

**Certification Assessments on
Public & University Lands:
A Field-Based Comparative Evaluation of the
Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the
Sustainable Forestry Initiative[®] (SFI) Programs**

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PINCHOT INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION

About the Pinchot Institute

The Pinchot Institute for Conservation is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to leadership in conservation thought, policy, and action. The Pinchot Institute was dedicated in 1963 by President John F. Kennedy at Grey Towers National Historic Landmark in Milford, Pennsylvania, historic home of conservation leader Gifford Pinchot, to facilitate communication and closer cooperation among resource managers, scientists, policymakers, and the American public. The Institute continues Pinchot's legacy of conservation leadership as a center for policy development in support of sustainable forest management.

Programs and activities

Policy research and analysis. The Pinchot Institute serves as a bridge between the scientific and policymaking communities in forest resource management. The Institute provides independent policy research and timely, objective analysis targeted to the current information needs of policymakers and resource managers.

Convening and facilitation. The Institute serves as a convenor and facilitator, fostering collaborative approaches to resolving key issues in forest policy. The Institute brings together leaders in forest management, research, and education from federal and state agencies, universities, industry, and conservation organizations to address new challenges and discover new solutions for advancing sustainable forest management.

Leadership development. Through its program on leadership in natural resource conservation, the Institute conducts research and provides training for resource management professionals and community leaders in participatory decision making and conservation leadership.

Current programs

Institutional and policy changes to implement sustainable forest management. Much of the effort to date in sustainable forestry has focused on policy development, with far less attention devoted to the mechanisms by which these policies will be implemented, or potentially thwarted. Policies for integrated approaches to resource management will make little difference on the ground until the appropriate organizational structures and administrative processes are developed. These include the development of processes for conservation-oriented strategic goal setting and performance measurement, and integrated resource management planning, budgeting and fiscal accountability. These considerations are complex and intensely politicized, and the Pinchot Institute can play a critical, constructive role through both independent analysis and facilitation.

Forest stewardship and sustainable rural development. The restoration and maintenance of forest ecosystems for multiple objectives requires a variety of continuing land treatments that can be the basis of stable employment and income in rural communities. There is a need for policies aimed specifically at facilitating the development of local capacity to carry out such land treatments through the kind of small entrepreneurial firms that characterize rural communities. The Pinchot Institute is working with policymakers, federal and state land management agencies and with a network of community-based rural development practitioners to identify and address key policy issues such as contracting, bonding requirements, capital financing, and training in the development of specific strategies to advance both forest stewardship and sustainable rural development.

Developing collaborative models of conservation leadership. The Pinchot Institute is committed to the development of effective natural resource conservation leadership among both beginning and mid-career professionals, in public agencies, private organizations, and conservation NGOs. The Pinchot Institute offers leadership workshops and executive development seminars in participatory decision models that are beginning to redefine the relationship between land management agencies and the communities they serve. The Institute's leadership development program is integrated with the training and conservation fellowship programs held at Grey Towers National Historic Landmark, primarily for mid-level managers in federal natural resource management agencies.

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	
OVERVIEW	5
TERMS OF REFERENCE	5
ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT	6
PART I: METHODOLOGY	
SECTION I-A: PARTICIPATING FOREST MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS	7
SECTION I-B: REVERSE EVALUATION	9
PART II: COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE RATINGS	
SECTION II-A: STANDARDS	
II.A.1 CLARITY OF STANDARDS	18
II.A.2 COMPREHENSIVENESS OF STANDARDS	18
II.A.3 BIOLOGICAL/ECOLOGICAL ISSUES	19
II.A.4 PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY	21
II.A.5 PUBLIC INPUT ON MANAGEMENT	22
II.A.6 ADEQUATE COVERAGE OF SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES	24
II.A.7 APPLICATION OF STANDARDS TO LOCAL CONTEXT	25
II.A.8 REQUIREMENT FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	26
II.A.9 REQUIREMENT FOR ADEQUATE STAFF TRAINING	27
II.A.10 OVERALL CREDIBILITY WITH MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS	28
II.A.11 STANDARDS SUMMARY	29
SECTION II-B: ASSESSMENT PROCESS	
II.B.1 COORDINATION OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS	29
II.B.2 OBSERVANCE OF PROTOCOL	31
II.B.3 TEAM QUALITY	32
II.B.4 TEAM EXPERTISE	34
II.B.5 THOROUGHNESS: EVIDENCE REVIEW	35
II.B.6 THOROUGHNESS: MANAGEMENT PLANNING	36
II.B.7 THOROUGHNESS: BIOLOGICAL/ECOLOGICAL ISSUES	37
II.B.9 THOROUGHNESS: SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES	39
II.B.10 THOROUGHNESS: DATA VERIFICATION	41
II.B.11 EFFICIENCY	42
II.B.12 REPORTING PROCESS	43
II.B.13 PROCESS SUMMARY	44
SECTION II-C: OUTCOME	
II.C.1 OBJECTIVITY AND ACCURACY	44
II.C.2 QUALITY OF REPORTING	46
II.C.3 CLARITY OF REPORTING	47
II.C.4 CREDIBILITY	48
II.C.5 VALUE OF ASSESSMENT PROCESS	49
II.C.6 OUTCOME SUMMARY	51
SUMMARY & CONCLUSION	52
APPENDIX	
A. EXHIBITS	56
B. UPDATES IN PROGRAM STANDARDS	62
C. ADVISORY COMMITTEE	71
D. REVERSE ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE	72

i. Executive Summary

In 2001, the Pinchot Institute for Conservation undertook the first comprehensive field-based comparative analysis of the two leading forest certification programs in the United States, that of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).⁴ Five public forest management agencies in five states and two university systems participated in the study, and all but one agency completed the “dual assessment.” The total area of public forestland evaluated in this study was 700,000 acres. At the completion of the process, each of the agencies participated in a “reverse evaluation,” in which their personnel assessed the relevance of independent, third-party certification to the agency’s mission and goals, and the degree to which the certification process facilitated improvements in the conservation and sustainable management of forests under their stewardship. Agency personnel also identified the most salient differences in the FSC and SFI certification programs, based on their own direct experience in the study, and compared what they regarded as the relative strengths and weaknesses of each program. It is these responses from participating agency personnel that are the basis for the information contained in this report.

This analysis is an outgrowth of an earlier study to examine the applicability of independent, third-party certification programs on public forest lands in the United States. Of particular interest in this study was how any changes in the management of public forest lands required in order to comply with independent certification standards would be reconciled with forest management guidelines to the agency provided through statutes, regulations, land management plans and other public policies. In 1998, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania became the first state to participate in the study. At the same time, the state of Minnesota embarked on a pilot certification of 500,000 acres under the management of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. FSC certification of the entire 2.1 million acres of state forest managed by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry required some adjustments in management and in existing public policy, detailed in a strategic plan issued by the Bureau of Forestry. Subsequently, the Pinchot Institute sought to expand the study to include other states. By this time, a second independent, third-party certification system had become established in the US, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. This provided the Pinchot Institute with the additional opportunity of having forest resource managers compare the relevance and performance of these two different programs, as well as of independent, third-party certification overall.

