

Some notes on the early years of FSC.

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The notes were meant to be parts of a book about the first ten years of the FSC. That book will not be completed (at least not by me), but I am circulating these parts for the record. I am very grateful to the Tropical Forest Trust for contributing to some of the costs of drafting this report.

FSC was intended to become an international enterprise, operating in a world of enterprises, but it was much more than a dry project set up by bureaucrats. It was the work of living people, often with powerful interests, motivation and egos. It had many of the elements of a campaign or movement, including lively differences between people with different personalities, using very different methods to achieve their ends. The passing years showed that many people shared a long-term vision, but there was also plenty of disagreement, leading to conflicts that were as long lasting as the alliances. The story of FSC is not complete without a sample of these dramas, but perhaps they are best written by someone less involved. So this is a personal history, without getting too personal. It is based mainly on what I saw and heard and read while it was happening.

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Introduction: What prepared me for working for forest certification?

When I applied to work for the Forest Stewardship Council in 1993, I thought it would be the best forestry job in the world, better than running a government department, or university faculty or international aid programme. It looked as though forestry certification was an opportunity to mobilize market forces in support of good forest practices, forces far more powerful and penetrating than any of the typical technical collaboration projects, institutional strengthening, training programmes or policy reforms where I had previously worked.

When I started work, I was delighted at my good fortune, but also worried that I would find large numbers of people watching and waiting for me to trip up, so that they could move into this enviable job. Of course, I found that I regularly tripped up, and there were certainly plenty of people watching, but I was sometimes alarmed that no-one seemed to have the slightest anxiety to take my place.

Sometimes I thought about what drove me to take this high-risk job. The answer lies in what I had seen of the world of forestry over the previous thirty years since graduating. In the late 50s and early 60s, there were still many examples of fully operational management in tropical forests in Africa and Asia: where the management plans were written by professional foresters, and implemented by them, and where the logging companies were expected and required to follow the regulations and the forester's instructions. This was the standard practice in Ghana, Uganda, and Malaysia and was even followed in countries which have subsequently lost most of their forests, as in Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Philippines. Cameroun, Gabon and Zaire had forests under professional control. Managed forests were found across the Atlantic in Trinidad and in Belize. The staff who struggled to teach me forestry at Oxford knew many of these places (well described by Baur, 1968). But when I went to work in Uganda in 1965, it was one of very few countries that still had operational tropical forest management.

Although the management practices had been solidly professional, the silvicultural practices of those times do not look particularly enlightened by today's standards. Intensive silvicultural treatments, often using arboricides like 2,4-T and 2,4,5-D, were thought to be justified by the increased production of valued timber. I happily applied them myself in Uganda. The impact on biodiversity was not taken seriously yet. These managed tropical forests were almost always state property. Local people might be allowed the privilege of collecting some forest products, but the concept of "public land" did not usually involve benefits for local communities. Such treatments would now have difficulties in getting certified. These attempts at "improving" the forests have now been widely replaced by logging, disguised as management.

By the time I started working more widely in the tropics and subtropics, tropical forest management was close to extinction. In Sabah, in 1979, I was told how the recent national forest inventory had been carried out with Canadian aid, but the results had been declared confidential, to allow time for Ministers and Permanent Secretaries to bid for concessions in the most valuable blocks. The next year, in the Philippines with the World Bank, I found that official government data showed how the forests were being logged and cleared so fast that there would be no commercial resources left by the end of the century; ministry officials were so angry that they threatened to close the project. The next year, in Indonesia, I saw how the uncontrolled logging in steep slopes was eliminating not only the forest but also the soils. The transmigration project aimed to create communities based on

subsistence agriculture, but such projects seldom quite achieve their stated objectives, so it was no surprise to see that the rainforests were being replaced by impoverished villages and sub-subsistence agriculture.

In many parts of the tropics, the impact of logging operations appeared largely negative. The role of forest industries as a catalyst for industrial development, initially predicted by Jack Westoby, seldom emerged. Instead, I saw one place after another where communities dependent on farming and forest products had left their fields to work for logging companies, only to find later, when the loggers moved on, and they were left with degraded forests and abandoned fields.

Working in forestry projects around the world did little to make me think that the situation was getting better, either for the forests or for the people who depended on them. This was more galling because I was convinced that basic management in tropical forests is not particularly difficult, and that good management is possible. I was sure that it was possible to remove timber and non-timber products without prejudicing the biodiversity, while also respecting the needs of local communities and the rights of workers.

I had grown disillusioned about aid projects, where too few seemed to produce durable benefits; and about plantations, where the trend towards monocultures and chemical-dependence continued unabated; and about tropical forest management, which had been in decline for years, replaced by barely supervised logging. FSC and certification seemed to be what was needed for a major shake-up.

My first encounter with opposition to certification came early in August 1991, in the notorious Chimanes forest in Bolivia. The owner of a logging company told me about his bitter hostility to the whole concept of certification, while his company was liquidating, as fast as possible, the most accessible mahogany in his concession. He clearly saw that any serious attempt to enforce the existing laws and regulations, let alone responsible standards of management, would bring his profitable business to an end. This encounter, and the launch of the B&Q Timber Buying Policy a couple of weeks later, convinced me of the potential power of FSC. If loggers like him were enraged by the very idea of certification, it must be worth supporting.

The manager of a neighbouring logging company explained his concept of sustained yield. His plan was to cut all the best and most accessible patches of mahogany within five years, then close down his sawmill and lay off the workers, and wait until the other species are commercially marketable; meanwhile, his profits, invested in the bank, gave him a very satisfactory sustained yield.

In the capital, La Paz, I discussed with government officials their difficulties in implementing the forestry regulations. During one meeting with a very senior official, we were interrupted by a young woman enquiring about permits for exporting alligator skins, which were then under a strict hunting ban. The official said very firmly "That is quite impossible". Then he did a sort of double-take, as though shocked at himself for saying that anything was impossible. He then said "...that is to say, it is, er.. difficult. " They quickly agreed to meet next day, and we continued our conversation about how hard it was to enforce the regulations.

These experiences matched what I had seen in many other parts of the tropics. So, when I began to see the potential power of market demand linked to management that assured social and environment benefits, it was the right moment.

Background: Why the forestry sector was ripe for certification.

This section is my view on why certification emerged when it did, and why it was perceived as an effective measure for tackling some of the problems of the forestry sector; why it seemed to be a necessary step (although obviously not sufficient) towards promoting better forest management; and why it generated such strong feelings in a way that other environmental and industrial certification systems have not.

Many publications have deal with the achievements, progress and successes in the world of forestry and timber (e.g., for the tropics, Dawkins and Philip (1998) , Poore (2004)), achievements that have earned respect for the forestry profession as one of the few aiming systematically at the long-term view, with calculations based on long-term benefits and needs. However, the elements that spurred interest in certification were rather the shortcomings and failures of the sector.

Forest based activities have mobilized material and economic resources, producing a great array of goods, services and benefits. They have also caused environmental, social and economic damage, often unexpected or unintentional, but also, now and in the past, often a matter of indifference to those reaping the benefits.

Governments and other authorities have intervened by establishing national forest reserves, forestry services, training facilities, and an array of laws and regulations. In their modern forms, these measures have been in place for three centuries or more in a few countries of Western Europe, and for at least a century in most other countries. They have given institutional, technical and legal strength to modern concepts of forest ownership, management planning and yield control. For long periods, they worked well enough to ensure that many state forests kept their forest cover, and many industries and markets were assured of their supplies. Logging spread to all kinds of natural forests, and the areas of plantations grew steadily.

The elements of tropical forestry were well developed in the Indian subcontinent in the 19th Century, especially in Shorea forests, and were introduced widely in Asia and Africa, and locally in tropical America, in the first half of the 20th century. In the early years of large-scale plantations, the pine forests in the French Landes were diagnosed as largely successful, while the extension of spruce plantations up into the Alps led to major problems of disease and erosion. Successes and failures occurred, then as now, in both natural forests and plantations.

The scene started changing faster after the second world war. First, there was an acceleration in demand and consumption of timber, associated with postwar reconstruction and the growth in economies and trade.

Second, there was an intensification of logging and management, shown by the use of heavy machinery for logging, road building, ploughing and land clearance (and the disappearance of animal traction and light railways); and the increased use of pesticides, herbicides and arboricides; and the rapid spread of industrial tree plantations, often at the expense of natural forests and other natural habitats.

Third, and most alarming, has been the steady decline in the ability of governments to enforce forestry regulations (not only in the tropics), combined with the adaptation of these forestry regulations in the interests of industrial timber production. Planned management was neglected or abandoned in most of the countries of Africa and Asia that had introduced management during the previous 50 – 100 years. In the 1960s, H.C.Dawkins described this process as the silviculturist losing control to the logger.

In temperate regions, forestry practitioners and scientists gradually shifted the paradigm of management away from the slow manipulation of natural forests, and from plantations that mimicked natural forests with high densities and long rotations, in favour of intensive treatments, short rotations and exotic species. Looking back, the enthusiasm for these processes shown by the leading foresters may look surprising, but they produced benefits that were then believed to be the priorities, and they were a natural result of the prevailing decision making processes. Using the information then available, many leaders in the field were convinced about the benefits from intensive practices, and took pride in them, and not many people objected.

Worries and objections had emerged from the earliest times, but they were mostly heard locally, in the regions where the impacts were felt. Neighbours objected to the march of alien-looking plantations, but they were easily brushed aside as being against the march of progress and the national interest. Naturalists and biologists wrote complaining about deforestation and the extinction of species, but they impacted mainly on other naturalists and biologists. Forest peoples objected to the degradation or destruction of the forests on which they depended. Forest-farmers and woodland grazing people, and agricultural communities near the forests were directly affected, but their voices were scarcely heard in the capital, much less abroad

Gradually, an interest in forests spread to those who were not directly involved: the educated, television-watching, magazine-reading, town-dwelling general public. Some of the most impressive scenes of forest destruction, and consequent human distress, were reported from the tropics. These made for good TV programmes, and raised public awareness.

Conservation organizations realized during the 1980s that this public interest in forests and wildlife could be promoted and mobilised in the cause of conservation. However, international campaigns to protect forests and the rights of forest-dependent peoples did not seriously start until the late 1980s, often in support of specific local campaigns. Then, the burning of the Amazon forests, the large-scale clear-felling in British Columbia, the plight of the Penang people in Sarawak, and the decline of the mountain gorillas became familiar features in the media of the world. Controversies about forestry became a global phenomenon, like the trade in forest products.

There was an urgent feeling of unrest and change in the world of forestry at that time. In one country after another, the tide was beginning to turn: against the conversion of old native forests to plantations in the UK, and the extensive use of burning and clear-felling in Sweden. By 1980, Mexican communities were using force to confront logging companies whose concessions conflicted with their traditional and legal rights.

In the tropics, ITTO commissioned a report on the current state of forest management in its tropical member countries in 1988. It produced a view very different from the one described by Baur 20 years earlier.

The report (Poore et al.1989) came to some stark conclusions. "The extent of tropical moist forest which is being deliberately managed at an operational scale for the sustainable production of timber is, on a world scale, negligible..... Progress in establishing stable sustainable systems is still so slow that it is having very little impact on the general decline in quantity and quality of the forest" (op.cit. p.xiv-xv). The report concluded that the total area of tropical moist forest managed for sustained-yield timber production in all the ITTO-member countries examined was about 200 000 ha (op.cit, p. 196); in other words, negligible (op.cit. p. 207). The chapter authors provided the details:

In Africa, "there are no sustained-yield management systems that have been practiced for any length of time over any large area of forest in Cameroon, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana or Liberia" (Rietbergen, op.cit. p. 70). In tropical America, there was a scattering of failed or failing demonstration projects, but "this author has not identified any case of operational TMF management for sustainable timber production in any member country except Trinidad and Tobago" (Synnott, op.cit. p.75). In Asia, Burgess was anguished by what he found, but tried to paint the picture less black: "with the exception of Papua New Guinea, where the land tenure system makes sustained management almost impossible, almost all the forests under concession agreement within the region are at least nominally under management" (Burgess, op.cit. p. 142-3). In a typically incisive overview, Palmer came close to suggesting a conspiracy of silence, and noted that "there is a dearth of comprehensive and factual information for all countries having tropical moist forest, since none now practices management of that forest in a demonstrably sustainable manner" (Palmer, op.cit. p. 155).

This whole report was "concerned with management for sustainable timber production, not with sustainable management for other purposes such as catchment protection or nature conservation" (Poore, op.cit. p. 191). Curiously, these were described as "strict criteria" by the Executive Director of ITTO, Dr. Freezailah, (op.cit. p. ix), although they did not cover social, economic or environmental impacts. Clearly, the report would have shown even greater weaknesses if the mandate had been broader.

The impact of the report was particularly severe because it was commissioned and welcomed by ITTO, global in scope, based on inspections in the field, authoritative and objective. It was now extremely difficult for any supplier to endorse tropical timber as coming from well-managed forests. By 1987, one of the criteria used for the first Good Wood Guide Seal of Approval was the assertion that the company was not using tropical timber. Companies found themselves branded as contributing to forest destruction based on the simple fact of using tropical timber (Friends of the Earth, 1987).

Into this scene, the concept of forest certification and standards emerged with some suddenness around 1990, arousing enthusiasm, worries and hostility. Fifteen years later, it might look strange that there was so much controversy. At the time, certification and standards for organic agriculture had been around for fifty years without causing great concern, and without having any great impact on the rest of agriculture. There was no sign that the concept would advance towards other natural resource industries such as mining or oil. Again and again, the question was raised by sceptics: Why pick on timber

and forestry? Why is this extraordinary solution needed, when we already have regulations, laws and international agreements?

This introduction has emphasized the problems of tropical forestry, because they are the ones on which I have mainly worked. However, FSC was not set up to focus on tropical issues. Some of the people involved were motivated mainly by tropical problems, while others were clearly motivated by temperate and boreal issues, and others by the fact that the timber trade was thoroughly global. By 1992-3, when the embryo organization was starting to call itself FSC, it had clearly set its aim at all forest types in all regions.

CHAPTER 1. The birth of the idea: The Origins of FSC, 1987 – 1990

In the 1980s, the local and specialist concerns about forests and forestry reached the media and the public in sufficient strength to cause national and global concern.

Multilateral organizations such as the World Bank and FAO, as well as national bilateral agencies, funded or managed numerous projects to improve forest management and protection. Initiatives such as the Tropical Forest Action Plan (later, Program) and the International Tropical Timber Organization were established to help improve the forest sector in the tropics, while all countries were taking a harder look at their own forestry situation.

Environmental NGOs did not immediately pick up on forests as a campaigning issue. "... in the early 1980s most major environmental NGOs were very reluctant to become involved in the tropical forest debate... WWF was so concerned that tropical forests would not be a popular campaign with members, that first forays into the area were deliberately presented as mainly concerned with primate conservation" "Throughout the 1980s and in the 1990s, forests became an increasingly important issue for the NGOs. Friends of the Earth led the pack. It started in the mid-1980s with research linking UK timber companies with tropical deforestation" (Dudley et al. 1995, p.109)

Facing public concerns, manufacturers put labels on the products, claiming sustainability of their forests sources. For some of them, the situation became urgent in the late 1980s when journalists, the media and environmental NGOs started targeting retailers and their purchasing policies. Logging companies were accustomed to criticism, but now well-established stores found themselves being openly targeted.

Many organizations and people contributed to the search for solutions. In a sense, all of them contributed to the eventual emergence of certification. Even the publicity and labeling campaigns by forest industries contributed to success by demonstrating the uselessness of measures that lacked transparency and credibility. Even the vigorous early criticisms of the certification idea contributed to success by identifying the key interests and needs of different groups.

