

## **FSC PLANTATIONS REVIEW**

Charles-de-Gaulle-Str. 5  
53113 Bonn, Germany  
Tel.: +49 - 228 - 367 66 0  
Fax: +49 - 228 - 367 66 30  
www.fsc.org  
fsc@fsc.org

08 APR 2005

### **REPORT FROM THE FIRST POLICY WORKING GROUP MEETING**

Sånga-Säby Conference Centre, Stockholm, Sweden March 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>

#### **Participants:**

##### Policy Working Group:

Javier Baltodano Aragon (Costa Rica, South Env)  
Luis Astorga (Chile, South Soc)  
Gilmar Bertoloti (Brazil, substituting for Roberto Waack, Brazil, South Econ)  
Tim Cadman (Australia, North Env)  
Joshua Dickinson (USA, North Soc)  
Anders Hildeman (Sweden, North Econ)  
Luis Fernando Jara (Equador, South Env)  
Jutta Kill (United Kingdom, North Env)  
Rob McLagan (New Zealand, North Econ)  
Dr. John Scotcher (South Africa, South Econ)  
Dr. Dharam Pal Singh Verma (India, South Soc)

Apologies: William Street (Canada, North Soc). (Mr. Street declared already when suggested as a representative that he would not be able to participate in the first meeting. A Swedish IFBWW colleague suggested as a substitute had to cancel attendance due to illness).

##### FSC IC staff and facilitator:

Matthew Wenban-Smith, Head of FSC Policy and Standards Unit (Wednesday only)  
Sarah McKay, Projects Assistant, FSC Policy and Standards Unit  
Anders Lindhe, facilitator

## Proceedings:

### Wednesday:

Matthew Wenban-Smith greeted the participants on behalf of the FSC. Björn Lyngfelt, Sweden, welcomed the participants on behalf of SCA Forest Products, acting as host for the meeting by covering costs of preparations, accommodation and conference venue for all participants, as well as travel costs for social representatives and southern environmental representatives. (Mr. Lyngfelt stayed with the meeting until the arrival of Anders Hildeman by lunchtime Wednesday).

After a short round of personal presentations by all representatives (short CV:s will be posted at the FSC Plantations web-site), Matthew Wenban-Smith gave a background and an overview of the review process, the overall objectives being:

- to engage social, environmental and economic stakeholders in an international review of FSC's policies and standards for plantation certification, and
- to provide clear guidance and/or standards for their future implementation.

Matthew Wenban-Smith also gave an overview of the funding status of the process. So far, approximately 100 000 Euro of the total of 1 000 000 Euro sought for the two year process have been secured through contributions from Stora Enso, SCA and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation. Discussions with other potential donors are ongoing. Matthew Wenban-Smith made an appeal for suggestions, and asked the group members to explore if their respective constituencies could make in kind contributions related to honorariums and travel costs for group members.

Matthew Wenban-Smith went on to outline and lead a discussion on the envisaged roles of the representatives, the facilitator and the FSC International Centre in the process. It was concluded that:

- Stakeholders that want to participate in, and influence the outcome of the process should contact members of the Policy Working Group (PWG). It was emphasised that (until there are public drafts, see further below) PWG members are the only 'points of entry' with an obligation to bring stakeholder views into the process.
- The primary obligation of the PWG members is to represent the views and input of FSC-members in their respective sub-chamber constituencies. However, PWG members will be open to receive input from all stakeholders that approaches them.
- All stakeholders, including non-members, who want to express views, provide background materials, case-studies etc, or want to stimulate a wider discussion on general or specific subjects related to the review, are invited to participate in the plantations e-mail forum.
- Funding will be sought to help FSC National Initiatives in up to six countries to carry out national/regional surveys of stakeholder views related to the objectives of the review process, with a primary aim to identify views and input from non-members.
- Public drafts from the PWG, and later on from the Technical Working Group (TWG), will be available in English and Spanish on the Plantations web-site. Drafts will be open for comments by all stakeholders, and all comments submitted on formal

comments forms (see web-site) will be recorded, collated and made available to the PWG and TWG, respectively.

- The facilitator welcomes discussions with all stakeholders at any stage during the process. However, the facilitator is not a 'point of entry' and not obligated to forward the content of such discussions to the PWG. The facilitator (being individual member of the environmental chamber) will not exercise any membership rights bearing on the review during the process, and participate in meetings arranged by the environmental chamber only upon invitation from an environmental chamber PWG representative.
- The primary task of the Plantations Review Steering Committee (currently Matthew Wenban-Smith, Heiko Liedeker FSC Executive Director and the facilitator) is to support and manage the facilitator. The Steering Committee is not to influence the content of the process or the output of the PWG. No additions to the Steering Committee should be made unless suggested to, and accepted by, the PWG.

Matthew Wenban-Smith then presented changes suggested to the Policy Phase Procedure document as results of comments received during public consultation period. These changes were discussed at the meeting and some additional amendments were proposed by PWG members. After discussion and incorporation of these, the procedure document was accepted by all PWG members.

For the second half of the afternoon, PWG members representing the same chamber met separately to get to know each other better, and to brainstorm a first overview of subjects important to address in the further process. These overviews were then presented and discussed in plenary. While by no means exhaustive (and 'personal' rather than results of consultations as the meeting was confirmed on very short notice) these chamber perspectives served as a first step in getting to know and to understand the wide range of views represented by the PWG members.

#### Thursday:

The group started working by dividing in chambers for one hour. All chambers were asked to identify one or a couple of important subjects and to introduce these subjects to the plenary for further discussion.

Back in the plenary, the rest of the working day was divided in three equal parts, giving each chamber a total of 80 minutes to present their subject/s of choice, views and concerns related to these subjects, and to allow time for discussions in the PWG. At this early stage in the review process, the aim of the sessions was to exchange and share perspectives rather than to seek solutions, as it was felt that understanding the background and rationale for other peoples views would be a necessary foundation for future problem-solving.

First out, the economic chamber representatives focused on use of chemicals, making a distinction between pesticides (used against certain animals), fungicides (against certain fungi) and herbicides (against certain plants). Examples were given of use of fungicides in seedling nurseries, pesticides against non-native fauna, and herbicides as a prime tool against competing vegetation and exotic weeds in management of stands as well as in restoration of native vegetation. The economic chamber also made reference to the role of certifiers and the wide range of interpretation of the FSC Principles & Criteria in the absence of national FSC standards. Much of the ensuing

discussion related to the use of chemicals, like application techniques; risks of accidental spills; biological control agents; native vs. exotic tree species; forestry vs. agriculture sector use of chemicals; the role of research; incorporation of real costs of production into prices; and balancing various trade-offs.

The environmental chamber representatives also had chemical use as one of the identified subjects, but as chemicals already had been discussed at some length, the chamber chose to focus on aspects related to stakeholder participation in all aspects of certification. It was argued that stakeholder participation tends to be implicit rather than explicitly stated in the FSC Principles and Criteria (P&C), and that assessments of socio-economic impacts of plantations are inadequate. The environmental chamber also identified conversion to plantations of forests and other natural ecosystems like grasslands and wetlands, the role of certifiers, and pros and cons of separate standards/ a separate category for plantations as other important issues for future work. Other aspects raised were large vs. small scale enterprises; certification in the absence of national standards; and the feasibility of stakeholder participation and consultations in countries/regions with inadequately operating legal systems and/or insufficient civil society rights. The chamber also commented upon how production models of plantations relate to 'over-consumption' in northern countries. Issues that came up in the wider discussions were calls for a manual on consultations, as well as for guidance how companies can interact positively with their surrounding communities.

The social chamber representatives observed that, while natural resource management is frequently addressed in the P&C's, less is said about systems for social management, on promoting and managing the 'social contract', on how to improve local conditions and on promoting local development. Furthermore, social aspects were not considered to form a coherent framework. It was argued that approaches to address social issues can be ordered in a progression from impact assessments in order to minimise negative effects, over provision of positive benefits (such as jobs and access to NTFP's), to activities to promote local development and to increase the local 'social capital'. Socially responsible management should include all these three approaches. Examples were given from co-operatives in Colombia and some larger operations in Chile. Issues brought up in the discussion: the concept of a 'social landscape', potential disruptive effects if an established large-scale actor withdraw from an area; displacement of peoples when companies buy up land; profit-sharing; the social responsibility of big corporations in relation to governmental welfare systems and local development; unions, worker's rights and lack of application of labour regulations; out-sourcing and contractors; and people as partners.

#### Friday:

The facilitator led a morning session with a presentation and some discussion on ideas for how to address subjects once they are identified, and on ways of structuring the results in relation to the Principles and Criteria. As for the other sessions of the meeting, the aim was not to suggest solutions, but to stimulate broader discussion and thinking about methodology.

