Criteria and Indicators: Verification and Certification

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Menpekotasunik gabeko egiaztapenaren premia du basoaren gestio eramangarriak. Baso-gestio eramangarria garatu ahal izateko prozesuak gobernuen menpekoak dira, eta nazioarteko eremukoak izan daitezke, edo ez. Irizpideak hainbat alderditan oinarritzen dira, hala nola legezkoak, ekonomikoak edo ingurugiroari dagozkionak. Txosten honek baso-egiaztagiriaren erabileraz dihardu: helburuak, alternatibak, egiaztagiria eta egungo baldintzak praktikan.

Giltz-Hitzak: Menpekotasunik gabeko egiaztapena. Lege - ekonomia - ingurugiro alderdiak. Baso-egiaztagiria.

Hay necesidad de verificación independiente en la gestión forestal sostenible. Los procesos para el desarrollo de criterios de gestión forestal sostenible son procesos gubernamentales de ámbito internacional y no internacional. Los criterios tienen que basarse en aspectos distintos como los legales, económicos o medioambientales. Este informe comenta sobre el uso de la certificación forestal: fines, alternativas, certificación y condición actuales en la práctica.

Palabras Clave: Verificación independiente. Aspectos legales - económicos - medioambientales. Certificación forestal.

La vérification indépendante dans la gestion forestière soutenable est nécessaire. Les processus pour le développement de critères de gestion forestière soutenable sont des processus gouvernementaux internationaux et non internationaux. Les critères doivent se baser sur des aspects différents tels que des critères légaux, économiques ou d'environnement. Ce rapport étudie l'usage de la certification forestière: buts, alternatives, certification et condition actuels dans la pratique.

Mots Clés: Vérification indépendante. Aspects légaux – économiques – de l'environnement. Certification forestière.

OVERVIEW

This presentation aims to provide an overview of:

- the drivers behind the need to verify "sustainable forest management"
- current processes for developing verification systems
- the aspects covered by principles, criteria and indicators used for verification
- the application of third-party verification for forest certification

DRIVERS AND PROCESSES

The development of criteria and indicators for veryfying sustainable forest management (SFM) has been driven by two separate, but related, influences:

- the need for governments to demonstrate progress towards conservation of national forest resources
- market demand, in many cases stimulated by environmental and other cause-oriented groups, for products that originate from well-managed forests

The first influence has resulted in several regional and international inter-government initiatives to define what is meant by sustainable forest management and how to measure it. These include:

- Intergovernmental Panel on Forest (IPF)
- International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) Criteria for natural and planted forests
- The Helsinki Process for European countries
- The Montreal Process for non-European temperate and boreal forest (largely Pacific Rim) countries
- Tarapoto Proposal for Latin America
- Dry zone Africa Initiative
- Central American Process of Lepateriqué

As a result of these processes, several governments have defined criteria that aim at measuring SFM for reporting their progress towards reaching commitments. One such example is the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers Criteria, which responds to the Montreal Process.

The second influence has resulted in largely non-government initiatives both in national and international fora for criteria that can be used to verify that forest management meets defined standards and, in cases, to make claims about the origin of forests products. National criteria include:

- the *Canadian* Standards Association Sustainable Forest Management Standard (CSA-Z809)
- the *Indonesian* Ecolabelling Institute (LEI) Forest Management Standard
- *Finland* - SFM Certification Scheme
- *Norway*- Living Forest Programme
- *United States*- American Forest $ Paper Association (AF&PA) Sustainable Forestry Initiative
- *Portugal* and *Spain*- Ibisus- the Iberian Declaration
- *Brazil*- Cerflor
- *New Zealand* Forest Accord and Principles for Plantation Forest Management

The first four criteria are aimed specifically for use in forest certification, while the others are intended for guidelines or self-verification.

Initiatives that have resulted from international fora include:

- The Forest Stewardship Council´s Principles and Criteria for Forest Management
- ISO/TR14061 on Forestry

The Forest Stewardship Council Principles and Criteria (FSC P&C) is the only set of criteria that is used as a standard that explicitly permits both certification of forest and labelling of woods products. The international initiative has resulted in the establishment of several national working groups that aim specifically to develop national or regional standards complying with the P&C and related to local conditions. Such groups have been established in Sweden, the UK, Denmark, Canada, Bolivia and the US. In addition, some national initiatives, such as Norway´s Living Forests, aim to develop their programmes so that they are compatible with the FSC P&C.