The “reverse evaluations” by agency personnel were conducted on the basis of a set of questions developed by the Pinchot Institute in consultation with the Forest Stewardship Council, the American Forest & Paper Association and other members of an advisory committee representing a diversity of perspectives and professional expertise. Each agency was given the opportunity to modify this set of questions to better reflect their particular experience, or additional information they wanted to document, but each agency chose to use the standard template of questions. By means of a rating scale, the participating agencies evaluated the FSC and SFI programs as they experienced them, in terms of the *standards* for forest management practices, the *process* by which the audit was carried out, and the value of the *outcome* for the agency. The agency personnel were asked to reflect on the value of independent, third-party certification generally, and on the relative value of the two different certification programs.

Both the FSC and SFI programs consistently rated high in the fundamental measures of relevance to agency mission and goals, and facilitating improvements in existing forest management practices. The responses of the agencies show several areas of similarity, where the programs were rated closely in

⁴ Sustainable Forestry Initiative® is a registered service mark and a program of the American Forest and Paper Association. SFI is a service mark of the American Forest and Paper Association.

performance. There are also many important differences, perhaps reflecting fundamental differences in the origins or approaches of the two programs, or simply differing rigor in performance.

Agency personnel viewed each program as having different strengths and weaknesses. The FSC program was generally regarded as more comprehensive, providing more adequate coverage of biological/ecological and social issues in the standards, in the field auditing process, and in the final reporting. Overall, the FSC system was also considered more relevant to the agencies' forest management objectives than the SFI program. The agencies reported that SFI certification offered clearer guidelines, supported by a clearer and better-coordinated assessment process. They also viewed the SFI program as more rigorous in requiring continuous improvement over time, and in focusing on the research and staff training aspects of forest management. For many elements of the reverse evaluation, there was substantial variation among the responses of the participating agencies, but for other elements their responses were very similar. The graphical displays of the agencies' responses contained in the body of this report are intended to highlight the degree of variation from one reverse evaluation element to another, and are important to accurately interpreting the information that can be derived from this study.

Independent, third-party certification of forest management practices is a relatively new mechanism in the United States, and this study is intended to address critical information needs on certification overall and on the relative features of each of the leading certification programs currently available in the US. It is important to note that both the FSC and SFI programs are continuing to evolve. This study is based on the features of each program at the time the study was conducted. Since the data was collected for this study, both FSC and the SFI program have made changes aimed at improving their relevance and performance; indeed, it is hoped that the results of this study will help contribute to those improvements.

The information in this report will be of value not only to public forest management agencies, but to forest land managers of all kinds. Certification is becoming increasingly important as a voluntary, non-regulatory mechanism for identifying opportunities to improve forest management practices on both public and private lands, and for publicly recognizing the achievements of resource managers whose efforts can serve as tangible, observable models for improving the conservation and sustainable management of America's forests.

ii. INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

This report summarizes the results of an in-field comparison of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program (SFI) based actual certification assessments on several areas of public forestland. The comparison is based on a survey completed by several organizations that participated in "dual assessments" on the public/university lands they manage. Their ratings, provide insights on the on-the-ground similarities and differences in the FSC and SFI certification programs. The dual assessments and the comparative study were facilitated by the Pinchot Institute for Conservation and funded by several private foundations. No public funding from the participating agencies or other sources was used in carrying out this study.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This comparative study was an unprecedented effort aimed at answering many questions on how the two leading certification systems in the United States performed in the field. The study involved different types of forest management organizations, multiple auditing firms, and many kinds of forests. For this reason, there are several factors that will be critical to understanding the approach used in this study. They are summarized below:

- The field assessments were carried out during 2001-2002 and therefore reflect the standards in use at that time. This report does not attempt to account for changes that may have occurred in the FSC and SFI programs since the initiation of this effort. Descriptions of these changes has been provided by each program for the purpose of conveying how the programs' performance on particular elements described in this report may now have changed (Appendix B).
- Each of the six land management agencies provided a single response to the Pinchot Institute survey, in most cases reflecting a consensus view of several individuals within the agency. Agencies were also encouraged to supplement their responses with information explaining how their experience resulted in particular ratings. This supplemental information is not included in this report. Additionally there is no weighting given to responses from agencies managing larger land bases. There is also no distinction made between agencies that were recommended for certification—under either or both programs—and those that were not. Finally, those agencies that participated in preliminary assessments, but did not complete full assessments for both systems, are also included (i.e. Vermont and Tennessee). The goal of this report is to accurately and faithfully convey the experiences of the agencies that participated in the dual assessments as they have reported in survey responses
- Each of the certification assessments that served as a basis for the comparative study was a "unique event"—involving a different land base and a different set of assessors working for one of several different firms. The uniqueness of the experiences for each agency is an important feature of the comparative study—in much the same way that certifications performed elsewhere will always take place in a unique context. However, this has implications for how data in this type of study may be interpreted. Averages of ratings given by different agencies minimizes their unique experiences. Thus where possible all individual responses have been included whenever average responses are discussed. The objective of this report is to provide complete, accurate and impartial information from the study, so that readers can arrive at their own informed conclusions regarding the comparative features of each of the leading certification programs, and their relative performance in field application.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The findings portion of the report is organized in two main parts. **Part I** describes the methodology and includes two sections. **Section I-A** describes the forestlands that took part in these facilitated dual assessments. **Section I-B** describes the template and how the agencies viewed the *importance* and *relevance* of particular types of questions about certification and forest management.

Part II describes the comparative performance of the two systems. This part is organized into three sections following the format of the survey. **Section II-A** looks at how well the *Standards* for each program addressed a broad set of forest management issues. **Section II-B** considers the quality and rigor of the certification *Process*—how well the programs and their auditing firms carried out the assessment. **Section II-C** focuses on the *Outcome* of the certification assessments, addressing aspects like value and credibility. The final portion of the report, beginning on page 52, is a **Summary & Conclusion**.

BACKGROUND ON PINCHOT INSTITUTE PILOT PROJECTS IN CERTIFICATION

The Pinchot Institute comparative study grew out of prior efforts evaluating the applicability of certification in untested settings—principally on state lands. Federal and state forestlands, university research forests, and tribal reservations often must support a broader suite of uses than do forestlands dedicated principally to wood products. Moreover, these other categories of ownership have varied and different administrative systems reflecting different types of accountability. With support from several private foundations the Pinchot Institute has facilitated certification assessments of forestlands managed by state, federal, and tribal governments. The goal of these facilitated assessments has been to test certification in unique contexts, familiarize a broader segment of the forestry sector with the costs and benefits of certification, and hopefully broaden the adoption of certification by other types of landowners. The most recent set of these pilot certifications were dual assessments—applying both FSC and SFI certification—and were used for the comparison contained in this report.

PART I: METHODOLOGY

SECTION I-A: PARTICIPATING FOREST MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

During 2001-2002, almost 700,000 acres managed by the six organizations underwent certification assessments by multiple auditing firms. These pilot certifications were a complex process--procedurally, politically, technically, and financially. Furthermore, as the majority of participating agencies either received certification as a result of these projects or are seeking to become certified under one or both of the systems, challenges remain for each organization in the future. Each organization manages its forests in a distinct manner befitting the unique objectives for state forests, parks, research and teaching forests, recreational areas, demonstration forests, etc. This diversity of land type and the associated political and administrative policies that guide their management enrich the range of insights provided by the participating agencies in this study.

