

Technical Workshop on the Refinement of the Montreal Process Criteria 6 and 7 Indicators

April 13 & 14, 2005

Embassy Suites Hotel | Bloomington, Minnesota

Sponsored by USDA Forest Service with the Roundtable on Sustainable Forests

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

In April 2005, the USDA Forest Service, with the assistance of a planning group from the Roundtable on Sustainable Forests (Roundtable), coordinated three technical workshops on the refinement of the indicators in the Montreal Process Criteria & Indicators (C&I) (<http://www.sustainableforests.net/criteria-indicators.php>) to obtain high quality input from a diverse set of forest stakeholders. Members of the planning group are listed in Attachment A. The first workshop, which focused on the indicators in Criteria 4 and 5, took place on April 5 and 6, 2005 in Atlanta, Georgia. The second workshop addressed the indicators in Criteria 6 and 7 and was held in Bloomington, Minnesota on April 13 and 14. The third and final workshop on the indicators in Criteria 1, 2 and 3, took place in Portland, Oregon on April 20 and 21. The order of the workshops, initially designed to address the indicators in Criteria 1 through 7 in sequential order, was modified based on participant availability. All of the PowerPoint presentations made at each workshop and other supporting documentation are available at the Meeting and Workshop Summary portion of the Roundtable's website, <http://www.sustainableforests.net/>.

The objective of the workshops was to provide specific recommendations for improving national level indicators to inform the U.S. position on the refinement of the Montreal Process Indicators. The results of the workshops were then to be reviewed for input by Roundtable participants at their May 2005 Workshop in Denver, Colorado, on the priority of the recommended refinements to be represented by U.S. delegations attending the Montreal Process Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting in October 2005 and the Montreal Process Working Group meeting in February 2006.

Prior to each workshop participants were provided the following key documents, which later served as the basis for the discussion on each set of indicators:

- Excerpts from *Science Biodiversity and Sustainable Forestry*
- Excerpts from the *National Report on Sustainable Forests–2003*
- Excerpts from the *Montreal Process Technical Notes*
- Summary of *Results from the On-line Survey Stakeholder Consultation on Potential Refinements to the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators*
- *Refining and Improving the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators: A Summary of Comments and Suggestions.*

At each workshop participants were divided into breakout groups of 5 – 12 people to discuss a selection of indicators, organized by Criterion or sub-criterion. In each breakout group, experts on the set of indicators provided opening presentations and served as resources on substance during the discussion. Volunteer facilitators from USDA Forest Service regional offices helped participants to clarify their ideas for refining the indicators, aiming for agreement on final recommendations to present to other workshop participants, the Roundtable, and ultimately to inform the U.S. delegation's contribution to international process of improving and revising the Montreal Process Indicators. Participants were directed to focus on developing recommendations for improving and refining indicator and rational language presented in the Montreal Process

Technical Notes. They were asked to recommend refinements that would improve the utility of the indicators at national, regional and state scales, while at the same time remaining cognizant of how their suggestions would be received in future international discussions. The recommendations developed by each breakout group were captured by the facilitator.

This summary presents the highlights of the opening plenary presentations and discussions on the refinement of the indicators in Criteria 6 and 7 held on April 13 and 14, 2005 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Bloomington, Minnesota. The opening plenary session included an overview of the Montreal C&I and the refinement process, the state of the science and information on the indicators, and an example of how the indicators were applied at a sub-national scale. The plenary session was followed by smaller group discussions to refine the indicators within each Criterion. All discussions were documented by USDA Forest Service staff attending the Technical Workshop. A participant list and an agenda are available at <http://www.sustainableforests.net/summaries.php>.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Michael Prouty, Area Director, USDA Forest Service, welcomed participants to the workshop and introduced Minnesota state forester Michael Carroll as the opening speaker for the workshop. Mr. Carroll added his welcome to participants and noted that the domestic dialogue about the Montreal Process C&I can help build support for them in the U.S., particularly when it focuses on the development of regional indicators. The USDA Forest Service can use the C&I as an overall standard for data collection and as a framework for interagency cooperation. Carroll said the USDA Forest Service should do some work across the agency's deputy areas related to C&I, and include information generated by states and nonindustrial sources to help educate the public. He added that state foresters need a practical and understandable message that enables them to effectively "work with people." Messages in effective sound bytes addressing what the indicators mean and how they will be used, are really critical. Mr. Carroll then turned to Al Abee, USDA Forest Service, for an overview of the workshop and the revision process.