ISO/TR 14061 is a "Type 3 Technical Report" formally called "Informative Reference Material to assist forestry organisations in the use of ISO !4001 and 14004 Environmental Management Systems". It has been developed by a working group in the ISO 14000 system to facilitate implementation of ISO 14001, in particular providing information on SFM criteria and how to incorporate these criteria into an ISO 14001 environmental management system. Unlike ISO 14001, CSA Z809, and the FSC P&C, it is not an assessable standard.

PRINCIPLES, CRITERIA AND INDICATORS

Principles, criteria and indicator are used to define SFM to different degrees of detail. These are defined as follows:

- *Principles*: A key element of a standard which defines its scope and serves as a functional guide to action.
- *Criterion*: An element that defines and clarifies a principle, relating it to forest practices.
- *Indicator*: A qualitative on quantitative variable which can be measured and/or described so that it is possible to determine whether or not a defined level of performance has been achieved, or performance tracked over time.

The processes described above have all defined principles and, to varying degrees, criteria and indicators for SFM.

While there are differences in detail between these sets of criteria, all share common features, focusing on four main areas:

- Social Acceptability
- Economic Viability
- Environmental Sustainability
- Forest Management Quality

SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY

Acceptance of forest management by society is determined partly by national and local laws and regulations, and partly by what local people and the international community ex-

pect. These may not always be the same, especially where customary practices and rules apply, or where national laws fall short of international expectations. Principles relate to:

- national forest policies
- national land use planning and allocation
- property rights and land use tenure
- regulatory and legal compliance
- long-term commitment to SFM
- impacts on local communities (including indigenous people)
- impacts on and treatment of employees

The first two aspects are concern with forestry at the national level and cannot be addressed by individual enterprises, while the latter three can be addressed both by governments and enterprises.

ECONOMIC VIABILITY

Economic viability relates to a forest providing a range of goods and services in the long term with proceeds re-invested and local populations benefiting to the extent possible. Key aspects are:

- a sustainable yield of wood and/or non-wood products
- maintenance of non-market services and benefits (air, water, recreation etc.)
- local processing and employment
- minimisation of waste
- economic and financial viability

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental performance generally considers the following aspects:

- Knowledge of environmental impacts, their prioritisation, and plans to address them
- Maintenance of biological diversity at the ecosystem, species and genetic levels
- Protection of representative ecosystems from all types of exploitation
- Soil and water protection
- Protection of rare, threatened and endangered species
- Avoidance (or reduction in use) of chemicals
- Disposal of used materials

FOREST MANAGEMENT QUALITY

Forest management quality deals with the information needed to make management decisions, the specification and performance of operations and the controls needed to assure quality. Key aspects are:

- systems for collection of information about the forest (stocking, growth rates, ecosystems, soils, hydrology etc.)
- documentation and updating of management plans, including specification of allowable harvest levels

- operational prescriptions
- operational monitoring and control
- forest health monitoring
- reporting systems

Some criteria sets place special emphasis on conditions under which natural forests (especially old-growth forests) may be exploited and forest plantations established.

VERIFICATION OF SFM PERFORMANCE

Verification of performance is a necessary part of determining progress towards achievement of SFM. Depending on its objectives, verification may be performed internally for management control or externally by second or third parties. It may be publicly reported with different levels of detail or maintained as confidential information.