Table 1. Participating forest management organizations.

Organization/ Lands	Acres	FSC Certifier	SFI Certifier	Status and Outcome
North Carolina State University (NCSU Research & Teaching Forests)	12,000	SmartWood	PlumLine	<i>Recommended for FSC, but not for SFI. Non-conformances for SFI are resolved and NCSU R&T Forests will become certified under both systems.</i>
North Carolina State Forests (NC Division of Forest Resources)	41,000	SmartWood	PlumLine	<i>Initially not recommended for FSC or SFI certification pending resolution of pre-condition and non-conformances.</i>
Duke Forest (Duke University)	8,000	SmartWood	Plum Line	<i>Recommended by FSC, but not for SFI. Non-conformances for SFI are resolved and Duke Forest will become certified under both systems.</i>
Tennessee State Forests (Tennessee Division of Forestry)	158,000	SmartWood	PriceWater-houseCoopers	<i>Pre-assessments completed first: Recommended for FSC full assessment, but not SFI full assessment. Based on subsequent full FSC assessment, TDF was recommended and will become FSC certified. TDF still resolving issues for SFI full assessment.</i>
Maine Public Reserved and Non-Reserved Forestlands (Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands)	450,000	SCS	Interforest/ Arthur Andersen	<i>Recommended for certification under both systems. State has become certified by FSC and SFI on all assessed acreage.</i>
Marsh Billings Rockefeller National Historic Park (National Park Service)	500	SmartWood	Bioforest	<i>MBR not recommended for full assessment under either system, but considering changes for full FSC assessment.</i>

Tennessee

The State of Tennessee Division of Forestry elected to undertake FSC and SFI program assessments on all 12 of their state forests, totaling 158,000 acres. They elected to first undergo a pre-assessment process to identify any obvious shortcomings that would prevent the state from successfully engaging in a full audit. In July, 2001, pre-assessments were completed by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (SFI) and SmartWood (FSC), resulting in a recommendation by SmartWood to proceed with a full FSC audit, but also resulting in a determination by PriceWaterhouseCoopers that the state was not ready to proceed with a SFI audit due to potential major non-conformances, many related to insufficient documentation. The state proceeded with a full FSC audit, which was completed by SmartWood in December 2001 with a recommendation for certification with conditions. In January 2002, Tennessee became the first state in the US South to achieve FSC certification of their public forestlands. At the time Tennessee Governor Don Sundquist announced their successful certification under FSC, he announced the state's intention to continue seeking SFI certification on all of their state forests.

North Carolina

In the State of North Carolina, 61,000 acres managed by three separate organizations underwent full FSC and SFI program assessment. Assessed lands included the 41,000 acre Bladen Lakes State Forest managed by the North Carolina Division of Forest Resources, 12,000 acres of research and teaching forests managed by North Carolina State University, and 8,000 acres of research and teaching forests of Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment. Completed by December 2001, the assessments were conducted by The Plum Line (for SFI) and SmartWood (for FSC). Initially, after the full assessment, Plum Line determined that all three institutions could not be certified by the SFI program due to major non-conformances. SmartWood determined that Duke University and North Carolina DFR could be certified with conditions, but issued one pre-condition to NCSU. As of February 2002, Duke and North Carolina State University had corrected all SFI and FSC non-conformances and announced they would seek certification under both systems.

Maine

The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands elected to undertake FSC and SFI program assessments on the 450,000 acres composing their "Public Reserved and Non-Reserved" forestlands. The assessment was carried out concurrently by Interforest/Arthur Andersen (for SFI) and Scientific Certification Systems (for FSC) in the summer/fall of 2001. All assessment work was completed by December 2001 resulting in recommendations for certification by both SFI and FSC. In March 2002 the Maine Parks Bureau became the first state in the nation to achieve certification under both FSC and SFI systems.

Vermont

The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park, a 500-acre working park became the first federal lands in the US to undergo SFI and FSC pre-assessment. BioForest conducted the SFI pre-assessment and SmartWood conducted the FSC scoping. The pre-assessments were completed by December 2001 with recommendations from both auditors detailing lack of readiness to proceed with full audit. In January 2002 - MBR announced its desire to proceed with a full FSC audit upon resolution of pre-conditions.

SECTION I-B: REVERSE EVALUATION

A survey instrument, or *reverse evaluation*, was used to document the perspectives of participating agencies. The template for the reverse evaluation was designed by the Pinchot Institute, with guidance from the American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA—sponsor of the SFI Program), the FSC-US, and members of a 10-person advisory committee (**Appendix C**), and served to guide forestland managers in their evaluation of each certification program. The managers were given the opportunity to adapt the template to meet their own particular needs and none chose to do so. The template presented land managers with a set of positive statements, or *elements*, about the certification assessment. Managers were asked to rate the degree to which that statement was consistent with their experience. For example, a statement might read:

“Assessors reviewed an adequate scope of documentation and field management operations to determine if the agency/organization is protecting water bodies and riparian areas”

The agencies were then asked to rate the degree to which this was true using a scale from "1" (strongly disagree) to "7" (strongly agree). The template contains three main sections focused on the *Standards*, the *Process*, and the *Outcome* of the certification assessments. The example used above was excerpted from the *Process* section of the template, which addressed how auditors carried out the assessment and applied the certification standards of each system. Overall the template included (**Table 2**):

- Forty-nine (49) elements addressing the *Standards*;
- Fifty-six (56) elements addressing the *Process*; and,
- Twenty-eight (28) elements addressing the *Outcome*.

Each of the three sections in the report contains several categories into which the elements are grouped. For example the category of Comprehensiveness is comprised of five elements, which in turn address comprehensiveness on biological, ecological, and social issues. The overall structure of the template is contained in **Table 2**.

Table 2 Reverse evaluation sections.

SECTION CATEGORY	# ELEMENTS
STANDARDS	(10 CATEGORIES, 49 ELEMENTS)
CLARITY OF STANDARDS	1
COMPREHENSIVENESS OF STANDARDS	5
BIOLOGICAL/ECOLOGICAL ISSUES	15
PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY	5
PUBLIC INPUT ON MANAGEMENT	4
ADEQUATE COVERAGE OF SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES	5
APPLICATION OF STANDARDS TO LOCAL CONTEXT	4
REQUIREMENT FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	1
REQUIREMENT FOR ADEQUATE STAFF TRAINING	3
OVERALL CREDIBILITY WITH MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS	6
PROCESS	(11 CATEGORIES, 56 ELEMENTS)
COORDINATION OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS	7
OBSERVANCE OF PROTOCOL	3
TEAM QUALITY	6

TEAM EXPERTISE	5
THOROUGHNESS: EVIDENCE REVIEW	5
THOROUGHNESS: MANAGEMENT PLANNING	4
THOROUGHNESS: BIOLOGICAL/ECOLOGICAL ISSUES	11
THOROUGHNESS: CONSULTING STAKEHOLDERS	4
THOROUGHNESS: DATA VERIFICATION	2
EFFICIENCY	3
REPORTING PROCESS	6
OUTCOME	<i>(5 CATEGORIES, 28 ELEMENTS)</i>
OBJECTIVITY AND ACCURACY	5
QUALITY OF REPORTING	4
CLARITY OF REPORTING	3
CREDIBILITY	8
VALUE OF ASSESSMENT PROCESS	8

Agencies were also asked to consider each statement based on the *relevance* and *importance* to their own particular mission and purpose. These questions used a 5-point scale, and asked respondents to rate the elements from “*irrelevant & unimportant*” (1) to “*extremely relevant & important*” (5). For ease of presentation, the agencies’ evaluations of each element have been averaged and are shown in **Tables 3a-3b**. The higher the score (nearing 5), the more *relevant* and *important* that element was considered by the agencies.