OVERVIEW OF THE INDICATOR REVISION PROCESS AND THE ROLE OF THE REFINEMENT WORKSHOPS

Al Abee, National Coordinator Sustainable Development, USDA Forest Service, standing in for Robert Hendricks, the official responsible for coordinating stakeholder input for revising the Montreal Process indicators, provided the participants with an overview of the Montreal Process and the indicator revision process. He noted that the Montreal C&I provide a unifying national framework for public dialogue, analysis, measurements, planning and assessments. In addition, Abee observed that the U.S. is seeing a convergence on how the Montreal C&I are being applied to inventory and report on forests through efforts like:

- The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization application of 6 criteria to format the World Report on Forests;
- Four Canadian Provinces legislating the use of C&I to model their forest program; and
- Over 20 states in the U.S. have used indicators in some way.

Abee then explained the indicator revision process which was agreed to by all of the Montreal Process Countries. Although many investments have been made based on the existing set of indicators, all of the Countries agree they can be improved. At the same time, Countries and various groups are sensitive about potential changes. In that context, the U.S. will probably succeed in implementing a limited number of suggestions in the international setting. For this reason, Abee suggested that participants focus on what they viewed as the most important indicators for the U.S. to refine, drop, or add. He reminded the group to view the

indicators as sets within each criterion or sub-criterion and then consider whether they are adequate and have the correct emphasis. He noted that adding indicators would be received with resistance at all levels.

In addition, Abee noted that the results of the workshops would undergo additional reviewed for input by Roundtable participants at their May 2005 Workshop, before being consideration by U.S. delegations attending the Montreal Process Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting in October 2005 and the Montreal Process Working Group meeting in February 2006.

Following the presentation, participants asked for additional clarification on the limits of their potential revisions, including whether or not substituting an indicator would be well received. Abee reemphasized the need to take care in prioritizing the suggested changes.

Dave Radloff, Special Assistant, Sustainable Development, USDA Forest Service, then provided the group with an overview of how the indicators relate to each other and sustainable forest management. For his presentation he referred to a conceptual framework to tie together sustainability criteria and indicators being utilized or developed by the forest, rangeland, water, and minerals and energy roundtables. He used the framework as a way to show how the Montreal C&I are interrelated and how they fit within a broader system of resource areas within a socio-economic and ecological context.

Based on this presentation, one participant observed that assigning a hierarchy might be a way of differentiating the level of importance between indicators in the context of current society – perhaps using human benefits as an approach for prioritization.

THE LATEST SCIENCE ON THE INDICATORS: THE STATE OF THE FIELD

Criterion 6– Maintenance and enhancement of long-term multiple socio-economic benefits to meet the needs of societies

Peter Ince, Research Forester, USDA Forest Service, gave a presentation on Criterion 6. He summarized what he drew from previous comments on indicator refinements and posed some assumptions about the Montreal C&I and possible missions for the C&I. He then shared some comments on the latest science on the indicators within Criterion 6 and how the indicators relate to one another.

Ince said we need more clarity on the mission of C&I before we can advise on changing them. He described four alternative C&I missions:

1. Accelerate National Learning: Use C&I to contribute to popular scientific understanding and enhance the awareness and insight provided to leadership and the public. This requires no agreement on goals or basic elements of the strategy to attain them.
2. Assess National Position and Progress: Measure the position of our country and monitor progress for our citizens. The C&I become largely descriptive indicator sets that provide a basis for comparing progress with other countries and our past state. This requires a generally accepted common vision and holistic framework that helps uncover especially challenging problems and beneficial opportunities.
3. Provide a Context for Policy or Program Evaluation: Use C&I as a body of knowledge for assessing the performance of particular policies, programs, or institutions. For example, indicators could provide a context for improving the implementation of government performance initiatives. This requires a well-grounded conceptual basis that integrates a wide variety of activities into an accountability framework.
4. Systematically Guide Strategic Decisions: This mission has a policy integration focus, in that it combines policy indicators from a variety of sectors into a systems model to guide policy choices by high-level decision makers. It aims to answer relational questions (why and how, rather than what or whether), and

responds to the growing perception among experts and the public that the interrelationships among economic, social, and environmental aspects of life are important, and policies will have unanticipated effects if these relationships are not understood.

