REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

for

Consultancy on FSC certified plantations and their contribution to creation of Shared Value in forest landscape

Issued on: 07 March 2022
Proposals due by: 04 April 2022
Contact: Procurement

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Purpose and Outputs

Purpose: 1. Identify a consultant who can form strategic partnerships with FSC-certified plantation managers to co-create globally applicable indicators to map the positive environmental contribution of FSC-certified plantations in the wider landscape as well as their social benefits for local communities. This pilot project will focus on Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, and potentially Brazil.

2. Develop a data collection tool that can systematically collect data against the indicators developed in the pilot from FSC-certified plantation across the world.

Outputs: 1. A set of clear, reliable and globally applicable indicators to generate data that can determine the positive environmental contributions and social benefits of FSC-certified plantations, based on a desk study, conducted in collaboration with FSC plantation managers and the FSC network in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, and potentially Brazil.

2. Proposals for collecting this data systematically on a 3-5-year basis in a way fitting in the FSC organizational set-up and available tools, which allows for easy assessments of the benefits of certified plantations.

Background Information

About FSC
The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) works to take care of our forests and those who rely on them by protecting plant and animal species, Indigenous Peoples’ rights, forest workers’ rights, and much more. We achieve this through FSC certification, ensuring forests around the world are responsibly managed. For more information on FSC, visit our website at www.fsc.org.

The mission of FSC is to promote environmentally sound, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. Our vision is of a world in which we can meet our current needs for forest products without compromising the health of the world’s forests for future generations.

Key Facts About FSC International
- 200 employees worldwide
- Composed of three legal entities with one wholly owned subsidiary
- Includes both a nonprofit entity (FSC International Center gGmbH) and a for-profit entity (FSC Global Development GmbH)
About This Project

**Background:** Planted forests are progressively substituting natural forests for timber production globally, accounting for more than one third of global industrial roundwood production in 2012, while only representing a modest 7% of the global forest area.

With consumption of wood and wood-based products expected to quadruple by 2050, the demand for FSC certified products will likely increase accordingly. A large proportion of these products will likely derive from industrial plantations. Currently, plantations only make up close to 10 per cent of the global FSC certified area under management, but output from these plantations amount to some 40 per cent of all FSC certified products.

The rapidly expanding role and area of planted forests is praised by some for the capacity to produce large amounts of wood, to take the pressure of natural forests, to provide alternatives to less environmentally friendly products like plastic, steel and cement, to support rural development by creating jobs and to provide or support a range of ecosystem services.

Despite these advantages, plantations remain controversial in many parts of the world with sceptics pointing to the negative environmental impacts when a single species is planted on large estates and concerns plantations are drivers of conversion of natural forest, the limited value distributed and reinvested locally as well as negative social impacts, such as conflicts related to land tenure.

These controversies are characterized by a wide range of different meanings and beliefs and are important to substantiate because of the increasing role

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2. See: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.foreco.2015.06.021](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.foreco.2015.06.021) - Changes in planted forests and future global implications, Article in Forest Ecology and Management · September 2015
3. We use the term “plantation” here for
   - The (environmental def.) for the even-aged tree monoculture; as well as for
   - “pars pro toto” for the (economical def.) industrial operation / company, vertically integrated, specialised on tree plantation management for pulp production, but often with additional entrepreneurial and/or social activities, which can hold FSC certificates for the entire or for only parts of the operation.
industrial plantations are going to play in meeting global demand for fiber and fuel.

FSC’s normative framework provides a comprehensive set of requirements that in combination ameliorate or prevent the negative externalities purported by sceptics.

**FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship Standard V(5-2)** for example provides best-practices requirements for forest managers regarding (i) the protection of High Conservation Values the identification and protection (and/or restoration) of representative sample areas of native ecosystems – or the restoration of a proportion of the management unit to more natural conditions where representative sample areas do not exist or are insufficient (P&C 6.5); (ii) the demonstration of the legal status of the management unit, including tenure and use rights (P&C 1.2); (iii) the prevention of conversion of natural forest to plantations; (iii) the provision of employment opportunities to local communities as well as additional actives that contribute to the communities’ social and economic development together with

As such, FSC certified plantations could be delivering all the benefits highlighted by supporters of planted forests, while mitigating the concerns raised by sceptics. This has however never been documented and the positive impact of FSC certification in the plantation industry is consequently neither recognized, nor visible.