Table 3a. Reverse Evaluation Template--Standards Section

<i>Element</i>	<i>Relevance Score</i>
• The program’s standards are clear.	5.0
• Overall, the standard addresses all relevant sustainable forest management issues faced by the state agency/organization.	4.0
• The programs standards cover an adequate range of:	4.5
o Ecological and environmental concerns	4.0
o Economic concerns	3.9
o Social concerns (e.g. community relations and workers’ rights)	4.9
• Standards cover an appropriate balance between the economic, environmental, and social concerns.	4.9
• Standard encompasses measures for protection of biological resources, by:	4.9
o Requiring protection of water quality (e.g. buffer zones, minimizing erosion, and incorporating measures for broad-scale watershed protection	4.7
o Specifying guidelines protecting rare, threatened, endangered species and their habitats (e.g. nesting and feeding grounds).	3.7
o Specifying guidelines for exotic and locally-adapted species.	3.5
o Specifying guidelines on genetic diversity.	4.4
o Requiring protection of wildlife habitat (e.g. snags, dens, downed trees, understory species, etc.)	4.7
o Requiring sustainable harvest levels	3.9
o Specifying guidelines for regionally appropriate forest composition and structural diversity	2.9
o Specifying guidelines for favoring pre-established natural regeneration of desirable species	2.5
o Specifying guidelines and limitations on forest conversion and plantation management.	4.5
o Requiring identification and establishment of protected areas containing unique flora and fauna.	3.9
o Addressing harvest utilization (e.g. high stumps).	

○ Addressing residual site damage.	4.5
○ Specifying guidelines and restrictions on the application of pesticides and herbicides in:	3.2
▪ Timber management areas	3.2
▪ Buffers	4.0
▪ Non-target areas	4.0
• Standard requires the agency/organization to promote sustainable forestry with:	4.5
○ Forest management staff	4.2
○ Contractors	3.9
○ Neighboring landowners	4.4
○ Forestry community	4.4
○ Public at large	3.7
• Standard requires that the agency/organization provide opportunities for the public to:	4.0
○ Provide input on certification	4.2
○ Raise concerns with poor forest management practices	3.9
○ Advocate other forest-management objectives (e.g. recreation)	4.2
• Standard requires opportunities for interest groups to participate and be informed of the commitment of the agency/organization to sustainable forestry.	4.2
• Standard clearly specifies the responsibility of the agency/organization to:	3.4
○ Identify and protect areas of cultural or historical importance.	4.5
○ Generate economic opportunities for local communities	2.2
○ Manage for non-timber values (e.g. recreation).	2.5
○ Protect legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples.	4.7
○ Maintain and demonstrate long-term forest-use rights for land and resources.	4.4
• Standard is easily applied to the local /regional context	4.2
• When adapted to the local/regional context, the standard:	4.4
○ Accommodates additional measures that strengthen the assessment	4.2
○ Limits subjective interpretation that weakens its rigor or intent	4.9
○ Accommodates unique forest management objectives where appropriate (e.g., research areas).	4.2
• Standard requires improvement of management practices over time.	4.5
• Standard required that relevant personnel are:	4.7
○ Informed of their responsibilities	4.2
○ Adequately trained.	4.2
○ Regularly assessed.	4.0
• The standard/certification program is regarded as credible by:	3.9
○ Timber Industry	4.0
○ Forest Landowners	4.2
○ Legislators	4.2
○ Scientific Community	4.2
○ Public at Large	4.3
○ Environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS)	4.3

Agencies felt that two-thirds (34) of the elements in the *Standards* section were *extremely relevant* and *important* (in the 4 to 5 range). Another quarter of the elements (12) were considered *relevant* and *important*; and the remaining few (3) were considered *unimportant* and *somewhat irrelevant*. These included the elements focusing on *tenure*, *indigenous peoples rights*, and *conversion*. The low scores for these categories are most likely due to the relative infrequency of conflict in rights and tenure on their

public lands. For the most part the elements used in the template, which cover many aspects of forest management, were considered *relevant* and *important* to the agencies.

Among the elements of the *Standard*, *clarity* appears to be especially important to agencies. Several other elements of the template were also highly rated, including an appropriate *balance of concerns* (ecological, social, and economic), attention to *water quality*; protection of *rare, threatened, and endangered species*; and the establishment of *protected areas*.

Table 3b. Reverse Evaluation Template--Process Section

<i>Element</i>	<i>Relevance Score</i>
• I knew what the standards would be at the outset of the process.	5.0
• Initial meeting(s) informed managers of the requirements of the assessment process (e.g. timeline, personnel time, etc.).	5.0
• Both the lead assessor and the agency/organization agreed on the indicators that would be used for assessment	4.9
• The comprehensive assessment plan that guides the process was accepted by the agency/organization.	4.7
• Assessors adequately notified the agency/organization about changes in the assessment plan.	4.5
• The chosen assessment team members were acceptable.	4.9
• Prior to the audit, the lead assessor determined whether sufficient documentation and evidence exists to initiate the audit, and notifies the agency/organization of its determination.	4.4
• The assessment process (e.g. timetables and responsibilities) was clear and understandable.	4.9
• Adhering to agreed timing and content of public announcements.	3.7
• Observing agreed discretionary role of the agency/organization for circulating documents, drafts, and final report.	3.5
• Overall, members of the assessment team were of high caliber and are well respected in the state's forestry community.	4.5
• Assessment team members communicated effectively.	4.7
• Assessors conducted themselves in a professional and ethical manner.	4.9
• Each team member had necessary education, formal and on-the-job training, and experience.	5.0
• Lead assessor had a certificate indicating successful completion of a lead assessors training course and is accredited by a national standards or accreditation body.	4.4
• Assessment team had sufficient expertise to evaluate:	4.7
o Silvicultural aspects of forest management.	4.9
o Biological and ecological issues in forest management.	4.2
o Economic aspects of timber management.	4.5
o Social aspects of public forestland management.	4.9
• Overall, the assessment team's expertise was suitable for the specific environmental issues faced by the agency/organization.	4.7
• Assessors did not have a conflict of interest with the agency/organization (i.e. the assessment team was totally independent of the agency/organization being audited).	4.5
• The assessors evaluated conformance with the standard by:	4.7
o Determining the existence of internal plans and documentation.	4.7
o Collecting field evidence.	4.7
o Interviewing knowledgeable personnel.	4.2
o Reviewing monitoring or compliance records.	3.6
o Pursuing independent investigation.	4.2
• Overall the assessors considered sufficient information to understand the economic decisions affecting forest management.	4.9
• Assessors reviewed an adequate scope of documentation and field management operations to determine if the	

agency/organization is:	
o Defining clear management objectives	
o Identifying and monitoring species of concern.	4.7
o Protecting water bodies and riparian areas.	4.9
o Maintaining regionally important wildlife habitat diversity: Across the landscape (e.g. age classes and forest types)	4.7
o At the stand-level (e.g. snags, dens, downed trees, understory species, etc.)	3.9
o Identifying and establishing protected areas.	4.7
o Managing for regionally appropriate diversity in forest composition and structure.	4.2
o Minimizing impacts to visually sensitive areas.	4.4
o Ensuring timber sustainability by: Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date inventory.	4.2
o Monitoring growth and yield.	4.0
o Minimizing residual site damage.	4.7
o Requiring efficient forest product utilization.	4.0
o Making sound economic decisions over the long-term.	3.9
o Considering and incorporating public input in forest management decisions.	3.9
• Assessors consulted an adequate range of stakeholders to determine if the agency/organization is:	
o Providing opportunities for the public to voice concerns over forest management.	3.4
o Respecting indigenous land rights/claims within or adjacent to holdings.	1.7
o Providing economic benefits to communities near forest holdings.	2.4
• Evaluations and analyses developed through interviews or consultation with stakeholder groups were accurate.	4.8
• All assessments, analyses, or evidence provided by the agency/organization were independently reviewed for accuracy and consistency.	4.2
• Documentation and field-based evidence independently collected by the assessors was accurate.	5.0
• The audit was conducted in an efficient and effective manner, by:	
o Effectively utilizing agency/organization personnel time	4.5
o Visiting a representative range of timber management operations	4.7
o Providing timely and explicit notification of necessary documentation	4.2
o Allowing the agency/organization to raise its own issues and concerns about the assessment process.	4.9
• Overall the agency/organization had an opportunity effectively to respond to issues and concerns raised in the assessment.	4.9
• The assessment team administrator attempted to resolve any dispute of fact/interpretation, by:	
o Holding a closing meeting to present and discuss audit findings.	4.4
o Carefully considering issues that are raised and incorporating revisions where appropriate.	4.9
• The lead assessor and agency/organization came to consensus on all substantive issues.	4.2
• Assessor provided a draft report to the agency/organization in the agreed manner (i.e. timing and content).	4.0
• Assessor provided a final report to the agency/organization:	
o By the agreed deadline.	3.7
o Containing the full scope of factual findings and analyses.	5.0
o Demonstrating careful consideration of amendments to the draft	4.5

Agencies rated an even greater portion of the elements in the *Process* section of the template, as *extremely relevant* and *important*. More than three-quarters (50) of the elements in this section were considered *extremely relevant* and *important* (in the 4 to 5 range); another seven were considered *relevant* and *important* (in the 3 to 4 range); and relatively few (2) were considered *less relevant* and *important* or

lower. The two lowest ratings were given to the elements *on respecting indigenous land rights/claims within or adjacent to holdings*, and *providing economic benefits to communities near forest holdings*.

As in the *Standards* section the highest average rating among elements of the *Process* section concerned *clarity*. Almost all of the “Top 10” elements in this section either concern *clarity* of the assessment process (e.g. *informational meetings*, clarity of *timetables* and *responsibilities*, and *agreement on indicators*); or *quality* of the assessment team (e.g. *education and training*, overall *expertise* in forestry, *expertise* in specific disciplines, and *professionalism*). Another highly rated element included the *accuracy of data collection*.

Table 3c. Reverse Evaluation Template--Outcome Section

<i>Element</i>	<i>Relevance Score</i>
• The final report clearly presented:	
○ Findings from review of documentation and independently collected data.	4.9
○ Findings from consultations with stakeholders.	4.9
○ Findings of non-conformance, recommendations, conditions, etc.	5.0
• The final report reflected the scope and extent of the assessment that was agreed to in the planning meetings.	4.7
• Overall, the findings and conclusions were based upon sufficient evidence demonstrating whether the requirements of the standards are achieved.	4.9
• The assessors used sufficient and accurate evidence to support their conclusions on:	
○ Silvicultural concerns	4.9
○ Ecological and biological concerns.	4.9
○ Economic concerns	4.4
○ Social concerns	4.7
• Overall, your agency feels that the audit process was credible and defensible.	5.0
• A peer review process enhanced the credibility of the assessment.	3.6
• The assessment results will be regarded as credible by the:	
○ Timber Industry	3.9
○ Legislators	3.9
○ Scientific Community	4.2
○ Public at Large	4.2
○ Environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS):	4.0
○ Forest Landowners	4.0
• Based on this experience, agency/organization would pay for this certification assessment in the future.	4.2
• If recommended for certification, the agency will pay for annual audits/ and re-certification according to the re-audit schedule.	4.0
• The assessment team's recommendations will result in immediate and concrete improvements in forest management practices.	4.2
• The assessment process helped the agency/organization to prioritize attention to important ecological/environmental, economic or social concerns	4.5
• The audit process will result in continual improvement of the agency/organization's forest management practices over the long term.	4.9
• The assessment process will help increase public support for the forest management activities of the agency/organization.	4.4
• The certification program offers a valuable means to label state forest products in the marketplace.	2.0
• If merited, the formal certificate issued by the auditing organization provided meaningful recognition of the agency/organization's performance.	4.0

As with the other sections, agencies rated more than three-quarters (21) of the elements in the *Outcome* section as *extremely relevant and important* (in the 4 to 5 range). Three (3) elements were rated as *relevant and important* (3 to 4), these are: a *peer review of the assessment report*, and the *credibility with the forest products industry and legislators*. The value the certification program offers as a *means to label their forest products* in the marketplace was the only element considered *less relevant and important*. Again, the agencies appeared particularly concerned about *clarity*. The average ratings suggest that agencies also regard the process of review and dispute resolution and the scope and rigor of reporting as especially *relevant and important*. Three of the highest rated elements in the *outcome* section address the process used by the auditors to consider and resolve disputes. Other highly rated elements include *clarity of the presentation of findings*, the *scope and accuracy* of the final report—and the way in which this contributes to the *credibility* of the certification process. Overall, almost all the elements were rated above 3, a score corresponding to “*somewhat relevant and somewhat important*.”

Summary of Relevance and Importance Ratings

The highest average ratings among *categories* in the *Standard* and *Process* sections are for those that cover *clarity*; *coordination*, *thoroughness in data verification*, and *team quality*. The average ratings for these categories, composed of multiple elements, fall between 4 (*relevant and important*) and 5 (*extremely relevant and important*).

Overall, of the 134 elements in the template agencies rated more than three-quarters (105) in the 4 to 5 range. Less than one-quarter (22) fell between 3 and 4, and only seven (7) of the elements had ratings of “3” or less. There was much greater agreement among the agencies over ratings for *relevance and importance*, than there was for the performance ratings for the two systems. It is clear that agencies view a wide array of issues as important to their forest management. The agencies were consistently concerned over the objectivity, accuracy, and clarity of certification programs—in the standards, the process through which they are applied, and in the manner of reporting.

PART II: COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE OF THE CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

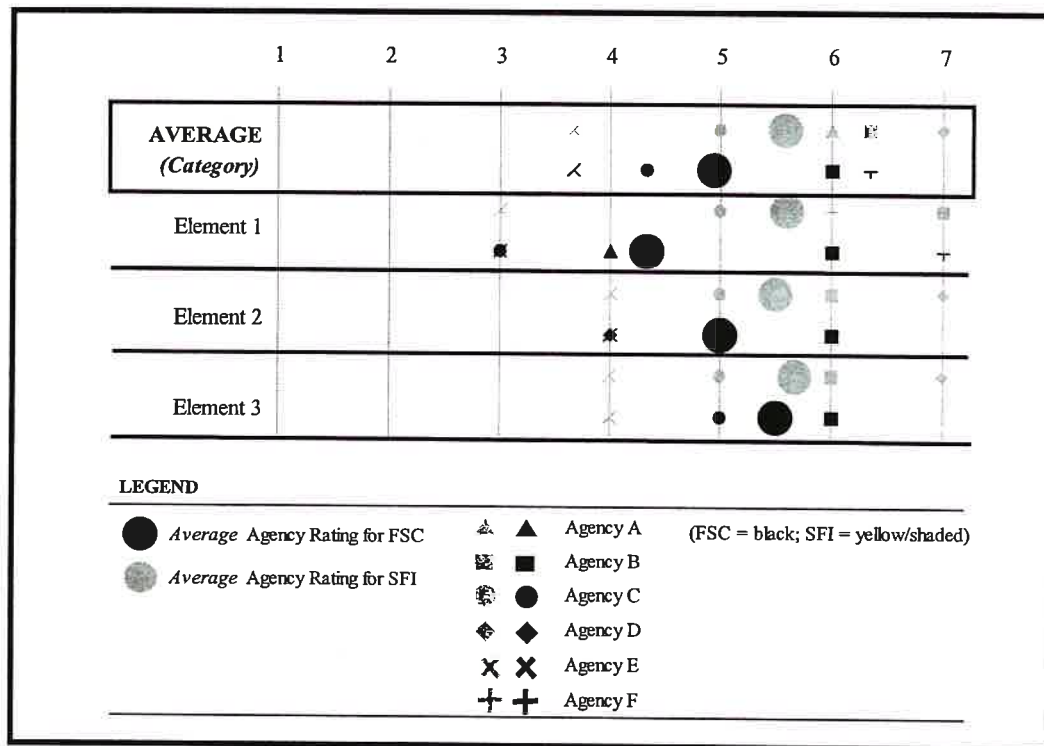
INTRODUCTION

Findings contained in this report are based on the responses in the reverse evaluation surveys received from participating public agencies. The data from this reverse evaluation are reported in two forms:

- One figure shows graphically how each agency rated the performance by programs for each element in the template. The same graphic also displays the average rating for several elements comprising a “category,” and the average rating across the six agencies (**Figure 1**).
- Another figure displays where each certification programs fell within a performance range (**Figure 3**).

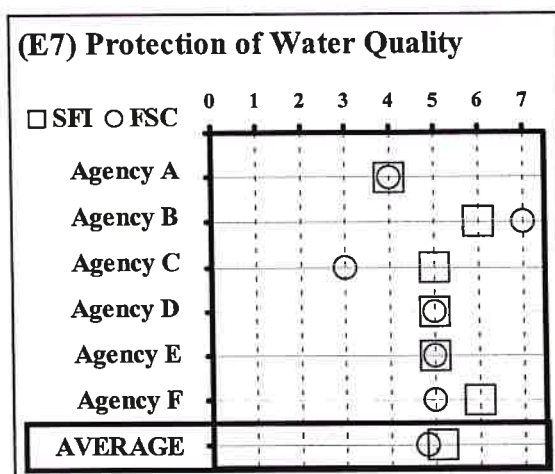
Figure 1 is an example of the graphical displays of data that will be used throughout the results section. It illustrates averages as well as the rating contributed by each agency. Throughout, SFI is presented in yellow (shaded in grayscale) and FSC data is presented in black. Large dots (●) represent the average of all six agencies. The other variously-shaped, but smaller points represent individual agency ratings. Each figure presents category averages, comprised of several elements, for *each* agency and as an average for multiple agencies. Ratings for each element are then presented by row—again, with large dots representing averages, and smaller points representing ratings from each agency.

Figure 1. Sample graphical display for comparative ratings data



The graphical display is designed to convey both the spread in ratings and the average for each element—and therefore also illustrates how certain agencies affect the average. (In some cases symbols will be overlapping, but the placement of most points is usually deducible). The variability in this data is important and affects the *significance* of the averages. However, based on the way in which most of the surveys were completed by the agencies—involving discussion and consensus among several personnel—each data-point is valuable and unique. The ratings given by the six agencies are not *replicates* of the same experience with certification. For this reason statistical tests of significance on differences in mean ratings across the six agencies are not used. Rather, the figure simply presents individual data-points alongside the average.

Despite the variability, average ratings for *multiple agencies* are still useful. In particular they are instructive to the degree to which they suggest how the programs perform overall, in several contexts. Meanwhile, average ratings for *multiple elements* are helpful in that they convey how well the programs perform for broader "categories." Including the averages across multiple agencies and multiple elements, along with the point data should enable the reader to weigh the importance and sources of variation, and understand the level of agreement among the respondents. For additional clarity on ratings given by each agency, additional exhibits are provided in **Appendix A**. A sample exhibit, in **Figure 3** shows the score given to both programs by each agency on the element of *Water Quality*.

Figure 2. Sample Graphic from Appendix-Exhibits Section

To more easily understand the similarities and differences, the ratings are also simplified into four *performance ranges* across the seven-point scale (**Figure 3**). Again, in the survey the programs were rated according to how well each of elements was *addressed* by each program. Therefore, in regard to *performance*--ratings between 1 and 4 suggest that the element in question was *minimal/absent*. Ratings from 4 to 5 suggest *low* performance, 5 to 6 are considered *medium* performance, and 6 to 7, *high* performance.

Figure 3. Performance Ranges

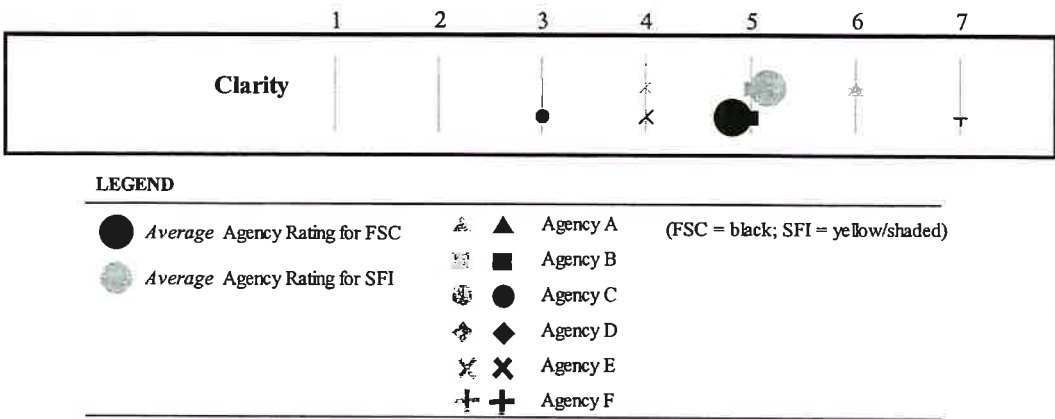
'Strongly Disagree'	"Disagree"	"Don't Think So"	"Not Sure"	"Think So"	"Agree"	"Strongly Agree"
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minimal/Absent				Low		Medium
						High

The remainder of report deals with the results of the comparative assessment, and reports the data in the manner just described. The organization of this results section, **Part II**, follows the structure of the reverse evaluation template--reporting data for categories, which are comprised of several elements.

