Most of the Finnish commercial forest area is certified according to the PEFC Finland forest certification system. However, PEFC-certification is quite poorly renowned in the international markets of forest industry products. Also the acceptance of the PEFC-certification system is poor among the ENGOs.

This study examines the expectations, experiences and the level of contentment related to PEFC-certification in the member organisations of the Finnish Forest Industries Federation. With this study, the Finnish Forest Industries Federation receives information about the situation of its member organisations in the environmentally-conscious markets. The study also reveals what kind of an effect PEFC-certification has on the success of these companies.

The research methods of the study are qualitative. The material of the research was acquired by conducting thematic interviews. The theory of the study is based on the concepts of experienced service quality. In this study, PEFC-certification is examined as a service, the customers of which are Finnish forest industry companies. The theoretical framework of the study is a model of expectations, experiences and satisfaction by Rope & Pöllänen.

The results show that the companies interviewed are fairly content with PEFC-certification. Nonetheless, there is some dissatisfaction, especially in the largest companies due to the poor acceptance of the PEFC-certification in the international markets and among the ENGOs. Certification has been acquired for the companies mainly because forest certification has been recognized to be a major trend in the forest industries. PEFC-certification has also been used as a means of responding to the claims of the environmentally conscious markets for the companies interviewed.

The companies are satisfied with the fact that PEFC-certification has enabled them to maintain their marketshare. However, many of the interviewees point out the fact that PEFC-certification cannot provide them with a genuine competitive asset in the markets where FSC-certification is considered as the most reliable.

Only few of the companies interviewed carry out communication efforts related to forest certification. Communication about PEFC-certification is considered to be superfluous because it doesn’t create a chance for differentiation for a company. Improvement of the image and acceptance of PEFC-certification was wished for in many of the companies interviewed, especially in the largest ones.
Further information