



Workplan for the completion of the national FSC forest management standard for Ireland

Public summary

Introduction

This workplan describes the process of the FSC National Initiative in Ireland (Irish Forest Certification Initiative, or IFCI Ltd.), which aims to develop an agreed FSC-accredited Forest Standard in Ireland by the end of 2009. An Irish FSC standard has been in development for several years in Ireland. This plan is to use the process described in FSC-STD-60-006 (draft 4-5) to build on both the past several years' work within the NI and on the progress which has been developing in the National Initiative over the past several months, and to finalise a standard for submission to FSC. The main components of the plan are: continuing to increase interest in and membership of the FSC NI in Ireland and developing a Standards Development Group (SDG) to improve, test in the forest, submit for additional public consultation, and finalise the draft Irish FSC standard.

Objectives of the standard

The standard proposed to be developed is a forest management standard for the Republic of Ireland.

Support for national standard development

The development of a national FSC standard is supported by a host of forestry and forest owner consultancies and organisations, forest management companies who are currently certified, several environmental NGOs including the two largest in Ireland (BirdWatch and An Taisce), forest community groups, academics, and a variety of recreational users of forests. These supporters represent most of the stakeholder groups as listed in FSC-STD-60-006 (FSC standard *Process requirements for the development of Forest Stewardship Council standards*).

Existing standards

Woodmark and other Certification Bodies (CBs) currently use generic standards adapted for Ireland in their audits in Ireland. However, for reasons of national history, honouring the immense effort in the long history of the FSC NI in Ireland, and because a draft standard has been partially developed, it is most appropriate for this process to be brought to completion in accord with the provisions of FSC-STD-60-006.



It is intended begin by analysing the international Criteria. Georegional standards, generic standards of CBs currently operating in Ireland, and the most recent Irish draft and related submissions made during consultation, will serve as reference for the work of the SDG. As two consultations have already taken place, this plan includes a single, widely publicised 60-day consultation on the revised standard.

History

The Irish NI (IFCI) has been through some turmoil in the past several years for a variety of reasons. This conflict, and particularly the manner in which it was perpetuated and portrayed, has not only driven formerly active members of IFCI away from the NI but also discouraged involvement by other interest groups.

An effort was made in late 2007 by ASI and FSC to bring agreed representatives from Ireland to Bonn to develop a plan of progress. Due to actions by an IFCI member, only two of the three agreed representatives attended Bonn in early November, 2007. Neither of the two members who could attend were members of the National Initiative. These meetings resulted in a plan which focussed on increasing membership and communication. These main issues are taken into account in this current plan.

As the minutes of the March 28, 2008, ground rule-setting IFCI Steering Committee meeting explain:

The Report of the Delegate Meeting with FSC, presented at the Limerick Meeting in December, proposed suspension of IFCI work (bar registration of new members) for 6 months whilst processes and programmes were reviewed by professional staff appointed by FSC. However, following the resignation of Heiko Leidekker at FSC, no funding to support this proposal was available. At the close of the meeting 2 stakeholders volunteered to flesh out the Delegate proposal. IFCI, in the absence of any decisions at the Limerick meeting and because stakeholders clearly wanted to move forward, met in January to consider how to address the concerns raised that led to the Delegate meeting and following it. Key decisions were taken including: 1) that IFCI needs to address how to broaden IFCI membership and, to support this, 2) that IFCI needs to agree ground rules to ensure that its business is conducted in a constructive and safe environment, and 3) the appointment of a Steering Committee member to liaise with the 2 volunteers working on the Delegate proposal. This meeting (28th March 2008) is for the Steering Committee to establish ground rules in order to accommodate all stakeholders in a safe working environment.

A main aspect of the ground rules is agreement to leave the past in the past. The IFCI SC is focussing on an inclusive and constructive way forward.



Recent progress

'Safe space' for discussion between different interest groups

The FSC process has at its heart negotiation between different interests. However, the history in Ireland was of differences of opinion being handled in a manner which had a negative effect on both the process and individuals. Therefore, the IFCI Steering Committee (SC) has agreed to create clear boundaries of behaviour to permit all interest groups to participate in constructive discussion. Ground rules incorporating both increased transparency and boundaries for disallowing overly negative or damaging actions have been developed (see Annex 1). The purpose of these is to create a 'safe space' for discussion of the issues in sustainable forest management in Ireland.

These ground rules are posted on the IFCI website, along with minutes from SC meetings within a few days of each meeting. It is planned to use a distilled version of these ground rules at the AGM in August. It is further intended that the Standard Development Group will function using these ground rules and independent, professional facilitation.

IFCI is also in the process of adapting the existing FSC Australia dispute procedure (with permission of the Chair of FSC Australia) in order to create a more robust and explicit method for dealing with any future disputes.

Increasing membership

The conflict in Ireland is often framed by some who describe themselves as excluded. This description of the problem is effective, as of course exclusion is in contradiction of what FSC is about. However, it is not accurate: there are no obstacles to any individual or organisation becoming members of IFCI. Even a former participant who has actively damaged reputations of individuals has only been asked to withdraw his accusations. The IFCI SC is taking the strong stance of welcoming all participants to join and become involved in a constructive manner. Hand in hand with this is an active promotion of membership, through media opportunities, a new website, and through personal contact with identified stakeholders and former participants.



Workplan

FSC Ireland aims both to promote FSC and to develop an Irish forest standard. The SC has developed a workplan following FSC-STD-60-006 (version 4-5), which is described in detail below. A Gantt timescale is shown in Annex 2.

It is envisaged that the work of IFCI will continue to be in cooperation with an experienced and independent facilitator, Dr. Harriet Emerson. This has been a very successful structure for the Steering Committee in 2008 and allows constructive resolution of discussions even when contentious.

At least one member of the IFCI SC in each chamber will serve on the SDG, permitting overlap and good lines of communication and supervision.

Improved ties with FSC through more regular contact with the Network Liaison Officer, submission of reports, and representation at relevant FSC meetings is also planned.

Facilitator

The work of developing the standard will be facilitated by three people, each responsible for certain skill strengths. The meetings and process will continue to be facilitated by Dr. Harriet Emerson. Technical issues will be facilitated by the Steering Committee (through the Chair as well as other members), and coordination and communication will be facilitated by a proposed part-time staff person, the Coordinator. These organisational relationships are outlined in Annex 3.

The division of the role of the Facilitator as outlined in version 4-5 of 60-006 will be as follows:

- 1) **Facilitator**
 - a) Facilitate meetings; replaces role of Chair during each meeting
- 2) **IFCI Steering Committee/Chair**
 - a) Set up SDG
 - i) SC Chair will chair SDG, and there will be at least one SC member from each chamber on the SDG.
 - b) Draft ToR for SDG
 - i) Supervise work of SDG and ensure coherence with FSC IC policy and practices
 - c) Assess and respond to complaints about content
- 3) **Coordinator**
 - a) Central contact and communication
 - i) Maintain records as per 60-006
 - b) Contact for Consultative Forum (CF)



- c) Summarise comments from CF
- d) Collate information for review and revision within 3 years of approval of standard
 - i) When the SDG ceases work, maintenance of records along with other NI records
- e) Communicate about complaints which will be addressed by SC.

Steps

Announcement of standard development process

The commencement of standard development will be announced during the summer of 2008, leading up to the IFCI AGM and an upcoming visit by Yale researcher Dr. Connie McDermott's visit in September (to cover post-holiday period). The announcement of the work will be enhanced by general publicising of FSC in Ireland.

Publicising FSC in Ireland

FSC in Ireland and the work of developing a national standard will be publicised using events such as the IFCI AGM in August with a field trip to a certified forest site of interest, and public lectures on FSC as a tool given by independent researcher Dr. Connie McDermott of Yale during a proposed visit in September. The aim of this publicity is both to capture the emerging consumer choice movement and to increase public awareness in Ireland of the work of FSC. The objectives are to increase membership in IFCI and to encourage submissions during the public consultation phases of the standard development.

The fact that Ireland is at the bottom of the WWF table with regard to implementing FLEGT further gives an opportunity to publicise the importance of FSC forest certification on a global scale.

The revised IFCI website (irishforestcertification.com) will also be a tool for educating members of the public about responsible forest management with regard to both forest management in Ireland and imported timber from abroad.

Define Standard Development Group (SDG)

The SDG and possible participants will be identified formally at the IFCI SC meeting and AGM on 23 August 2008. As the agenda for IFCI SC meetings is sent to members two weeks prior to the SC meeting, there will be ample time for input by members.



The SDG will be composed of at least 9 members with a minimum of three in each chamber. Academics and other experts will be further identified who can provide technical assistance on particular topics, with special attention to topics which have been contentious in past work on an FSC standard in Ireland. The proposed qualification of understanding FSC will be fulfilled through information from SC/Chair (with help from FSC Policy and Standards contact and FSC NI Network Liaison) as well as possible training by a FSC Policy and Standards staff member. SDG members will be required to agree to use the IFCI Ground Rules (see Annex 1), and meetings will be facilitated by Dr. Emerson.

