FSC Plantations Review

- summary of the Policy Phase

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Background

• ’Within FSC’ concerns:
  - standards favour plantations over natural forests
  - standards unclear and open to interpretations
  - CBs not rigorous enough

• External critique

• Review of of policies and procedures requested by 2002 General Assembly
• Process key for legitimacy

• Chamber self-selection of representatives

• FSC-balanced working group: 12 people (4 from each chamber, equal North-South)
• 5 PWG meetings
• PWG consultations with chambers
• GA 2005 stakeholder meeting
• Formal consultations on draft report
• Final report – high level of consensus

• Next phase: Secretariat-driven implementation
PWG Final report

• General:
  - strive for the highest common denominator
  - focus on prevention rather than cure
  - build and maintain trust and relations

• Specific recommendations to improve FSC
1. Social aspects

Adopt a Social Management System approach that:

- ensures ’good neighbour’ relationships
- contributes to local development and poverty reduction
- upholds workers’ and indigenous peoples’ legal and customary rights…
...and includes/addresses:

- social mapping
- identification of social objectives
- personell management
- participatory social impact assessments
- prevention/mitigation strategies
- local involvement to improve livelihood
2. Ecosystem integrity

a) FSC P&C 6.3 for plantations:

• prevent-mitigate negative effects on ecosystems
• focus on MU level – in landscape context
• the higher the impact - the more mitigation
…taking into account:
• environmental benefits in stands and set-asides
• local/regional conservation context
• local community needs of natural resources
• sphere of influence of the manager
b) Proactively safeguard:

- high conservation value areas and features
- areas of representative and rare ecosystems
- habitats for rare species
- riparian zones and elements of connectivity
c) Field trials to evaluate and optimise:

- stand level retention of native species
- conservation area design
- size and distribution of managed stands
3. Stakeholder consultation

• consultation - a continuous management activity!
• proactive outreach to *affected* stakeholders
• identify conflicts and resolution mechanisms
• FSC to develop a practical guide / handbook
4. Use of chemicals

• FSC must acknowledge that chemicals will not be phased out in the short perspective
• focus on proactive reduction of use and negative impacts
• implement best practise integrated chemicals management, including:
• site-specific application to eliminate downstream/adjacent effects
• full declarations and transparency
• prevention/mitigation of negative impacts on nature and people
• monitoring and reporting
• demonstrable efforts to use alternatives
• proactive information to local communities
5. Improving the certification process

FSC must swiftly:

• ensure consistency of CBs work
• give CBs better guidance and training
• improve auditing and monitoring of CBs performance
• improve and speed up complaints procedures
• ensure that CBs rotate their auditors vs. clients
FSC must also:

- develop a common membership vision and strategy for future growth!
- focus more on the system than on policies
- support national initiatives and networking
6. Conversion

• current rules cause much frustration

• FSC’s objectives are unclear

• some Criteria are potentially contradicting
• evaluate future changes, but keep cut-off date for the time being

• clarify existing procedures for exceptions

• give priority to rights of indigenous peoples

• clarify policies related to other HCV ecosystems
7. Input to review of the P&Cs:

- FSC should develop one common integrated set of P&Cs for all management units
  (only point of no consensus, 10 of 12 in favour)

- FSC should be open to operations across the full continuum from low-impact natural forest management, to high-intensity, short-rotation plantations
...but also:

- avoid incentives to gradually transform natural forests to plantations

- keep plantations and forests as separate categories in the FSC database

- use 'forests and plantations' or 'management units' when referring to all operations
Some lessons learned...

- there are no shortcuts to consensus...
- …but balanced representation works!
- clear ToRs necessary for all parts
- provide consultation support
- professional meeting facilitation essential
...and finally:

- unique learning exercise for all involved...
- powerful mind-expander and bridge-builder...
- expensive, difficult and often frustrating...
- ...but also the living democracy that sets FSC apart!