

FSC deliberations

Plantation Standards

Euan Mason

The Plantation Standards Technical Committee of the Forestry Stewardship Council National Initiative is creating a set of national standards that can be applied to plantations in New Zealand. The New Zealand Institute of Forestry has one representative (me) on the committee, and several members have been elected to either the indigenous standards technical committee or the National Initiative Working Group.

Contributions towards indigenous biodiversity and the use of chemical herbicides and pesticides are still the main issues under discussion.

Reserve requirements are now much more reasonable at 8% + riparian areas for a total expected area of 10-12% of a management unit. One item that is still debated is the status of indigenous forest outside the biodiversity contribution. One chamber wanted these areas reserved also, but this would mean that the Plantation Standards would be masquerading as standards for all forests, and so the other three chambers objected. It is reasonable to expect that indigenous forest outside of reserves is managed sustainably (from an ecological point of view), but this begs the question of how sustainability would be judged. In the absence of agreed FSC standards for indigenous forests, an approved plan under the Forests Act is the only definition available to us, but use of this standard is disputed by one chamber.

The pesticides issue is also proving difficult. Pesticides that a chamber wishes to see banned include Glyphosate (Roundup), Hexazinone (Velpar) and Triclopyr (Grazon), for instance. In some instances the evidence presented for environmental damage is flimsy, and the very low rates commonly applied in plantations are not being taken into account by some committee members.

The Economic Chamber has asked for an extra month for consultation before the 6th draft is released publicly.

At time of writing only draft 3 is available publicly from the NZIF web site (<http://www.forestry.org.nz>), but I'll post the 6th draft as soon as it is released. At time of writing I am seeking permission to post working draft 6 on the "Members only" area of our website. Members with email accounts will have been sent a username and password for that area.

Indigenous Standards

Roger May

The fourth meeting of the Indigenous Standards Technical Committee (ISTC) was held on the 9th May 2002. The meeting was attended by eight of the nine elected representatives from the Maori, Economic, and Social Chambers together with members of the Indigenous Forest Certification Steering Group (IFCSG). All meetings to date have taken place with no representation from the Environmental Chamber despite advance invitations.

The main items dealt with at this meeting were the continuing issue of Environmental Chamber representation, the role of the National Initiative Working Group (NIWG), discussion on an Alternative Proposal to the Plantation Standards Technical Committee (to avoid conflict between the draft Indigenous and the draft Plantation Standards), facilitation of the Terms and Definitions development process, the perceived status of the ISTC and the draft Indigenous Standards by the NIWG, harmonisation of Indigenous Forest Standards and Plantation Standards, and a number of funding, procedural, and communication issues.

The National Initiative Working Group (NIWG) has set up a new website with information on forest certification, contact details for National Initiative representatives, Standards documents and minutes, and links to other sites. The website is hosted by NZFIC and located at www.enlighten.co.nz/certnz_pending/.

International expert meeting on planted forests

An international expert meeting on the Role of Planted Forests in Sustainable Forest Management is to be held in New Zealand from 24-30 March 2003. The main objective of the meeting is to promote the role of planted forests and identify ways and reach consensus on ways to maximise their contribution to global sustainable forest management. The meeting will build on the outcomes of the first such consultation held in Chile in 1999.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry will host the meeting with the support of a number of other government agencies and the forest industry. A steering Committee comprising representatives of government, industry, NGOs, academic community, research organisations as well as the Institute of Forestry is overseeing arrangements for the meeting. Findings of the meeting will be presented to the UN Forum on Forests. MAF spokesman Don Wijewardana says that "the aim of the meeting is to reach conclusions and recommendations that recognise the important role planted forests play in global SFM as well as identify ways to address any key issues related to them. "An

additional objective for New Zealand", he says, "is to showcase New Zealand forestry. Given the large increase in the supply of wood in the coming years we want to ensure there are no impediments to market access on grounds of sustainability".

Organisers plan to invite around 100 overseas participants comprising both critics and supporters of planted forests including government, industry and NGO representatives. The meeting is sponsored by a number of countries and international organisations. They include Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO).

For further information contact Don Wijewardana, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, P O Box 2526, Wellington, Tel: 04 4989870, fax: 04 4989891, email: don.wijewardana@maf.govt.nz. Website: www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/unff-planted-forestry-meeting/