Evaluation of Forest Management Certification Projects in Turkey in terms of Silviculture

Ahmet Sıvacıoğlu¹

¹Assoc. Prof., Kastamonu University, Kastamonu, Turkey. E-Mail: asivacioglu@kastamonu.edu.tr

Abstract:

In Turkey, forest management certification projects had started with Bolu-Aladağ sub-district project in 2010. After this project, Kastamonu-Daday project had started with district base. As regional directorate base Muğla Project can be stated here. FSC certification system for all this project has been used. Nowadays, 8 of projects of certification are being proceed by FSC accredited certification bodies. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is established to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world’s forests. FSC forest management certification is designed to provide a credible guarantee that all Forest Management Units included in the scope of the certificate comply with the requirements of the Forest Stewardship Standard specified on the certificate. Evaluation phase is based on adapted standards of the certification body. Also, observations of the means of verification for each Indicator of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard are important issues of evaluations. The objective of this study to evaluate the general certification process and clarify the silviculture related criteria to be followed by certification bodies when evaluating the forest management unit.

Key Terms: Certification, FSC, forest management, silviculture,

Introduction:

The local public and other NGO’s about forest and forestry reached sufficient strength to cause national and global concern in 1980s. Thus, some of the multilateral organizations like World Bank and FAO as well as national bilateral agencies, funded or managed numerous projects to improve forest management and protection. Also, some of initiatives such as the Tropical Forest Action Plan and the International Tropical Timber Organization were established to help improve the forest sector in the tropics (Synott 2005). Throughout the 1980s and in the 1990s, forests became an increasingly important issue for the NGOs. Friends of the Earth started in the mid-1980s with research linking UK timber companies with tropical deforestation (Dudley et al. 1995). Facing public concerns, manufacturers put labels on the products, claiming sustainability of their forest resources. For some of them, the situation became urgent in the late 1980s when journalists, the media and environmental NGOs started targeting retailers and their purchasing policies. In this case, many organizations and people contributed to the search for solutions. In a sense, all of them contributed to the eventual emergence of certification. Even the vigorous early criticisms of the certification idea contributed to success by identifying the key interests and needs of different groups. Up to the late 1980s, most national efforts to promote better forest management had concentrated on pressuring their own governments, foresters and loggers. Most of the bilateral and multilateral efforts in the tropics targeted the same groups. In contrast, three initiatives in northern countries developed the idea of using market forces to promote good forest management. They focused on the traders and retailers in timber products, and proposed to encourage the preferential imports of tropical timber from identifiable well managed forests. These three early initiatives (Friends of the Earth-UK, The Ecological Trading Company- ETC, The Woodworkers Alliance for Rainforest Protection-WARP) led in a direct line to the launch of global accreditation and certification in their present form (Synott 2005). Besides, other initiatives like WWF-International developed its plans for a campaign to promote sustainable forest management, and to concentrate the international trade in the products of sustainably managed forests worldwide (Elliott 1991). By July 1991, WWF-
UK had identified the potential role of an International Forest Monitoring Agency in helping to achieve this target. By May 1992, the target had “been broadened to cover the entire trade in wood and wood products worldwide” (The 1995 Group, other Buyers Groups and the Global Forest & Trade Network were emerging (WWF-UK 1992). In mid-1990, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) made a study of the need for certification, and the potential for TNC itself to become involved as a certifier. They consulted organizations involved in certification, trade and forest conservation. Most of them were highly skeptical about the need for certification, and whether any credible form of tropical forest certification was possible (TNC 1990). Shortly afterwards, The Homeland Foundation commissioned a study of the requirements for a credible certification system for forest products (Simeone 1990).

The first group to launch itself into forest certification was Rainforest Alliance, a New York NGO with four years of experience in rainforest areas. During 1990, a program was developed for identifying “well-managed tropical woods”, and evaluated logging concessions in Indonesia. In October, the launch of the Smart Wood certification program was announced. It was recognized the lack of “broadly accepted standards for particular tropical forest regions”, and developed a simplified system based on 1) watershed stabilization, 2) sustained yield production, and 3) positive impact on well-being of local people. Operations that demonstrated a “strong operational commitment to these criteria will be classified as well-managed (Ussach 1990a). This was the first third-party certification of forest management. In November 1990, Ussach (1990b) circulated a draft Rainforest Alliance “Criteria for Evaluating the Sustainability of Tropical Logging Operations”, which followed closely the recent ITTO Guidelines (ITTO 1990). These eventually evolved into the Smartwood standards. Rainforest Alliance confirmed that certification needed “independent third-party field evaluation” and, in due course, a broad agreement on the definition of “sustainable logging”. Thus, the concepts of third party assessments and widely agreed standards formed part of the original concept. Meanwhile, this early version of certification concentrated attention and encouraged the attention of other certification initiatives. Green Cross Certification Co (1991), (later SCS) and the Institute of Sustainable Forestry (ISF 1991), both of California, drafted their forestry certification systems in March 1991; Soil Association entered certification discussions with WWF in May 1991, and SGS was started making its interest in the same period (Synott 2005).

From January 1991, the Certification Working Group (CWG) took the initiative. Over the next year, most of the activities that led to the founding of FSC were associated with this group or its members. However, it remained quite informal, as a gradually expanding circulation list or forum, rather than a fixed membership. The first key event organized by the CWG was a Certification Meeting in San Francisco in April 1991 (Synott 2005) Rainforest Alliance and Scientific Certification Systems, and an explanation of the proposed International Forest Monitoring Agency. Much of the meeting was devoted to wide-ranging discussion of the concerns, expectations and questions about forest and wood certification, and to the contents of a Forest Stewardship Charter to which all certification groups could subscribe and adhere. The meeting also discussed the structure and governance of the organization that would monitor the certifiers for compliance. By now, it was clear that the new organization under consideration would not itself certify forests, but would be responsible for developing some sort of standard. A report of the meeting referred to the birth of “an umbrella certification watchdog/standards organization, tentatively called the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)(Simeone 1991).

**FSC (Forest Stewardship Council):**

Concerned about accelerating deforestation, environmental degradation and social exclusion, a group of timber users, traders and representatives of environmental and human rights organizations met in California in 1990.
The timeline of FSC started with this meeting. This diverse group highlighted the need for a system that could credibly identify well-managed forests as the sources of responsibly produced wood products. The concept of FSC and the name were coined at this meeting. Some of the purposes of FSC had defined as; to promote an adequate management of forests, providing the assistance required to achieve an environmentally appropriate and economically viable exploitation of natural resources, avoiding deterioration or affectation of such resources, of the ecosystems, or of the surrounding communities; to promote a viable management of the forest resources and a forestry production that preserves the environment; to promote the Principles and Criteria of responsible management of the world’s forests through the development of the forest management standards and a voluntary accreditation program. The FSC Principles and Criteria were first published in 1994. They were amended in 1996, 1999 and 2001. A comprehensive review commenced in 2009, which resulted in major revisions to the wording – although not the substance – of the Principles and Criteria being proposed in 2011 (URL 1; FSC 2007). All ten principles and criteria must be applied in any forest management unit before it can receive FSC certification. The Principles & Criteria apply to all forest types and to all areas within the management unit included in the scope of the certificate. The P&C are applicable worldwide and relevant to forest areas and different ecosystems, as well as cultural, political and legal systems. This means that they are not specific to any particular country or region (FSC 2009).

The FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship provide an internationally recognized standard for responsible forest management. However, any international standard for forest management needs to be adapted at the national or sub-national level in order to reflect the diverse legal, social and geographical conditions of forests in different parts of the world. The FSC Principles and Criteria therefore require the addition of indicators that are adapted to national or sub-national conditions in order to be implemented at the forest management unit (FMU) level. The FSC Principles and Criteria together with a set of such indicators accredited by FSC constitute an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard. In areas in which there is not yet an FSC-accredited Forest Stewardship Standard certification bodies may therefore carry out certification according to their own ‘generic’ standards, adapted to account for the local conditions in the country or region in which they are to be used with input from local stakeholders. The process of local adaptation of the certification body's generic standard is not designed to be a substitute for the process for developing an FSC regional, national or sub-national Forest Stewardship Standard. Nevertheless it allows examples of forest certification in a country. Such examples can be useful tools for explaining and demonstrating the potential benefits as well as the limits of forest certification. Finally, the discussion and consultation surrounding the development and implementation of a locally adapted standard can act as a catalyst for the longer and more complex process of developing an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard based on national debate and support (FSC 2009).

