



Synthesis report (2007-2009)

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August 2009

The New Generation Plantation Project publication summarises shared insights of WWF, forest plantation companies and government departments and was developed collectively through three technical papers over a two year period, during and between four study tours in Scotland, Brazil, China and Colombia. The following is a discussion publication and does not represent the policies of any of the participating organisations. WWF would be pleased to receive any comments about the content and opinions expressed in this publication and on suggestions for how future editions could be strengthened and improved. Please send comments to WWF as above. The material and the geographical designations in this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatever on the part of WWF or the organisations concerning the legal status of any country, territory or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.
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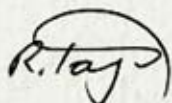
Foreword

The partners in the New Generation Plantations project have come together around the premise that well-managed and appropriately located plantations can contribute positively to sustainable development. The project explores how plantations can support biodiversity conservation, benefit local communities and contribute to economic growth. This publication is a first attempt to describe the characteristics of a new generation plantation, and examples of practices that embody those characteristics across a range of contexts.

As with second and third generation mobile phones, the term new generation implies innovation and progress to eliminate faults and improve performance. When applied to plantations, the new generation can be contrasted with poor and outmoded plantation practices that, for example, disregard the rights or livelihoods of local peoples or destroy natural habitats. An “upgrade” to the new generation, involves progressing from worker relations to meaningful consultation with stakeholders; going beyond the design of tree compartments within a management unit to planning that takes into account how the plantation fits within the wider landscape; and voluntarily exceeding legal requirements to protect high conservation values. These elements are described in this publication, which summarises the result of project partners’ first phase of work.

A second phase of work, already underway, will develop additional elements of the new generation concept – the role of plantations in water management at catchment level, the supply of biomass for bio-energy, the role of plantations in the forest carbon market, and improved recognition of the benefits of new generation practices by those buying pulp and paper products or investing in the sector. This publication is the output of constructive collaboration between industry, government and civil society. I hope this collaboration will continue, and help to mainstream new generation plantations as the global norm. I look forward to a future where harmful plantation practices are history, and most plantations are unequivocally helping to maintain a “living planet” for future generations.

Rodney Taylor



Director, Forests
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Introduction

Forests, including plantation forests, supply wood, fibre, fuelwood and non-timber forest products for industrial and non-industrial uses.

If they are managed in a sound manner, both natural and planted forests can also contribute positively to provision of environmental services (soil and water protection, rehabilitation of degraded lands, restoration of landscapes and carbon sequestration) and to social benefits and livelihood support (income generation, employment and recreation).

The productivity of planted forests, in terms of supplying a sustainable volume of timber and fibre, is usually greater than natural forests. The added benefits of wood products over some competing products are that they are renewable; they can also be more energy efficient and have a lower environmental footprint.

There are currently around 140 million hectares of “plantation forests” in the world, accounting for around 7 per cent of global forest cover.



Introduction New Generation Plantations Project

Of these around 25 million hectares could be classified as intensively-managed plantation forests (IMPF); covering around 0.2 per cent of global land area or 1.25 per cent of global forest cover. We use the word “plantation” here as equivalent to that of the FAO term “plantation forest”.

Plantations produce around 40 per cent of industrial wood. Both the plantation area and contribution to world wood production are projected to continue to increase in the foreseeable future.

Plantations vary enormously, from large stands planted for commercial purposes to small groups of trees planted for community use, as well as for non-production purposes such as erosion control. The idea of planting trees as crops is as old as agriculture and many “semi-natural” or “natural” forests around the world were, at one time, established as plantations.

The case studies from this project clearly show that well-managed plantations exist, however plenty of examples of badly-managed plantations can also be found globally and controversies are not limited to plantations in the developing world. Conversion of natural forests, grasslands and wetlands to plantations can have adverse environmental impacts and can also result in significant social consequences if the rights and interests of local communities are not respected. Concern about badly planned and managed plantations has resulted in a significant opposition movement. Some objections to plantations also reflect a broader critique of a society where a few powerful actors (governments, international financial institutions, big NGOs and corporations) can influence decisions over land and natural resource use without adequate concern for the aspirations of less powerful actors, or for environmental considerations.



Background

Context of the NGPP

*The New Generation
Plantations Project (NGPP)
sought to identify and promote
better practices for plantation
design and management.*



Background New Generation Plantations Project

The project brought together companies, governments and WWF offices from around the world and was oriented around real world learning, covering technical plantation design as well as the social, environmental and cultural impacts of plantations.