Up to the late 1980s, most national efforts to promote better forest management had concentrated on pressuring their own governments, foresters and loggers. Most of the bilateral and multilateral efforts in the tropics targeted the same groups. In contrast, three initiatives in northern countries developed the idea of using market forces to promote good forest management. They focussed on the traders and retailers in timber products, and proposed to encourage the preferential imports of tropical timber from identifiable well-

managed forests. These three early initiatives led in a direct line to the launch of global accreditation and certification in their present form.

1. Friends of the Earth UK, FoE-UK, published their first Good Wood Guide in **1987**, and started work in **1988** on a project proposal for ITTO, for a pilot study of forest monitoring and timber-labelling in a tropical country.

2. The Ecological Trading Company, ETC, started exploring the issue at the end of **1989**, identifying well managed sources of timber, and opened discussions in **mid-1990** about an independent forest monitoring agency.

3. The Woodworkers Alliance for Rainforest Protection, WARP, held its Founding Conference at the end of **1990**. The conference set up a Certification Working Group, which paved the way to FSC.

1 Friends of the Earth-UK.

FoE was the first major NGO to link forest conservation with trade. In 1985, FoE proposed a European Trade Directive or Regulation to promote and integrate the trade and conservation principles of both the EEC and ITTA. In March 1997, FoE-UK published the first edition of the Good Wood Guide, and launched its Seal of Approval for dealers and retailers. The guide was produced as part of the FoE aim “to see the timber industry – from retailers to manufacturers, suppliers and importers – switch to using tropical hardwoods that have been grown sustainably”. It listed hundreds of UK dealers and retailers, mainly according to their involvement with tropical timbers.

This was a formidable initiative, emphasizing the direct link between forest destruction and the retail sales tropical timber. The enterprises were grouped into three categories:

- (1) those “who are actively helping to save rainforests by obtaining timber from an ecologically benign source” (i.e. mainly by selling temperate timbers, not tropical) who were entitled to use the FoE Seal of Approval;
- (2) those that were helping the campaign but “may still be using some non-sustainably produced tropical timber”; and
- (3) (the great majority) “those that are contributing to the destruction of tropical rainforests”, including names such as Harrods and B&Q.

Some of the guidance in the first edition of 1987 was unsafe. Many the companies awarded the Seal of Approval had simply not used tropical timbers, or had stopped using them. It became clear that not all sources of temperate timbers deserved endorsement, and no criteria were available for measuring sustainability or “ecologically benign” sources. The appendix on Sustainably Managed Tropical Timber mentioned only teak from plantations in Java, Thailand and Burma, rubberwood from Malaysia, and (surprisingly) greenheart from Guyana. The Seal of Approval was discontinued in 1990. Still, it set the scene for the next steps, and showed the potential power of the concept of identifying well-managed forests, identifying the companies using their forest products, and encouraging other companies to do likewise.

The FoE-UK initiative has appeared in several editions. The 1996 edition (FoE 1996) by Simon Counsell was much safer in its judgments, and provides guidance on choosing products and timbers. It recommended the use of recycled and reclaimed forest products, and provided details of companies offering them. It offered a cautious endorsement of the FSC, whose logo had started to appear on products a few months before. The later

edition (FoE and FFI 2002) provides more detailed guidance for timber users, with details of dealers in reclaimed timber, and of members of the WWF 1995+ group, suppliers of FSC certified timber. Separate versions have been developed in many individual countries.

In 1988, FoE tried encouraging ITTO to consider certification and labeling as mechanisms for improving tropical forest management. In July, Koy Thomson, then Senior Rainforest Campaigner for FoE-UK, came to the Oxford Forestry Institute for a meeting with John Palmer, John Wyatt-Smith and me. For four hours, we discussed the idea of identifying and monitoring forests with socially and environmentally acceptable management, and tracing and labelling the products. The first proposal was drafted a few days later (Synnott 1988). Thomson also had meetings with the UK Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). Chris Patten (1989), Minister for ODA, liked the proposal: "I strongly support the concept of a feasibility study of tropical hardwood labeling".

After several drafts, with feedback from other people, the proposal evolved into a feasibility study of mechanisms for identifying and monitoring individual forests and companies. It included most of the elements of the future FSC programme: marking, labeling, documenting and tracing consignments of timber and manufactured products; and systems of defining, certifying and verifying good management (Synnott, Thomson & Counsell, 1989). The final version was submitted by the UK Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which then headed the UK delegation to ITTO, at the 7th ITTC session in Yokohama, November 1989. (Gale 1998 p.159, 160, 172,)

The proposal provoked a great deal of controversy. Chip Fay, then in the Environmental Policy Unit in Washington D.C., noted that "no pre-project proposal has ever stirred up so much debate". A report from WWF noted that "This proposal was extremely controversial, with an initial hard line taken by Malaysia and supported by Indonesia and Cameroon". Faced with these strong reactions, the UK delegation, headed by the Department of Trade & Industry, agreed to revise the proposal. They removed all mention of certification and labeling from the stated objectives, and changed the title to "Incentives in Producer and Consumer Countries to promote sustainable development of tropical forests" (Gale, 1998, p.160).

ITTO contracted the Oxford Forestry Institute to carry out this study, in 1990. Neither Friends of the Earth nor I were involved. The report (Oxford Forestry Institute, 1991) was thoroughly sceptical about certification, labeling, and monitoring of forests and chains of custody. Next, a report was commissioned by the British Government, with ITTO's agreement, from the London Environmental Economics Centre (Barbier et al., 1993). It was discussed at the 13th ITTC session, and recommended that ITTO implement country-level rather than forest-level certification. Next, a report was commissioned by ITTO from Baharudin Ghazali & M. Simula (1994). This report was expertly written and well received, but again resulted in no definite ITTO decisions, except recommendations for more studies.

The unwillingness of ITTO members to make a move on certification made a strong impression on many NGOs, an impression made worse by the disappointing results of the report on Sarawak (cf. Gale 1998 Chapter 11), commissioned by ITTO and debated at the 9th ITTC session in November 1990. These impressions confirmed, for some people, the hollowness of the Target 2000 for achieving sustainable management of the world's tropical forests.

Nevertheless, as a result of the numerous panels, committees, commitments and guidelines produced by ITTO and its member countries, “the basic building blocks for sustainable management of all forests....were gradually crafted and began to gain acceptance around the world” (Crossley, 1996). The commitments and guides were not legally binding, and little progress was made towards target 2000, but equally their long-term institutional importance may be recognized.

The FoE-UK initiative is identified as one of the roots of FSC for the following reasons:

i. Any hopes that ITTO or some other international agency would take the lead on certification were depressed by the reactions to the FoE-UK proposal in 1989, and by several subsequent ITTO studies of certification. The events have been described fully and entertainingly by Gale (1998, chapter 10). They indicated that ITTO was unlikely to promote certification and labeling in a form acceptable to environmental and social interests. Those interested in certification decided that they would have to do it themselves. Within 18 months of the discussions of November 1989, the concept of FSC was clearly defined, and seed-funding had been secured.

ii. The experience of the Good Wood Guide showed that a single campaigning NGO could not reliably identify sustainable sources, based on its own sources and policies, in an arena as complex as forest management. This demonstrated the need for criteria or standards, and multi-stakeholder participation. Similar conclusions were drawn from the Wood User's Guide, produced in 1991 by the Rainforest Action Network.

iii. The institutional tensions in ITTO showed that workable and acceptable solutions would not arise unless representatives of all sectors participate equally in their formulation and design. They also showed how ITTO's abilities were constrained by restricting its mandate to tropical timber, and by its polarizing division into producing and consuming countries. These lessons were learned in the FSC, which was designed from the start to be open and participatory, for application in all forests, worldwide.

2 Ecological Trading Company, ETC.

One of the companies concerned about the sources of their timber was the ETC, directed by Hubert Kwisthout. ETC traded in tropical and temperate timbers, and was already tackling the difficult issue of finding sources of tropical timbers with some confidence in the sustainability of the forests and the supplies. Hubert Kwisthout and Chris Cox visited the Oxford Forestry Institute in December 1989, and we discussed what could be done following the failure of the FoE proposal to ITTO.

In 1990, while in Papua New Guinea, he developed the idea of an independent body for verification of sources, monitoring and standard-setting, and wrote a paper on monitoring and verification systems (ETC 1990). He proposed setting up an International Forest Monitoring Agency, IFMA, the earliest suggestion for an independent agency.

In July 1990, he opened discussions with WWF-UK and FFPS (now FFI). This was WWF's first involvement with this topic. WWF was already promoting 1995 as a target for obtaining timber from well-managed forests, and now started to support the concept of monitoring and certification.

His proposals were presented to the Soil Association, which immediately became interested; again to the WARP founding conference in November 1990; and again at the WWF Conference on Steps to Sustainability in London in December 1990. From then on, there was widespread interest in the concept of an independent organization with an international scope for monitoring forest management.

Hubert Kwisthout also sought funding from B&Q, where Alan Knight was interested in the sources ETC has identified in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and also in the idea of independent monitoring. This contact led up to the B&Q decision to remove all labels from their timber products, in May 1990, pending the development of a single credible label. It also led up to the strong collaboration between Alan Knight of B&Q and Francis Sullivan of WWF-UK, in support of FSC and the Buyers Groups.

In April 1991, Kwisthout secured funding from WWF-UK and B&Q for developing his ideas for an independent, international monitoring agency. The proposals were now becoming defined.

3 Wood Workers Alliance for Rainforest Protection: WARP

In many countries, manufacturers and dealers were already investigating their sources, and seeking (or offering) assurances of “sustainable” sources, ever since the campaigns and pressures of the late 1980s. In the USA and Canada, many of them came together to form WARP, the Woodworkers Alliance for Rainforest Protection. This new organization had its founding conference in November 1990, attended by woodworkers, environmentalists, foresters, scientists and importers and dealers of wood products. The ETC proposals for an independent, international forestry monitoring agency were presented, and were well received. The conference set up a Certification Working Group, CWG.

The WARP CWG met at the end of the conference, and agreed several key tasks including 1) to draw up a set of verifiable criteria for sustainable forestry, 2) to develop mechanisms to monitor the production of timber, 3) to develop a system for certification, and 4) to propose an organizational and operational structure for FSC.

The CWG convened two meetings, in San Francisco in 1991 and in Washington DC in 1992, that led directly to the birth of FSC.

Other initiatives: These were by no means the only initiatives being pursued. Many other people and organizations explored the field, made their decisions and laid their plans.

WWF-International developed its plans for a campaign to promote sustainable forest management, and to concentrate the international trade in the products of sustainably managed forests worldwide (Elliott 1991). The selection of 1995 as a target date emerged in discussions during 1989. By July 1991, WWF-UK had identified the potential role of an International Forest Monitoring Agency in helping to achieve this target. By May 1992, the target had “been broadened to cover the entire trade in wood and wood products worldwide” (WWF-UK, 1992). The 1995 Group, other Buyers Groups and the Global Forest & Trade Network were emerging.

In mid-1990, The Nature Conservancy made a study of the need for certification, and the potential for TNC itself to become involved as a certifier. They consulted organizations involved in certification, trade and forest conservation. Most of them were highly sceptical about the need for certification, and whether any credible form of tropical forest certification was possible. "Most people interviewed do not think that a large scale general certification program of sustainably viable rainforest products is needed now.....Some believe that a more formal certification process may be necessary in the future". These opinions discouraged TNC from entering the certification arena. (TNC, 15 June 1990)

Shortly afterwards, The Homeland Foundation commissioned a study of the requirements for a credible certification system for forest products. Robert Simeone carried out interviews in July and August, mainly with people in the USA. The study aimed to explore the issues relevant to "the promotion of natural forest management for the sustained yield of forest products worldwide". These were early indications that the initiative was global, and embraced all forest products. From these interviews, Simeone identified most of the basic elements needed for credible certification, and also reported a great deal of enthusiasm and interest. All groups consulted wanted to participate but "no one group felt it had sufficient .. experience necessary to address all the pertinent issues..." (Simeone, 1990a)

The start of certification

The first group to launch itself into forest certification was Rainforest Alliance, a New York NGO with four years of experience in rainforest areas. During 1990, Ivan Ussach, Director of the Rainforest Alliance Tropical Timber Project, developed a program for identifying "well-managed tropical woods", and evaluated logging concessions in Indonesia. In October, he announced the launch of the Smart Wood certification program. He recognized the lack of "broadly accepted standards for particular tropical forest regions", and developed a simplified system based on 1) watershed stabilization, 2) sustained yield production, and 3) positive impact on well-being of local people. Operations that demonstrated a "strong operational commitment to these criteria will be classified as well-managed". He announced that the plantations of the State Forestry Corporation (Perum Perhutani) in Java had already "been classified as well-managed" (Ussach, 1990a). This was the first third-party certification of forest management.

In November 1990, Ussach (1990b) circulated a draft Rainforest Alliance "Criteria for Evaluating the Sustainability of Tropical Logging Operations", which followed closely the recent ITTO Guidelines (ITTO, 1990). He signalled interest in developing criteria for plantations. These eventually evolved into the Smartwood standards. Rainforest Alliance confirmed that certification needed "independent third-party field evaluation" and, in due course, a broad agreement on the definition of "sustainable logging". Thus, the concepts of third party assessments and widely agreed standards formed part of the original concept.

In its early stages, this was a somewhat ad hoc program. Some of the decisions, including Perum Perhutani, led to some grief afterwards. There were initially some large gaps in the system (for example, "we do not believe it prudent to insist on a measure of biodiversity preservation... as biodiversity is best protected in areas free from development" (Ussach, 1990b)). The necessary improvements and comprehensive scope were introduced into later versions over time. Meanwhile, this early version of certification concentrated attention and encouraged the attention of other certification initiatives. Green Cross

Certification Co (1991), (later SCS) and the Institute of Sustainable Forestry (ISF, 1991), both of California, drafted their forestry certification systems in March 1991; Soil Association entered certification discussions with WWF in May 1991, and SGS was making its interest evident by July.

In December, Ussach (1990c) showed some reservations about the proposed IFMA, although the idea had already been approved by WARP. He wrote that “it is an idea worthy of consideration, but I will need more time to digest it”. He was quite right. The role of an international monitoring organization was still not at all clear.

The professional certification bodies, including Soil Association, SCS and SGS, were well aware of the role of accreditation, and that they would normally need to be accredited for any new certification program or system. However, this concept was still unfamiliar to people from other backgrounds. From mid-1990 (when Kwisthout circulated his proposals for an IFMA) through much of 1991, there was very little clarity about what FSC would do, and about its relationship to existing certification organizations.

At the time, there was some enthusiasm for moving ahead as rapidly as possible, with a “quick and dirty” approach. Richard Donovan (1990), then with WWF-US, wrote “now is the time to move, i.e. ‘damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead’”.

However, many people felt that a great deal more preparation was needed. In the event, almost everyone underestimated the amount of work that was required to set up FSC as a fully operational accreditation body, and to ensure that certification bodies were operating adequately. In February 1996, when FSC finally signed accreditation contracts, even some board members felt that we had moved too fast.

Before the end of 1990, the CWG started to mobilize itself. Messages passed between the CWG members, arguing the importance of maximum transparency, a voluntary system, global scope, and coverage for plantations. Robert Simeone was involved in many of these exchanges, and he suggested a name for the global monitoring organization (Simeone 1990b): the International Forest Stewardship Consortium, the beginnings of the initials **FSC**.

CHAPTER 2. Sounding out opinions: San Francisco to Toronto, 1991 – 1993.

Who set up FSC? And why? The emergence of the Principles & Criteria. National Consultations. The Founding Assembly, October 1993. Association or Foundation.