SDG work

Following the AGM, identified stakeholders with specific technical expertise will be invited to participate in the SDG or as resource people with technical expertise in a particular issue. Other interested parties will be invited to participate at the CF.

The development of the standard will be in accordance with FSC-STD-20-002. In addition, the SDG will be provided with a compiled document, which will represent for each P&C the content of the UK FSC standard (as the most similar both with regard to a high proportion of plantation forestry, in climate and regarding habitat types) combined with the Woodmark (and other CB) Generic Standard used for Ireland, other recent FSC-accredited standards such as the Danish standard, and the most recent IFCI Draft 3 and submissions made during the consultation phase of that draft in late 2006/early 2007.

The objectives of using this combination of documents as a starting point are to:

- Provide a framework and geographical regionalisation by using the accredited UK standard;
- Provide examples from the UK of how some of the same hot issues, such as clearfell, were addressed;
- Include a more recently developed standard from a country which also has a high proportion of plantations (Denmark);
- Facilitate the incorporation of some of the work already done by IFCI and stakeholders in developing the current IFCI draft.

The use of this background material is not intended to be limiting to the work of the SDG but to permit focussing of the time of the SDG on the gaps or hot issues as they arise.

The SDG will take the current revisions of the FSC Principles and Criteria into account as revisions become finalised.



The SDG will base its work on scientific evidence and will communicate on technical issues with expert resource people, primarily academics or other researchers.

The SDG will work intensively for 4 months on the revisions to the standard, which will then be tested in the forest by trained and/or experienced auditors. The forest-tested draft will be revised by the SDG in consultation with resource people. This revised draft will be open for public consultation from the Consultative Forum and revised again following receipt of submissions. Stakeholders who make submissions will receive individual responses from the Development Officer addressing the points which were incorporated into the standard and/or giving evidence-based references for why points/suggestions were not incorporated.

The SDG will work with the professional facilitator and record its decisions on wall charts, which will be photographed and made available via the IFCI website. (This procedure has proven to be useful and effective for recent SC meetings.)

This process will permit submission of a national standard to FSC by September 2009 (see Annex 2).

Communications plan for standard development process

Communications will involve meetings, e-mail, individual phone calls, and written communications. Public consultation will be announced through the NI website, public media, and e-mails to NI members and members of the consultative forum.

Consultative Forum

A Consultative Forum (CF) will be set up for public consultation phases. The formation of the CF will be advertised on the FSC Ireland website, through relevant organisations, and through the publicity of related events. FSC Ireland members and all other interested parties will be welcome to register as members of the CF. All meetings, including CF, will be facilitated using the existing FSC Ireland ground rules.

The Coordinator will record any comments and the response of the SDG. Where the input from the CF addresses a technical issue, the expert opinion of relevant resource people will be consulted.



Conclusion

This workplan takes into account the problems identified in 2007, together with the progress made since then, and the FSC standard development guidelines. The FSC Ireland SC is inspired by the idea that a structured, transparent and constructive process could lead an Irish standard being submitted to FSC before the end of 2009. FSC Ireland is determined to put the past behind and look forward to a positive and constructive future resulting in the agreement of an FSC-approved forest standard for Ireland.



Annex 1: IFCI Ground Rules

IFCI Steering Committee Meeting Friday March 28th 2008, ENFO, Dublin

AGREED Minute of the Meeting

Attendance: Sasha Bosbeer (GMIT), Pat Hennessey (IFA – observer), Mick Keane (Coillte), Declan Little (Woodlands of Ireland), Ruth McGrath (VOICE, IPCC), Anja Murray (An Taisce), Geraldine O’Sullivan (IFA), Peter Sweetman

Apologies: Fran Igoe (SRFB), Monica Muller, Tony Mannion (SIF), Pat O’Sullivan (SIF)

Facilitation: Harriet Emerson

Background:

The Report of the Delegate Meeting with FSC, presented at the Limerick Meeting in December, proposed suspension of IFCI work (bar registration of new members) for 6 months whilst processes and programmes were reviewed by professional staff appointed by FSC. However, following the resignation of Heiko Leidekker at FSC no funding to support this proposal was available. At the close of the meeting 2 stakeholders volunteered to flesh out the Delegate proposal. IFCI, in the absence of any decisions at the Limerick meeting and because stakeholders clearly wanted to move forward, met in January to consider how to address the concerns raised that led to the Delegate meeting and following it. Key decisions were taken including: 1) that IFCI needs to address how to broaden IFCI membership and, to support this, 2) that IFCI needs to agree ground rules to ensure that its business is conducted in a constructive and safe environment, and 3) the appointment of a Steering Committee member to liaise with the 2 volunteers working on the Delegate proposal. This meeting (28th March 2008) is for the Steering Committee to establish ground rules in order to accommodate all stakeholders in a safe working environment.