The work addressed both the management of existing plantations and the development of new plantations.

The NGPP started with the premise that well-managed and appropriately located plantations can be a key feature of healthy, diverse and multi-functional forest landscapes, and can thus provide conditions that are compatible with both biodiversity conservation and human needs.

In addition, the plantation industry can contribute to sustainable economic growth and generate employment. However it also recognised that in some areas, without significant changes in policies and practices, the expansion of intensively managed plantations will cause controversy by, for instance, threatening the rights or livelihoods of forest dependant peoples or valuable ecosystems and biodiversity.

Three technical papers and this synthesis paper were developed collectively over a two year period, during and between four study tours in Scotland, Brazil, China and Colombia.

This paper summarises shared insights of WWF, forest plantation companies and government departments relating to three issues: ecosystem integrity, high conservation value forests and stakeholder engagement. These are described in turn below and good practice is illustrated by reference to the case studies, which are identified by number in the text and listed at the end.

(Note: the paper does not reference every example of good practice that can be drawn from the case studies, but provides illustrative examples).

A photograph of a forest during autumn. The ground is covered in a thick layer of fallen brown leaves. Several large, mature trees with thick trunks stand prominently in the foreground and middle ground. The foliage on the trees is a mix of green and yellow, indicating the transition of seasons. The background shows a dense forest of thinner trees. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

Ecosystem Integrity

Ecosystem Integrity New Generation Plantations Project



...”NGPP agreed to look at the influence of plantations on the integrity of four major ecological processes: water, nutrients, carbon and biodiversity”...

Ecosystems are loosely defined, dynamically changing associations of biotic and abiotic components.

The analysis adopted here is based on consideration of key ecological process, as defined in the **Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: ecosystems being regarded as the physical, chemical and biological actions or events that link organisms and their environment.**

Drawing from this general framework, the NGPP agreed to look at the influence of plantations on the integrity of four major ecological processes: water, nutrients, carbon and biodiversity. Measures of integrity must in this case include consideration of the ability of the ecosystem to maintain services of value to humans.

The conceptual approach to ecosystem integrity used in the context of the NGPP is based on a model where a plantation is embedded within a forest management unit (FMU), which is itself embedded within the landscape. There will be cases where the FMU is made up entirely of a plantation although these are unusual. To understand the potential impacts of plantations, a plantation manager, regulator or researcher needs to characterise the status and trends in local ecosystems and also in local human communities, and then to determine baselines and indicators for assessing positive outcomes of management actions.

Lessons learned from the case studies

› Plantations and the water cycle:

a primary concern amongst stakeholders, particularly in arid or semi-arid regions, is that plantations could reduce the amount of water available in a catchment, leading to drying up of streams, reduced productivity on surrounding lands or reduced availability of potable groundwater.



..."(Maintaining nutrient balance and site fertility is one of the key economic and environmental objectives of any sustainably-managed plantation.)..."

The science of hydrology is complex but there is now a general consensus that **net surface water flow from afforested areas is more likely to be reduced as compared to pastures and other degraded forms of land use, although plantations can contribute positively to water regulation through improved filtration and to water quality through erosion control.** Good management planning and implementation of watershed and freshwater habitat management practices were observed in the operations of NGPP government and private partners. Given the variability of ecosystems in the landscapes in which plantations are embedded, prescriptive approaches decided at global or regional level are generally not recommended, but there is a broad recognition that **special attention needs to be given to the management of watersheds and freshwater habitats and that agreed controls tailored to specific locations are essential.**

Better management practices that are in place included: the establishment of riparian zones and water protection measures using native vegetation in Scotland (Case 2); measures to prevent damage from harvesting, transportation and land preparation in order to reduce the level of sediments reaching the water courses in Uruguay (Case 4); and minimisation and localisation of herbicide and fertilizer application, especially during wet periods (Case 4). Several NGPP partners also mentioned the importance of plantation design and mosaic harvest planning within the FMU to avoid significant changes of surface water flow at the landscape level (e.g., Case 3)

› Plantations and the nutrient cycle:

Maintaining nutrient balance and site fertility is one of the key economic and environmental objectives of any sustainably-managed plantation. Establishing a plantation can influence the nutrient cycle in both positive and negative ways.

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Positive effects can include stabilising soils in areas susceptible to erosion and building up fertility in depleted soils. Conversely, substantial biomass removal; disturbance of soil structure as a result of poorly specified or controlled operations; and the leaching of fertilizers can all be detrimental to nutrient availability and/or water quality. It is generally agreed that most potential nutrient-cycle problems from plantations can be addressed by good management.

