

Société Générale de Surveillance SGS

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Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) is an international company that provides certification services for a variety of industries. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has accredited SGS Forestry's international forest management certification programme. The requirements of SGS's QUALIFOR programme cover environmental sensitivity, social responsibility and economic viability and include all the elements of the FSC Principles and Criteria, within the context of a documented management system. Logtrack is a SGS high technology system designed to track logs and other wood products throughout the supply chain from the forest to the final point of sale.

Major issue with Asian Forests: These forests are not being managed - just being logged. Supply of timber is being rapidly depleted. Forest industry needs help. Certification and market demand for wood products that come from well-managed forests can't alone save the forests but are tools to help.

Certification: SGS uses the 10 FSC principles and looks for three basic qualities

- sustainability of resources: timber and non timber
- environmental elements: are you maintaining the environment: siltation of streams
endangered species, biodiversity
- provision of social benefits to local communities and indigenous populations

Problems with certification

- Market wants certified timber immediately when insufficient supply is available: very little forest is certified in the tropics and forest managers need time to change their system from logging to good forestry management.
- Suppliers want assured premium for certified wood.
- Little technological and managerial assistance exists to assist managers in making changes required by certification: Typical process of certification is preassessment and then main assessment with nothing in-between.

Development of support program by SGS and WWF and others

- Based on recognition of need of a step wise approach to arrive at full certification. (similar to what IKEA uses)
- At present five forests around the world involved in this program and two others in Northern China to prepare for certification

Important distinction between two costs of certification:

- Cost of verification that the forest is well managed
- Cost of getting up to certification, i.e. developing better management:

