Swedish credibility project

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Why should there be a credibility project in Sweden?

• The first national forest management standard 1998

• More than 12 million ha, 40% of the forest land

• Big individual certificates, one big group

• Sweden is one of the key countries in FSC
Critique on the FSC system in Sweden:

• NGO critique due to how the forests are managed and on the implementation of the FSC system in general

• The certification is not trustworthy
• The standards are not followed
• Forest companies doesn’t fulfill legal requirements
• The complaints procedure doesn’t work
• FSC is too complicated
• No-one has ever lost their certificate
• The forest companies are choosing their certifier
• More.....
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Goal is to increase quality and service in the FSC system in Sweden

1. Complaints
2. Capacity building/ stakeholder engagement
3. Standard development and enforcement
4. Assurance and ASI oversight

2-year project
FSC Sweden in collaboration with FSC QAU and ASI

Funding from FSC International (Strategic Investment)
1. Complaints

- Finalizing the complaints report
- Investigate how complaints are handled in Sweden
- Complaints procedures, a proposal to handle complaints
- Database for complaints
- Informal complaints
- (Smart phone app for registering complaints)
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One complaint case:

• Local community is unhappy about what has happened when cutting the forest
• Track damage
• Walking paths
• And more

• Contacts with the forest company
• Contact with FSC Sweden
• Facebook and press-release

• Actions of the forest company

• Actions of the villagers

• Conclusions
2. Capacity building/stakeholder engagement

- Best practice on complaints
- Contact with other standards owners, building a network in Sweden
- Alert system for FSC Sweden to handle problematic issues
How to make a complaint?

Studied webpages for complaint procedures of certification bodies, forest companies and FSC Sweden

Very varied result, from well formulated and easy to find to almost nothing

Difficult to understand:
• who to complain to?
• at which level of the certification body and the company?
• which certification body?
• the process

Conclusion: You have to be a professional!

Solution: Make a good procedure, make it user friendly, NO is a resource center
3. Standard development and enforcement

- Analyzing CAR statistics
- Analyzing auditability for key-indicators
- Test the new interpretation STD-60-006
- Calibration meeting
  - assessment of environmental values – key issue
  - key group consisting of forest owners, certifiers, NGOs being critical, FSC key members and staff
  - concentrated group
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Analyze CARs

• This seems straight forward but it isn’t

• Official Audit reports
• Certification cycle
• Lacking differentiation between a CAR for an action by a group member or by the group management

• 50% of CARs on Principle 6
• Very few to no CARs on Principles 2 and 3
• 50% of CARs on certified groups even if the area is only 20%
“No one has ever been de-certified”
Large FM-certificates: no one has been de-certified, close substantial efforts

For the smallholders in the group there are quite many members which have actively or passively been taken out of the group.

• Of 24 000 smallholder members in 14 groups about 50 members were more actively lifted out last year.

• No direct fraud, more of lacking plans, documentation etc.

• Several also leaving after an own decision or just disappearing out.
4. Assurance and ASI oversight

- Coordinated assessment planning contributing to ASI plans
- Identifying focus areas
- Feedback on accreditation criteria, dispute resolution system, forest management evaluations and other consultation
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Conclusions after one year

Good progress - through the project we are improving quality of the FSC system

To achieve credibility you need to have the system in order, proper procedures, readable documents and good services.

But there are also a lot of soft values in achieving credibility
• Get people to understand how the system works for example the one making a complaint needs to understand the process
• Meet the ones being critical and not only once
• Giving quick response to critical statements
• Network with certification bodies
Credibility for all forever?

The project works well together with other actions by FSC Sweden.

The new Global strategy gives good support for the further work.

Importance of One organization

Some parts will be ongoing, networking, complaints, calibration meetings and cooperation with QAU and ASI.