The facilitator started by discussing some personal expectations related to FSC's 'definition' of responsible forestry as environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable. Such forest management, the facilitator argued, could be expected to:

- maintain high conservation values
- provide environmental 'services' and social benefits in the broad sense
- minimise negative environmental and social impacts

- deliver sustainable yields of materials
- promote a robust local socio-economic framework

The facilitator then focused on services and benefits and suggested some assessment of overall provisions of services and benefits at the Forest Management Unit level. To facilitate stakeholder input, promote learning from 'good examples' and enable comparisons, 'claims' related to provision of services and benefits could be stated in the public parts of certification reports. The facilitator suggested compensation / mitigation as one potential tool to promote harmonisation between different certified FMU's.

Regarding negative effects, the facilitator argued that it may be possible to formulate maximum 'tolerable' impacts – for each factor as well as for cumulative effects – and to identify measurable 'indicators', or sets of such indicators, to enable certifiers to assess if the management performs within these limits. Such a focus on real effects may be a more promising way forward than a focus on management methods or concepts. The facilitator also suggested that, to a certain extent, specific negative effects could be compensated / mitigated by increased overall provisions of environmental services and social benefits.

Drawing upon previous discussions in the group, the facilitator pointed to the need for the review process to address 'scales of responsibility'. While it may be argued that focusing only on the FMU may be too narrow a perspective to include wider environmental and social impact, such as landscape planning or disruptions of 'social fabrics', where does the responsibility of FSC certification (including managers and certifiers) end? And, while many developed countries have operational social security and welfare systems, to what extent should managers be expected to address such issues in the absence of institutional systems?

After the morning session, the group addressed logistics of the further process and next steps. It was concluded that:

- The group will meet three more times within the one year scheduled for the policy phase of the process.
- The facilitator suggested that the next meeting could be located in a southern country with plantations, allowing the group to spend a day in the field. However, the group did not consider potential benefits of a short field trip to compensate for increased costs of travel and burdensome travel logistics at this stage in the process. Thus, the group opted for having the next meeting in a location 'equally accessible' to all, and it was decided to hold the next meeting in Bonn, Germany, drawing upon the facilities of FSC International Centre. This meeting will take place July 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005.
- Group members will consult with their respective constituencies and suggest subjects and work programme for the next meeting to the facilitator before June 15<sup>th</sup>. The facilitator will circulate a draft meeting agenda to the group members for comments no later than June 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- No decisions were taken on exact dates or locations for the third and fourth meeting, but the group will consider linking the third meeting to the General Assembly in Brazil.

The group also made some requests to FSC IC and to the facilitator in order to promote progress, keep the process within the scheduled timeframe, and provide some clarification on the background for the review. It was decided that:

- Sarah McKay of FSC IC will set a Yahoo group discussion forum to enable the group to communicate internally. This forum will be accessible to all PWG group members, to Sarah McKay and to the facilitator.
- The facilitator will provide the group with a brief informal, 'non-scientific' analysis of complaints submitted to FSC IC related to FSC-certified plantations, with the aim of identifying 'common denominators' of 'criticised' vs. 'non-criticised' operations. The facilitator will also collect some information / statistics on what percentage of all plantations that are FSC-certified, the extent to which FSC-certified plantations have been criticised and what proportions of these that are located in the south vs. the north. The results will be presented to the group at the next meeting.
- The facilitator will compile standards and draft standards related to plantations that have been endorsed by FSC, or forwarded to FSC IC for comments.
- Matthew Wenban-Smith will pass on a request to the Board of Directors for clarification on the background and motives for the plantations review process, including decisions taken not to declare, or pursue further, a moratorium on certifications of plantations suggested by some stakeholders at the Bonn meeting. In this context some representatives wished to point out that most plantations criticised by environmentalists and local communities are large-scale monocultures.

The meeting was concluded by a brief evaluation round. The feedback was generally positive, and there was general appreciation of the frank and open atmosphere that had characterised the discussions and sharing of perspectives. However, it was also pointed out that the group has a huge responsibility, that much must be accomplished within a limited timeframe, and that the next meeting must move on and focus on producing a more substantial output.

The facilitator closed the meeting by thanking and complementing the group members for their participation, for their efforts to contribute to the discussions, and for their spirit of mutual respect. The facilitator also expressed, on behalf of FSC and the group, sincere appreciation of the financial support to the meeting granted by SCA Forest Products.

Stockholm 2005-03-29 Anders Lindhe