From January 1991, the Certification Working Group took the initiative. Over the next year, most of the activities that led to the founding of FSC were associated with this group or its members. However, it remained quite informal, as a gradually expanding circulation list or forum, rather than a fixed membership. The first key event organized by the CWG was a Certification Meeting in San Francisco in April 1991. Its composition reflected its origins in the Founding Assembly of WARP: seventeen people attended, of whom only three (Francis Sullivan, Hubert Kwisthout and Don Dennis) were based outside North America. However, the orientation was already clearly global.

The meeting included reports from the two existing forest certification programmes, Rainforest Alliance and Scientific Certification Systems, and an explanation of the

proposed International Forest Monitoring Agency. Much of the meeting was devoted to wide-ranging discussion of the concerns, expectations and questions about forest and wood certification, and to the contents of a Forest Stewardship Charter to which all certification groups could subscribe and adhere. The meeting also discussed the structure and governance of the organization that would monitor the certifiers for compliance.

By now, it was clear that the new organization under consideration would not itself certify forests, but would be responsible for developing some sort of standard. A report of the meeting referred to the birth of “an umbrella certification watchdog/standards organization, tentatively called the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The heart of the council would be the Forest Stewardship Charter, a document that would allow participation by signatories.... in the development of global principles for the long-term stewardship and sustainable use of forestlands worldwide” (Simeone, 1991).

The meeting agreed that the FSC initiative should embrace all forest products, not only timber. FSC would also cover certification of forests in all parts of the world, not just tropical forests. The issue of whether and how plantations might be included was raised but not defined. The first forest management certificate had already been issued for plantations, so the concept was clearly not an alien one, and several participants stressed the importance of including plantations. The concepts of labeling as a market mechanism, and of market demand as an incentive for improving forest management, were all included. The discussions and the minutes included all the key concepts that were adopted later by FSC itself, including the expectation that the package of elements would help to promote better forest management. (Simeone, 1991; Wellner, 1991; Kwisthout, 1991)

The concept of umbrella-monitoring corresponds to the concept of accreditation. This word was not recorded in any reports on the San Francisco meeting, nor in the various reports and drafts of the charter and standards produced for the rest of the year. It gradually became part of the vocabulary. It was used in May 1991 in a draft US Labeling Bill, designed to regulate labeling in the framework of certification and accreditation of forests and forest products, supported by Al Gore. It was mentioned by Francis Sullivan at the B&Q Workshop on Eco-Labeling of Wood, in September 1991. And it entered FSC documentation in the Second Draft FSC Charter & Statutes, drafted by Richard Donovan in February 1992: “The FSC is an organization which monitors, evaluates and provides official accreditation for such certification programs”. Accreditation has been a central element of the FSC since then.

Nearly a year passed from the San Francisco meeting to the next meeting, in March 1992. Invitations were sent out in the name of the Certification Working Group, which then effectively ceased to exist.

The meeting took place in Washington D.C. in March 1992. It called itself by various names, including the FSC Working Group, the FSC Charter and the FSC Founding Group. Forty-three people participated from ten countries (including six tropical countries). Among the documents discussed were the third draft of the FSC Charter and Statutes by Richard Donovan, the fourth draft of the Forest Stewardship Standards, and the first draft of an Operations Manual for a Forest Management Evaluation and Certification System

One of the crucial decisions at this meeting was the election of responsible officials for the FSC. After considerable disagreement and debate, this group was named “The Interim

Board of the FSC Founding Group". Soon after, it started calling itself, and being called, the Interim Board of the Forest Stewardship Council. Its members were Chris Elliott (coordinator), A.Knight, A.Poynter, D.Hammell, D.Irvine, D.Irias and J.C.Centeno.

The meeting agreed the need for regional consultations around the world, national certification standards consistent with the FSC list of Principles, and a general assembly when the consultations had been completed. In addition, six work groups were set up to tackle specific issues: (1) finance, (2) membership, charter and constitution, (3) principles and criteria of forest stewardship, (4) consultative process, (5) communications, (6) monitoring other initiatives. The minutes (Donovan & Pierce 1992) reflected the decisions and some of the tensions.

This was the first of many FSC meetings where strong differences of opinion emerged, including some that were personalized and entrenched. Disagreements that emerged during and after the meeting included the participation of people with economic or commercial interests, and the status and decision-making powers of the "Interim Board". However, an embryonic FSC emerged from this meeting with draft statutes, standards, mission statement, and a group of people that could take decisions, raise funds, and initiate actions in its name. From then on, FSC had a de facto operational existence, although it was still 30 months away from a legal existence.

Why was FSC set up? Why did the people at the key meetings, and all the others involved in consultations, think it was worth going ahead with the concept of FSC, certification and labeling? And what did they want FSC to do?

Anyone wanting an answer to these questions must examine the objectives that united all FSC's early supporters, as well as the separate aims and motives of the individuals.

Any number of statements have been made as to why FSC was set up, and what are, were or should have been its objectives. Many of these reflect the personal objectives or perceptions of the participants. For example, in the early years, there was a widespread perception that FSC would or should focus its attention mainly, or even exclusively, on small-scale or community-managed forests.

"..if, as we have been assured, the principal aim of the FSC and FSS is to discriminate in favour of small-scale community-based timber extraction using appropriate technology and exclude from the market timber provided by the present dominant form of large-scale highly mechanized logging, it seems bizarre in the extreme to invite along people who promote and practice the kind of logging we are set against." World Rainforest Movement, letter to NGOs, 12 March 1992.

"We agree with the analysis that it is likely that small-scale community-based forest management schemes are likely to be the initial candidates for certification... But provided the verification is carried out by an independent assessor, using very clear techniques of social and environmental impact, we see no reason why medium- or even large-sized producers should not be included." WWF-UK Position Paper, 1 May 1992.

"One may reasonably suggest, as some individuals have, that FSC focus its efforts on small-scale, community-based operations; this FSC may well end up doing, if only out of necessity. Now, I have always assumed that in strategic terms the large industrial operations were of much greater importance, based on sheer numbers and impacts. But is that really so?" Ivan Ussach, in 5th draft of P&C 15 May 1992.

In some sectors, there was also a perception that the objectives of FSC were incompatible with the certification of plantations, and especially of large-scale, commercial or exotic plantations, because of the well-documented negative impacts of some such projects. This line of thinking was widely held, with leadership from the World Rainforest Movement (for example, WRM 2003). Several northern NGOs maintained fiercely that FSC should not approve certification of commercial logging in tropical rainforests, a policy not much supported in tropical countries. Step by step, these different perceptions and objectives have been brought together in a framework for identifying just what actions are unacceptable or acceptable in different circumstances.

Still, a wide variety of perceptions remain in circulation. As late as September 2004, at the FSC Annual Conference in Bonn, we heard that “The original intent of certification was to value ecosystems” (Michael Jenkins), and “The original mandate of FSC was to stop tropical deforestation” (Virgilio Viana). These were doubtless the intentions of some participants, but the objectives that united all participants were those that emerged in the FSC statutes and P&C, that boil down to promoting good forest management, worldwide. The broader context of the birth of certification was well described by Vogt et al. (1999).

A highly entertaining description of the co-existence of perceptions, expectations and realities has been provided by Hannes Mäntyranta (2002), who provides a trenchant critique of FSC and many other NGOs.

“Certification was supposed to prevent forest loss. It has failed to do so, as was known from the outset. Certification was supposed to restore the rights of indigenous peoples. It has failed to do so, because Western NGOs do not appear to be genuinely committed to this aim. Certification was supposed to improve the quality of commercial forest management. It has failed to do so, at least in the eyes of some.... Certification was supposed to increase the competitiveness of timber. It has so far failed to do so...”
Mäntyranta (2002) p 299.

Perhaps not everyone shared those suppositions or expectations of why certification got going. And perhaps not everyone thinks that they have all failed. Still, at the start of the book, he states clearly what FSC aimed to achieve as an accreditation body: “In a nutshell, the aim of forest certification is to prove to the buyer of timber products that the timber used for them is derived from a well-managed forest” (op.cit. p.27).

The first set of objectives, agreed or at least accepted by all participants, must be those that are expressed in the minutes of the Certification Working Group Meeting of April 1991, and its follow-up, the FSC WG Meeting in March 1992. Both these meetings indicated that FSC would be concerned with certification worldwide, for all types of forest and products. It was not clear how to include plantations, but they were already being certified. There was no indication that either plantations or commercial forestry would be excluded. There is no evidence that the participants had any collective agreement or agenda that was not covered by the minutes.

One other item must have been in the back of their minds, although not mentioned in the minutes: bans and boycotts. Several conservation NGOs started promoting boycotts of tropical timbers in the second half of the 1980s. Others became interested in the idea, aware of the destructive impacts and illegal components of much of the timber in the international trade. When the European Parliament started debating ideas for limiting the

trade in tropical timbers from unmanaged forests in 1990, the issue of boycotts became a matter of intense discussion and lobbying.

I believe all participants in the San Francisco meeting were interested in certification and labeling as effective and positive alternatives to bans and boycotts. The timber traders and manufacturers represented (such as ETC and the members of WARP) were interested because they were actively involved in this market, and wished to continue trading in tropical timbers without contributing to the destruction of tropical forests. Some of the ENGOs such as WWF were interested as a matter of policy, opposed to a general boycott of tropical timbers as a blunt and negative instrument offering no clear incentives for improvements. Some of the other participating ENGOs, such as the Rainforest Action Network and Greenpeace, remained interested in the use of selective and targeted boycotts, but were also interested in positive and effective alternatives. The representatives of social NGOs present, such as Cultural Survival, were interested because the emerging concept of good forest management included full respect for the traditional rights of forest-based peoples. This is my impression, but it was not spelled out in the minutes.

The emergence of the Principles and Criteria, P&C.

The FSC P&C, and the subsequent array of Forest Stewardship Standards, emerged in steps during the first years. The FoE proposal to ITTO in 1989 had planned to produce a "Manual of best practice and standards describing systems and activities which yield timber in a manner which is considered sustainable". The proposal also referred to certification, but the reference to a manual of best practice suggests something different from certification standards.

In mid-1990, the ETC proposed verification, monitoring, guidelines, criteria and "standards for sustainable forest management". This proposal was accepted at the founding conference in WARP at the end of 1990, when the CWG was set up to "draw up a set of clear, observable and verifiable criteria for sustainable forestry", among other tasks.

When Rainforest Alliance announced its certification program in October (Ussach, 199a), it noted the absence of "broadly accepted standards", and evaluated individual forest sources according to its own three criteria: (1) Watershed stabilization, (2) sustained yield production and (3) positive impact on well-being of local communities. By February 1991, the Smartwood Guidelines had evolved into Principle and Criteria (Rainforest Alliance 1991). The three original criteria were now called principles, and were supplemented by three pages of criteria. These criteria were simple statements of fact, scored of a five-point scale, such as "Security of community land tenure has been established".

Other early certification systems were also based on criteria (Green Cross Certification Company (1991), ISF (1991)). The notion that certification would be based on standards, containing principles and criteria, rapidly became accepted.

These elements came together at the CWG meeting in San Francisco in April 1991. The meeting agreed to develop the Forest Stewardship Charter, including global principles of forest stewardship and use, with criteria for evaluating forestry practices. All organizations associated with the FSC would subscribe to this charter, and would be checked and monitored. (The meeting also agreed to avoid the word sustainable, or any claim of sustainable use, because of the ambiguity of this term.)

In May 1991, Francis Sullivan drafted an outline for the Forest Stewardship Charter. The first full version was drafted by Hubert Kwisthout in May, and revised various times in 1992. This document eventually evolved into the FSC Statutes.

Kwisthout also drafted the first version of the Forest Stewardship Standards in July 1991, to be understood as “general principles”. He structured them in seven categories: (1) Management Objectives, (2) Management Plan, (3) Monitoring, (4) Silvicultural Aspects, (5) Legal-Political Factors, (6) Social-Political Factors, (7) Ecological Factors.

The second, third and fourth drafts were produced by me in November and December 1991, and February 1992. At the time, they were described as general principles, to guide implementation by people involved in forest management and evaluation by other; they were more like management guidelines than certification standards. In those drafts, the elements of forest stewardship were considered in four groups: (1) Technical and Administrative, (2) Legal and political, (3) Social and Economic, and (4) Ecological and Environmental. They were circulated very widely, attracted hundreds of comments, and grew to 22 pages.

With Clare Barden, I also drafted a ten page operating Manual for a Forest Management Evaluation and Certification System, for the use of certification inspectors. This checklist eventually evolved into the Accreditation Manual and Guidelines for Certification Bodies.

In March 1992, the latest draft was discussed at the FSC Working Group Meeting in Washington DC. The meeting agreed that FSC needed a document that focused more on generally applicable principles, and less on management guidelines. A Working Group for the P&C was set up to oversee the drafting and consultations.

The next draft was produced in May by Ivan Ussach, who had left the Rainforest Alliance. For the first time, it was entitled Draft Principles and Criteria for the Forest Stewardship Council. It was now refined down to seven pages, with twelve Principles, of which nine referred to the forest management and three to FSC policies. The P&C were explicitly designed to cover natural forests and plantations, timber and non-timber products, worldwide. This was the first version drafted as P&C, in the language of certification standards, taking account of the ITTO Guidelines of 1990. They covered all the elements now covered by the P&C, although there have been many changes in emphasis since then.

Ussach’s introduction refers to the issue of community forests, which was already becoming a focus of controversy, but he makes it clear that this was a suggestion, indicating that it was never an agreement among the participants in earlier meetings.

In October, after many more consultations, the next draft of the P&C, the 6th, was written by Richard Donovan, now working for Rainforest Alliance. It had eleven principles, all referring to the forest management, including a Principle 10, for Forest Plantations, and a Principle 11, for Chain of Custody issues. At least 5000 copies of this version were distributed worldwide, and formed the basis for the national consultations which had recently started.

The structure and framework of the P&C were now set. They have been many changes since then, major and minor, but the latest FSC P&C are clearly derived from the 5th and

6th drafts of 1992. Both these drafts took account of available publications from ITTO (including ITTO 1990 - 1992) and IUCN (Poore & Sayer 1992).

Consultations about the 6th draft of the P&C continued for six months, intensively in the countries of the national consultations, and more generally worldwide. In April 1993, the FSC interim board asked Matthew Wenban Smith to collate and summarise all the comments received on the 6th draft. They also asked Jessica Hidalgo and Pedro Solano of the Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental to write a working paper for the next draft.

The P&C Working Group met in Honduras in June 1993 to discuss the latest version, and review comments from the FSC Latin America Workshop which had taken place just beforehand. Working Draft 7A of the P&C emerged from these discussions in early July, and Draft 7B was distributed in late August. Draft 7B included eight Principles: (1) Compliance, (2) Forest Security & Tenure Rights, (3) Social Rights, (4) Environmental Impact, (5) Plantations, (6) Optimising the forest's economic potential, (7) Management Plan, (8) Monitoring & Assessment. The Criteria continued to evolve, but the Principles were the same as Draft 7A, except that Forest Security was combined with Tenure Rights.

Both these drafts required compliance with specific ILO Conventions for the first time, prompted by comments from IFBWW. These were crucial elements that played in big part in obtaining the support of the trades unions and indigenous peoples in several countries, although several years passed before FSC produced a checklist dealing with the details of compliance.

During 1992-3, many people and organizations had suggested that Plantations should have a separate set of P&C. At the request of the P&C WG, I drafted a full set of P&C for Plantations (18 August 1993). The structure was similar to Draft 7A, but I decided that it made sense to include a new Principle on the Rights of Indigenous People (that later evolved into Principle 3), and one on the Relation between Natural Forests and Plantations (later Principle 9).