Good management practices include: careful matching of species to site, as in Scotland, taking note of soil types, elevation and environmental conditions (Case 2). Practical steps can also be taken to minimise impacts during harvesting, such as: **(i) appropriate selection of harvesting systems** and extraction routes considering soil characteristics, topography and climate; **(ii) cushioning the ground travel of harvesting equipment** and carrying out log hauling over tree debris to reduce soil disturbance; and **(iii) leaving branches, leaves and tree bark spread** on the field for nutrient integration in Uruguay (Case 4).

› Plantations and the carbon cycle:

Plantation forestry offers three ways to influence the carbon cycle: **(i) good management practices in existing plantations** to increase biomass in timber and soil; **(ii) sequestering carbon by establishing new plantations** on land with low carbon storage value (e.g. degraded land); and **(iii) avoiding emissions by maintaining existing carbon storage** in natural forests and non-commercial stands within the FMU. Plantations can sequester a proportionately large amount of carbon because the bulk of stored above-ground carbon is removed every few years and new growth occurs, although the net carbon balance depends to a large extent on the end use of the timber and the management practices used (e.g. post harvest residue burning will accelerate the release of carbon).



... "most potential nutrient-cycle problems from plantations can be addressed by good management." ...



...” Lower intensity soil preparation practices can minimise soil carbon loss.” ...

The conversion of pastures and depleted areas to planted forests can substantially increase the carbon stock and can reduce the emissions of methane to the atmosphere in cases where they supersede cattle-raising. Lower intensity soil preparation practices can minimise soil carbon loss.

NGPP partners are starting to look at issues of carbon balance. In China for example the economic value of forest carbon storage assets at landscape scale was assessed (Case 1). In Wales, areas of ancient deep peat and woodland are being restored and protected (Case 3).

› Plantations and the biodiversity cycle:

Well designed and managed plantations can be beneficial to biodiversity in degraded landscapes, while conversely, poorly located or badly managed plantations can cause significant damage; e.g. the use of heavy machinery can harm ground vegetation and agrochemicals can damage some species, and plantations have sometimes resulted in introduction of invasive species. Actions such as the replacement of natural or semi-natural habitats or the creation of new habitats will influence biodiversity and connectivity at landscape level. Better management can maximise the gains and minimise the losses, with examples seen including: the designation and protection of specific ecosystems, corridors and habitats as rare or valuable; use of tools such as Environmental Impact Assessment in Uruguay (Case 4); and restoration of native species in Brazil (Case 14). Many management agencies drew on HCVF analysis in this process and also FSC certification (see later section). In addition, economic valuation of biodiversity assets at a landscape scale helps to make the case for conservation, as was seen in China (Case 1). Choosing suitable harvesting schemes, such as mosaic distribution in Colombia (study tour) or selective felling in Scotland (Case 2) can contribute to structural and age class diversity. In South Africa, allowing wild animals to have access to plantations provided a valuable buffer for an adjoining protected area (Case 17).

Lessons learned from the study tours

- › In highly degraded landscapes, plantation estates may be the only places where remnants of natural forests can survive or be restored (Brazil and Colombia study tours);
- › Where there is enormous human pressure on land, set asides within plantations may not work and in this case a plantation enterprise may more effectively offset by protecting land further away (China study tour), although this must be related to specific contexts and there are dangers in such approaches if not properly controlled;
- › While many plantation enterprises were initially set up just to produce timber, changing social expectations and understanding have often resulted in a broadening of aims to include, for example, conservation, landscape values, recreation and non-timber forest products; there are economic implications in such changes (Scotland study tour).

Going Forward

The techniques for ensuring ecosystem integrity within plantations are developing rapidly and hold tremendous potential for advancing the science of good plantation management. Research is urgently needed to collect hard data on ecological processes and ecosystem integrity in and around plantations, which will need to be carried out in association with private, state and international institutions. Key issues identified as requiring follow up include:

- › Catchment-scale hydrology
- › The extent of biomass removal and its implications



... "The techniques for ensuring ecosystem integrity within plantations are developing rapidly and hold tremendous potential for advancing the science of good plantation management." ...

*High Conservation
Value
Forests*



High Conservation Value Forests New Generation Plantations Project



... "The HCVF concept is one voluntary tool amongst many that can be used to promote conservation." ...