Ince commented that fulfilling missions 1 and 2 are feasible, while missions 3 and 4 are less feasible to undertake. Mission 2, in particular, requires a general holistic framework which would establish the relationship between the indicators in Criterion 6 to other Criteria (e.g., investment flows, capacity and natural capital, and benefits/values). Ince suggested that missing information or indicators includes benefits and values, such as the distribution of benefits (i.e., equity) and water and other ecological services; as well as the effect of benefits and values on land use and capacities. A participant agreed that Criterion 6 should include aesthetic benefits as well as commodity production. Another participant asked if the indicators should describe “states of nature” or the “process” of attaining states of nature? Ince replied that they try to do both with a holistic framework.

Criterion 7—Legal, Institutional and Economic Framework for Forest Conservation and Sustainable Management

Michael Kilgore, Assistant Professor in the University of Minnesota College of Natural Resources, addressed potential refinements to the Criterion 7 indicators. He said there was a need to look at the wording of indicators to make sure it is clear and unambiguous. He also raised the issue of indicator redundancy and the need to consider placing some indicators under other criteria. Challenges include making the indicators focus more on outcomes and less on influences, and determining whether or not to define “sustainable forest management.” Kilgore cautioned against further “lumping” together of criteria, which can make interpretation difficult.

A participant asked if there was a contraction between eliminating redundancy and avoiding lumping indicators together. Kilgore said his comments about redundancy were related to cases of two very similarly worded indicators that could be combined. However, suggestions such as creating a single “index” by lumping together unrelated or partially related indicators could be difficult. It is still not clear if the idea of creating an “index of sustainability” is possible or meaningful, but it may be a good idea.

One participant commented that Criterion 7 is a “catch all” that almost could be divided into two or three new criteria, and asked if there was room for such a recommendation. For example, a new criterion could bring out the “social” piece. Kilgore replied that there is room for refinement and change, and if there were a compelling rationale and argument for creating a new indicator it should work. However, he reminded the participants that they were charged with refining the indicators, not the criteria.

Another participant said there was a need to better define what they were talking about: should Criterion 7 discussions focus on legal and institutional capacity? A participant commented that Criterion 7 serves as the institutional framework for the delivery of Criteria 1–6.

Building a Common Language for Monitoring Forest Sustainability in the Northeastern Area

Connie Carpenter, Northeastern Area Sustainability Coordinator for the USDA Forest Service, described the collaboration between the Northeastern Area and the region’s 20 states to develop and report on regional sustainability indicators. She said that when pulling together information at the national level, it is important to make it readily accessible to folks at the regional and state level. Consistency and common definitions are useful.

A participant asked how the initiative selected a balance of core indicators, and Carpenter replied that they made selections based on what they thought they could control, while remaining comprehensive and credible.

Another question concerned the involvement of other federal agencies in the development of the regional process. Carpenter said there was awareness and representation by other agencies early on, but noted that they generally were not represented during the final selection of indicators. A critical component of follow up with other agencies will involve federal land management indicators.

One commenter said that as we look at processes for developing regional indicators, we must be careful about the audience we select, recognizing the broad scope of stakeholders.

INDICATOR REFINEMENTS

At the Bloomington workshop, participants were divided into four smaller groups to discuss the following sets of indicators:

- Breakout Group 6A: Criterion 6 - Indicators 29 – 34 and 38 – 41.
- Breakout Group 6B: Criterion 6 - Indicators 35 – 37, 42 & 43, and 44 – 47.
- Breakout Group 7A: Criterion 7 - Indicators 48 – 59.
- Breakout Group 7B: Criterion 7 - Indicators 60 – 67.

Participants and the facilitator for each group are listed in Attachment B.

The refinements developed by each of the two groups working on the subsets of indicators for each Criterion were compiled into one table of refinements for each Criterion. Those tables are available at <http://www.sustainableforests.net/summaries.php>. Each table includes the original language from the Montreal Process TAC notes; the proposed refined language from the workshop; and the explanation for the change.

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