The situation was now urgent, since the Founding Assembly in October was expected to take some sort of decision on the next version of the P&C. Another meeting of the P&C WG took place in Vermont in August, and agreed many changes at all levels. Draft 7B had combined the interests and rights of local communities with those of indigenous peoples, and it proved impossible to agree on wording that reasonably and fairly protected both sets of interests in a single Principle, so the meeting agreed to a new Principle 3, Indigenous Peoples' Rights. The meeting also agreed to remove the Plantation Principle that had appeared in the two previous drafts, and replace it with the new Principle 9.

The definitive Draft 7 emerged from this meeting. This version was distributed at the FSC Founding Assembly in October, together with the draft Plantation P&C, both with nine Principles.

In the event, the P&C were not debated in detail at the Founding Assembly. Institutional conflicts and caucus meetings interfered with the proposed Agenda. There was a tacit acceptance that the P&C were on the right track, but that they needed more work. However, after thirty months of drafting, discussions and meetings, the Draft 7 had a substantial institutional strength and even inertia. Revisions to the P&C have continued from 1994, and will surely continue. However, unlike the early drafting, with one dominant author and informal consultations, the subsequent revisions have involved extensive

global consultations, meetings of defined working groups, and decisions of the FSC board of directors and membership.

In spite of some early fears that the P&C process could easily be co-opted and dominated by particular groups, and steered towards their interests, it is now difficult and complicated to make changes. They are made only when there is strong evidence that they are clear improvements to the FSC system and to forest management, and also realistic and cost-effective, and are also accepted by a convincing and balanced majority of active FSC members. Even so, changes will continue, responding to new scientific information, new techniques available, and strong pressures from public opinion.

The National Consultations.

The FSC Working Group (or Founding Group) Meeting in March 1992 agreed on the need for widespread consultations, to gauge support for the idea of setting up the FSC, and to seek suggestions and input of all kinds. Up to that time, various drafts of the proposals for the IFMA, the FSC charter and the standards had been distributed very widely, and many comments had been received and taken into account. What was needed now was a more formal, systematic, global exercise. This exercise served two purposes. First, it spread out information far more widely than the previous exercises, and involved more people in discussions and input, and second, it provided the interim board and the “founding group” with more ideas, and a sense of whether it was worth proceeding.

A Consultation Working Group was set up at the Washington meeting, initially coordinated by Nickie Irvine and Pam Wellner. In May 1992, Charlie Walkinshaw of Experience International circulated a draft outline of the consultation process, with detailed suggestions of what was to be done and achieved, and how. This proposal, and countries proposed, was modified over time, but the process took off quickly, with initial funding from the MacArthur Foundation and WWF-UK.

Jamie Ervin was hired in August 1992, as interim coordinator, to help with communications for the interim board and the consultative process. The Consultation Working Group met in San Francisco in August, and Jamie Ervin consulted widely (including a meeting with me in Burlington in September). In October, a tentative list of countries and a framework for each consultation had been drafted. The first process was in Switzerland, managed by Pierre Hauselmann, and was completed in December.

By September 1993, the consultations had been completed in Brazil, Canada (British Columbia), Ecuador, Ghana, Malaysia, USA (Oregon & Washington), Papua New Guinea, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom. The full reports or their summaries were widely distributed, and were part of the information available at the FSC Founding Assembly.

No overall summary was made of the reports or their conclusions, except for the comments relating to the Principles and Criteria. In the Summary of the Consultative Process (Ervin 1993a), the following phrases represent widespread conclusions, and the baseline established at the Founding Assembly:

“Forest Stewardship must be defined equally by environmental, economic and social considerations..... Forest Stewardship Principles and Criteria must apply equally to boreal, temperate and tropical forests...Forest Stewardship can and should be defined by global principles, but can only be defined locally in terms of ecosystem-specific

standards..... The FSC P&C should apply equally to plantations and natural forests ... [and to] small and large scale forest operations.”

The FSC programme has remained consistent with those conclusions ever since.

The reports were widely distributed, and had two important results.

First, they provided assurance to the interim board and other supporters of the FSC idea that they were on the right track, and that they could expect substantial support from many interests worldwide. This sense of confidence helped to carry them through the hazards of the Founding Assembly, just as the convictions of subsequent board members and staff have carried them through other confrontations.

Second, each consultation involved large numbers of people in the discussions about the design of FSC, with the effect that they felt themselves as participants and part-owners of a creative process. This sense of ownership continued long after the Founding Assembly. It is no coincidence that the countries and regions selected for consultations were among the first to start work on drafting their national standards (with the exception of Ghana, which formed an independent initiative, with little linkage to FSC).

The FSC Founding Assembly, October 1993.

The Founding Assembly marked the end of five years of growing momentum, from the first appearance of the idea in 1988 to a firm plan, backed by documents in advanced stages of drafting, global consultation and information exercises involving some thousands of people, and a group of convinced and determined proponents.

The need for a founding assembly was agreed by the interim board in May 1992. Much of the work of the interim board and the working groups was aimed at this assembly: drafts of the Principles and Criteria for natural forests and for plantation, drafts of the Charter or Statutes, and the national or regional consultations.

The interim board was well aware that the credibility of the new organization would depend on the scope, conduct and success of the founding assembly. They recognized that a completely open participation would run the risk of being dominated by particular interest groups, or by those people and organizations best able to pay the expenses. Great care was taken in selecting the invitees, to ensure a reasonable balance of interests between tropical, temperate and boreal regions, and between social, environmental and economic interests.

The list of invitees included 134 people, with addresses in 24 countries. 56 of these people had addresses in 17 tropical countries, while 78 of them had addresses in 8 temperate countries. Not all of these addresses reflected their citizenship or permanent base, but the broad geographical distribution was clear.

The organizers had funds to pay for only a limited number of participants, giving priority to people from NGOs in the tropics, so there were inevitably more from northern countries, but many of these northern participants represented organizations concerned with tropical social or environmental interests. The participants included representatives of several governments (Canada, Ghana, Malaysia, Netherlands, Nigeria, USA) and many industries, as well as social and environmental NGOs.

The countries represented in the list of invited participants were as follows:

USA (37), Brazil (16), Canada and UK (13 each), Malaysia (6), Papua New Guinea, Peru and Sweden (5 each), Mexico (4), Costa Rica, Ecuador, Germany, Ghana, Netherlands, Switzerland (3 each), Colombia, Solomon Islands (2 each), Argentina, Bolivia, Honduras, Indonesia, Japan, Nigeria, Philippines, Venezuela (1 each).

The agenda laid out a programme of briefings and discussions about progress so far, decisions about the composition, structure and legal status of FSC, and a mandate to proceed on the basis of the draft statutes and P&C. Perhaps no-one expected a completely smooth ride. Troubles began immediately.

Even before the meeting started, a paper entitled "The Forest Stewardship Council Aims Principles and Criteria: A Critical Examination Predicting its Failure", was circulated by Rettet de Regenwald, an NGO based in Hamburg. A catalogue of gaps, weaknesses and criticisms were identified, starting with the observation that FSC was not a legal entity. "This and other fundamental flaws will ensure not only its failure but will severely hamper attempts to conserve the world's remaining natural forests".

At best the FSC initiative is naive, at worst it provides a framework for the timber industry to achieve a much desired "green veneer" and defuse pressure to attack the real issues of illegal trade, indigenous people's rights and over-consumption.
Rettet den Regenwald, 30 September 1993.

As soon as the meeting started, some of the participants started protesting about the composition of the assembly and the decision-making procedures. Their main objections were the participation in discussions and decision-making by people with a commercial interest in the exploitation or marketing of timber. Some of the participants objected particularly to organizations involved in logging in tropical forests, others to organizations involved in commercial plantations, but the objections were also aimed at retail organizations such as B&Q, whose representative Alan Knight was on the interim board. Initially, the people who identified themselves with these objections came from a large number of social and environmental NGOs, north and south. A degree of leadership for this group was provided by Simon Counsell, who demanded time for them to develop their position.

The facilitator of the assembly found himself at a loss over how to handle this disintegrating situation. Perhaps he had expected a meeting of enthusiastic supporters, cheerfully discussing and agreeing the way ahead. Some skillful chairing by Chris Elliott allowed the meeting to be suspended from time to time, to allow people to meet in caucus, and avoiding a confrontation or crisis. Gradually, the group of people who objected in principle to the participation of economic interests became smaller. Representatives of indigenous people from Brazil and PNG found that they did not share a blanket opposition to harvesting in tropical forests, even in undisturbed tropical forests. Representatives for some social NGOs recognized that many committed dealers and manufacturers played a valuable role, and should have a voice in the FSC. And many people from the tropics found they did not share the tactics of some of the northern NGOs. The caucus of objectors became steadily smaller.

When Chris Elliott denied one of Simon Counsell's demands for the right of reply, the rump of the group withdrew from the discussion and abstained from voting. At that moment, I realized that the meeting had succeeded: the great majority of the participants were in agreement on the key issues of participation and membership in FSC, while the small group had abstained without leaving. Later that evening, Alan Knight told me that he had come to same conclusion.

The agitation of the Founding Assembly foreshadowed the next few years of the FSC debate. FSC could not expect unity in any chamber or subchamber. Each stakeholder group (social, environmental, economic) included people and organizations with different policies and practices, such that total agreement would rarely be possible. A large majority support would sometimes be a major and difficult achievement.

FSC was not set up to satisfy the "boutique" trade in forest products. FSC chose to work in the broad field of mainstream forestry, from small scale community management to large scale commercial operations, from natural forests, through heavily altered forests to exotic plantations, and from the equator to the arctic circle. For decades, this had been a battleground of conflicting interests. FSC worked in this arena, and had to adopt different means to achieve its agreed objectives, including negotiation, confrontation, compromise, diplomacy, stubbornness and even lawyers, but not including surrender.

Association or Foundation: One of the key decisions was to set up the FSC as a membership organization. This was not entirely expected.

Early drafts of the FSC charter were based on the model of a membership organization, with the General Assembly as the highest authority. The first draft Charter and Statutes (Elliott 1992) included: "The FSC organs include the General Assembly, the Board of Directors [etc.].... A General Assembly is held every year for the first three years.... The General Assembly delegates operational decision-making and executive powers to the Board of Directors by electing the directors. However, any decisions of the Board may be overturned by majority vote at the General Assembly"

This concept remained in place until April 1993, when a legal adviser, James Cameron, joined a meeting of the interim board in Vermont. According to the Minutes, he warned that a decision-making mechanism that depended on frequent General Assemblies and a relatively open membership would be unwieldy, expensive, and a severe limitation to the flexibility and decision-making capacity of the secretariat, and it would put at risk the balance of stakeholder interests. The interim board moved in this direction, collaborating with the same lawyer.

An FSC Update of early June 1993 described the Proposed FSC Organizational Structure, without members or a General Assembly. Another FSC Update of 27 June mentioned the legal recommendation to have no membership, or at most a non-voting membership. The FSC Draft Charter circulated on 27 July again had no members or future assemblies, and Jamison Ervin (1993) wrote that "The FSC seems to be moving towards becoming a foundation.....The Founding Assembly participants in Toronto will be invited to ratify this FSC Draft Charter, either as it is presented at the Founding Assembly or with specific amendments..

Another FSC Draft Charter was circulated in August 1993, with the observation that “After careful consideration, the Interim Board has recommended that the FSC be a Foundation...with no members. However, the option that the FSC should be an Association with members .. has not been excluded”. One of the main reasons for the interim board’s preference for a Foundation was the expense and complications of managing decision-making General Assemblies every few years, and the risks of a membership organization being taken over by any particular interest group.

This was the build-up to the Founding Assembly, when the interim board hoped for a clear mandate to proceed on the basis of an agreed charter. As the meeting evolved, it revealed the disagreements about what FSC should do, and especially about who should take the decisions in FSC. The interim board members soon realized that they could not expect the assembly participants to agree to an organization in which they would have no future voice. Some participants clearly believed that an association would be a better structure for achieving FSC’s goals, while others showed limited confidence in an FSC in which board members chose their own successors.

When the majority of participants finally accepted or agreed on how to proceed with the meeting, and to take decisions, a vote was called on the issue of Association versus Foundation. The whole interim board stood up in support of the Association, which was carried by a large majority. This was probably the most important decision of the Founding Assembly, given that all other elements in the Statutes and P&C were subject to review, votes and changes over the next few years.

This crucial decision involved introducing the chamber system, to avoid the risk of any one group dominating FSC decisions. There would be no limit to the numbers of FSC members from different interest groups, but at the time of voting and formal decision-making the membership would be divided into pre-determined groups with fixed voting weights. No matter how many members registered their votes, the total voting weight for each statutory group would be pre-determined. With this provision, the majority of participants felt that FSC would have an open, participatory system, in which no one category could be suppressed and all categories would be guaranteed a voice and vote.

Initially, there were two main chambers of members, for voting purposes, the economic chamber with 25 % of the total voting weight and the social-environmental chamber with 75 %. The two chambers were further divided into Northern and Southern sub-chambers, actually the richer and the less rich countries (using UN classifications). Probably, no-one thought that this arbitrary arrangement was perfect or permanent, but it was sufficient to enable the FSC to move forward. I was convinced that if FSC succeeded in earning the trust of most members in all chambers, these voting weights would be evened out in due course. So it turned out.

This institutional decision had a profound impact on the success of FSC. The first and most obvious impact was to make the day-to-day and year-to-year work of FSC immensely complex and challenging. All important decisions were subject to the review of the staff, the elected board members and the full membership. These reviews were not usually in the form of votes, which were used for statutory issues relating the statutes, by-laws, P&C and elections, but rather in the form of consultations, working groups, lobbying and the strongly expressed opinions of members. There was no possibility of the smooth operation of a small group of like-minded individuals that might have been constructed in a Foundation or a private company.

The dangers of this model were most publicly evident at the first General Assembly in 1996, when uncertainties about how to manage the meeting, and strong differences of opinion among the members, almost caused a meltdown. Staff of Coopers & Lybrand attended as observers, gathering material for the design of the Marine Stewardship Council. Following their recommendation, to avoid what were perceived as FSC's weaknesses, the MSC was established quite differently, not as an Association of members.

On the other hand, the membership structure provided two crucial benefits that would not have been possible otherwise. It meant that the institution, programmes and decisions of FSC had the support of an impressive array of other organizations, representing almost every imaginable interest in the forestry sector, in all parts of the world. This support was sometimes explicit, when based on a formal vote, sometimes tacit or implicit, based on continuing membership, and sometimes perhaps reluctant, but nevertheless a powerful source of credibility, available to no other forestry certification system.

This structure also meant that decisions were actually better than they would otherwise have been. FSC could call on the experience and expertise of a large number of members, with better results than might be expected from a costly consultant, so these decisions were often politically sounder. The forestry debate includes many of the basic elements of politics (land, capital, labour, markets, values), as well as public and popular perceptions, so an element of democracy in making and revising decisions has been a source of great strength. It is extremely unlikely that FSC would have made such progress if it had started as a foundation.

Chapter 3 Getting started: from foundation to operation.

October 1993 is now usually given as the date when FSC started. This is reasonable, in the same sense that a building may be dated from the laying of the foundation stone. But FSC still had a long way to go in 1993. For several months, FSC had no funds, staff or office, and it was still two years away from having a legal status, but the work was under way.

In June 1993, the interim board had already identified Mexico and Switzerland as the preferred countries for the FSC head office (FSC Interim Board Meeting Minutes, June 1993) and had called for applications for the post of Executive Director in July. By that time, I was living in the north of Mexico. A letter from the Mexican Subsecretario de Desarrollo Regional, Ing. Carlos Rojas, was sent to the FSC Board on 4 October 1993, during the Founding Assembly, inviting them to set up FSC in Mexico.