The concept of High Conservation Values Forest (HCVF), defined by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for use in forest certification, is in increased use in other contexts such as nature conservation, purchasing policies and policies of government agencies. The concept was first developed to address principle 9 in the FSC principles and criteria, which aims to maintain forests of outstanding significance or critical importance for their environmental or social values. The HCVF concept is one voluntary tool amongst many that can be used to promote conservation.

WWF has applied frequently using the HCVF concept more broadly in its conservation programmes and there is a tendency to expand the concept to include High Conservation Value Areas (HCVA) beyond forests. This is outside the scope of this project (see box) and the case studies focus on HCVF as applied by the participant governments and companies in FSC certified plantations.

The paper looks in particular at four issues:

- › **The framework for determining and using HCVFs in plantation projects:** in particular who decides what is and is not HCVF and who else they should or could consult
- › **Linking HCVF to other policy instruments:** examining how the HCVF concept complements (or clashes with) existing legal, official and voluntary ways of identifying and prioritising conservation areas
- › **Identifying options to protect or manage any identified HCVFs:** deciding on management options for HCVF at a site and landscape scale
- › **A standardised approach to use in plantations:** options for developing a standardised approach to the use of HCVF in plantations.



"NGPP participants worked with partners, staff and consultants and invested in or drew on robust, science-based ecoregional level planning." ...

Lessons learned from the case studies

> The framework for determining and using HCVFs in plantation projects:

NGPP participants worked with partners, staff and consultants and invested in or drew on robust, science-based ecoregional level planning; most NGPP participants rejected the idea of an expert-only system and identified the need to work with other stakeholders. There is a defined framework for HCVF but evidence suggests that within this very different approaches are used and can be equally satisfactory. The precise methodology depends on the extent to which national laws provide for protection of high conservation values; local and national policies; data availability; social conditions; previous land use; and potential for conflict. **HCVF is applied to the forest management unit but some dimensions of HCVF protection can only be considered at a landscape scale** and this leads to some constraints, because managers generally only has control within their individual FMUs.

Governments and NGOs are often partners in HCVF identification: e.g. in China (Case 1), Malaysia (15), Portugal (7) and Brazil (14). There may be multiple partners in some cases; e.g., in both China and Brazil stakeholders included government departments, universities and communities (Cases 1 and 14); in Malaysia the government worked with NGOs and communities (Case 15). In Scotland, the company used its own ecologists along with NGOs and government experts (Case 12). In China, staff received special training in HCVF (Case 13).

> Linking HCVF to other policy instrument:

Plantation planning must start with the legal requirements of the country concerned. In cases where conservation and social safeguards are strongly represented in law, HCVF analysis may add little to existing requirements. Amongst participating companies, it appears that because many had carried out similar exercises under other frameworks, completing the HCVF analysis required few extra resources. **Where policies and laws are weaker, HCVF can fill the gaps and potentially also influence national policy.** The case studies show that some companies have gone beyond legal requirements or have applied progressive conservation and social policies before the existence of the FSC or HCVF.

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Communication of the process and its results is an important component of implementation.

In Uruguay, conservation designations stemmed from voluntary EIAs, later classified as HCVF for FSC certification (Case 16). In Portugal, HCVF was added to the requirements of the European Union's Natura 2000 network and with statutory protection for cork and holm oak (Case 11). In Scotland, identification was made concurrent with the needs of the UKWAS certification scheme, Red Data Book species and the EU Habitat Directive (Case 12). Elsewhere, NGPP partners linked HCVF closely to the FSC, e.g., in China and Malaysia (Cases 13 and 15). In Brazil links were made with FSC but the area set aside as HCVF was also part of the largest private heritage reserve in the Atlantic Forest (Case 14).

› Identifying options to protect or manage any identified HCVFs:

Most HCVF management by NGPP partners includes setting aside land from planting, sometimes offset by intensified management elsewhere. In all the case studies, plantation managers were engaged in active management of set-aside areas to maintain their values. In the most advanced cases, managers are actively restoring areas to reverse past practices or employing pro-active management to increase biodiversity values. Whilst all the case studies included set aside areas, most NGPP partners have not tried to include these reserves in national protected area networks or on the World Database on Protected Areas: this presents an opportunity for better recognition and support for these efforts and integration of private reserves into national systems.

In Scotland, management has focused on a combination of promoting HCVF within productive areas, restoration and set aside (Case 12). In China, a series of zones have been identified with varying degrees of protection (Case 13). In Brazil, areas outside the plantation have been protected and where necessary restored, creating an ecosystem that has attracted World Heritage status (Case 14).



