



Principles and Criteria Review

Briefing Paper on Restoration

Bonn, 04 November 2010

This paper was produced by the P&C Review Working Group to explain its approach to restoration in the revised Principles and Criteria and to address stakeholder concerns raised in relation to this approach. The paper will also serve as a basis for further discussions at the P&C Review Workshop on the 15th and 16th of November 2010. The P&C Review Working Group does not pretend that this could be The Last Word on the issue.

In line with its terms of reference, the tasks of the P&C Review Working Group are mainly:

- a. to clarify the FSC requirements, so as to reduce disparities in evaluations by ASI-accredited conformity assessment bodies;
- b. to shift the wording of Criteria towards outcomes where practicable; and
- c. to minimize the variety of interpretations found in national forest stewardship standards and national adaptations of the generic standards developed by the conformity assessment bodies.

Should you have any further questions regarding this issue, please contact Matthias Fecht at m.fecht@fsc.org

What is the issue as perceived by some FSC stakeholders?

The arguments raised by some people in the FSC environmental chamber in comments on or related to the draft revisions of the P&C may be summarized as follows:

"Restoration of natural forest has been a signature requirement of FSC since the Principles and Criteria were first published in 1994 (Criterion 6.3) and reinforced in 1996 with the addition of Principle 10 on plantations. P10 encouraged The Organization applying for or holding a FSC forest management certificate in saying that plantations "should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forest" as part of plantation management, and Criteria 10.1-10.3 provided additional detail.

"Criterion 10.2 has followed the Principle in using the advisory "should" in "The design and layout of plantations should promote the protection, restoration and conservation of natural forests, and not increase pressures on natural forests". In contrast, Criteria 10.1 ("The management objectives of the plantation, including natural forest conservation and restoration objectives, shall be explicitly stated in the management plan, and clearly demonstrated in the implementation of the plan") and 10.5 ("A proportion of the overall forest management area, appropriate to the scale of the



plantation and to be determined in regional standards, shall be managed so as to restore the site to a natural forest cover”) use the imperative “shall”. Applicants, certificate holders and ASI-accredited conformity assessment bodies have generally (always?) interpreted these Criteria as imperative requirements, not as recommendations.

“The report of the policy phase of the FSC Plantations Review (2006) recommended an active approach to prevent, mitigate and if needed remedy / restore for any environmental effects of its management on ecosystem integrity, where “its” refers to The Organization.

“The continued loss and degradation of forest globally should strengthen the case for FSC to require precautions against loss and degradation inside a Management Unit, and for The Organization to take greater precautions when risk of damage is greater. However, in some controversial cases, Organizations have not taken such precautions, have caused environmental damage, and have not restored degraded ecosystems. Therefore the P&C revision should make more explicit this key feature of the FSC system – restoration of degraded ecosystems.”

What is the response by the FSC Working Group?

While the revised P&C require repair of recent damage caused by The Organization (revised Criterion 6.8), they do not require restoration to some prior state before the ownership or management by The Organization; see the accompanying FSC Briefing Paper on Landscapes and Mosaics.

The WG has replaced the previous requirements in Principle 10 for restoration towards natural forest in plantations, which were often ecologically impossible or inappropriate, with requirements in Principle 6 for positive management of conservation areas.

In line with current thinking about the rapidity of anthropogenic climate change, combined with natural climate change, and the present unpredictability of the location, trend or direction, frequency and intensity of effects of climate change, the revised P&C promote management aimed at resilient forests which are more able to adapt to those effects; for example, shorter periods of rain but more intense rainfall and consequent flooding, more and stronger windstorms, longer periods of drought, less winter snow cover, longer growing seasons and so greater danger of pest epidemics. Criteria in revised Principles 6 and 10 therefore promote planning and management activities which favour enhanced biodiversity, habitat diversity and complexity of structure, together with greater connectivity between forest areas inside and outside the Management Unit to facilitate migration of both wildlife and tree genotypes.

For plantations, the revised P&C are more explicit about positive management of unplanted and unplanted areas, such as steep and rocky slopes, shelter belts, fire



breaks, riverine strips and wetlands. The aim should be to enhance perennial cover by vegetation.

Forest may be damaged by deliberate or accidental activities, including predatory or careless logging, arson or accidental fire, grazing and browsing or careless herding, and farming. Forest may also be damaged by natural causes, such as epidemic pests, lightning strikes, wind storms, landslides and floods. Pollutants from nearby farming or industry may cross the forest boundary. Habitat loss and over-hunting outside the forest may cause loss of pollinators and seed dispersers within the forest. Most management plans require checking for and prevention of damage, and restoration to the pre-damage state from activities of The Organization itself; these are normal management operations. The P&C generally specify maintenance and, where appropriate, enhancement of ecosystem functionality and the provision of ecosystem services [or environmental values – the WG is still debating the wording]. Principle 6 has been re-structured to follow a more conventional sequence of identification of potential problems (C6.2), with precautions against damage (C6.3), repair of environmental damage (C6.6), and repair of water courses and wildlife corridors (C6.7).

There is no universal principle to indicate why a forest should be restored to some assumed primeval state (for example, before the development of agriculture and Neolithic forest clearances), or to a pre-industrial forest, or in some countries to the assumed state before European settlement. For some people, restoration means a shift towards the state that they recall from images rather than from direct experience. Because of the lack of a meaningful universal target for restoration, the revised P&C generally avoid this term.

Moreover, even if restoration to a prior state was ecologically possible and financially feasible, anthropogenic climate change makes unlikely a reproduction of the climate conditions which were associated with that prior state of forest, so the restoration would be unstable and unsustainable. Thus, even if all human influence were to be removed, it would not be possible to restore a pristine forest. The Organization may choose to restore all or parts of a forest towards a previous state, but the P&C do not require this action.

The WG will insert more references to specific Criteria when a new version of the revised P&C is completed.

The WG suggests that FSC members should ask themselves two questions:

- a. Do you agree with / are you convinced by the argument in this paper?
- b. If you are not convinced, can we amend the wording of this Paper or the P&C to arrive at a mutually satisfactory understanding?
- c. If you do not think that we can simply edit the P&C wording, would you be willing to present a statutory motion to GA2011 in which you propose specific, Criterion-



related, alternatives and/or policy motion to request a formal Policy paper from FSC?”

Sources

The current Principles and Criteria: http://www.fsc.org/fileadmin/web-data/public/document_center/international_FSC_policies/standards/FSC_STD_01_001_V4_0_EN_FSC_Principles_and_Criteria.pdf

Draft 3-0 of the revision of the FSC Principles and Criteria (2010):
http://www.fsc.org/fileadmin/web-data/public/document_center/Current_consultations/FSC-STD-01-001_V5-0_D3-0_EN_FSC_P_C_Complete.pdf