Discussion of Ground Rules:

It was AGREED that the Steering Committee’s Ground Rules should include the following areas:

- The purpose of the process
- Who should/may participate
- How decisions will be made
- How meetings will be conducted
- Safeguards to protect stakeholders
- The process schedule



- Facilitation issues

It was further AGREED that the Steering Committee will present its agreed Ground Rules to the full IFCI membership, in the hope that these could provide the basis for Ground Rules for the wider membership to use in all IFCI business which will be discussed and agreed at a General Meeting at a later date.

AGREED Ground Rules

The Ground Rules AGREED are as follows:

Purpose of the process:

- The purpose of the process is to develop a FSC-approved standard for Irish Forestry, to advance sustainable forest management in Ireland through the FSC certification process, to engage the general public and relevant interest groups in the development of the Irish FSC standard.

Participants in the process:

- The participants include all stakeholders in the economic, social or environmental sectors.

Decision-making:

- The Steering Committee makes decisions by consensus or, failing that, by a majority of votes of the elected members within each chamber who are present. (Consensus is defined as a lack of sustained objection.)

Conduct of meetings:

- Steering Committee meetings will be notified by email to all IFCI members at least 21 days in advance, and the agenda similarly pre-circulated (14 day before the meeting).
- Decisions taken at meetings on pre-circulated agenda items will be considered agreed by IFCI.
- Issues raised under AOB are for decision at a subsequent meeting.
- Agreed decisions taken on agenda items at meetings will be written up prior to the closure of the meeting and issues raised under AOB will be noted and these will be circulated by email promptly to all members. PDFs of flipcharts of discussions at the meeting will also be posted on the website promptly.
- If SC members feel the need to consult with constituents about a pre-circulated agenda item, decisions on that item may be deferred for a maximum of one SC meeting.
- Steering Committee members represent their/ their organisation's views in meetings and will present the views of other IFCI members (not on the SC) in their Chamber where requested to do so.
- Correspondence requiring Steering Committee discussion received more than 14 days prior to a Steering Committee meeting is notified on the pre-circulated Agenda. Such correspondence arising less than 14 days before a SC meeting is brought to the meeting for decision by the Steering Committee as it sees fit.



- A record of all correspondence conducted to and from IFCI is kept and is available to IFCI members on request at the following Steering Committee meeting.
- We, or our alternate, will attend meetings in person at this stage in the process to assist in building positive relationships and working together to best effect. We will revisit use of other ways of participating in the future when better relations between participants have been established.
- At least two meetings a year will be held in locations outside Dublin with major public transport nodes to encourage participation.

Safeguards for stakeholders:

- We, and our alternate, will
 - agree to stay away from establishing hard positions and express ourselves in terms of our own/ our group's interests and needs, and the outcomes we wish to realise;
 - make a conscious and sincere effort to refrain from unproductive arguing, venting, or narrative within and outside meetings, and agree to use our time in this process to work towards what we perceive as our fairest and most constructive agreement possible;
 - learn from the past but NOT dwell on things that did not work in the past, instead we will focus on the future we would like to create;
 - NOT make personal attacks or revisit previous interpersonal conflict;
 - respectfully challenge one another by asking questions for the purpose of gaining clarity and understanding;
 - speak up if something is not working in the process;
 - point out if the facilitation is not being impartial to person or neutral as to outcome;
 - turn off mobile telephones in meetings but opportunities for breaks to deal with telephone calls will be provided;
 - listen actively;
 - NOT interrupt, will speak one at a time, and make brief and concise contributions with no speeches;
 - use respectful language;
 - NOT use disrespectful body language and non-verbal communication;
 - give all participants equal time to speak;
 - recognise that, even if we do not agree with them, each participating group/ individual is entitled to their views, and respect this;
 - try to understand each other group's interests and needs;
 - speak from our own experience and position, using "I"/ "we" and NOT "they"/ "you";
 - address other stakeholder by their first/given name (not "he"/ "she");
 - NOT attribute comments/ statements within or outside meetings;
 - attend at least 1 in every 2 meetings, and attend to all other relevant business, in a timely manner, and participate fully in the process;



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- maintain participation in meetings and NOT leave the meeting repeatedly;
 - provide a synopsis of the organisation and/ or the individual to include our objective, how we operate, who we represent, and the structure of the organisation (i.e. staffing, decision-making);
 - NOT dispute SC decisions in public;
 - sign up to abide by these Ground Rules.
- On the first instance that a Ground Rule is broken the person concerned is given a verbal warning by the facilitator/ chair.
 - On the second repeated infringement of a Ground Rule, this is recorded in attributed form in the meeting minutes.
 - On the third infringement of a Ground Rule, the person is asked to leave while the meeting is suspended and this is also minuted.