The FSC board embarked on its first formal board meetings. At its second, in Mexico in March 1994, the board confirmed a decision to place the head office in Mexico. The main reason was geo-political, to avoid pitfalls rather than because of any obvious superiority of a head office in Mexico. Already, critics were promoting the myth that FSC was a northern initiative to give an advantage to their temperate forests, or was designed to help tropical forests with no relevance to temperate regions. It was seen as important to locate the head office in a country that would not give credence to these myths. This argued against the selection of country that is entirely northern or southern, or entirely tropical or temperate. Mexico is half tropical and half temperate, both in its geography and in its

forest composition. It is also a country that has managed to maintain good relations (off and on) with northern and southern blocks. These advantages were expected to be useful during the early years, while FSC established its own credibility and its global representation. However, the drawbacks of a head office in Mexico were clearly recognized and predicted. Particular efforts were made to counteract the drawbacks, including ensuring a global distribution among board members and staff, and no-one imagined that the head office would remain in Mexico indefinitely.

It was more difficult to decide exactly where to place the office. Board members had consulted many people, and selected the most important criteria: good communications by road and air, some linkage or proximity to forestry activities, and a pleasant location for staff and their families. They rapidly eliminated cities with excellent communications but with little linkage to forests, such as Acapulco, Cancun, Guadalajara and Monterrey. Many people advised against setting the office in Mexico City. Oaxaca and Merida were on the final shortlist, but I suggested that the board consider Texcoco, for its close proximity to two university forestry faculties, half an hour from Mexico City Airport. The board investigated these three options, with visits and consultations. They visited the two Chapingo forestry departments in Texcoco, where they received a suspicious and unenthusiastic reaction. They visited a hotel in Texcoco that was suggested for board meetings, but they were not impressed when the receptionist asked if they wanted to rent bedrooms by the night or by the hour.

In due course, the board selected Oaxaca. In April 1994, I was offered and accepted the position of executive director. I went to Oaxaca on another project, and looked for possible offices. The old family home in the Calle Hidalgo was the first house I visited. It was approved at the next board meeting when funding from Austria had been secured. It became the FSC head office on 1 August 1994, and remained so for over eight years.

Funds for setting up the FSC became available from an unexpected source. In 1992, the Austrian Parliament introduced legislation requiring all imported tropical timber products to be labeled as coming from "sustainable" sources, together with a voluntary quality label for other timber and timber products from "sustainable" forests. This was effectively a ban on tropical timber from "unsustainable" sources. The Parliament also increased the import tariffs on tropical timber by 70%. Indonesia and Malaysia filed protest with GATT. In 1993, the tariff increase was cancelled, and labeling was made voluntary for all sources. A significant budget had been approved for the original proposal, and WWF-Austria persuaded the government to assign part of the funds for establishing FSC, as an initiative compatible with the aims of the legislation.

With funds assured, I immediately asked Guillermina Garza to handle the office management and finance, Matthew Wenban Smith to handle accreditation, and Hannah Scrase to start the UK national initiative.

Our first tasks were to finalize the documents that had been broadly approved at the Founding Assembly, to establish FSC's physical presence in national initiatives around the world, to develop a system for FSC's prime function as an accreditation body, and to set up FSC as a legal entity, without which no action or decision had any legal validity. So we got used to working on several fronts simultaneously.

Consultations and revisions continued on the documents that had been distributed at the Founding Assembly: the FSC Statutes, the Principles & Criteria, the Guidelines for

Certifiers and the Accreditation process. A meeting of the P&C WG took place in Gainesville, Florida in May 1994, that resolved most of the issues. The most significant new elements were the prohibition of Genetically Modified Organisms in certified forests, and a definition of “plantations” that referred to the structure and composition of the forests, rather than to the method of regeneration. The P&C then had just nine Principles, accepted by the FSC membership and “fully consistent with ITTO Guidelines and UNCED’s Forest Principles” (Crossley 1996).

Just a month after opening the office, both documents were distributed in a ballot of all who attended the Founding Assembly (with the exception of government representatives), and were approved overwhelmingly. At the 4th board meeting in Indonesia in September 1994, the board endorsed the results of the ballot. The provisional mandate of October 1993 was now reinforced by a definitive mandate. This opened the way for establishing the legal status of FSC. Work started immediately to register FSC as a Civil Association in Mexico, with statutes compatible with the document approved in the ballot. Legal advice soon made it clear that the statutes of the legal entity needed to include several other clauses, to satisfy Mexican legal norms; on the other hand, many clauses in the ballot document were not suitable for legal statutes, and should be placed in the By-Laws or Reglamento. Work started on drafting these new documents, with frequent revisions to ensure full compatibility with the statutes document already approved. The final approved version was distributed at the 7th board meeting in London in August 1995. In October, the FSC was legally registered as a Mexican NGO, or Asociación Civil.

The process of establishing global recognition for FSC was proceeding simultaneously. In my first year, I travelled on FSC business from Mexico to Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Germany, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Sweden, UK and USA. After that, the travelling increased.

The development of FSC’s accreditation system started, based on the guidelines developed in 1993. Matthew Wenban Smith started work part-time in October 1994, drafting the protocols. During January - March 1995, we visited natural forests and plantations that had been certified by SCS, SGS and Rainforest Alliance in Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and USA, followed later by those of the Soil Association in the UK. This process allowed us to evaluate their certification procedures, and to design the FSC accreditation system to take account of their strong points, and to cover the weaknesses identified. Matthew moved to Mexico in May 1995, and took on the development of the Manual. A workshop on the Accreditation Manual was held in Oaxaca in June, and the draft was widely circulated for review.

By August 1995, FSC staff had completed the evaluations of all four applicant certification bodies. This involved detailed assessments of all their documented systems and certification reports, and field visits to the great majority of their certified forests. Full reports were presented at the 7th board meeting in August, with recommended conditions and preconditions. After a detailed revision of all conditions, the board gave me authority to negotiate and sign the accreditation contracts, according to the agreed conditions. Most of this work was completed by the end of 1995, by which time FSC was a legal entity, able to sign contracts.

On 21 February 1996, contracts were signed with all four of the first applicants, accrediting them for certification in natural forests: SCS, SGS, Soil Association and Rainforest Alliance. Plantation accreditation followed later.

Early in 1996, FSC started the work it was planned for, as an accreditation body for forest certification. These were stimulating years, when FSC was a project and campaign, operating in a highly conflictive environment, with young and highly motivated staff, building an internal consensus among members, while systematically constructing itself in accordance with internationally recognized guidelines from ISO, ITTO, ILO and national legal frameworks.

During these first years, the FSC framework was laid down: manuals, guidelines, protocols and contracts for certification bodies, national initiatives and staff, together with the procedures for meetings: formal general assemblies, and less formal annual conferences and working groups.

Within a few years, FSC was no longer the vision of 1993, or the project of 1996, but an international enterprise and with heavy responsibilities. And it still has its share of controversies. Even now, there are still some interesting tensions between two contrasting concepts, (1) of FSC as a service organization, based on accreditation, standards, trademarks etc, to be run professionally as an enterprise in order to achieve its stated goals, even if it offends many of its voting members, and (2) of FSC as a network, a consensus-based initiative that must reflect the wishes of its members at all times.

FSC's visibility in the international arena has steadily increased for four reasons: (a) strong support from NGOs, (b) there has been no truly viable alternative to FSC to date in the market place, (c) availability of significant external funding, and (d) quality and commitment of the secretariat staff..... Baharuddin & Simula, ITTO, 1997

Chapter 4 FSC National Initiatives (FSC NIs)

Origins of the idea. FSC NIs and their roles were described in the first drafts of the FSC Statutes, in early 1993, by the working group set up by the Interim Board, in terms that have changed little since then. The provisions for NIs were based on two concepts:

One concept was the example of the “global” NGOs that have branches distributed around the world. WWF, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth are legal entities registered in one country, according to the laws of that country, usually with headquarters in that country. They also have associates or partner organizations in other countries, some of which are also legal entities, registered in their own countries. They have contracts with the parent organization, governing their legal right to use the name and logo. These associates sometimes use the name of the parent organization, such as WWF-UK or Greenpeace Mexico, while others are registered with different names, such as Sahabat Alam Malaysia, the FoE associate in Malaysia. Some of them are not yet separate legal entities, but have the status of projects or programmes; for example, WWF-Mexico has operated for years as a program of WWF-US. This wide range of options and arrangements has enabled each one of them to implement their programmes with flexibility and with the security of legal agreements or contracts between organizations.

FSC was designed to have a similar range of units and agreements, although its objectives and status as an accreditation body meant that it could not exactly copy any other model or agreement. The idea was that the parent organization, the Forest Stewardship Council, would also be a legal entity registered in one country (determined in early 1994 to be Mexico) with, in due course, contacts and partners in other countries.

This arrangement was seen as appropriate for FSC because certain parts of the programme were better arranged nationally by people living and working in their own countries, especially promotion, publicity and information adapted to national languages and cultures, while other parts are better managed and implemented by staff of the parent organization (especially the international accreditation programme).

The other concept was the need to produce national standards for certification. The FSC P&C were not designed as a stand-alone certification standard. It was understood from the start that national standards would be best developed by national stakeholders, working together in a national working group, to develop nationally-appropriate indicators and verifiers to supplement the P&C. It was understood that the parent organization, FSC, would play a coordinating role, but would not itself develop the national standards. This is why standards were not mentioned in the first versions of the FSC Statutes.

The first steps in the FSC recognition of NIs were simple and informal. They involved selecting national Contact Persons (CPs), based on impressions of their enthusiasm for promoting certification and FSC, and their skills in working with different interest groups. The first FSC Contact Persons endorsed by the board were Hannah Scrase for the UK and Pierre Hauselmann for Switzerland, in August 1995. The early expectation was that Contact Persons would quickly form national working groups to develop standards, having in mind informal groups of people working speedily, without much need for protocols and centralized rules, much like the Working Groups that had helped to draft the statutes and P&C in 1993 – 1995.

However, even before the FSC board had nominated any Contact Persons, an informal process was under way, operating spontaneously in several countries. Committees and working groups met to promote FSC and to develop standards, especially in countries that had experienced earlier meetings and national consultations. One of the earliest was in Sweden, where WWF Sweden convened a group to work on standards and CoC verification in 1993. The FSC board met such a group in Brazil in November 1993, and another in Mexico in February 1994. In the USA, the Sigurd Olson Institute hired a consultant to start drafting a standard for the Lake States region in 1994.

Challenges: From the start, the NI program moved forward with a mixture of conspicuous success in some countries (thanks to the commitment and competence of participants) and daunting challenges.

The challenges arose from our policy of learning by doing, moving forward with NIs and solving problems on the way, without waiting for tried and tested rules or a fixed institutional framework. The NIs and standards would never have developed with such enthusiasm and speed if FSC had tried to regulate their every move; and we could not have perfected the protocols and guidelines before we gained experience in practice.

Inevitably, there were difficulties in making progress and reaching agreements, when working with a highly diverse group of motivated and energetic people, sometimes with different personal visions and agendas. The main challenges were the following:

1 Funding. Early on, the board made it clear that FSC did not expect to pay for all the work needed to promote certification and develop national standards, country by country. It was essential to count on the voluntary participation of other organizations and

their staff, and on local fundraising and technical contributions. NIs were not organized or funded by FSC, but were organized by people who obtained their own funding from donors, or who were employed by other organizations (including WWF). But NIs were not all equally successful in fundraising, and many found that they had to respond to the agendas of their donors.

2 Legal status. The early idea that FSC NIs, especially WGs, would operate as informal committees, developing standards and other items by negotiation, started promisingly in a few countries, notably Sweden and the UK. Soon, it became clear how difficult it would be to achieve international harmonization, and consensus-based results, without clearly agreed ground-rules. It also became clear that FSC was in danger of fragmentation, and of losing ownership and control of the name and logo, unless agreements were put in writing. NIs also found that it was difficult to raise funds for their FSC work, unless they were registered as legal entities and had a clear relationship with FSC.

From September 1995, I had meetings with Michael Rogers, who made these anxieties explicit, and then started guiding us to the professional solutions. With his help, we moved ahead quickly to register the FSC name and logo as trademarks, in several countries and product categories; to encourage the NIs to establish themselves as legal entities under their own names in their own countries; and to draft agreements or contracts between the FSC and each CP and WG, with protocols and guidelines to be satisfied before the agreements were signed. The legal and technical status of NIs, and the distribution of rights and responsibilities, evolved through negotiation rather than being imposed and pre-determined. They developed step by step, as the needs and realities became clear, after many of the NIs were already in place, a delicate process.

3 Institutional framework. A third major challenge involved clarifying and agreeing the relationship between the parent organization and the NIs, collectively and individually, and their status in the global FSC framework. By 1997, nearly twenty national or regional groups had started work on promoting FSC and development of standards for FSC. Some of them were set up under the institutional umbrella of WWF or other NGOs, while others had formed themselves with their own funding. Visits from FSC staff or board members were scarce, so these groups naturally considered themselves, and were perceived, as the de facto FSC representatives in their country or region. However, their formal status in the FSC structure was still undefined. It was not clear whether they were to be directly supervised by, or answerable to, either the FSC ED or the FSC Board.

The early informality of the National initiatives was now causing difficulties. People made different interpretations and took different positions, some of which were a hazard for the integrity and harmony of FSC. I avoided a confrontation while I assembled the elements needed for unity, including legal advice, contract documents, and a majority of people who were in agreement.

The underlying tensions, and the way ahead, became clearer during a meeting of FSC NIs in Vermont, USA, in October 1997. One of the areas of resistance was the concept that national initiatives should sign contracts or agreements with FSC. Many NIs shared the confident vision that they effectively were the FSC in their countries, and could act with independence and responsibility, without legal restrictions set by the FSC board or secretariat.

Anticipating some problems, I had invited Michael Rogers to come over from Switzerland, to clarify the situation and its risks, and help resolve them. In his firm way, he explained

that Contact Persons and Working Group coordinators work for FSC in the sense that they promote and strengthen the FSC programme and the demand for accreditation and certification. However, in formal terms, they legally work for whichever organization or donor employs them and pays their salaries. So long as the FSC name and logo were being used by staff of other organizations without agreements or safeguards, the FSC was in danger of fragmentation.

"I do not intend to be overly negative about the secretariat, but I am increasingly frustrated with the direction and tone of the people in Oaxaca, and their relationship with those of us who are trying to make the FSC something more than a small hacienda by the Zocalo in Oaxaca". Jamison Ervin, Waterbury, November 1997.

Another of the causes of tension was the issue of decentralization, in the sense of delegating more rights and responsibilities to contact persons and working groups. By 1997, some of the better established working group members felt strongly that they should be taking the decisions in the endorsement of national standards, accreditation of certification bodies in their countries, and approval of new FSC members. It was understood that all these items were initially decided by the board of directors and staff, because initially there were no national initiatives, but many people felt that these tasks should be devolved. There was much talk of some sort of franchise system.

Again, we were helped by the legal and management advice of Michael Rogers, learning from the unfortunate experiences of other organizations (including WWF) that had moved too quickly towards national representation. Our position was that, in principle, there was no limit to the responsibilities and powers that could be assigned to national representatives or offices, provided that each office had (1) sufficient assured income or funding to be able to fulfill its responsibilities for the foreseeable future, (2) sufficient trained staff to ensure the quality of the work (such as lead assessors for accreditation evaluations), and (3) a clear history of good working relations with the parent organization.

Meeting the challenges: The meeting in Vermont at the end of 1997 was a turning point in the relation between FSC and its national initiatives. We had not yet reached a shared understanding about the role and status of NIs, much less a written agreement. We came from different cultures, worked in different organizations, and had a wide variety of ideas about how FSC should be structured and organized. All points were debated very vigorously, with frequent good humour. There were real differences of opinion, and some acidity, but the Vermont meeting showed much greater unity of vision than the previous General Assembly of 1996, and dramatically more than the Founding Assembly. It led to major steps forward in the institutional arrangements of FSC and the national initiatives.