Indufor’s [Strategic Review on the Future of Forest Plantations](#) developed for FSC in 2012 identified the location of industrial plantations globally:
Objectives of the pilot project
A conceptual model developed by Brockerhoff et al (2008)\(^4\) categorizes types of plantations related to the relative conservation value of plantation forests compared to conservation forests and agricultural land use. The pilot will focus on the three categories highlighted below\(^5\).

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\(^4\) Brockerhoff et al, 2008: Fig. 1 - Conceptual model of the relative conservation value of planted forests relative to conservation forests and agricultural land uses. Note that many plantation forests cannot be clearly assigned to one of the main categories outlined here. Some plantation forests serve multiple purposes including production, protection and conservation on the same land. Categorisation is also difficult for some forests in Europe that have been established as pure stands by planting or sowing centuries ago and have since become more diverse by natural processes. “Close-to-nature forests” are included in our “managed semi-natural and natural forest” category. For more details refer to the text and the case study examples provided.

\(^5\) For the fast-wood plantation category (and all other categories), plantations replacing natural forests after 1994 will not be considered in accordance with P&C 6.9.
Brockerhoff et al note that: “Consultation of a wide range of stakeholders, including NGOs, and annual re-evaluations of certified ‘forest management units’ to ensure that there is a mechanism that scrutinises whether these criteria are being met. While such processes do not transform plantation forests into biodiversity havens, in many countries FSC-certification has contributed significantly to raising the standards for consideration of biodiversity conservation goals as such issues are among the most frequently issued corrective action requests.” (2008)

This pilot sets out to add flesh to the bones of Brockerhoff’s findings by developing a methodology for documenting the positive impacts of FSC certified plantations and plantation organizations beyond meeting the market’s demand for FSC certified products⁶.

On this backdrop, the principal objective of this project is co-create a set of clear, reliable and globally applicable indicators with plantation managers to generate data that can determine the positive environmental contributions and social benefits of FSC-certified plantations. The purpose of this is to

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⁶ In this connection it is important to note that FSC’s policy on conversion and plantations remains unchanged; i.e., FSC does not certify the conversion of natural forests to forest plantations (note the ongoing development of FSC-POL-01-007 Policy to Address Conversion).
nuance the conversation around plantations by providing tangible documentation of the positive contributions of FSC certified plantations beyond satisfying the market’s demand for FSC certified products.

Framework for the project

Based on the experiences of the pilots in South Africa and ANZ, FSC plans to evaluate if similar pilots can be conducted in other countries with large areas of FSC certified plantations such as other Latin American countries, African countries, Spain and Portugal. Therefore, the set of indicators developed through this pilot project may be used and further developed in other countries and regions as well, after finalization of this project.

This project also has a link to FSC’s work to introduce digital audit reporting by certification bodies.

Project Context

Australia’s government in 2019 committed the country to growing its plantation estate by one billion trees, or 400,000 hectares, to add to the country’s current two million hectares of plantation forests. The plan seeks to capitalize on the increasing domestic and global demand for timber and wood fiber and will also see Australia move closer to meeting its commitments under the Paris Agreement.

86% of Australia’s total log harvest was derived from commercial plantations in 2015–16 and since the period 2001-06, a progressive reduction in total native forest harvest volumes has occurred across the country. The reduction in native forest harvesting is expected to accelerate further as the Victorian and Western Australian state governments decided to phase out the industry over the next decade. The decisions are accompanied by a commitment to increasing the plantation estate.

The FSC certified forest estate in Australia is made up almost exclusively of plantations

New Zealand has a total of 10.1 million hectares of forests, covering 38% of the land. Of this:

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8 million hectares are native forest, 2.1 million hectares are plantation forest of which 1.7 million hectares are productive.
Approximately 1.3 million hectares of the productive forests are FSC certified
Productive forests make up 1.6% of New Zealand’s GDP (NZ$6.8 billion) and employ 35,000 workers

Volumes are expected to be high for the next decade (to 2030) as forests planted in recent decades reach maturity, and the plantation estate is expected to expand under New Zealand’s ‘One Billion Trees Programme’, which aims to plant a billion trees by 2028.

Under current legislation, native forestry in New Zealand is subject to heavily regulated harvest permits. Consequently, a modest ~24,000 cubic meters of native forest is currently registered for harvest whereas over 35 million cubic meters of plantation forest was harvested in 2018.