... "In the most advanced cases, managers are actively restoring areas to reverse past practices or employing pro-active management to increase biodiversity values." ...



...“Early development of national HCVF interpretation reduces the risk of companies having to retrofit their practices later” ...

FSC's 1994 cut-off rule

Project participants encourage the FSC to develop an alternative mechanism to FSC criterion 10.9, which excludes certification of plantations established on land converted from natural forest after 1994. This rule inhibits the use of FSC certification as a tool to promote best practice in agriculture frontier regions where management improvements often are crucial to safeguard high conservation values. The new mechanism should promote efforts to offset the impacts of the original conversion (e.g. through forest restoration). This could provide an avenue for plantation managers undertaking such efforts to become eligible for forest certification in cases where there is a recent history of conversion.

> Standardised approach to use in plantations:

National interpretation of HCVF, whether or not in the context of national FSC standards, can help local application: this can take pressure off management agencies and lead to more effective and holistic implementation. Although sufficient tools for HCVF identification (methodologies, legislation) already exist in some countries, where they do not, the process is more challenging.

HCVF analysis is a collective effort in that while expert input is invaluable, it is also important to include other stakeholders. A national toolbox is a good early step, with clear definitions agreed by all key stakeholders, and can provide an interim measure where development of national FSC standards will inevitably be delayed. Such national level interpretation of HCVF, with or without an FSC national initiative in place, is the best approach to minimise duplication and subjectivity. National interpretation should not be overly prescriptive in its approach; it can usefully be supported by national guidance on application. Early development of national HCVF interpretation reduces the risk of companies having to retrofit their practices later, once a national standard is eventually developed.

Malaysia used a simplified version of an existing manual to identify HCVFs (Case 15). China developed its own indicators, which included an HCVF analysis based on Values 1, 3, 4 and 5 (Case 13). In Brazil, a simpler method was used, based on legal requirements, distinguishing native or regenerating native forest and setting this aside from the plantation (Case 14).

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Lessons learned from the study tours

- › If the HCVF concept is going to be used successfully, some level of training is important, particularly for people working in the planning and management of plantations (China study tour).
- › In most cases a certain amount of support – in terms of technical co-operation and probably financial support – is also important for successful HCVF identification and management at a national landscape scale (Scotland study tour).
- › The adoption of an HCVF approach at such a “high” level can, potentially, attract further conservation benefits in raising awareness of the risk of other land use change (such as cattle ranching – Colombia study tour).

Going Forward

The use of HCVF principles in plantation development is still undergoing modification, even within the FSC. Associated issues that require particular attention in the next few years are:

- › If, under what conditions and how land set aside for protection within a plantation estate might be recognised more fully in national protected area systems and on the World Database on Protected Areas.
- › How HCVF can still be useful in situations where FSC certification is sought well after the start of the plantation project, at a time when many broad landscape-scale decisions have already been made.

WWF comment on use of the HCV concept outside FSC

WWF is involved in various applications of the HCV concept outside of FSC certification. Examples of this expanded use and adaptation of the HCV concept include:

- › Encouraging companies that are excluded from FSC certification (e.g. due to the application of 1994 cut-off rule on conversion of forests to plantations) to commit to the protection of HCVFs.
- › Incorporation within certification standards for other commodities (e.g. the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil prohibits new plantings on “any area required to maintain or enhance one or more High Conservation Values”)
- › Incorporation within forest carbon standards (e.g. the Climate Community and Biodiversity Standard requires project proponents to do a HCV assessment)
- › Advocating adoption of the HCV framework in government land-use designations and policies or the mapping of HCVs to inform such policy processes.
- › Encouraging corporations and financial institutions to include HCV protection as a safeguard in their procurement and investment screening policies
- › Exploring the applicability of the HCV concept to non-forest ecosystems such as natural grasslands, wetlands and marine environments.

An expanded use of the HCV concept raises issues that are beyond the scope of this project, due to its focus on HCVF protection in the context of FSC certification. These include:

- › How to promote innovative adaptation of the concept without diluting its central tenets or creating irreconcilable differences in how the concept is interpreted
- › How to ensure the integrity, quality and credibility of HCV applications and assessments outside the context of FSC certification
- › How to achieve the political legitimacy of such applications, especially where they result in non-government actors making critical land-use decisions (e.g. on whether forest is converted or protected)
- › What role the HCV Resource Network should play in addressing these issues, and what the implications are for the governance, membership and structure of the network



Stakeholders Involvement

Stakeholders Involvement New Generation Plantations Project



..."(Most responsible companies recognise that engaging with stakeholders is not only about being a good neighbour but also makes good business sense."...

