

----- Message from FERN re response to 1<sup>st</sup> draft -----

Answers from Saskia Ozinga Highlighted for clarity

From: saskia ozinga <[saskia@fern.org](mailto:saskia@fern.org)>  
To: pefcc <[pefc@pt.lu](mailto:pefc@pt.lu)>  
Cc: <[leontien@fern.org](mailto:leontien@fern.org)>  
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2004 9:14 AM  
Subject: Re: Fern report

Dear Ben,

Thank you for your response although, no doubt to the poor quality you judge our report to be, your response was not detailed enough to make many required changes to the report. Below a few answers to your questions, more in the attachment.

- more about the methodology  
To assess the 8 operational certification schemes on a number of issues that are seen as particularly relevant. These include: are minimum performance based standards available?; is the scheme transparent (i.e. are summary reports of certifications and standards freely available)?; is the standard setting process inclusive and not unduly dominated by vested interests)?  
I know you and many others believe that we only support the FSC but it is important to stress that it is not the FSC we want to support per se, but more that we believe these values are extremely important for any credible scheme and the FSC meets most of them. Although it is also clear the FSC's implementation is not always as it should be.
- who is being assessed,  
FSC, PEFC, MTCC, SFI, CSA, CERFLOR and Certfor
- who wrote the sections,  
Different NGOs in the different countries (Tim Cadman, Cristina Souteiro Timmer, Elisa Peter, American Lands, Sue Hume, IDEAL, Chris Lang, Sierra Club Canada)
- who is financing this report.  
FERN with core funding as well as some specific support from private foundations and governments
- Our concerns in our writing of 31st July 03 have also not yet been addressed.  
I believe where relevant these have been taken on.
- When you envisage a final draft will be ready and when you plan to publish  
24th of February is launch date of the report. The summary report will be on the web any day now. The case study reports no later than 24<sup>th</sup>
- Whether you will publish both the report and summary or only the summary and where.  
Only summaries in printed version, full reports on the web only.
- 3) The quality of the main report (written by your consultant) on which you have had to base your summary, is really so poor that it would be better to start again.  
I am sorry you see it this way.

Best wishes

Saskia

## PEFC Council Comments on Draft FERN Report (January 2004 version)

Dear Saskia

Thank you for sending this draft report to me for PEFC comment. I see my colleagues have sent you detailed comments on their national schemes so I will not cover them in this response. I also note that the "Peter" section has not considered any of our responses of 30<sup>th</sup> July 2003 and I respectfully ask you to therefore consider these and send us a revised draft when this basic correction work has been completed.

We see that only a very small proportion of our responses to the 17 questions specifically asked in July 2003 have been selectively incorporated and we ask you to revisit the answers again since so many of them (especially any positive points) have obviously been ignored in the summary report.

I believe all relevant comments have been taken on

The draft report is full of contradictions such as on PEOLG and performance criteria in standards endorsed by the PEFC council and we are amazed that the report makes such sweeping comments on the quality and variety of standards when its clearly stated that comparisons were beyond the scope of the study. Incidentally what is the scope of this study? How will your criteria be assessed and who set them? Are you applying a qualitative or quantitative analysis? Can we see the methodology you are applying please? It would be good to let your study subjects know how you are operating.

See email I sent you.

**Summary (written by Saskia?) based on Elisa Peter edited Report.**

Yes

### *History and Characteristics*

- There are numerous factual errors in the summary, which conflict with information presented on our website. As long as you don't point them out I can't change them
- No methodology or rationale for the methodology has been provided even though we raised concern about it in our writing of 30<sup>th</sup> July 2003.
- The foot notes contradict the text and often are factually incorrect. As long as you don't point them out I can't change them
- Had the consultant done her homework, she would have known that the PEOLG have always formed part of every PEFC assessment process since the beginning. As you know at the PEFC meeting in Wurzburg I clearly stated in my speech that IF the PEOLG were chosen to be part of the baseline assessment for any certification standard, it would be a lot better than the Helsinki Criteria which are not at all suitable for forest certification. The PEOLG are still only a reference, not a requirement. I was encouraged that the language about the PEOLG for assessing schemes is slightly stronger. However your comments make me doubt if this is the case in practice....
- The motivation section is someone's opinion. Reference? There are so many quotes at different forums that could be used as a reference that I have not mentioned any. I have numerous in my office from different people on your board as well as national co-ordinators and government and commission officials!

- The information on coverage is misleading and incomplete Some endorsed schemes which have FMU certification are not mentioned **As long as you don't point them out I can't change them**
- and if group certification is considered by the consultant as FMU certification, then there is no reason as to why regional certification is excluded (see PEFC Council requirement for Regional and group certification Annex3).
- We provided information on hectarage, which is in the footnote but is contradicted in the report. **Unclear to me.** Also it would have been more objective if the reasons as to why we don't collect information as FERN wants it had been given
- International Chain of Custody exists as Annex four and a new one is being developed – see response of 30<sup>th</sup> July 2003. **Taken on.**

### *Quality of Standards*

- Much about what is written here about the performance or system standards is conjecture and bold statements of opinion are made which bear no relation to the facts.
- Where is the evidence concerning variations in “quality”? As we understand it this from the text it was beyond the scope of the study. **No information look clear to me.**
- It is simply not true that indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights are not recognised. Please see PEOLG. **See problems in Sweden and Finland**

### *Standards setting procedure*

- The information on ENGOs is still wrong see PEFC national websites. **As long as you don't point them out I can't change them**
- What anecdotal evidence? **Taken out**
- I suggest you see ISO Guide 59 concerning participation. Both FSC and PEFC share “self exclusion” problems and your voluntary participation can't be manatory as you seem to imply should happen. See our response of 30<sup>th</sup> July 2003. **I have read all these guides but don't agree with your conclusion.**

### *Certification process*

- It is clear the authors or the persons dictating the criteria for this study lack understanding of normal certification processes and you should therefore refer to ISO Guides 62, 65 and 66 re stakeholder consultation, monitoring and complaints procedures, and ISO Guide 61 re accreditation procedures including complaints procedures. Please also see our comments of 30<sup>th</sup> July 2003 on this matter. **I have read all these guides but don't agree with your conclusion.**

### *Transparency*

- See 30<sup>th</sup> July 2003 response to your questions 4 and 5 which have not been incorporated. **Unclear to me.**

### *Label Protection and Chain of Custody*

- Factually accurate concerning label use and chain of custody procedures, but subjective statements such as “-and quite likely will not-“ should be removed. **Agree, have removed them.**
- Last sentence is incorrect. **Ok taken out.**

*Footnotes* – quite a few are missing. **Thanks. Have checked them and hope it is ok now.**

## **Conclusion**

We strongly urge you to consider the concerns in our comment of 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004. Looking at the quality of the work presented to date we suggest you consider starting again in an objective and more professional manner.

**Unclear what is objective and professional. Questions as; are summary reports available and are standards performance or system based are pretty simple and objective to answer.....**

We look forward to your revised draft report and if you have any queries concerning the above please do not hesitate to contact us.

Revised draft attached

PEFC Council  
Luxembourg  
26<sup>th</sup> January 2004.