

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 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
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- 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!