

Open Discussion

~Possible Alternative Certification~

Problem Statement from Dr. Tim (ACIAR Project)

- **FSC is expensive and far too complex for smallholder growers in rural community.**
- **What are the alternatives??**

Recent updates from the Auditors of FCS

- The FSC have made a decision to standardise the certification process, which is meaning that multinational companies in developed countries and small struggling companies in the developing world have to meet the same conditions.
- Most countries have an FSC committee or Technical Working Group that can make some adjustments to suit local conditions. Solomon Islands is one of the countries that does not and FSC have decided not to support a TWG but instead to leave development of the SI Standard to the auditors, effectively SI does not have a voice in the process.
- The level of compliance has become much harder with the additional measures contained in the Annexes adding a far greater burden on companies seeking certification.

Comments from Dr. Tim

- Eagon have de-certified, it remains to be seen if KFPL can continue with certification once the new standard is introduced. There is no possibility of certification for the smallholder growers that our project supports.
- FSC was set up to protect the worlds forests yet the loggers ship millions of cu m. of timber with impunity while the people who are doing the right thing are penalised by inappropriate legislation or denied certification altogether.
- FSC has lost relevance to SI and other developing counties, they cannot treat one of the UN Least Developed Countries and one of the recognised Small Island Developing States the same as they do the OECD countries, yet that is exactly what they are doing.

Comments from Dr. Tim

- It is my belief that we need to develop an alternative that is cheap, relevant to SI and other developing country conditions and yet acceptable on the world market.
- I do not know how this would be achieved but at least we can start the dialogue between ourselves and take the first step.

Past Experience of Certification in SI

- In 1980s and 90s, Certification was promoted by NGOs in Solomon Islands through Eco-timber Projects and Solomon Islands Eco-Forestry Programme
 - Soltrust
 - Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT)
 - Solomon Western Islands Fair Trade (SWIFT)

They were supported by International NGOs such as Green Peace and WWF and also funded by EU, NZ, UK, Pacific Conservation Development Trust etc.

Past Experience of Certification in SI

- For marketing certified timbers and meeting market demand of consistent and stable supply of certified timber, following key actors was also formed
 - Village Eco-Timber Enterprise (VETE)
 - Sawmill Owners Timber Producers Associations (SOTPA)
- NGOs were initiated Solomon Islands National Certificate (SolCert) in 1990s, following requirement of FSC Standards. However, it failed...

FIY : Current Support for Certification

- PHAMA Programme has been supporting Sawn Timber companies for Certification and maintaining market access of Solomon Islands sawn timbers to AUS and NZ market.
- Last year, PHAMA Programme supported MOFR to invite alternative Accredited Certification/Auditing Body, NEPCon (Nature Economy and People Connected), which offered lowest price for auditing among other bodies.