SECTION II-A: STANDARDS

II.A.1 CLARITY OF STANDARDS

Figure 4. Clarity of the Standards



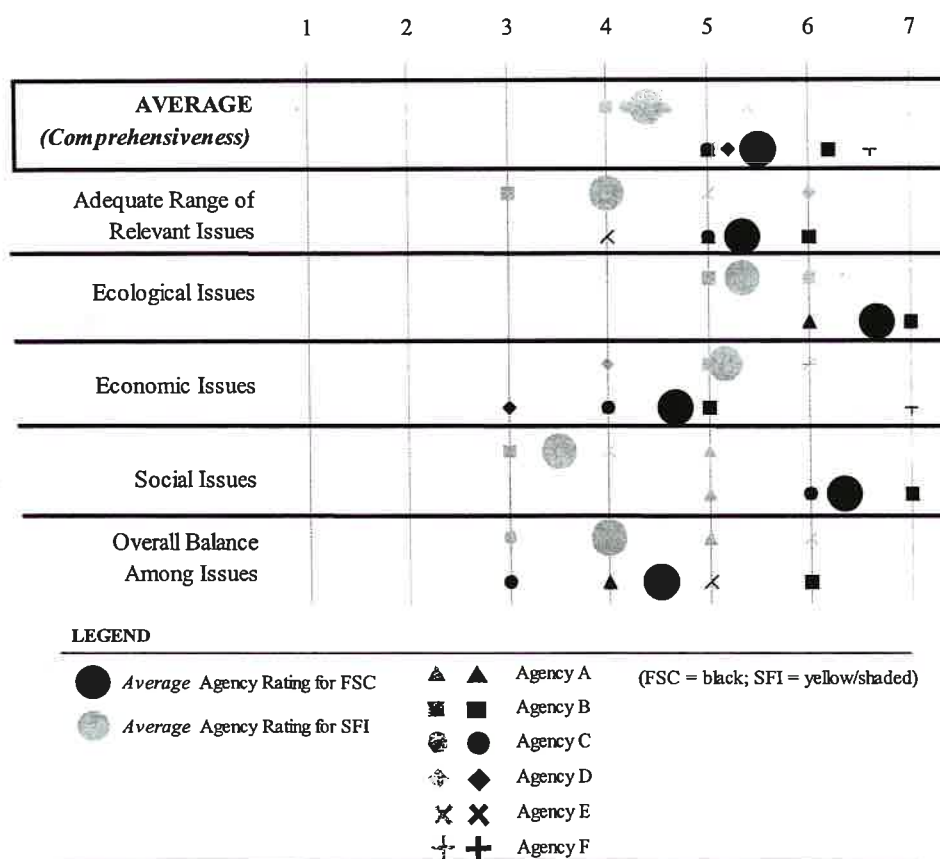
The agencies were asked one question regarding how *clear* the standards are (Figure 4). On average they rated SFI higher than FSC, however the agreement among the agencies was relatively low—especially for FSC, which received scores between 3 and 7. Two agencies rated SFI higher than FSC, one agency rated FSC higher than SFI, and three agencies rated the systems equally. The average SFI rating fell within the *medium* performance range while the average rating for FSC fell within the *low* performance range (Table 4).

Table 4. Clarity of the Standards

	Min./Absent (1-3)	Low (4 +)	Medium (5+)	High (6+)
Clarity		FSC	SFI	

II.A.2 COMPREHENSIVENESS OF STANDARDS

This category focuses on how *comprehensive* and *balanced* the standards seemed to the agencies. The elements ask whether the standards addressed an adequate range of *environmental*, *social*, and *economic* issues—and whether their prioritization of *social*, *environmental*, and *economic* concerns is well-balanced (Figure 5). Considering average ratings, five of the six agencies felt that the FSC *Standard* addressed these elements better than the SFI *Standard*. They were least in agreement on whether one system was more *balanced* than the other, and most in agreement in rating the FSC *standard* higher on *social* and *ecological* concerns.

Figure 5. Comprehensiveness of the Standards

Looking at the averages, FSC is rated higher than SFI in all but one of the elements, including overall *comprehensiveness*, coverage of *environmental* and *social* issues, and requiring an appropriate *balance* between environmental, social, and economic priorities. SFI is rated higher than FSC in addressing economic issues. Across all five elements for comprehensiveness the average rating for the FSC program falls in the *medium* performance, while the SFI program falls in the *low* performance range (Table 5).