As a result of these discussions, FSC staff and NIs worked together to develop agreements or contracts, and sets of guidelines and protocols for the FSC endorsement of standards and NIs. Work on these documents had started in mid-1996, after my first meeting with Michael Rogers, but the management and resolution of the situation was a major task that was not completed until the end of 1998.

The agreements with NIs were of three kinds, covering the roles, rights and responsibilities of each party: (1) a contract for CPs who are independently funded, i.e. a simple agreement between the Civil Association FSC and the individual, (2) a contract for CPs

who are staff members of another organization, which necessarily includes the approval of the CP's employer, and (3) a contract with the legal entity formed by the national FSC WG.

The first NI agreement was signed in the first days of 1988 by Lincoln Quevedo, then on the staff of WWF Bolivia, as FSC CP for Bolivia. Agreements with the other NIs followed, with the development of a fuller understanding of their legal and institutional importance.

By the spring of 1998, the great majority of endorsed contact persons had signed the new agreement and had excellent working relations with the FSC secretariat. Most of the endorsed Working Groups had agreed to sign the WG Agreement, that was still being developed. Finally, after protracted negotiations and changes in personnel, the US Working Groups agreed to sign in June 1999. Since then, all NIs have readily signed the agreement with FSC, as soon as the guidelines and requirements approved by the FSC board have been fulfilled.

The NI guidelines and protocols were developed step by step from 1994, and later revised and combined into the FSC NI Manual. They are now systematically revised and amplified whenever necessary. They cover the characteristics expected of a Contact Person and a Working Group, the procedures to be followed for the FSC board to approve the agreement and for the ED to sign it, and the processes for the WG to develop and revise standards and for FSC to endorse and accredit them.

The status of the NIs was fully resolved by the time of the FSC meeting near WDC in June 2000, when it was easy to agree and recognize that FSC consists of the members, board, staff and the endorsed NIs, as indicated in the statutes. Some people still refer to this group as the "FSC Family", but it is effectively the FSC.

The NIs are the clearest demonstration of FSC's decentralized structure, right from the start. FSC operates not only as an accreditation body, but also as an international standards organization with a system of national certification standards, developed and endorsed by national entities before final approval by the parent entity. The national Working Groups are also responsible for information and promotion in their own countries. The relationship between FSC and the NIs is covered by legal agreements, to ensure that all interests are properly protected. In contrast, the FSC accreditation programme is managed from the centre, to maintain global uniformity, but it involves intensive national consultation. More of the monitoring and decision-making could be assigned to NIs, when they have the necessary resources.

In retrospect, it is strange that the development of legal agreements caused such uneasiness among FSC NIs, even among those who were staff of WWF (which is notoriously strict in protecting its legal status and its logo, with much more elaborate legal provisions for its associate organizations). With hindsight, we should have backed up the endorsement of CPs and WGs with a simple written agreement, right from the first endorsements in 1995, followed in due course by the more comprehensive legal agreements developed later. Much grief would have been avoided.

The early difference of vision between the FSC staff and a couple of the FSC contact persons had an unsettling effect on the whole organization, for a couple of years. However, it had the positive effect of accelerating the negotiations and consensus-building for a strong and effective institutional framework.

By the time FSC was clearly established in the mainstream of the forestry sector, in 1999 – 2000, the problems were resolved. There is now a full recognition of the central area of responsibility of the FSC board and staff, and also of the vital importance of the work of NIs. Guidelines, protocols and legal agreements are now an accepted part of doing business, and a necessary (if burdensome) tool for quality management.

Certification would never have reached its current status without the extraordinary mobilization of energy in dozens of national and regional processes, coordinated by small numbers of committed staff, and involving many hundreds of people worldwide, in developing agreements over the standards.

NIs provided a forum for representatives of all forestry interests. In all countries where the main stakeholders entered in a spirit of negotiation, and where individuals emerged with the skills of facilitation, there emerged a high degree of agreement about the basic elements of good forest resource management. This was one of the most important of FSC's successes.

The success of individual FSC NIs can be measured not only by the degree of consensus they have developed around the national standards, but also by their ability to develop a constructive dialogue among the national forestry stakeholders, even when these interests had a history of conflict. With hindsight, it is evident that the success of NIs depended heavily on a very few individuals with the right mix of enthusiasm, persistence and coordinating skills, and with the right back-up.

Chapter 5 The Position of the forest products trades and industries

This section covers the positions on FSC and certification taken by forest products trades and industries. It deals with the various levels of interest, support, collaboration, commitment and opposition shown by dealers, manufacturers, processors and retailers of forest products. I concentrate here on the currents within (or affecting) the forest products trades and industries that contributed to the development of FSC and certification.

By about 1988, the tensions within the timber trade were become serious. In July 1988, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling on all Member States to suspend the importation of timber from Sarawak, because of widespread concerns about over-logging. This call came to nothing, but it thoroughly alarmed the tropical timber trade.

In the same year, Hemmo Muntingh, then a member of the European Parliament, presented a proposal that EC member countries should import tropical hardwood products only when produced under forest management and protection programs, and that such products be certified (Crossley 1996). The proposal was unanimously adopted by the European Parliament, but not by the European Council of Ministers, so it had no legislative effect, but it intensified the debate on certification. The proposal was to introduce by 1995 positive incentives which would reward the production of sustainably logged timber, and by 2000 disincentives to obstruct the importation of unsustainably logged timber. These proposals were GATT-illegal. Although not implemented, they signaled the potential power of a combination of market demand and credible certification.

Later the same year, ITTO commissioned a study of the current state of forest management in its tropical member countries (Poore et al. 1989), showing the extreme scarcity of sustained-yield management.

These examples from 1988 were not the most powerful events, but they were among the earliest signals of a change in climate affecting the timber trade. Governments, industries and NGOs began to recognize the need to take action, and to focus on the possibility of linking the import-export trade to the identification of “sustainably” managed forests and their products. These signs of crisis referred particularly to tropical forests, but they had an impact on the international timber trade, to which tropical timber was a small but significant contribution.

By the end of the 1980s, dealers in the global timber trade found themselves confronted by issues of sustainability of their sources of supply, in addition to the usual issues of price and quality. No longer able to ignore the issues of sustainable management or supplies, they developed new approaches. Product labels appeared in abundance, from retailers and manufacturers anxious to reassure their customers. Advertising and publicity campaigns were promoted by industry and trade organizations, anxious to maintain the market share and status of timber. There was widespread agreement in the trade that Something Must Be Done, and that a new public image was needed.

Not all the changes were forced on the industry against its will. There have always been manufacturers and dealers proud to buy with confidence from forests that had a good reputation for management. I used to meet some of these dealers when working in the Woburn estate in 1960-61, in forests that had been managed for the last thousand years under only two ownership regimes, the Abbots of Woburn and the Dukes of Bedford.

Even in the tropics, some companies have operated as family-owned enterprises for some generations, when the long-term supply of raw materials and employment were widely welcomed as valid contributions to development. An interest in the future of the forests, and some respect for the validity of management practices, are not completely new concepts in the timber industry.

The timber trade became increasingly global. Even small, local industries sometimes obtain their raw materials from unknown or unidentified sources at great distances. It became increasingly difficult to obtain personal assurances of good management. Dealers and manufacturers of forest products generally took the same position as the dealers of other globally traded goods: agricultural products, food, fibres and fish. They ignored the issue, or relied on governments to set and apply appropriate regulations. At the same time, the governments of many countries were clearly and seriously failing in this role.

This was the situation in the early 1990s. Surveys by WWF showed that only a small minority of manufacturers and retailers knew the sources of their raw materials, or had any credible assurances of the quality of their management (Read 1994). Some of them began to check their own sources.

Hubert Kwisthout of ETC was one of the first dealers committed to avoiding damage to forests or forest-based communities. Already informed about the debates in Europe, the Good Wood Guide and the fate of the monitoring and labeling proposal put to ITTO, he visited Papua New Guinea in search of reliable sources. In September 1990, John Curtis, preparing the Founding Conference of WARP, wrote to me that “The ETC... is still the only

enterprise making a concerted effort to sell only those woods originating from sustainable yield sources". Other dealers and wood-users were turning their attention to the problem, and seeking solutions.

In the USA, the Founding Conference of WARP played a key role in alerting dealers to a mechanism for identifying well-managed forests and their products in the supply chain. Participants heard about the ETC proposal for an international forest monitoring agency. They also heard about the Rainforest Alliance Smartwood program that was initially aimed just at the US market. This gave some encouragement to dealers there, but they remained cautious about changing their purchasing policies.

In the UK, companies started to revise their purchasing policies. By March 1991, Alan Knight made clear his interest in taking action in B&Q, the largest chain of home improvement stores in Europe. In April 1991, he agreed to provide funding for the International Forest Monitoring Agency, which had already received some funds from WWF. By September 1991, after intense internal debate, B&Q adopted a new Timber Buying Policy, and launched it publicly at a conference in London. It supported certification as a means of verification.

By the end of 1991, other UK companies were publicly committing themselves to sourcing their forest products from well-managed forests. David Norman of M & N Norman in Scotland made known his plan to commit his company to sourcing wood only from "well-managed" forests. He re-opened his company with this policy in November 1991, with a high-profile meeting attended by WWF staff and a prominent ecologist, David Bellamy, who referred to this initiative as "almost unique". It developed into the Scottish Hardwood Charter, presented in Brussels at a seminar in March 1993, by which time the potential of certification was widely recognized in Europe.

However, not all the progress was smooth. Many companies opposed certification and FSC and the Buyers Groups. Long before FSC was mentioned, many industries had opposed forest certification and the FoE-UK proposal to ITTO in 1989. Among the most commonly cited reasons were the infeasibility of tracking and tracing forest products between the forest and the market, and the bizarre concept that certification was a threat to national sovereignty. Later, many industries objected to FSC because it does not form part of any existing institutional arrangements, like ISO, in which they are familiar participants (i.e. they objected to its independence).

Soon, the global timber trade was waking up to the supply and demand for the products of well managed forests. In July 1991, the director of a certification organization assured me that he knew of "dealers who would kill to get certified timber" for the US timber trade.

In early 1992, the UK companies that were committed to trade from well-managed forests now included Milland Fine Timber, Speyhawk and Finewood, and were joined by large retailing companies such as Sainsburys and HomeBase. The WWF 1995 Club came into existence at its first meeting in February 1992, committed to phase out the use of wood and wood products that cannot be shown to come from well managed forests by the end of 1995.

Similar initiatives, known as Buyers Groups, were developing in many parts of Europe, based on a new and constructive dialogue between staff of timber industries, retailers and conservation NGOs. One of the most effective, was the Hart voor Hout initiative in the

Netherlands, set up by Vereniging Milieu Defensie (FoE-NL) and NOVIB, in early 1994. This had a powerful role in building interest in certified forest products, and support for FSC. These early initiatives were coordinated by WWF in Belgium, Germany, France, Spain, UK and elsewhere, by Friends of the Earth in the Netherlands, and by Greenpeace in Brazil and Russia.

Early in 1992, I was assessing the progress of the B&Q purchasing policy, and visiting industries to check the sources of the raw materials: manufacturers of particle board, tools, furniture, fencing, mouldings etc. Management staff were all aware of the growing public concerns about sources and sustainability, but they were sometimes anxiously unaware of the origins of their own raw materials. B&Q was then their only client asking for this information, so they were anxious about where the B&Q policy might take them. Overall, they were quite willing to verify their sources, as a new responsibility that could reasonably be expected of them, but they were also reluctant to make expensive changes, especially if only one of their clients was requesting them. The surveys showed that a wide variety of raw materials and components came from regions where the documentation was deficient or suspect. Sometimes, they were bought from agents or brokers, and could not be sourced even to a specific country. Some difficult choices had to be made.

Timetables were drawn up with a phased approach to verifying sources. More and more retailers and manufacturers started asking for the same information and assurances. Gradually, the mood changed among the suppliers to B&Q and other members of the 1995 Group, and in the national timber trade, and in one country after another. Manufacturers and suppliers came to accept that it was reasonable (or at least inevitable) that their clients would ask questions about sources and forest management quality. Later, when clients started asking for certification of sources, this was also increasingly accepted. Responsible purchasing policies for forest products came to be seen as a basic element of doing business.

These early steps turned out to be highly significant. Grumbles were sometimes heard about companies being threatened or coerced into joining a Buyers Group, but the process was typically a negotiation (although not always a completely comfortable one). If any NGO representative was incautious enough to raise the threat of campaigns or boycotts, it usually set back the process and alienated the already-cautious businesses. Progress depended mainly on the careful negotiations of key players such as Francis Sullivan of WWF-UK, Jean-Paul Jeanrenaud of WWF-International, Anders Lindhe of WWF-Sweden and Gemma Boetekees of FoE-Netherlands, talking through the problems and seeking realistic solutions with industry representatives.

In the best cases, these discussions showed (sometimes to the surprise of all parties) that workable solutions could be identified by negotiations in good faith. Rather than needing sudden and costly changes, they often led to commitments to a phased programme, including elements such as (1) phasing out sources that were obviously unverifiable, such as the spot market or undocumented sources, (2) giving preference in future contracts to sources with some evidence of responsible management, and (3) a willingness to give preference to certified sources once they became available on the market.

Two other results emerged during these times: Industries confronted the uncomfortable reality that they could no longer rely on governments to ensure that acceptable social, environmental and economic principles were applied in the production of their raw materials from around the globe.... not for forest

products, nor for a wide range of other products. They found themselves confronting the ethical and political consequences of their purchasing policies. This led inevitably to the gradual development of new policies, affecting not just forest products but also marine products, child labour, waste and effluents, the use of environmentally damaging solvents, recycling and so on. Perhaps the globalization of business ethics.

Second, many people discovered that it was possible to have dialogue, negotiations and agreements between commercial interests and environmental or conservation NGOs on purchasing policies. This realization paved the way for the far-reaching dialogue on Forest Stewardship Standards. Overall, a track record of successful negotiations was built up. Previous experiences with negotiating Buyers Groups made a substantial contribution.

The habit of referring to industries in general, or “the industrial sector”, gives a mistaken impression of unity, and masks the reality of a wide diversity of interests, objectives and policies. Discussions and controversies about standards, certification and FSC have illustrated the particular positions of individual industries, often revealing substantial differences between superficially similar industries. (For example, the position on FSC certification taken by large Swedish forest industries has been very different from that of their neighbours, the large Norwegian forest industries. They operate in very similar forests and markets, but in significantly different patterns of forest ownership).

Governments also revealed dramatically different positions, that changed with time. In April 1992, The Minister for Primary Industries of Malaysia expressed a widely held opinion in a press statement: “We strongly oppose .. the formation of the FSC for the following reasons: it is discriminatory .. a non-tariff barrier .. undemocratic .. divisive .. misleading and dishonest, totally impractical and costly, counterproductive.” (Dr. Lim Keng Yaik, 1992) However, in March 1999, the same Minister told me enthusiastically in Kuala Lumpur that he welcomed collaboration with FSC, while FSC-labelled furniture from Sabah was on display at the International Furniture Exhibition. At that time, I was told that the change in attitude was caused by appeals from representatives of Malaysia timber industries, who had informed the Minister that they would be delighted to seek certification in the Malaysian Timber Certification scheme, but what they needed to help their exports was certification in the FSC scheme. Who knows? But more and more people noticed that the tide was turning.