**Forest Management Certification Projects in Turkey:**

In Turkey, the forest certification projects started in 2010, based on FSC system. Now, 1380123 ha of forest area certified under 5 projects (FSC 2013). Firstly, this process had started with Bolu-Aladağ sub-district pilot project (7587 ha) in Turkey. After that the forest area of Kastamonu-Daday; Zonguldak-Karabük; Yenice; Kastamonu-Ayancık, Tosya, Taşköprü, Tosya, Araç; Muğla-12 FMU certified. And, the process is going on for the forest area of İstanbul-Demirköy, Vize, Kirklareli; Bursa-Yalova, İnegöl, Keles; Bolu-Aladağ, Bolu, Seben, Gerede FMUs. By the end of 2015 and 2017, 3.2 and 4 million ha of forest area want to be certified as to the strategic aim of General Forest Directorate (GFD). In the forest management units (FMUs) of RFDs, compliance to the 10 of FSC principle and 56 of FSC criteria has to be confirmed with more than 200 indicators and verifiers. In this certification process, in the scope districts and sub-districts...
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(FMUs), together with various works arising from standards, some activities such as; trainings on social, environmental-economic issues, monitoring/inspection/recording, set up a substructure have to be performed by the managers and other technicians. Incompliance to the FSC standards, shortfalls related to some issues raised during the pre and main assessments in Turkey.

Criteria related to Silviculture based on projects in Turkey:

There are 10 principles and 56 criteria under FSC certification system (FSC 1996). The indicators and verifiers can vary as to the adapted standard of FSC accredited certification body. In terms of Silviculture; under Principle 5 (Benefits from the forest), maintenance of the value of forest services and resources is assessed. In that context, the justification of regeneration techniques must be clear. Also, harvest level in regeneration and thinning areas have to clarified. Under Principle 6 (Environmental Impact) during the silvicultural interventions, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (EIA and SIA) have to done on site base. Protection of rare, threatened and endangered species during the interventions is another important issue under the same principle. Also, buffer zones along the streams have to be identified and mapped. In harvesting activity, on the regeneration compartments maximal allowed damage to natural regeneration must be defined.

Chemical pest management is the other important point under Principle 6 related to silviculture. There is no use of chemicals in natural forest land in Turkey. But, in forest nurseries some of the chemicals are used. As to the FSC pesticide policy, chemicals can be used in forestry except for FSC prohibited ones. Thus, in case of chemical using in a nursery the responsible forester has to show objective evidence that there is no FSC prohibited chemical using. To have the list of FSC prohibited chemicals and their safety data sheets is the main objective evidence on this issue. Thus, the responsible person for chemical depot must be familiar if there is any FSC prohibited chemical in depot or not. Also, H&S risk assessment and appropriate PPE have to be present for work with chemicals. As a last point, in case of chemical using handlings and disposal of chemical containers must be in accordance with ILO related code or best practice.

The Principle 10 which consist of 9 criteria fully related to plantations. Plantation defined by FSC as “Forest areas lacking most of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems as defined by FSC-approved national and regional standards of forest stewardship, which result from the human activities of either planting, sowing or intensive silvicultural treatments” (FSC 1996). As to criteria; objectives of plantation and plantation design and layout clearly identified. Soil cultivation methods have to clarified clearly. The best methods mitigating the risk of soil degradation and erosion should be used. Also, during the cultivation buffer zones along the streams have to be identified and protected. In machinery cultivation, the well-trained operator is the most important issue for mitigating/minimizing the environmental damage of the machinery cultivation. Not being respected of buffer zone, blocking of water streams with dirt and branches, during the soil cultivation activities will need to raise a CAR (Corrective Action Request). In plantation areas whenever possible, diversity in composition, supporting the natural process and biodiversity, protect natural patterns of vegetation in definite areas, species selection, monitoring of impacts are the other important issues during the assessment of plantations.

Besides; under Principle 6 (Environmental Impact) the criterion 6.10 related to plantations. In this criterion, the plantations evaluated as conversion. If the plantation, entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit; does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long term conservation benefits across the forest management unit; can be evaluated as comply with the standard.

References


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