Schedule:

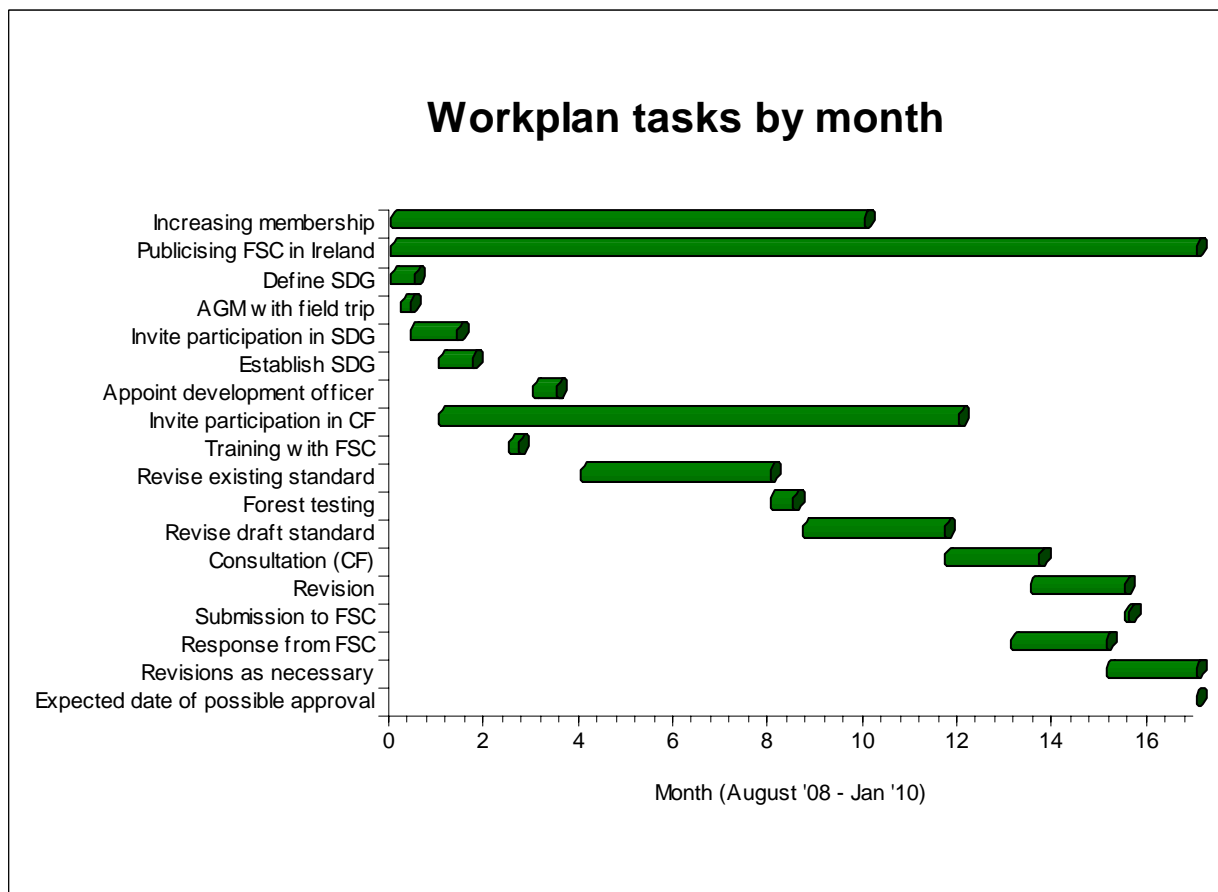
- We will agree a schedule for delivery of our main objective (i.e. the Forestry Standard).

Facilitation:

- We will use independent facilitation in all meetings where this is possible.

** A matter for discussion when dealing with substantive matters in development of the Forestry Standard was noted. This involves establishing a means of assessing the relative strength of information received/use in the process.*

Annex 2: Gantt diagram with timescale



NB: A first draft of a standard was published in 1999, and a Draft 3 of an Irish standard was published in October 2006, on which submissions have been received.

Annex 3: Organisational flowchart

