

Summary points of CPET Reference Board Meeting 27/11/2006

Attendees:

Bob Andrew, Defra

Claire Treliving, Defra

Sandy Shattock, Defra

Neil Judd, ProForest (CPET)

Kate Bottrill, ProForest (CPET)

Sofie Tind Nielsen, ProForest (CPET)

Saskia Ozinga, FERN

Andy Roby, TTF

Martin Gale, Confor

Apologies:

Beatrix Richards, WWF UK

Agenda items

The following agenda items were agreed upon for the meeting

- PEFC scheme review
- SFI scheme review
- MTCC scheme review
- CSA & FSC scheme reviews
- Reviews and Communication
- Local Authority engagement
- Policy uptake
- Audits of 'high risk countries'
- Category B
- AOB

PEFC Review

Summary:

PEFC had recently made changes to its scheme requirements and clarified its guidance on implementation. Significant changes included:

- Proposals for new national standards, and re-endorsement of existing national standards (undertaken every five years), can not be completed in the event of sustained opposition from a single interest group.
- An independent panel of experts composed of interest groups' representatives will review all assessment reports and will be able to halt endorsement by the PEFC Council if there is evidence that a national scheme is not compliant with PEFC requirements.

CPET judged these changes to merit a score of 1 for Criterion 1.3.3 which tests the credibility of the decision making procedures for setting standards. The Board agreed that this was a significant improvement to PEFC's internal governance controls and that in theory it would be much more difficult for national bodies to follow procedures that do not meet PEFC's requirements. However, some Board members remained un-convinced that these changes would have the desired effect on all the national bodies and advised Defra that for the time being in their view not all PEFC schemes did meet CPET criteria.

Defra indicated they would consider these recommendations and decide whether PEFC's changes merit confirmation of its continuation as assurance of legal and sustainable timber sources.

SFI Review

CPET had considered the comments and evidence submitted by FERN and WWF and accepted that some social interests were not party to standard setting and that the certification process was vague about what issues needed to be identified when consulting stakeholders on standard compliance. Accordingly, CPET had judged it appropriate to change the scores for criteria 1.3.2 and 2.4 from 2 to 1. CPET did not accept that any other score should be changed. FERN/WWF and Proforest agree to disagree on the SFI assessment.

MTCC Review

Defra and CPET had met with MTCC to discuss concerns over compliance with relevant laws and the chain of custody system. MTCC had made changes that require the FMU to comply with all relevant laws and require the assessor to adequately check the Government Removal Passes and forest checking stations. During a recent visit to Malaysia, CPET had also taken the opportunity to discuss MTCC scrutiny of the Removal Pass system in the field. CPET judged these changes sufficient to merit a score of 1 for assessment criteria 1.1.2 and 4.2.

The Board agreed that the chain of custody requirements seemed adequate or at least that they had not yet received any counter evidence. Not all members accepted that the requirements for legal compliance were adequate. In particular, one member remained of the opinion that MTCC still did not meet CPET criteria 1.1.1 and 1.1.2.

CSA and FSC scheme reviews

No major issues arose concerning either CSA or FSC.

Communications and review

It was confirmed that the next review of the schemes would be scheduled for May 2008.

It was agreed that the review reports would be published as soon as Defra made an announcement. Stakeholder comments and evidence would be published as soon as compilation was completed.

LA Engagement

Chatham House had been commissioned by Defra to look into the timber supply chain in the North East of England. The aim was to get 2-3 local authorities to sign up and promote (with the help of the North East Centre of Excellence and NETTA) responsible timber procurement in their area. Those authorities would then be used as case studies to promote good practice

to the wider public sector. Chatham House's involvement would provide an element of impartiality to the process and so lend credibility to the end results.

Policy take up

Sofie Tind Nielsen had joined the CPET team as a Project Manager to oversee the monitoring of government departments' implementation of the timber procurement policy. It was hoped that clearance for the work would be forthcoming in order for the programme to start early in the New Year.

In the light of Greenpeace exposés of probable illegal timber being used in a number of public sector construction projects it was suggested that the timber procurement guidance should include a new model contract condition requiring main contractors to check deliveries on site and reject unverified timber.

Audit of 'high risk' countries

The quality and reliability of certification in producing countries with poor governance was often open to question. This risked compromising the credibility of all forest certification schemes. No one scheme was immune to this risk. It was suggested that CPET should use its growing influence to encourage schemes to be more rigorous in their quality requirements for accredited assessors. The auditing process needed to be strengthened and possibly augmented by unannounced audits to lend the process more credibility.

Category B

Two guidance documents were produced by CPET for a) supply chain and b) forest sources and will be tested in a pilot study using volunteer organisations.

AOB

It was agreed that written declarations of interests should be made by each member of the Reference Board and lodged with Defra.

Next meeting

Scheduled for 5th February 2007 in Oxford

Defra – December 2006