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## Malaysia: MTCC certification scheme seeking acceptance in Europe

The Malaysian Timber Certification Council scheme, MTCC, is set up to meet demands from the Western markets for a green stamp on tropical timber, and MTCC has been a pioneer among the national certification schemes from tropical countries to really invest in getting acceptance from the European market. Malaysian delegations, headed by the Minister of Primary Industries, have several times visited Europe, and the active promotion of their own scheme has worked. Last year, Denmark, as the first European country, officially accepted MTCC as “a good guarantee of legal forest management, on its way towards becoming sustainable” in their tropical timber purchasing guidelines. This was done with the acceptance of two Danish environmental NGO's; WWF Denmark and Nepenthes, who participated in a working group elaborating the guidelines.

The EU Commission, European national governments and several cities in Germany and the Netherlands, such as Hamburg and Amsterdam, have also been approached by the Malaysian government and the country's timber industry, actively promoting MTCC as a credible certification scheme.

Whether MTCC standards are deemed acceptable has implications not only for forestry in Malaysia, but also for the future of forest certification around the world. Accepting MTCC would undermine the rights of indigenous peoples and sustainable forestry in Malaysia. Further, it would indicate globally that certified forestry remains exploitative and unsustainable business as usual, and is essentially meaningless in protection of forests and indigenous peoples' rights.

MTCC has repeatedly been criticised by Malaysian and international NGO's, but apparently more work is needed. One of the latest efforts is an email action alert by Forests.org and the Rainforest Foundation Norway towards the Danish government, asking for a withdrawal of the Danish support of the MTCC scheme.

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