Increasingly, there are expectations that a wide range of stakeholders will be involved in discussions about the development of plantations, from the early stages of pre-planning through to implementation and subsequent management. In many countries, large-scale land use changes require consultation and are formalised by a legal obligation to hold an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), which will usually involve consultation. Even when there is no legal requirement, some plantation developers carry out voluntary studies as part of their professional risk assessment. And even where no assessment takes place, companies recognise the need to engage with many stakeholders during the project, for practical reasons (not least in terms of supplying labour and materials) and to respond to expectations, demands, concerns and complaints from local people. Such engagement may be time consuming, costly and require considerable skill. Most responsible companies recognise that engaging with stakeholders is not only about being a good neighbour but also makes good business sense. The main stimuli for stakeholder engagement of various kinds in plantation development can be grouped into four categories:

➤ **Operational reasons** in terms of understanding the local situation, identifying potential opportunities and constraints and ensuring that design and management of the plantation is as widely acceptable as possible;

➤ **Social reasons** in that many governments and companies now have policies aimed at maximising social benefits from large development projects and minimising potential costs, both of which need to be assessed by responsible companies;

➤ **Legal or quasi-legal reasons**, as a result of both national laws (such as the obligation to hold an EIA) and codes of conduct that reference United Nations treaties, which oblige signatories to fulfil certain social safeguards (for example International Labour Organisation standards);

➤ **Certification reasons**, specifically to meet the requirements of third party certification schemes.



...“in other situations the company may negotiate specific agreements with target stakeholders,” ...

There is now substantial momentum towards engagement with stakeholders and most responsible state forest departments and private companies see it as a necessary and ultimately beneficial aspect of their work. In this context, a number of considerations emerge as important in carrying out a stakeholder engagement process:

Key considerations in a stakeholder engagement approach for plantation development

- › Deciding on the level and type of stakeholder engagement
- › Drawing up clear rules of procedure
- › Identifying and connecting with relevant stakeholders
- › Informing stakeholders
- › Collecting and collating views and perspectives
- › Working with stakeholders to agree monitoring procedures
- › Practising good conflict resolution if this becomes necessary

Lessons learned – from case studies

› Deciding on the level and type of stakeholder engagement:

Adequate stakeholder analysis is needed to ensure that all the relevant people and groups are involved in the process. In all the cases presented, NGPP partners “actively consulted” on projects. In Scotland (Case 2), the role of an advisory group suggests some attempt to reach consensus although final decisions rest with the government. In Uruguay (Case 10), the make-up of the board of the associated charitable foundation is an example of authority sharing with respect to outreach activities. However, knowledge of other examples suggests that this is not currently the common level of engagement: in most plantation projects, collaboration stops at the level of active consultation and there can be commercial or even legal limits that

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prevent further engagement. In some cases there may be a desire or need to seek consensus on key points with local communities; in other situations the company may negotiate specific agreements with target stakeholders, e.g., for leasing land or agreeing grazing rights. In less usual cases, normally when a foreign company is working with a government, some sharing of authority may be desired. In politically-volatile situations where disapproval of plantations may lead to protest action, then at least consensus on key points may be a necessity.

> Drawing up clear rules of procedure:

It is important to set clear rules and guidelines for the process and to stick to the scope of the stakeholder process. Almost all the NGPP partners identified the time and money involved in running a stakeholder process to be a problem; both in terms of investment and the opportunity costs of delays. Experiences in Scotland (Case 10), England (Case 8) and Portugal (Case 7) all identified considerable problems in getting stakeholders to respond; being an active stakeholder also takes time and resources. Companies or governments carrying out consultations need to have worked out their own time and budget limitations before starting, and to transmit these clearly to other stakeholders. In Uruguay, a social responsibility team acted as a conduit between local communities and the operations (Case 10). Some companies brought benefit packages to encourage engagement; for example community development funds were set up in China (Case 6) and Uruguay (Case 10). Many companies invited local partners to join the process: UNDP in China (Case 6); a university in Portugal (Case 11); the state body in Scotland (Case 5); an NGO in Malaysia (Case 15). Almost all NGPP members identified the need to engage outside facilitators to build trust and ensure a neutral voice.

> Identifying relevant stakeholder groups:

NGPP case studies varied in the stakeholders involved, although all identified government and local communities.