In South Africa, approximately 80% of commercial forest plantations are FSC certified, covering approx. 1.2 million hectares planted. Commercial plantations were established on grasslands in the early 1900s, as a solution for the protection of the over exploited natural forests. The country has seen a 4% decline in afforested areas since 1980, with withdrawals being attributed to conservation of riparian zones, conversion to agriculture, fire damage, etc. According to Forestry South Africa, an industry association representing 93% of landowners, 70% of forestry estates are managed for production, with up to 20% managed for conservation.

Scope of Work

| Required Tasks                                                                 | Plantation estates are clearly crucial for satisfying demand for forest products and meeting Paris Agreement commitments as well as delivering on several UN targets. This project therefore aims to quantify |

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10 https://www.forestrysouthafrica.co.za/environmental/
and document the positive impacts of FSC certified forests beyond satisfying the market’s demand for FSC certified products.

The consultant is expected to deliver at least on the following elements:

1. Review sets of indicators contributed to this project by associations of plantation owners and/or FSC Network Partners from South Africa, Australia/New Zealand and potentially Brazil, as well as a literature check,

2. Collect data and further develop a set of indicators which is potentially applicable and/or comparable with the by the consultant explored plantation and restoration in other countries and

3. develop a data gathering template and analysis tool (in Excel or similar), useful in identifying the contribution of restoration of degraded land and conservation through FSC certified plantations in the pilot countries,

4. The scope of this set of indicators is expected to include as a minimum:
   a. Proposed time scope for assessing and identifying indicator: last 5-10 years (2010 – 2020)
   b. Statistics: Identifying planting, natural generation of trees and set-aside area; describing the ratio between monocultures and multi-species / natural areas, both certified and uncertified
   c. Statistics: collecting comparisons of jobs in plantation and vertical industries compared to jobs created in other social area
   d. Qualitative: Identifying further social indicators, (in addition to creation of jobs), e.g. direct and indirect financial benefits, land rights issues etc.
   e. Qualitatively identify biodiversity indicators, incl. protected areas within or next to plantations, improvements in plantation management, other ecological values
   f. Identifying indicators for contributions to addressing climate change
   g. Identifying indicators for contributions towards Ecosystem Services
h. Providing potential for mapping for areas of restoration and conservation, coming from FSC plantation management, incl. the plantation itself

The data gathering system should be compatible with FSC existing tools and organizational set-up (with international, regional and national offices)

5. Consultation on indicators and data collection systems with Industry, NGOs and research institutions
   a. Identify and agree with FSC on organizations to be consulted

6. Consolidation of data with partners in the project, including Associations of plantation owners in Australia/New Zealand and South Africa, FSC.

7. Making the sets of indicators ready to be used in an IT tool for the collection of the data

8. Provide concise training materials for those gathering the data and putting them in a correct way into the system

9. Finalize report of the work done

Filling the IT tools with data for the pilot countries is expected to be done in close collaboration with and by FSC National Offices, as well as plantation companies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of Work</th>
<th>Primary location: consultant’s office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional locations (if applicable):</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-contractors (if applicable)</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverable Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work plan</td>
<td>Description of the project presenting the work plan, the design and methods planned</td>
<td>1 June 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 We expect to consult to the least: WWF, WRI, TNC, Forest Dialogue, IUFRO, CIFOR and government conservation agencies of the pilot countries, as appropriate. We also expect engagement for data gathering systems with the unit of DAEL in FSC International, and with regional/national FSC offices important for plantation management.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft List of potential indicators for consultation</th>
<th>Collected by consultant through partnering with FSC Network partners and plantation associations; to be agreed with FSC</th>
<th>20 June 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draft list of potential consultation candidates</td>
<td>Including relevant global organizations as well as Australian, New Zealand and South African (and potentially Brazilian) candidates</td>
<td>20 June 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with stakeholders, resulting in a next draft list of indicators</td>
<td>Including consultation of plantation companies in target countries and environmental and social NGOs, as well as governmental relevant bodies.</td>
<td>1 August 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of an IT data management tool</td>
<td>Identification of a <em>data gathering template and analysis tool (in Excel or similar)</em>, that can be used in different countries worldwide by plantation owners and/or certification bodies to identify the contributions of plantations to natural resource management in the landscape. The proposed tool shall be easy to use and fit within FSC’s global IT system at FSC and National Offices, and shall have potential for easy revisions (expected every 3-5 years)</td>
<td>8 August 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of complete and agreed set of indicators</td>
<td>Set of indicators towards facts and figures identifying contributions of FSC certified plantations to conservation and restoration that can be collected in a developed database tool (or excel or similar) and that can be used in different countries worldwide. This tool and the indicators has been tested in South Africa and ANZ by at least 2 users in each country</td>
<td>5 September 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Final report | 1. An edited and FSC-agreed final report of maximum 10 pages including a summary, with facts and figures  
2. a power point presentation of 20-25 pages that can be used for presenting an appealing story about the development of indicators, and to understand FSC certified plantations | 26 September 2022 |
Proposal Requirements
Please ensure your proposal includes all of the following:

| Cover letter | Please include a cover letter including your contact information and signed by a duly constituted official legally authorized to bind the vendor to both its proposal and all the particulars of that proposal, including cost schedule. |
| Description of solution | **Outline of approach**  
A general overview of how the vendor will address the problem and structure the work.  
**People involved and qualifications**  
Please provide a list of who will work on the project and in what capacities, including job titles and CVs, where available.  
**Projected timeline for implementation**  
Please provide approximate timeframes and dates for completion of the various stages of the project. |
| Vendor qualifications | **Company background**  
Please describe your company’s background and experience with the relevant area  
**Client references**  
Please provide (3 to 5)  
**Description of relevant past projects**  
Please provide, if available. |
| Acceptance of Terms and Conditions | Vendor must indicate that they accept FSC’s Terms and Conditions as stated (or bring up requested changes in a timely fashion). |
| Cost estimate with breakdown | Please provide a detailed breakdown of costs per deliverable as well as a total, separated by project phase if relevant, including a clear statement of when specific installments will be due for payment (note that FSC does not pay upfront). Please indicate the daily or hourly rate you are charging per seniority level, along with your expected net time investment (number of working days or hours). Travel expenses are to be listed separately from consulting fees. |
| Demonstration | To be scheduled by FSC at a mutually convenient time. |
How to Submit
Please submit all materials via email to procurement@fsc.org.

Selection Criteria and Process
The following criteria will be used to evaluate vendors, in descending order of importance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suitability of solution</strong></td>
<td>The successful proposal will convincingly indicate that it can address all or most of FSC’s requirements. In the event that not all requirements can be met, the successful proposal will provide a satisfying explanation as to why not and a plan for how these needs can be addressed. The successful proposal will describe a solution that aligns well with FSC’s existing processes and culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suitability of vendor</strong></td>
<td>The ideal vendor will have significant prior experience successfully setting up software that is similar to FSC’s needs, including positive references from former clients. The successful vendor will display the skills necessary for working with FSC, such as fluent English, as well as the skills necessary for working on this specific project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Soft” characteristics</strong></td>
<td>FSC will seek a vendor that it believes will be pleasant and easy to work with, considering factors like responsiveness, flexibility, and attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
<td>FSC will evaluate which vendor provides the best value for cost. This does not mean that the successful vendor will be the cheapest vendor; <strong>FSC’s decision shall NOT be based solely on cost.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for questions</td>
<td>Please submit all questions you have in preparing your proposal to <a href="mailto:procurement@fsc.org">procurement@fsc.org</a> by this day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for FSC to answer questions</td>
<td>FSC will respond (via email or call) to all questions received by each vendor. Alternatively, according to its discretion and depending on the vendor feedback received, FSC may elect to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
hold a conference call with all candidates in which vendors are
given pseudonyms and responses to questions (the askers of
which would, again, be kept anonymous) are discussed in an
open conversation.

| Closing date for submission | All proposals must be received by this time. Late proposals will be accepted only at FSC’s discretion. |
| Proposal evaluation and shortlisting | FSC will evaluate proposals based on criteria such as team composition and skills, experience and relevant references, approach/methodology and cost. |
| Interviews/Demonstrations with shortlisted candidates | Selected vendors will be invited either to FSC’s offices to meet with key staff or to a conference call to present their proposal and answer questions on the proposed approach and budget. |
| Negotiations and additional information gathering (optional) | FSC will enter into negotiations with the final group of candidates and will reserve the right to request further interviews, references, portfolios, etc. to assist in making a decision. |
| Notification of final selection | FSC will notify all vendors as to the result of the selection process. FSC will enter award the contract to the most competitive vendor. |

