

# Sappi achieves PEFC Group Scheme certification for small growers

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Five small timber growers in KwaZulu-Natal have made history by becoming the first participants in the Sappi Khulisa programme to achieve forest certification through the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) in the Sappi Group Scheme for small growers.



Sobengwe Trading Team members

The five timber growers, with a total 8,143 hectares of timber area, have been successfully audited and awarded a PEFC Group Scheme certificate. The recipients of this significant award and founding members of the Sappi PEFC Group Scheme are the iMfume Cluster, consisting of more than 201 individual small growers from the Mfume district near Scottburgh, Sobengwe Trading from Ixopo, MG Farming from Richmond, Mclean M from Underberg, and Braecroft Timbers (Pty) Ltd from Underberg.

This follows years of intensive efforts by Sappi, working together with other players in the forestry industry in addressing the barriers of entry for small growers to achieve certification. This international certification provides the crucial assurance to end-use consumers.



Divisional environmental manager for Sappi Forests, Hengiwe Nklovu proudly displays the PEFC Certificate received for Sappi's first small growers' Group Scheme certification

In 2021, Sappi announced that it had achieved the first PEFC endorsed SAFAS (Sustainable African Forest Assurance Scheme) certification in South Africa, after starting with the process in 2015 – a journey which entailed participation in the development of a Forest Management Standard for South Africa, the development of mechanisms to support certification requirements and, in 2018, the endorsement of the standard and certification procedures. A certification tool was developed by the team to assess plantations, based on several factors including environmental, social and economic conditions specific to South Africa.

“After years of collaboration and dedicated commitment to developing a forest certification standard for South Africa, this achievement marks a historical moment in our long journey to support and make forest certification more accessible to the small landowners that participate in our supplier programmes, “ commented Duane Roothman, vice president of Sappi Forests.

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