

Summary points of CPET Reference Board Meeting 18/07/2006

Attendees:

Bob Andrew, Defra

Katharine Thoday, Defra

Claire Treliving, Defra

Neil Judd, ProForest (CPET)

Beatrix Richards, WWF UK

Saskia Ozinga, FERN

Andy Roby, TTF

Martin Gale, Confor

Annual Scheme Review

It was agreed that the comments/evidence received for each scheme would be published on the CPET website unless the author had submitted them in confidence; that included any comments/evidence that CPET had rejected and the reasons for rejection.

Preliminary Findings of Reviews

CPET's initial findings were that the CSA, FSC, SFI and PEFC schemes could continue to be accepted as assurance of compliance with requirements for legality and sustainability. However, some members of the Board were not convinced that the evidence justified this finding.

There was one major point of concern – the issue of schemes whose requirements for deciding forest management standards allowed national bodies to adopt procedures that could be inconsistent with each other and potentially jeopardise the necessary balance of interests.

On the matter of decision making – CPET Assessment criteria 1.33 – the debate centred on whether a partial compliance (score of 1) could be justified for PEFC, given the inconsistency between the PEFC Council requirements for consensus and the requirements of some national schemes that are based on alternative voting mechanisms.

The revised MTCC certification requirements revealed an apparent technical non conformity with the chain of custody criteria. MTCC would be consulted again to confirm the position. Subject to this issue being resolved, the MTCC scheme would continue to be accepted as assurance of legality. There was also concern about certification proceeding where there are legal challenges over land tenure and/or land use rights. On the matter of legal challenges the Board was split. Some members were of the view that commercial activity, on which livelihoods depended, should be allowed to continue until such challenges were resolved by national courts. Others believed that it was wrong to certify a forest as legally compliant if there was a chance that a court would rule against that finding in due course.

Much discussion centred on the perceived inconsistency between some scheme requirements and apparent performance in the forest. Members agreed that the Board should continue to discuss any potential opportunities for addressing these concerns.

It was agreed that Reference Board members should have more time to consider the issues discussed and submit further arguments either by correspondence or at a reconvened meeting on 07 September 2006.

Next meeting

Scheduled for 7 September 2006

Defra – July 2006