



## EDITORIAL

There are currently about 200 million hectares of plantation worldwide. By the year 2020 it is predicted that about 44% of the world's industrial wood and fibre will come from plantations. What kind of plantations will they be?

When FSC came into existence, plantations were a contentious issue for FSC's founding members. The search for resolution meant that FSC's 'Plantations Principle' - Principle 10 - was finalised two years after the other Principles and Criteria had been completed.

At the core of Principle 10 is this statement, affirmed by a vote of the full FSC membership: "While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's needs for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests".

Six million hectares of plantation and a further 17 million hectares of 'mixed' plantation and natural forest have been certified to FSC standards since Principle 10 was approved. On average, some 12% of the area of each FSC-certified 'plantation' is managed for conservation objectives. However, some FSC plantation certificates have also been strongly criticised - particularly in relation to social impacts.

FSC has earned a reputation for involving and listening to its members as well as other forest stakeholders. We also have to resolve differences in seeking environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable solutions. The FSC Plantations Review, which is based on FSC's values of transparency, participation and equity is intended to find accepted solutions.

How can plantations contribute to stewardship of the world's forests? FSC's model of standards development, certification, and product labeling gives stakeholders a unique opportunity to help answer this question.

We call upon FSC members to take up the challenge, and let the Plantations Review Policy Working Group know what you think!

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## PLANTATIONS, THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

The impacts of plantations on societies, the environment and economies have been analysed from many perspectives. Opinions can be diametrically opposed, ranging from loving to loathing, from idealism to pragmatism. But plantations evidently seem to be here to stay. The question is what kind of plantations will they be? And how and by whom will this be defined?

FSC has started a full review of its policies and standards for plantations. The aim is to involve as many people as possible in order to find a solution that FSC members from all three chambers (environmental, social and economic) can support.

FSC commissioned a study to identify the range of issues and opinions that need to be considered. In this special issue of the News + Notes, we present a short overview of that study. The resulting paper "Perspectives on Plantations" is available at [www.fsc.org/plantations/resources](http://www.fsc.org/plantations/resources). The following notes give a sense of the range and complexity of the issues covered.

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## PLANTATIONS, THE CHALLENGE AHEAD (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

### Environmental issues

Much debate over plantation forestry concerns plantations' impacts on ecological systems. People have voiced concern regarding biodiversity loss, fragmented ecosystems, and disruptions to soil hydrology and nutrient regimes. Issues related to plantations' effects on adjacent forest areas, and the spread of pests, diseases, and exotic invasive species have also been raised as an important issue, as well as the use of genetically modified organisms.

Others have promoted the environmental merits of plantations, including their potential to sequester carbon and thereby help combat global warming, their ability to improve continuity between forest patches and increase biodiversity when established on degraded land. A central theme in the plantation discussion is the assertion that intensive plantation management helps reduce pressure on native forests by producing greater wood and fibre yields from smaller areas.

*In FSC certified plantations, the median percentage of production and conservation area is 76% and 16% respectively.*

*FSC data base*

### Social Issues

Social issues are another dimension of the plantations debate. Much controversy stems from instances where plantation forestry has created or exacerbated social conflict over land use. Other issues concern plantation ownership influence on management outcomes, the impact for local peoples and, the opportunities for local employment and poor working conditions. People have suggested this is often related to the outsourcing of work or contracting temporary or part-time employees, rather than hiring full time employees and providing training and benefit packages.

Impacts on Indigenous Peoples' livelihoods and access to land are also important issues. An important aspect of the plantations debate concerns the land upon which plantations are established, its use by local people, and their rights and access to the resources contained therein. The absence of tenure security for local people is also problematic if plantation establishment leads to their displacement, increasing deforestation and other negative impacts elsewhere.

A commonly cited social benefit created by plantations is local employment generation. However, controversy surrounds the extent to which plantations generate employment benefits for local communities. The land use system replaced by a plantation is an important factor in assessing the net impact on local employment.

*88 per cent of FSC certificates noted contributions to infrastructure including: financial and material support to community organizations, medical clinics, schools, maintenance of public roads, and provision of employee accommodation.*

*FSC data base*



### Economic Issues

In many cases economic issues facing plantation companies revolve around balancing the increasing demand for wood fibre production, with the reality of decreasing land availability for other objectives. Wood product markets are an important factor in this equation, and affect both the establishment and subsequent management of plantations.

For some stakeholders, consumption is a major issue, whether driven by societal desires or industry efforts to stimulate demand. The evidence suggests that demand will continue to increase in the foreseeable future, in which case the ability of plantations to produce greater volumes of wood from smaller areas will continue to be an important consideration.

