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Responsible Forestry: a Draft Irish Standard for Forest Certification goes to public consultation

***FSC Ireland is submitting a new Draft Irish Standard for Forest Management Certification for public consultation. Developed following tough negotiations between representatives of social, environmental and economic interests, this Standard sets out measures to ensure the responsible management of certified forests in Ireland. The comments of all interested parties are sought before the 23<sup>rd</sup> October, and the Draft will be revised in the light of these, before approval from the Forest Stewardship Council –the most demanding international forestry standard - is sought. This is the opportunity for all those with an interest in Irish forestry to contribute to successful certification for responsible forest management here.***

Dublin, Ireland, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009

FSC Ireland presents a new Draft Irish Standard for Forest Management Certification for public consultation.

This Standard interprets the core set of the international Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Principles and Criteria to describe how forests have to be managed **within Ireland** to meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations. Between now and the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009 anyone with an interest in Irish forestry and/or responsible forest management is invited to examine the Draft Standard and submit their comments. The Draft Standard will be revised following consideration of these comments, before approval from the FSC International is sought. The Draft Standard document can be viewed and downloaded at [www.irishforestcertification.com](http://www.irishforestcertification.com).

The United Nations recognises FSC as the fastest growing and most credible eco-label for wood products in the world. The FSC certification label shows that the management of the forest complies with the highest social and environmental standards on the market. As public concerns about the state of the world's forests and timber resources increase, FSC provides a real solution to complex environmental and social issues. The FSC label helps consumers to buy wood products that they know have been produced from sustainable forests. FSC certification helps to protect a producer's brand and reputation, and it allows them to access highly environmentally sensitive markets. Increasingly, governments and others specify FSC certified products in their procurement programs.

The strong and growing market demand for FSC certified products globally, alongside its high environmental and social standards, is the reason why Coillte and other forestry companies choose FSC over other certification bodies. Kimberley-Clark Corporation, which makes brands like Kleenex and Huggies used by 1.3 billion people each day and has the number 1 or 2 market position in over 80 countries worth US\$19 billion annually, has just announced a new policy of shifting to FSC-certified wood procurement. Other major international players include B&Q plc, Johnson & Johnson, IKEA, and companies involved in use of every sort of wood product are making this commitment in response to consumer demand. Irish producers are keen to access these growing markets, as Irish consumers are to support them. A national Standard for Ireland is part of achieving this.

FSC International is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that was established in 1993 to bring different stakeholders together to achieve better stewardship of the world's forests. FSC certified forests account for over 100 million hectares of the world's productive forests, in 82 countries. In Ireland, the national initiative has been supporting the development of an Irish forest stewardship standard,



involving all members and interested public. This Draft Irish FSC Standard is an adaptation of the international FSC rules to more specifically address the national situation

FSC Ireland (the national FSC initiative) established a Standard Development Group with representatives of environmental, economic and social interests, which undertook the initial development of the Draft Standard, in compliance with standards and guidance set by FSC International. A diverse range of issues are addressed within the Standard, including: legal compliance, recognition of rights, protection of forest workers, shared benefits from forests, interests of local communities, environmental impacts, management planning, monitoring & assessment of the forest, management activities and their impacts, maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests and the management of plantations.

The Draft Irish Standard for Forest Management Certification represents the outcomes of challenging negotiations between economic, environmental and social interests involved in forestry in Ireland. Negotiations have been challenging and sometimes fraught, but the Draft Standard presented now for public consultation is the product of extensive work and commitment from all interests.

Consumers of timber, paper and other forest products, from large corporations to individuals, and those involved in forestry management and markets all have an interest in this document. This is the opportunity for them to make an input and influence the final Standard for the better. FSC International demands that wide public consultation take place on proposed national Standards.

FSC Ireland is keen to hear the views of all interested parties, in order to be able to generate the best possible final revised Draft Standard to submit to the Forest Stewardship Council. Comments can be made directly from the link on the website [www.irishforestcertification.com](http://www.irishforestcertification.com) where the Draft Standard document can also be found. Hard copies of the document can be obtained from the contact below.

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