Many industry federations remained unconvinced. The director of the UK Timber Trade Federation wrote that “The wheels [of ITTO] are beginning to turn and momentum is building up and I believe that the proposed Standard of Forest Stewardship will only act as a diversionary brake” (Letter of October 1991). Mr. Terence Mallinson, director of the Forests Forever campaign, wrote twice in 1992 to the Oxford Forestry Institute, expressing his opposition to the FSC proposals. “.. it concerns us very much that Tim Synnott.... may have been led into something which could rebound on us all”, “We do not approve of the FSC and its charter, since it is clearly in breach of sovereignty and defies any current or proposed forest management programmes” (Letters of 1991). These positions looked increasingly misguided as time went by.

Over the next few years, forest products companies reacted differently, according to how difficult and costly it would be to obtain their raw materials from certified well-managed forests. Industries that owned no forests faced greater problems than those that obtained at least some of their raw materials from their own forests. Those buying from many separate forests faced greater problems than those buying from a few. Those that

obtained their raw materials from relatively controversial sources (that by now included British Columbia, Russia and much of the tropics) faced greater problems than those buying from regions where forest management was relatively well-accepted by society (as in much of Western Europe).

The attitude of industries towards certification was notably different between countries with a significant degree of self-sufficiency (France, Germany, USA) where certification was slow to gain a high profile, and countries that are highly dependent on imports (Belgium, Netherlands, UK) or exports (Canada, Finland, Sweden) where certification had a high profile from the start.

Prior to September 1997, arguments over certification were driving ENGOs and forest owners in the UK into opposing camps. ENGOs were pushing hard for a scheme to be developed under the FSC banner, while forest owners refused to accept either the need for or the benefit of certification. The landscape in the UK changed when first Poland and then Sweden had significant forest areas certified and when FSC products from certified forests in Malaysia appeared in British stores. There followed over the next 18 months a process of inclusive negotiation.... As a result of the process, environmental and forestry groups have overcome barriers to co-operation and communication. ... There is a far better understanding of each other's concerns, and in place of dispute over the sustainability of UK forestry there is now a consensus and, importantly, a willingness amongst ENGOs to positively promote UK forestry as a sustainable activity. ...Forest Enterprise...went through a UKWAS assessment during 1999 and achieved FSC labeling in January 2000..... The exercise was of great benefit, aiding clarity of thought and a consistent approach across the organization. Importantly, it was a professionally satisfying experience. Forest Enterprise is a better organization as a result.

David Bills, Director General, UK Forestry Commission. 2001.

Chapter 6 FSC's early contributions to responsible forestry: FSC policies.

This section describes the origins and evolution of some of the most important policies developed by FSC. It covers the time-lines of these evolutions, and also some of the differences and conflicts that emerged along the way between interest groups and individuals. These policies are distinct from the technicalities and procedures of certification and accreditation, which seldom attracted much attention or controversy (except from the certifiers). On the contrary, these policies were aspects that directly related to forest management practices, and to the access of forest products into the market for certified products. They have often been highly controversial, and are all liable to continued change and evolution, responding to new information, new techniques and changes in public perceptions of responsible management.

These policies were developed with a wide range of procedures. Some were costly: the policy for Percentage Based Claims has involved a wide variety of technical committees,

advisory groups and commissioned reports. The revision of principle 9 and the development of the concept of High Conservation Values, was a classic example of a successful, formally-constituted FSC Working Group, that did its work in three days in September 1998, followed later by the work of other technical committees and the HCVF Toolkit project carried out by ProForest. FSC guidance for plantations and the interpretation of Principle 10, and the policy for Percentage Based Claims, have also required wide involvement of stakeholders around the world, since the range of issues and controversies covers all aspects of forestry. In contrast, very little funding was available for the development of other policies: for chemical pesticides, the ILO Conventions and GMOs.

6.1 Percentage Based Claims.

FSC's starting position was that 100% of a certified or labeled product would come from certified forests. There was no suggestion that this would be FSC's permanent position, but it was the point from which accreditation and accredited certification took off in 1996, with the labelling of simple solid-wood products.

The concept of 100% certified content in products made of solid wood parts or fibres was included in the first draft of Guidelines for Certifiers in July 1993, and in the version circulated at the Founding Assembly. By October 1994, the full Guidelines for Certification Bodies were being drafted, and FSC staff started to explore policies for products with less than 100% certified content.

The first concerns were to make provision for recycled paper, reclaimed timber and similar ingredients that were considered to be environmentally and economically responsible components. The board considered this for the first time in December 1994, and agreed that if a forest product contains waste, salvaged or recycled materials, it would potentially be certifiable. Several proposals were discussed, including minimum certified contents, but no resolution was made at that time.

Already, many industry representatives, including FSC members, were complaining vigorously about the difficulty or impossibility of producing industrial furniture, particleboard and paper based on 100 % certified wood. The dimensions of the problem, and the dangers of not addressing it, gradually became clear. For me, the key encounter came when I went with Steve Howard and Hannah Scrase to the Caberboard factory in Scotland in September 1995.

The manager explained that his raw materials came from hundreds of municipal and industrial recycling schemes, from thinning operations in thousands of different properties, and waste from countless sawmills, all derived from a long list of forests that varied every year. He recognized the public concerns about forest management quality, and also the right of industries to seek evidence of good management, but he knew that several years would pass before most of these forest properties would be certified. He was willing to start down this road, but only if he could get some recognition for the progress made towards fully certified raw materials, while continuing to use some raw materials from uncertified forests. After this visit, a policy for Percentage-Based Claims was a priority, that came into operation two years later.

The issue was covered by a secretariat discussion paper in April 1996, and another more detailed paper in October 1996. At this time, labeling of products was well under way, but

the use of the logo was still restricted to 100% certified products. The October paper determined the scope of the issue, and identified several options for further discussion, including various options for the maximum proportions of recycled and uncertified virgin ingredients. Another draft of the discussion paper was circulated in December 1996, with a range of options and secretariat recommendations.

The discussions and controversies started, as intended, with the circulation of the discussion papers. Some members were strongly opposed to any dilution of the 100% rule, feeling that the credibility of the logo and the organization would be irreparably damaged by anything less. Others felt that it was essential to allow uncertified raw materials, but disagreed about how much, and how to calculate it, and how to present the information.

However, by then, it was clear that many industries (like Caberboard) had made their calculations and realized that they could not hope to quickly reach 100% of certified raw materials. Mixing certified ingredients with recycled ingredients would not solve their problems; they needed to include some uncertified raw materials for some years to come. It would not be worth their while to start pressuring their suppliers, adding to costs, and risking conflicts, while getting no benefit or recognition.

We concluded that a highly restrictive policy would have advantages in the simplicity and credibility of the message, but would enormously weaken FSC's ability to achieve its mission of promoting good forest management through certification. If major industries decided that certification was not for them, because of this particular FSC policy, there would be fewer incentives on forest managers to improve their management and to seek certification. The board meeting in January 1997 noted that "FSC's mission is primarily to promote forest stewardship, not certification. If FSC insists on 100% certification, to the disadvantage of good forest stewardship, FSC is failing in its mission". The board agreed to set up a Working Group on this issue, and as a start agreed that certified products could contain a certain proportion of "re-used" materials.

Work continued on this issue through 1997. An internet forum opened in April. In June, a draft Policy Paper was circulated, written by Matthew Wenban-Smith and me. It proposed a limit of 75 % for recycled ingredients, and two options for the virgin ingredients: either 100% certified, or up to 30 % uncertified. On 1 September, we circulated a revised policy, recommending the 75% and 30 % limits, with examples.

These two percentages and the various raw materials could be applied in various combinations. A product with the maximum of recycled fibres would contain only 25 % of virgin fibres. A product with the maximum of uncertified virgin fibres (30 % of the 25 %) would contain only 17.5 % of FSC certified fibres. This was the origin of 17.5 % as the absolute minimum of certified raw materials, which continued through several later revisions of the policy. This low figure alarmed many people, but it has served as an achievable target for many hundreds of industries. It has been copied by other non-FSC certification systems, and it has worked successfully to spread the demand for good forest management and credible certification

In September, the board approved the new policy for immediate implementation, and it was published on 20 October 1997. Labels and market claims based on percentage contents started shortly afterwards. The first FSC-labelled paper product to reach the

market was Kämmerer wallpaper, which received its chain of custody certificate from SGS in February 1998.

All parties recognized that this first policy would soon need revision, in the light of practical experience. A technical committee and a stakeholder panel was set up, and the working group held its first meeting in London in March 1998. A long list of tasks and issues was divided among the members, who developed a series of technical reports, completed by September.

The findings and case studies of the technical committee were collated in a major report by Matthew Wenban-Smith and Anna Jenkins in October 1998. The technical committee met again in Stockholm in December 1998. Its task was to develop technical specifications to fully implement the current policy, to resolve inconsistencies and fill gaps. Their report of January 1999 did that, and also provided clarification for the policy where needed. In addition, they reviews the policy overall, and recommended greater flexibility in its implementation.

The board approved several of the committee's specific recommendations, introducing changes to definitions, categories and technical procedures without altering the percentage limits. The new policy was published on 24 February 1999, replacing the first policy of October 1997. The changes enabled several industries and products to make use of the FSC-logo, from which they had previously been excluded. This was well received by the trade overall, although it annoyed industries that had successfully battled their way to satisfying FSC's requirements only to find several of their competitors following on the fast track.

However, these changes were not expected to be definitive or permanent. WWF-Belgium funded another round of policy development. In April, a draft discussion paper by Veerle Dossche was widely circulated for comments. It described the problems and implications of the current policy, and included a questionnaire, but did not propose solutions or make recommendations. It was revised according to the comments received, with the help of Martin Walter, as a contribution to a workshop after the 2nd General Assembly in June 1999.

By now, the main controversy was over how to handle recycled materials. From June to December 1999, there were intense discussions, recognizing that the percentage of recycled wood and non-wood fibres was steadily increasing in many industries, not only in paper but also in a wide range of furniture and other items made with chips and fibres. Alan Knight and others strongly argued that FSC must organize the certification or endorsement of recycled products. The difficulty was that the FSC mission focussed on endorsing management systems that are demonstrably beneficial, and the products that come from those management systems; whereas the essence of recycled wood and paper products was that no-one usually knew the sources of the raw materials, much less whether those sources were well managed. It was widely recognized that recycling, in general, is A Good Thing, but it is also well known that many individual recycling chains have high economic costs (especially for extra local or long-distance transport) and sometimes high social costs (as when waste wood is collected for industrial recycling, and no longer available as free fuelwood for poor families). The negative as well as the positive implications of recycling were well documented in the study of the Paper Cycle by IIED (1996).

Finally, in January 2000, Anna Jenkins and I decided that the only way through this conflict was to abandon any endorsement of the merits or beneficial results of the recycling system or materials, and concentrate on a simple claim that the raw materials are certified as recycled. This would need a new standard and definition of the numerous products that can qualify as recycled, and the systems of recycling, as well as additions to the certification and accreditation systems, and a new label for recycled products. The end result would be simple: A certification body would state that the item is recycled, and FSC would confirm, 'tis. Problem solved.

The FSC board agreed in principle to study the issue of endorsing recycled products, in the sense of developing systems to support claims that specific products are genuinely recycled, complying with agreed standards and definitions. Put simply, the message might mean that "FSC endorses the claim that this product is recycled, or contains recycled material", without any claim that the product is socially, environmentally or economically beneficial. The recycling controversy then died down. In due course, this option was put into practice, and companies can now adopt policies to use, for example, recycled paper, with confidence that the product is what it claims to be.

Anna Jenkins organized informal meetings in London in August and September 1999 to discuss the percentage policy and to suggest new solutions, and drafted a series of discussion papers. The board decided some of the next steps at its meetings in November 1999 and again in February 2000. These were built into new policy drafts, revised and circulated for discussion from December 1999 to March 2000. Finally, the new approved Policy Document was circulated on 15 May 2000, replacing the second policy of February 1999, allowing an increase in the recycled content of labeled products.

This version of the policy lasted longer than the others, although it was not long before discussions started on how to revise it. The absolute minimum content of FSC-certified ingredients remained set at 17.5 %, unchanged since 1997, but greater flexibility is allowed in the composition of the other ingredients. Crucially, the percentage certified content must be shown on the label. These and other changes have given much greater flexibility to industries, while retaining an incentive to obtain certification in the forest and in the chain of custody.

6.2 Chemical pesticides

The Principles and Criteria have included restrictions on the use of pesticides, since the first draft in July 1991. The wording has remained unchanged since the P&C were formally accepted by the FSC members and board in September 1994. The wording expresses a principle of responsible management that most stakeholders have been willing to accept, with varying degrees of enthusiasm. However, the P&C do not give clear and specific guidance, and this started to cause problems.

The use of pesticides in certified forests is covered by Criteria 6.6 and 10.7 of the P&C. They include an unambiguous prohibition of pesticides classified by the World Health Organization as types 1A and 1B. All the other phrases are open to a variety of different interpretations. Even the term "chlorinated hydrocarbon" was found to mean different things on different sides of the Atlantic.

The controversies did not emerge when the first plantation certificates were endorsed by FSC. Plantation certification has generated controversies from the start, but the earliest

controversies mainly concerned social issues (as in Indonesia and Brazil), or economic issues (as with the teak plantations of Flor y Fauna, Costa Rica). However, the extension of certification into the large plantations of Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and the UK soon produced controversies over environmental issues, including the use of some specific pesticides. By 1998, the development of policy guidelines and interpretation moved up to a high priority.

The first major exercise was carried out in the UK, where pesticides of many kinds have been used in plantation programmes for many decades, including warfarin, unmistakably in WHO Class 1B. Anna Jenkins produced a report, for the FSC UK Working Group, to guide certification decisions in the UK (Jenkins, 1998).

During 1999, I started work on a detailed guidance document for FSC as a whole. Initially, I used a wide variety of published lists, including the chemicals formally approved, licensed or prohibited by different national authorities, ranging from the European Commission to the US Environmental Protection Agency. The first drafts of the policy document included lists of prohibited chemicals, backed up by the official positions of these authorities.

Fortunately, the FSC US initiative decided to contract a guidance document from specialists. Even more fortunately, the terms of reference given by FSC-US, and the positions adopted by the authors, matched very well the overall needs of FSC. (Radosevitch et al, 2000). The final report of the consultants proposed clear thresholds and limits for each of the terms and categories identified in the P&C, together with the identification of many of the forestry chemicals that are reliably reported in the scientific literature as reaching or exceeding these limits.

As a result, during 2000 and 2001, the FSC draft policy document took on a new form, based on setting thresholds for toxicity, persistence, bio-intensification or accumulation. Lists of prohibited chemicals were included, with the reasons for the prohibition.

The draft policy documents created little controversy, since most stakeholders welcomed the clarifications. Some members felt that the restrictions were much too weak, while others felt that they were too strong, but overall it was clearly an important step forward. It defined the thresholds for forbidding certain chemicals and formulations, but it did not suggest that the permitted chemicals were for free and unrestricted use. On the contrary, all pesticide-use must follow rules and regulations, and be documented by the manager and monitored by the certification body. It set the thresholds according to measurable and published impacts in a way that makes it possible to change the thresholds and the status of individual chemicals when new information becomes available. The policy is stricter than official regulations in most countries, so it has the effect of reducing the use of pesticides, and eliminating the use of the more dangerous pesticides, in certified forests.

The first challenges to the policy arose from arguments that certain pesticides were needed, and uniquely suitable, for certain specific situations, even though correctly banned for most purposes. FSC needed to find a way of challenging silvicultural systems that had become heavily dependent on certain pesticides, while allowing some flexibility in the face of emergencies or serious management problems.