Another central economic theme is the relationship between the public and private sectors. Rationales for subsidising plantations include increasing the rate of return on investments that would be marginally profitable but offer social benefits, and in order to generate a "critical mass" of plantations to establish a large-scale competitive wood processing industry. Conversely, subsidising plantation establishment and management may simply encourage environmental degradation, and in effect give public money to private companies whose interests in social benefits are uncertain at best.

*97 per cent of FSC certified plantations meet FSC Principle 3, related to indigenous peoples' rights. 3 per cent were issued a minor "corrective action request".*

*FSC data base*

This range of issues (and the many more than have not been mentioned here) gives a sense of the challenges facing plantation managers today. However they also suggest opportunities for improvement in the future.

The first stage of the FSC Plantations Review is to identify and understand all of the issues and concerns surrounding plantations. Then, we need to seek solutions, and to answer the question of what the world's plantations might look like in the future.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE PLANTATIONS REVIEW PROCESS

### The review has two key objectives:

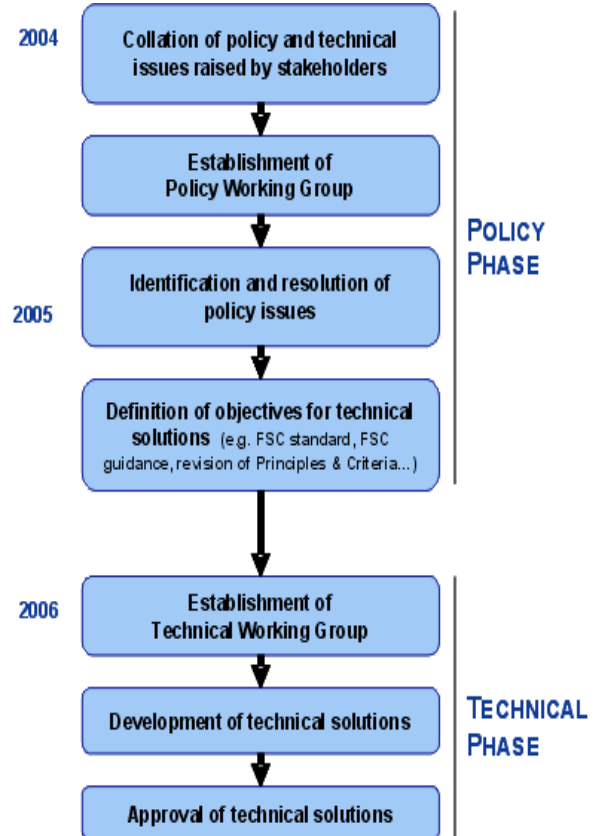
\* To engage social, environmental and economic stakeholders in an international review of the implementation of the FSC Principles and Criteria for plantations, and to provide clear guidance for their future implementation, with the broad support of the FSC membership;

\* To provide for the benefit of the global community, clear, authoritative and widely accepted social and environmental standards for responsible plantation management.

### A two-phase process is planned to meet these objectives.

In the first phase, the deep, underlying policy issues need to be identified, debated, and resolved. This 'policy' phase of the review will be coordinated by a Board-endorsed Policy Working Group, with members from each FSC chamber. Full details of the process have been agreed with the Policy Working Group members, and are available on the FSC Plantations website.

In the second phase, technical solutions will be developed to meet the policy requirements identified. This 'technical' phase of the review will be coordinated by a Technical Working Group, and the final results will be approved by the Board of Directors, and if necessary, the FSC membership. The details of the process will be finalised when the policy phase been completed and the scope of the technical phase has been clarified.



## LAUNCHING THE REVIEW

The Plantations Review was launched on September 9th 2004 at a meeting in Bonn, Germany prior to the celebration of FSC's 10th Anniversary and Annual Conference. Over 100 individuals from more than 30 countries came together to identify and debate key issues that the review will need to address.

The one day meeting was open to anyone interested in the role that FSC certification can play in improving plantation management worldwide. Presentations gave an overview of the current portfolio of FSC certified plantations, as well as considering broader plantation issues at the international level.

Representatives from Forests and the European Union Resource Network (FERN) and the World Rainforest Movement (WRM) outlined several persistent criticisms concerning FSC certification of plantations. The meeting also heard from a range of stakeholders who provided environmental, social, and industrial perspectives on the future of FSC plantations.

Participants identified seven key themes as well as a number of additional specific issues: the FSC review process itself, FSC Principle 10; Habitat conversion; Conservation and Restoration; Definition and Data; Economic Viability; and Social Aspects.

trial perspectives on the future of FSC plantations.

Copies of all the presentations and a summary report of the meeting have been posted on the Resources page of the Plantations website <http://www.fsc.org/plantations>, together with further background information.

"The climate created let people express the completely opposing positions of the diverse participants very clearly."

*From the evaluation of the meeting in Bonn, Germany.*

"The review must include more members from the social chamber, including representatives from local institutions where communities face problems with plantations."