...”Companies or governments carrying out consultations need to have worked out their own time and budget limitations before starting.”...



..."Stakeholders should be made aware that they share responsibility in making such processes work efficiently and effectively," ...

Several found problems in ensuring that all voices were heard and that processes are not dominated by vocal minorities. In Portugal, national and local government, private forest owners and their associations, NGOs and contractors were all enlisted (Case 7).

In the UK a new forest development targeted 46 near neighbours and four schools in addition to general information dissemination (Case 8). In central Uruguay, a wide range of stakeholders were brought together including farmers, teachers, media people, unemployed, officials, students, contractors, local businesspeople and rural workers; this was possible because an ESIA had previously identified stakeholders (Case 9). In west Uruguay union groups, academics, school students, neighbours and local communities are all involved in discussions (Case 10). In South Africa, a special Socio-Economic Assessment Tool was used and partnerships were developed with specific stakeholder groups and through social programmes (Case 17).

> Informing stakeholders:

Transparency in the process is critically important, particularly at the beginning when rumours could start to circulate, although this clearly sometimes clashes with company desires for confidentiality. Stakeholders should be made aware that they share responsibility in making such processes work efficiently and effectively. There are numerous ways of informing stakeholders, depending on situation, scale, access to technology and the types of stakeholders. Approaches suitable for areas of low literacy and low internet access will be different from those in literate, technologically advanced societies. In China, access to information was an important element in the stakeholder strategy and was addressed by instituting a series of telecentres and training people in their use (Case 6). Other NGPP members put most of their efforts into public meetings (e.g. Cases 3 and 7). Failure to engage with stakeholders early in the process creates uncertainties, rumours and problems. In the UK, a gap between announcement of a project and stakeholder consultation (which was due to factors beyond the developing agency's control) created rumours and antagonism that could have been avoided by earlier contact (Case 8).

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› Finding out what stakeholders think:

NGPP members used a variety of methods to find out what people thought about a particular project. In England, meetings, a website, and circulation of 25,000 questionnaires helped to elicit responses (Case 8). Almost all NGPP members held public meetings of one sort or another although informal meetings at the start of any process seem particularly useful. In England public meetings were sometimes found to be negative, by giving space to a vocal minority and excluding others from the debate (Case 8). In Uruguay, there was a special telephone number set up for complaints about transport problems (Case 10), showing the importance of having continual opportunities for making contact. The Landscape Outcome Assessment Methodology (LOAM) was used in Portugal and Uruguay (Cases 7 and 9) to find out peoples' opinions about opportunities and threats through drawing, mapping etc. In Scotland the company felt that stakeholder demands for a large range of "nice to know" but non-essential information was frustrating to the process: being unnecessary, time delaying and expensive (Case 5).

› Working with stakeholders to agree monitoring procedures:

Most of the case studies did not address monitoring in detail, although the two LOAM exercises in Portugal and central Uruguay both worked with stakeholders to identify some indicators. It should be noted that there can be some risks involved in monitoring: local communities may want very detailed information or unrelated issues to be monitored, which is not practicable, and vested interests and inexperience may result in inaccuracies, particularly in non-professional or volunteer monitoring. Authorities may also be involved in monitoring and it is important to agree early in the process the split of responsibilities between the plantation manager, the government and other parties' contributions. Professional third party expertise can bring important credibility to results. Monitoring should wherever possible, focus on things that the plantation managers can address directly through management actions.



... "to agree early in the process the split of responsibilities between the plantation manager, the government and other parties' contributions" ...



› *Conflict management:*

None of the case studies reported significant conflict. However, tensions were observed in a number of the field tours, for example in Brazil and Colombia, about access to land and other resources, including water. Several of the case studies also reported active debate and some opposition to plans. The most successful attempts to address such conflicts require careful building of trust with local communities, a transparent approach to discussing potential problems and flexibility in responses. The presence of members of local communities working within plantations, and thus with a stake in both “sides” of the debate, is often a critically important element in reaching a successful longer term conclusion..