We developed a mechanism for evaluating, approving and defining exceptions, called derogations, to justify the use of certain chemicals under specific conditions, a process

that is well established in the Organic Agriculture movement. The first of the derogations were considered ad hoc, case by case, by the full FSC board. They included warfarin in the UK, under controlled conditions, by officially licensed operators, used against the exotic grey squirrel, implicated in damage to many species of indigenous trees and in the decline of the native red squirrel. They also included three chemicals used to control rodent vectors of the deadly Hanta virus in forest camps in Chile.

At the end of 2001, the board set up a committee with defined powers for evaluating requests and granting derogations for specific chemicals under controlled circumstances, when satisfied that their use is justified. After three years of drafting, the final version was approved in July 2002, my last month on the staff of FSC.

6.3 Principle 9: Maintenance of Natural Forests and High Conservation Values.

Principle 9, as endorsed by FSC in September 1994:

Maintenance of Natural Forests: Primary forests, well-developed secondary forests and sites of major environmental, social or cultural significance shall be conserved. Such areas shall not be replaced by tree plantations or other land uses.

Criterion 9.1. Trees planted in natural forests may supplement natural regeneration, fill gaps or contribute to the conservation of genetic resources. Such plantings shall not replace or significantly alter the natural ecosystem.

Criterion 9.2. The use of replanting as a technique for regenerating stands of certain natural forest types may be appropriate under certain circumstances. Guidelines on the acceptable intensity and spatial extent of tree planting will be addressed in national and regional forest management standards to be approved by the FSC. In the absence of such national and regional standards, guidelines developed by the certifier and approved by the FSC will prevail.

FSC was founded with nine Principles and their Criteria, approved by a ballot of the Founding Members in September 1994. By December 1995, when Principle 10 was endorsed, it had become clear that Principle 9 and its criteria were the least satisfactory. The Principle was clearly important, and it limited certification where natural forests and other important areas were converted to other vegetation types. However, both of the criteria referred mainly to matters of tree-planting, and provided very little that a certification assessor could use to determine whether or not a manager was in proper compliance with the principle itself. Moreover, with the approval of Principle 10 for plantations, its purpose was unclear.

The Principle itself gave protection not only to natural forests, but also to other sites of major significance. The criteria gave no guidance as to how these sites should be identified and managed to ensure compliance with the principle. And FSC's position was still unclear in the long-running debate about how much special protection should be given to tropical forests, old-growth forests, virgin forests and other high-profile ecosystems.

As soon as Principle 10 had been endorsed, work started immediately on a new version of Principle 9. The work initially focused on the issue of conversions, which seemed to be the main point of the principle. An article on "Conversion issues" appeared in FSC Notes (Synnott & Ervin 1996), asking for suggestions and comments. Suggestions from FSC members in fourteen countries were collated and abstracted by Ervin in time for the first General Assembly (Ervin, June 1996), with a new draft for Principle 9, called Maintenance, Enhancement and Restoration of Natural Forests. The way was now opened for two years of drafting and redrafting.

Immediately after the General Assembly, a "Conversions Working Group" held a meeting, open to all who were interested. The meeting drafted three more possible versions of P9, and the report of the meeting suggested a fourth (Ervin, 1996a). One of these versions included, for the first time, the phrase "high conservation values". The meeting called for a clear definition of the phrase. Over two years later, this phrase was the keystone of the new principle.

Another draft by Ervin was published in FSC Notes No. 4 in December 1996, under the title "Maintenance, conservation and restoration of primary, natural and semi-natural forests" (Ervin 1996b). It included the phrase "high biodiversity value", but it did not yet include the broad concept of conservation values adopted later, including the environmental and cultural elements.

Again, numerous comments were received, and Jamie Ervin drafted another version of P.9 in August 1997, considered by the board in September. The board then asked me to carry out editorial changes. I produced another draft in November 1997, and again in December 1997 and January 1998. Another version was drafted by staff and board members during the board meeting in January 1998, and widely circulated.

By now, it had become clear that this continuing process of consultations and redrafting was not leading to good solutions, and was getting bogged down. In March 1998, the board committee met in London to examine the comments and suggestions received so far, in a 32-page report prepared by Matthew Wenban-Smith. During the board meeting in Sweden in May, the board decided to set up a formal FSC WG to revise Principle 9.

The board and staff had already decided, in 1997-8, that all future FSC Working Groups should have clearly defined structures, composition and terms of reference. So, for the first time, detailed terms of reference were provided to this group, determining their decision-making procedures, and the next steps.

Two FSC members for each sub-chamber were appointed by a process of self-selection, coordinated by two board members and approved by the board in May. They meet in Chetumal, Mexico, in September 1998, and were provided with a compilation of almost all the successive drafts from 1996 to 1998 (FSC 1998).

The meeting was a signal success. A new draft P9 was proposed, under the title "Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests". Every part was endorsed by the group, usually with a full consensus, mainly unanimously, or in some cases with a maximum of one vote opposed.

A few days later, the recommendations of the working group were presented to the board meeting in Oaxaca (FSC 1998a). The board decided to accept the recommendations in full, including new Criteria 6.10 and 10.9. A postal ballot was organized in November, and the new Principle 9 came into formal effect at the board meeting in January 1999.

The new Principle, Criteria and definitions were clearly a major step forward, and a great relief. They went some way to removing the arguments about giving special status to broad categories such as Virgin Forests, and made it clear that the areas that should have special attention should be those with certain defined values and characteristics.

Principle 9: Endorsed by FSC in January 1999.

Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests.

Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes which define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of the precautionary principle.

Criterion 9.1 Assessment to determine the presence of the attributes consistent with High Conservation Value Forests will be completed, appropriate to scale and intensity of forest management.

Criterion 9.2 The consultative portion of the certification process must place emphasis on the identified conservation attributes, and options for the maintenance thereof.

Criterion 9.3 The management plan shall include and implement specific measures that ensure the maintenance and/enhancement of the applicable conservation attributes consistent with the precautionary approach. These measures shall be specifically included in the publicly available management plan summary.

Criterion 9.4 Annual monitoring shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to maintain or enhance the applicable conservation attributes.

Definition: High Conservation Value Forests are those that possess one or more of the following attributes:

- a) forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant
 - * concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia); and/or
 - * large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance
- b) forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems
- c) forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control)
- d) forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health) and/or critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

This principle and definition recognize implicitly that all forests have conservation values, often many of them. Good management aims to maintain all these values, and certification provides a credible guarantee that they are being maintained. But mistakes can happen. Some conservation values are exceptionally important, and merit exceptional measures and a higher level of guarantee, to protect them from damage. When an exceptional value is identified, extra measures must be applied, including annual verification by the certifier. However, that was not the end of the problem. The Working Group recognized the need for guidance and instruction to ensure that the new Principle was implemented coherently and consistently, and to monitor and evaluate the results.

Guidance was urgently needed for forest managers, and for certifiers trying to assess compliance, and for standard-writing groups trying to develop indicators and verifiers. The new Principle focused attention on the phrase High Conservation Value Forests, so it was still possible for many stakeholders to argue that all tropical forests, or all natural forests are obviously High Conservation Value Forests. All four of the Criteria refer to conservation attributes, but these are described in the definition of HCVFs, tucked away in the glossary. There was still plenty of room for ambiguities and conflicting interpretations.

In the months following the adoption of the new Principle 9, the FSC staff and board worked out how to move forward, and obtained funding from Greenpeace and WWF-US. At the General Assembly in June 1999, we announced the formation of an Advisory Panel for the Implementation of “High Conservation Value Forests” and the “Precautionary Principle”. The panel was made up of four (initially five) forest scientists, from Brazil, Canada, USA, and Sweden.

The panel started work in early 2000 by requesting certification bodies, national initiatives and others to submit the kinds of questions and problems they had encountered in implementing the new Principle. The panel met in California in August, and produced a report that was widely circulated (FSC, 2000), as a consultation document. The results of the consultation were discussed at a meeting in Oaxaca in November 2000, during the Annual Conference. The panel report was revised, and distributed again in March 2001 (FSC, 2001).

The panel report provided excellent guidance on how to identify the existence and importance of high conservation values, including indicators and verifiers of such values. However, much of this guidance was imprecise, e.g. “The presence of one or more of the following may suggest that the forest is a HCVF”. Moreover, it did not provide guidance or indicators for confidently verifying compliance with the four FSC criteria, in the form needed by managers, certifiers and standard-writers.

The panel intended to produce a third and final version, on the basis of comments received. In the event, no other draft was produced. After the FSC panel coordinator resigned, this approach ceased.

Almost at once, work started on another approach. After discussions with FSC and donors in Sweden, ProForest took the initiative with a project proposal for a “High Conservation

Value Forest Identification Toolkit" (Nussbaum, April 2001). By November, agreements had been reached and work started. The key objectives of the project included clear and practical guidance on How to identify HCVFs and What to do with HCVFs, with practical field indicators, in the format and language needed by certification and standards. The first draft to go into general circulation came out in December 2001 (Synnott, Jennings and Nussbaum, 2001), as a discussion paper.

One of the advances made at that time was the separation of the key elements of HCVFs, as defined in the glossary, into six separate High Conservation Values. Each HCV has its own characteristics, importance, indicators, and management requirements, and in turn each can be given indicators and verifiers of compliance, to determine that each one present is maintained or enhanced. This was an example of the reductionist approach that has often been helpful for FSC, when faced with complex situations: such situations can often be broken down into their separate component parts, each with a suitable solution, taking care that the separate solutions, when integrated and taken together, also address the full complexity of the problem.

Since December 2001, several other drafts and at least five full reports have been produced by ProForest (for example, Jennings et al. 2003). These provide a comprehensive basis for handling the issue, and are all freely available on the ProForest website. These publications were intentionally designed for a wide range of users and systems, not exclusively for FSC certification or standards. This has had the great benefit that many other initiatives, including other certification systems, have adopted and adapted the same concepts, adding an important tool to the armoury of forest managers.

The toolkit and its derivatives help forest managers, standard-writers and certifiers to deal with forests where special and exceptional features exist, whether occupying the entire forest management area or tucked away in some small corner. For the purposes of certification, any forest management unit containing even one small HCV is classified as a High Conservation Value Forest, which brings into play the extra features of consultation, maintenance or enhancement, and annual monitoring. However, the burden of these extra features is determined by the size and importance of the HCV. They will affect only those parts of the forest, and those aspects of management, that affect and ensure the maintenance of the HCV.

So far, there is no FSC-endorsed version of the toolkit, nor FSC guidance specifically for certification bodies or national initiatives HCVs. When this is produced, the long process of revising Principle 9, started in 1996, will have reached a conclusion.

6.4 Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

The first official version of the P&C included a prohibition on the use of GMOs in certified forests, and a definition of GMOs that now looks like poor science and worse grammar. They give the impression that FSC is institutionally opposed to GMOs, which is not an entirely correct impression.

The proposal to include this prohibition and definition was made at the meetings of the FSC P&C Working Group in Florida in May 1994, but there was no agreed statement explaining or justifying the prohibition. The official reason why FSC prohibits the use of GMOs in certified forests is simply the fact that the great majority of FSC founding

members voted in favour of the proposed P&C. However, remembering the discussion, I recall two main lines of reasoning.

One line of argument against GMOs was expressed by people who were already involved in the debate about agricultural GMOs in Europe and N America. Serious concerns were already growing about possible biodiversity and social impacts of GMOs in farming. Many of these concerns potentially applied to GMOs in forestry. This line of argument has continued and grown in force over the years.

The other line of argument came from the belief that forestry companies were not showing much interest in GMO trees, so there would be no immediate problem with a simple prohibition. This belief was mistaken, because research into GMO trees was already under way. This was coupled with belief that, by the time GMOs became important for forestry, there would be comprehensive international agreements and reliable, effective means of avoiding the environmental and biodiversity risks. This belief was equally mistaken. Many countries have introduced regulations and licensing systems, but there is not yet a scientific consensus, much less public confidence, that these systems can avoid gene transfer and cross-pollination between crops and wild plants.

The prohibition is therefore not based on an institutional objection to GM technology as such. The objection is that the technology is not well understood, and the consequences unpredictable. While there are clearly many potential benefits, there are also clearly many potential risks, environmental and social. All this requires more research, in proper isolation. This research should not be carried out in forests where the risks may be brought about by the research plants themselves, and certainly not in a managed forest that is certified as being environmentally responsible.

To clarify the confusion caused by the poor definition of GMOs in the P&C, work started in January 1999 to draft guidelines and a position paper. This work was encouraged by a motion passed at the 2nd General Assembly, calling for a clearer definition and a full policy on GMOs. Drafting and consultations continued through 1999 and early 2000. The policy and interpretation was approved by the FSC board in May 2000 (Synnott 2000).

Endnote The pesticides policy is an example of how an important policy, with a direct impact on forestry practices, can be developed with minimal funds, no formal FSC Working Group, and at a time of considerable stress in the FSC. In contrast, the policies and guidelines on Principle 9, HCVFs, SLIMFs, social policies and plantations, have required an array of working groups, committees, commissioned studies and formalized consultations. The essential difference is that pesticides, GMOs and the legally endorsed ILO Conventions all have a definable or technical core, and are subject to specialist knowledge. As soon as FSC developed a guideline or interpretation that was well founded on a technical base, and was also in harmony with other FSC policies and principles, the membership generally found it easy to accept. In contrast, HCVs, the status of communities and small-scale producers, and the role of plantations, all have wide-ranging impacts on almost every aspect of forestry, social values and politics. Consequently, the longer, slower and more costly route is needed for developing good policies.

Numerous other policy decisions were made during FSC's first years that have had a profound effect on forming FSC's effectiveness and the quality of certified management. These range from the policies for Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), Small & Low Impact Managed Forests (SLIMFs), the ILO Conventions, and the special elements of

plantation management. Major efforts and controversies surrounded other policies and decisions concerned with the inner workings of FSC as an entity, or its relations with other organizations, such as Group Certification, relations with MTCC in Malaysia, and with LEI in Indonesia, and the Strategic Plan of 2000.

Many other issues loomed large in FSC at different times, causing arguments and reaching conclusions of varying qualities. These included, for example, the controversial certifications such as Leroy-Gabon, Flor y Fauna and Perum Perhutani; the endorsement of the Maritimes Standard in Canada that provoked such a rumpus south of the border; the Strategic Plans and the report of the Change Management Team; and the arguments over mutual recognition.

As time went by, along with the successes and triumphs, I also recognized a catalogue of errors and failures, including senior staff recruitment and team building, financial and business planning, the development of protocols or rules for Board, a failure to give enough priority to Finland, Malaysia, Ghana and some other countries, and a clear identification of FSC's "customers".

There is abundant documentation for them all, but the controversies now seem far away, and most of the dust has settled.

<p>"Of all dust, the ashes of dead controversies form the driest" Arthur Quiller-Couch, 1920, <i>On the Art of Reading</i>, Cambridge.</p>
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The work of the FSC has been described as an example of "Consumer Democracy" by Monbiot (2003, p. 59), "enabling the consumer to make an informed choice". When the "informed choice" to buy certified forest products is made by large number of governments, organizations and companies, the impact can be very great.

Mäntyranta stated correctly that " the aim of forest certification is to prove to the buyer of timber products that the timber used for them is derived from a well-managed forest" (Mäntyranta 2002, p.27). We recognize that certification is aimed not only at the buyers, and not only at timber, and that certification has had a steep and rocky learning curve, never free of risks and errors, but is fair to conclude that FSC is achieving this aim. The broader aim of promoting good forest management is something that takes much longer, with the development of public opinion, business practices and government policies. It is a long road.

FSC has now advanced fifteen years from the first proposals, and ten years from its start as an accreditation body. Its achievements, in the face of early opposition and continued controversies, have been spectacular. It serves as a model and an inspiration for other sectors, showing what can be achieved when negotiations involve every interested group, in good faith.

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