*From the evaluation of the meeting in Bonn, Germany.*

## BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER, BRIDGING DIVIDES: THE PLANTATIONS REVIEW POLICY WORKING GROUP

FSC's unique strength is its ability to bring together people with extraordinarily diverse perspectives and experiences, but with a shared determination to improve the way the world treats its forests and forest dependent people. The key to this strength is the balanced structure of FSC's procedures and decision making process.

The FSC Board of Directors has formed a Policy Working Group (PWG) to carry out the policy phase of the Plantations Review. This group consists of two representatives of each of the six FSC sub-chambers (North/South: social, economic and environmental). The representatives' role is to bring the views of their

sub-chamber to the table for discussion and to seek policy level solutions that can be supported by all six sub-chambers.

Representatives were selected by the FSC Board and members on the basis of their understanding of and support for FSC's mission and vision, their understanding of the potential social, environmental or economic impacts of plantation management, their commitment to the review's objectives, and their ability and willingness to identify and represent the diversity of views of their FSC sub-chamber.

### THE FACES OF THE POLICY WORKING GROUP



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The twelfth member of the Policy Working Group is William Street, a Canadian representing the International Federation of Building and Construction Wood Workers in the Social North chamber. He can be reached at [william.street@ifbww.org](mailto:william.street@ifbww.org)

## THE FACILITATOR



**Anders Lindhe** has been appointed as facilitator of the policy phase of the Plantations Review. His role includes facilitating meetings, supporting the members of the PWG, and fundraising for the plantations review process. Anders is from Stockholm, Sweden. He was a member of the Swedish FSC working group and a member of the international FSC Working Group that developed the High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) concept. Anders Lindhe can be contacted at [peltis@swipnet.se](mailto:peltis@swipnet.se)

## PWG MEMBERS CROSS THE GLOBE TO START THEIR WORK

From Canada to New Zealand, India to Argentina, representatives of FSC's six sub-chambers crossed the globe to meet as members of the recently formed Policy Working Group (PWG) at the Sanga-Saby conference centre near Stockholm, Sweden from March 9-11 2005.

The members of the PWG were selected by the FSC membership and the FSC Board of Directors to represent environmental, social and economic stakeholders during the FSC Plantations Review. Together, the PWG members are an eclectic group of individuals who bring to the table a wide diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives on plantations.

The task of the PWG is to identify and debate fundamental issues of plantations, and then to determine appropriate FSC positions and/or approaches to resolve these issues.

At their first meeting a rich diversity of subjects on plantations issues were discussed. Discussion covered the use of chemicals in plantation management, stakeholder participation, conversion of forests and other natural ecosystems to plantations, the role of certifiers, the wide range of interpretation of FSC Principles and Criteria, the diversity of scale and intensity of plantations worldwide, and the weakness of systems for social management.

Members of the working group did not take positions on any of the topics discussed at this first meeting. They will be working between meetings to consult with stakeholders to ensure that all topics are addressed during the review, and to be informed on the issues.



The PWG at Sanga-Saby conference center in Stockholm, Sweden.

The PWG members were aware of the heavy responsibility they have in representing their constituencies in this phase of the review, but were stimulated by the wide range of experiences and views within the group, and were confident that this would bring balance to the results of the review.

The next PWG meeting will be held at the FSC IC office in Bonn, Germany July 13-15.

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FSC PLANTATIONS REVIEW PROCESS

The success of the FSC Plantations Review will be built on the participation of interested and affected groups and individuals. FSC will be working hard over the next two years to ensure that as many people as possible can have their say. If you want your viewpoint to be heard, please join in! All the contact details are given below.

There are a variety of ways to take part. The most important is to make **direct contact with the PWG members** representing the FSC sub-chambers. Contact your PWG representative to ensure that the topics that are most important to you are included in the review. See the PWG contact details on page 4- 6

FSC has also set up an email **discussion forum**, where we encourage FSC members and other stakeholders to raise issues and propose solutions. Join the FSC Plantations Review email forum to share information and participate in discussions on

plantations topics! To join, just send a request to [forum.administrator@fsc.org](mailto:forum.administrator@fsc.org).

We are working with our **FSC National Initiatives** to encourage a broad set of National and Regional stakeholders to feed into the international review process. Find out what's happening in your country by contacting your National Initiative! For contact details for national offices, visit [www.fsc.org/en/about/contact\\_fsc/national\\_initiatives](http://www.fsc.org/en/about/contact_fsc/national_initiatives)

Finally, we will be publishing information and updates on a dedicated website throughout the review, in addition to this special issue of the FSC newsletter (circulated to over 5,000 members and non-members). Visit the FSC Plantations Review website [www.fsc.org/plantations](http://www.fsc.org/plantations) to stay up-to-date on the review process!