Third-party verification of SFM is generally considered necessary if public claims regarding SFM are to be made. However, drawing comparisons between different situations and the use of different systems in similar situations remain contentious issues. Differences focus both on the politics related to each system and different perceptions of who has influence and control, than with the principles themselves, although some matters of principles still divide different groups. Typical reasons for lack agreement are:

- Lack of representation of a full range of stakeholder, including environmental and social interest groups, forest industry and private forest landowners, in development the standards and verification system.
- Global principles (such as the FSC P&C and regional-based criteria) are considered either to be too vague and general to be useful, or too specific and detailed, depending on one´s perspective.
- Existing and proposed verification methods cannot achieve measurable results while providing realistic economic benefits.
- The wide range of forest types within countries make local criteria difficult to apply, sometimes even in narrow geographical areas.
- There are disagreements about how much forest to set aside for biodiversity, posterity, preservation, watershed protection, etc., and how to do it.
- There are substantial differences in the forms of tenure and the socio-economic conditions among the countries and resolved.
- There are disagreements over how land resource tenure claims by indigenous populations should be resolved.
- There are disagreements on whether new agricultural, urban or industrial lands should be created from natural forest, and whether undisturbed natural forest should be managed for productive purposes at all.
- There are disagreements on the role of forest plantations should play, where they should be established and how they should be managed.
- There are disagreements on the role of genetics (especially clonal forestry and GMOs), pesticides, and fertilisers to enhance productivity of managed forest.

FOREST CERTIFICATION

Forest certification aims to improve forest management through market forces making use of consumer demand for environmentally-friendly products on one hand, and claims by

producers on the other, backed up by third-party verification that the producer is meeting the requirements specified by a recognised set of SFM Criteria. The intended result is either increased market share or a price premium.

While several of the systems outline above are aimed at certification of forests as a means of communicating the quality of forest management to consumers and other interest groups, only the FSC P&C aim to do this through product labelling.

Forest industry has in general been opposed to forest certification, seeing it as additional regulation and cost imposed on companies by environmental interest groups with little or no representation of either the industry or consumers. Principal arguments against forest certification are:

- It is limited effectiveness because no market demands exists for ecolabeled forest products and certification is a limited motivator to private forest landowners. Buyers´ groups are not arising spontaneously from concerned potential customer, rather as a reaction by traders and retailers to pressure from environmental groups.

- Environmental organisations have developed certification processes with virtually no involvement of forest industry or private forest owners in developed countries. Thus, industry and private owners tend to see certification as an NGO agenda to impose costs and performance requirements on them that are not imposed by their local societies or governments.

- Certification was originally conceived to help reduce tropical deforestation by causing developed world consumers to insist on certified wood products from the tropics. However, since most tropical deforestation is the result of land clearing, land conversion and fuel demands, certification will have little effect in reducing tropical deforestation.

- In industrial countries, other actions are considered to have greater impact, if lands are to be maintained under forests. These include tax policies, especially real estate and estate taxes which when added to urban encroachment, often compel landowner to subdivide, sell, and otherwise fragment the forest landscape.

- There is significant disagreement between NGOs and the private sector on the utility and efficacy of chain of custody which is a requirement for labelling. Where wood flows may involve thousands of forest owners and operators, chain of custody requirements may increase costs causing landowners to seek alternative revenue sources and remove their land from production, which in turn can increase harvesting pressure on undeveloped forest in other regions.

- Buyers groups are seen by some as impediment to free trade and contrary to antitrust legislation in some countries.

There has been an additional argument favouring ISO14001 certification over the FSC P&C. It should be emphasised that the former is a system standard rather than a performance standard and the two are complementary, together forming a strong combination that can lead to improved forest management.

Despite arguments against forest certification, many forest companies have shown increasing interest in ways to achieve it. As shown in the following table, there are now 113 FSC-certified forests in 22 countries with a total area of 7.3 million hectares.

Country	No of Forests	Area
Belgium	3	10,282
Belize	2	95,800
Bolivia	1	52,000
Brazil	5	161,978
Canada	1	19,184
Costa Rica	4	22,117
Czech Republic	1	10,441
Honduras	12	25,000
Italy	1	11,000
Malaysia	2	55,251
Mexico	4	117,211
Netherlands	4	12,084
New Zealand	2	45,025
Paraguay	1	16,000
Poland	4	1,724,729
Solomon Islands	9	1,076
South Africa	7	324,009
Sri Lanka	3	12,726
Sweden	8	3,155,900
United Kingdom	10	6,084
United States	28	1,429,742
Zimbabwe	1	24,850
Total	113	7,332,489