



## Principles and Criteria Review

### Briefing Paper on Preservation of Natural Forest

**Bonn, 04 November 2010**

This paper was produced by the P&C Review Working Group to explain its approach to and address stakeholder concerns raised in relation to the scope of FSC certification. The paper will also serve as a basis for further discussions at the P&C Review Workshop on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:m.fecht@fsc.org)

#### **What is the issue?**

The arguments raised in the FSC environmental chamber may be summarized as follows:

"The words 'preserve' and 'preservation' are not found in the current FSC Principles and Criteria.

"Natural forest, in the sense of pristine or primary forest which has not had significant human impact, is decreasing rapidly in most countries. In some cases, component species of animals or plants have such specific habitat requirements that they cannot sustain themselves against human interventions. In some other cases, the component species may largely survive but the structural complexity is lost after human interventions. Our understanding of the interactions between species and habitats in pristine forest is usually not sufficient to know what we would be losing when pristine forests are opened to human activities. As FSC supports the Precautionary Principle, it is a requirement that such forests should be maintained.

"HCV-2 in revised Criterion 9.1 covers the high conservation values of 'Large ecosystems that form major elements of the landscape, that are significant at global,



regional or national level, containing viable populations of most of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance'. Revised Criterion 9.1 covers identification and assessment of status, Criterion 9.2 requires development of strategies to maintain or enhance the identified HCVs, Criterion 9.3 requires implementation of those strategies, and Criterion 9.4 requires monitoring to check on the effectiveness of those strategies. Although Explanatory Note 1 to the Principle 9 itself is explicit about the application of the precautionary principle, the revised P&C do not explicitly confirm the need to retain pristine forest as such. However, a pristine forest may be or form part of a landscape assessed as HCV-3, having rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems, in Criterion 9. Or the forest may contain "large ecosystems ... containing viable populations of most of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance" (HCV-2), which The Organization is obliged to sustain.

"FSC-DIR-40-005 (July 2010) for Controlled Wood specifically mentions Intact Forest Landscapes as 'unspecified risk'. Such landscapes are defined in [www.intactforests.org](http://www.intactforests.org) as "an unbroken expanse of natural ecosystems within the zone of current forest extent, showing no signs of significant human activity and large enough that all native biodiversity, including viable populations of wide-ranging species, could be maintained". What is the position of FSC when the IFL Consortium of ENGOs designates an area as Intact Forest Landscape but there are legally valid Management Units in such an area with rights to make significant interventions such as logging? Are such Management Units then not eligible for FSC certification?"

### **What is the WG response?**

The WG **concludes** that proper / correct attention to the requirements of Criteria in Principles 6 and 9 will show how sensitive would be the component species, population structures and interactions to disturbance by management activities. Applying the precautionary principle may lead to a decision by The Organization that logging or similar interventions would affect the HCVs adversely, thus supporting the maintenance of the pristine state. That decision would be checked by the ASI-accredited conformity assessment body during evaluations.

The WG cannot offer an opinion about the implications of the mention of IFLs in the Controlled Wood document FSC-DIR-40-005.

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

- a. Do you agree with / are you convinced by the argument in this Briefing 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 the GA2011 in which you propose specific, Criterion-related, alternatives and/or a policy motion to request a formal Policy paper from FSC?



**Sources:**

The current Principles and Criteria (2002): [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](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](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)

FSC Directive on FSC Controlled Wood (2010): [http://www.fsc.org/fileadmin/web-data/public/document\\_center/international\\_FSC\\_policies/Directives/FSC-DIR-40-005\\_EN\\_Controlled\\_Wood\\_Directive.pdf](http://www.fsc.org/fileadmin/web-data/public/document_center/international_FSC_policies/Directives/FSC-DIR-40-005_EN_Controlled_Wood_Directive.pdf)