Lessons learned from the study tours

- › Analysis of potential stakeholders (who they are, their knowledge base, their interest, attitude to the project and their power) must be carried out before engagement begins (all tours);
- › It can be useful for project managers to facilitate the creation of user groups with common interests to gain a consensus view (Scotland);
- › successfully engage (for example concerning the process and responsibilities of the various parties as well as the objectives of the project itself) (Scotland and China);
- › Project managers must be able to select appropriate engagement techniques that take into account stakeholders' different characteristics and the available resources, for example to engage with people who cannot read or are difficult to contact (all tours);
- › Both project management and stakeholders need to engage meaningfully and proactively in order to reach mutual trust (Brazil, China, Colombia);
- › There may be significant costs of stakeholder engagement in time and resources (all tours);
- › The manager must be aware that not all stakeholders will be able or willing to participate directly in the process, and if necessary, take action to try to accommodate their needs (all tours);

Stakeholders Involvement New Generation Plantations Project

Going forward

The following were identified as areas requiring further attention, which might be addressed by future NGP projects:

- › Identifying and where necessary adapting or developing the best channels and tools to communicate and engage with stakeholders at different stages of the project, recognising that this could involve modifying existing tools.
- › Defining criteria for stakeholder engagement success and exploring ways of evaluating the quality of stakeholder engagement



A photograph of a dense forest with many tall, thin, light-colored tree trunks. The ground is covered in a thick layer of brown, fallen leaves. The word "Conclusions" is written in a white, cursive font across the middle of the image.

Conclusions

Conclusions New Generation Plantations Project

- 1.** The new generation plantations concept can make a positive contribution to sustainable development, with respect to maintaining ecosystem integrity, conserving high conservation value forests and protecting stakeholder interests
 - 2.** The project visited examples of plantations that make very positive contributions to conservation, restoration and social development.
 - 3.** The large variability in conditions and opportunities within plantations favours the use of generalised frameworks for management, rather than detailed prescriptive rules, as long as the former are based clearly on outcomes in terms of good environmental and social results.
 - 4.** Real-world experience, based on applied science, enriches understanding; the study tours gave an opportunity to experience plantation practices at first hand and discuss with local experts.
 - 5.** The process, including production of technical papers with case studies (using a standardised format to help comparison), authored by WWF, but with input from the companies and governments, allowed a transparent approach and a robust exchange of views and in consequence built trust and respect and led to pragmatic conclusions.
- We invite those working in similar areas to draw on the lessons learned to inform policies and practices.

Case studies New Generation Plantations Project

The following case studies provided the information that provides the basis of this synthesis and can be accessed at www.panda.org/forestry/newgenplantations

› **Case study 1:**

Asset creation through investments in sustainable forest management in Guangong Province, southern China: SFA China

› **Case study 2:**

Pinewood restoration and conservation in an existing plantation in Glen Affric, Scotland: UK Forestry Commission

› **Case study 3:**

Management of biodiversity and natural forest fragments in a commercial plantation in Wales: UPM Tilhill

› **Case study 4:**

Maintaining ecosystem integrity and protecting habitat in a Eucalyptus plantation in Western Uruguay: Forestal Oriental

› **Case study 5:**

Designing a new plantation to include consideration for wildlife and landscape in southwest Scotland: UPM Tilhill

› **Case study 6:**

Using telecentres to build capacity in farming communities near plantation in Guangxi Province, China: Stora Enso

› **Case study 7:**

Stakeholder engagement in high conservation value forest identification in plantations in Portugal: Portucel

› **Case study 8:**

Developing new community woodland and green space near a major centre of population in England: UK Forestry Commission

› **Case study 9:**

Using the Landscape Outcome Assessment Methodology to assess progress in plantations in Uruguay: Stora Enso and WWF

› **Case study 10:**

Stakeholder engagement in Western Uruguay: Forestal Oriental

› **Case study 11:**

Methodologies and approaches for identifying high conservation value forests in a plantation in Portugal: Portucel

› **Case study 12:**

High conservation value identification in an existing commercial conifer plantation in Scotland: UPM Tilhill

› **Case study 13:**

High conservation value forest identification in Yonglan Province, China: Fujian Yong'an Forestry Group

› **Case study 14:**

High conservation value forest identification in Bahia, Brazil in a Eucalyptus plantation with remnant Atlantic forest: Veracel Celulose

› **Case study 15:**

High conservation value forest identification in Sabah, Malaysia: Malaysian Forestry Department and WWF

› **Case study 16:**

High conservation value forest identification in eucalyptus plantations in Western Uruguay: Forestal Oriental

› **Case study 17:** Mondi in South Africa

This project was coordinated by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
with the participation of the following organisations:

Forestal Oriental

Malaysia - Sabah Forest Department

Mondi

Portucel

Smurfit Kappa Carton de Colombia

State Forest Administration of China

Stora Enso

UK Forestry Commission

UPM-Kymmene