Expected Timeline

All deadlines end at 23:59 Bonn time (Central European Time).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07 March 2022</td>
<td>Request issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 March 2022</td>
<td>Deadline for questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 March 2022</td>
<td>Deadline for FSC to answer questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 April 2022</td>
<td>Closing date for submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 April 2022</td>
<td>Proposal evaluation and shortlisting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 April 2022</td>
<td>Individual interviews with shortlisted candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03 May 2022</td>
<td>Negotiations with final candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06 May 2022</td>
<td>Notification of final selection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Terms and Conditions

1. RFP Amendment
   FSC reserves the right to amend, cancel or re-issue the RFP at any time.

2. Submission of Proposal
   Proposal must be submitted in the English language on the requirements specified in this RFP. Vendors must provide all requisite information under this RFP and clearly and concisely respond to all points set out in this RFP. Prices must be stated in USD and value added tax should be itemized separately. Prices shall be final and not subject to revision after the closing date for submission.

3. Clarifications or Further Information Regarding the RFP
   FSC will only respond to questions in writing. Any question and answer will also be provided to any other vendor to ensure all vendors are provided with the same information upon which to base their proposal.

4. Late or Non-Compliant Proposals
   FSC will not be obligated to consider any proposal submitted later than the closing date or not fully completed in accordance with the requirements specified in this RFP.

5. Rejection of Proposals, Waiver of Informalities or Irregularities, Negotiations
   a. FSC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any minor informalities or irregularities contained in any proposal, and to accept any proposal deemed to be in the best interest of the organization.
   b. FSC reserves the right to negotiate and award only a portion of the requirements; to negotiate and award separate or multiple contracts for the elements covered by this RFP in any combination it may deem appropriate, at its sole discretion to add new considerations, information or requirements at any stage of the procurement process, including during negotiations with vendors.

6. Vendor’s Cost to Develop the Proposal
   Each vendor will meet its own costs associated with the preparation and demonstration of its proposal and any negotiations.

7. Withdrawal of Proposal
   Proposals may be withdrawn or amended at any time prior to the closing date for submission specified in this RFP, provided notification is received in writing. Proposals cannot be changed or withdrawn after the time designated for receipt.
8. Revisions of Proposal
   Once the proposal has been received and the closing date for submission passed, FSC may decide not to accept further commercial or legal revisions which constitute a change to the original proposal submitted by the vendor in response to the RFP.

9. FSC’s clarification
   FSC may, at any time, request from any vendor clarification of its proposal as well as additional information about any aspect of its proposal. FSC is not required to request the same clarification or information from each vendor. The vendor must provide the clarification or additional information in the format requested. The vendor will endeavor to respond to requests in a timely manner. FSC may take such clarification or additional information into account in evaluating the proposal. Where the vendor fails to respond adequately or within a reasonable time to a request for clarification or additional information, FSC may cease evaluating the vendor’s proposal and may eliminate the proposal from the RFP process.

10. Proposal Validity Period
    This RFP contains no contractual proposal of any kind. Any proposal submitted will be regarded as a proposal by the vendor and not as an acceptance by the vendor of any proposal by FSC. Submission of the proposal will signify the vendor’s agreement that its proposal and the content thereof are valid for (3) months following the closing date for submission and will become part of the contract that may be negotiated between FSC and the successful vendor.

11. Ownership of the Proposal Documents
    In consideration of FSC undertaking to give fair consideration and to take into account the vendor’s proposal received, but for no other consideration, all proposal documents submitted in response to the RFP shall become the property of FSC which may use such information including the copyright of same for the proposal evaluation purpose. Notwithstanding the above and without prejudice to anything agreed in any subsequent contract, ownership of the intellectual property in the information contained in the proposal document shall remain unchanged.

12. Confidentiality
    a. Each vendor will take reasonable steps to protect information related to the FSC activities, whose access is subject to restriction (“Confidential Information”) and will not disclose Confidential Information to a third party without the prior written consent by FSC.
    b. The RFP or any part thereof, and all copies thereof must be returned to FSC upon request. It is understood that this RFP is confidential and proprietary to FSC, contains
privileged information, part of which may be copyrighted and is communication to and received by vendors on the condition that no part thereof or any information concerning it may be copied or exhibited to others without the prior written consent of FSC except that vendors may exhibit the specifications to prospective subcontractors for the sole purpose of obtaining offers from them.