Table 5. Clarity & Comprehensiveness of the Standards—Performance Ranges

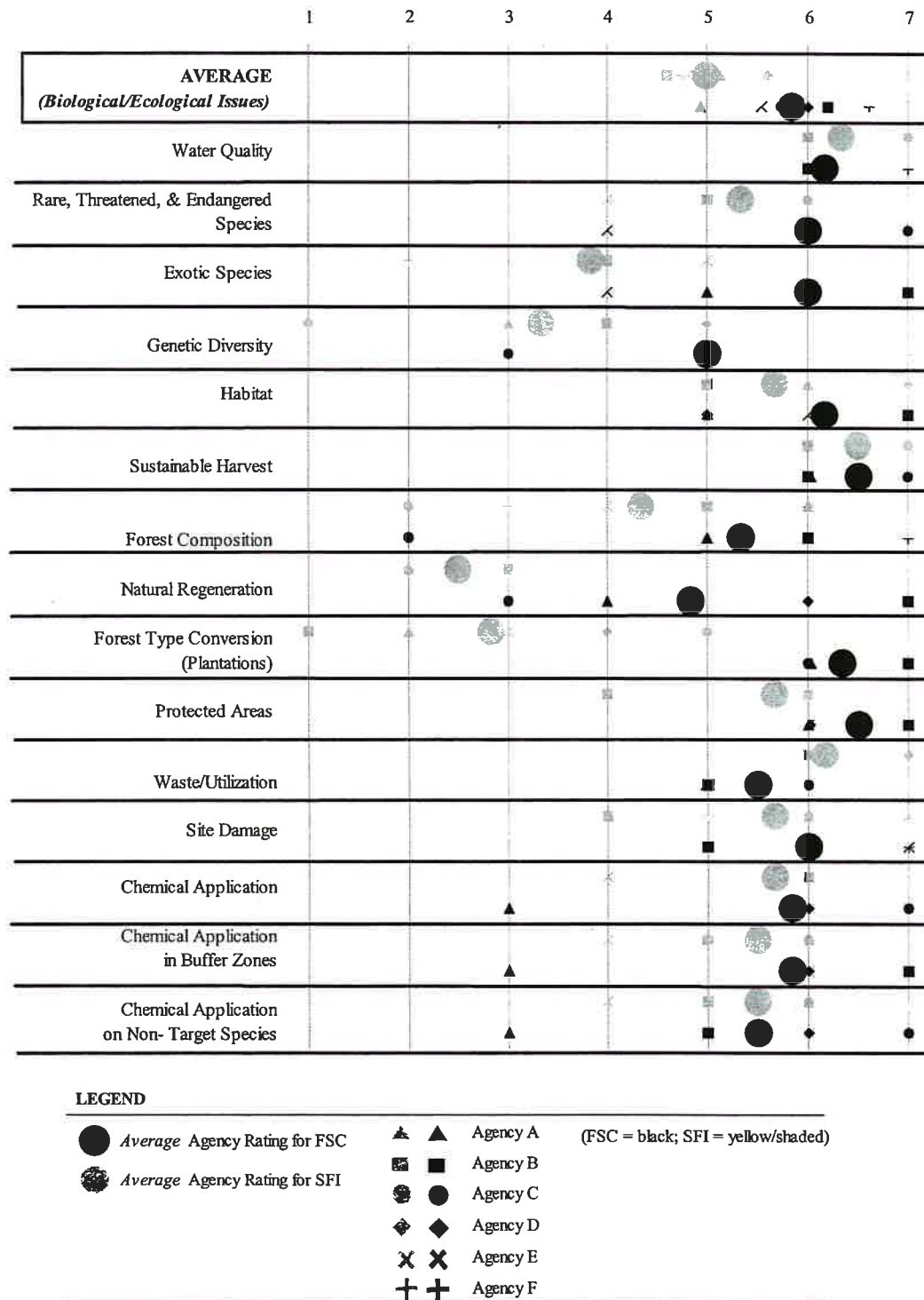
	Min./Absent (1-3)	Low (4 +)	Medium (5+)	High (6+)
<i>Comprehensiveness:</i>				
• Adequate Range of Relevant Issues		SFI	FSC	
• Ecological Issues			SFI	FSC
• Economic Issues		FSC	SFI	
• Social Issues	SFI			FSC
• Balance		SFI/FSC		

II.A.3 BIOLOGICAL/ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

This category focuses on 15 *biological/ecological* aspects of forest management (Figure 6). Average scores for five (5) agencies rated FSC higher than SFI for this area. Of the 15 elements, FSC is rated higher than SFI in eleven (11); SFI is rated higher than FSC in two (2) areas—*water body protection* and

waste/utilization. Ratings are approximately equivalent in two (2) areas--(chemical application on non-targeted species, and requiring sustainable harvest).

Figure 6. Biological/Ecological Issues



The level of agreement among the agencies varies widely across the 15 elements. All six agencies concurred in rating FSC higher than the SFI in addressing forest-type *conversion*—but this is the only

element for which agreement is unanimous. A majority agreed in rating FSC higher in the degree to which its standards address the issues of *exotic species*, *genetic diversity*, *habitat*, and *natural regeneration*; and rating SFI higher in addressing *utilization* and *waste*. There was more variability in the responses for the other elements. The average ratings for several elements are heavily influenced by outlier ratings from individual agencies. This includes the SFI rating for *genetic diversity*, *forest composition*, and *protected areas*; and FSC ratings for *genetic diversity*, *forest composition*, and the three elements concerning *chemical application*.

For the entire category, the average FSC rating falls in the *medium* performance range, while the average rating for the SFI program falls in the *low/medium* performance range. Average SFI ratings fall in the *minimal/absent* performance range for four (4) elements—in limiting use of *exotic species*, maintaining *genetic diversity*, favoring *natural regeneration*, and limiting *forest conversion* (Table 6). Only one FSC rating falls in the *low* range (favoring *natural regeneration*) and the rest are either *medium* (n=6) or *high* (n=7). SFI ratings fall in the *high* performance range for two (2) elements—*sustainable harvest*, and *harvest waste/utilization*.

Table 6. Biological/Ecological Issues—Performance Ranges

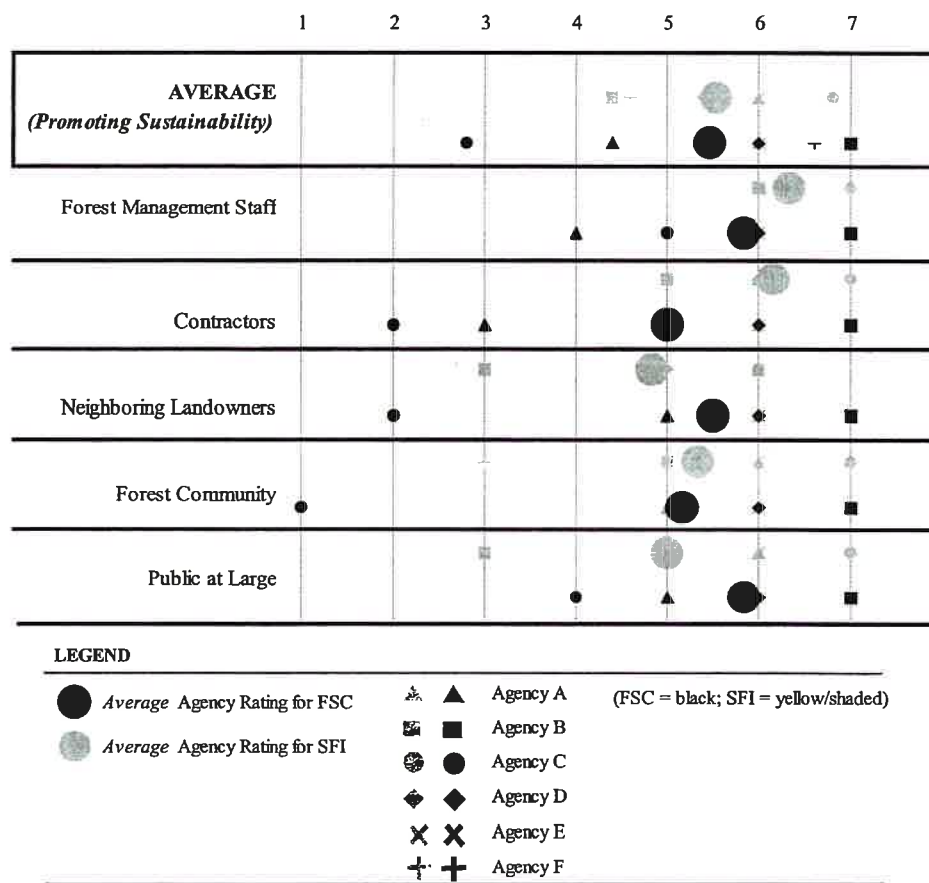
	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Biological/Ecological Issues</i>				
• Water Quality				FSC/SFI
• Rare/Threatened/ Endangered Species			SFI	FSC
• Exotic Species	SFI			FSC
• Genetic diversity	SFI		FSC	
• Wildlife habitat			SFI	FSC
• Sustainable harvest				FSC/SFI
• Forest composition			FSC	
• Natural regeneration	SFI	FSC		
• Forest Type Conversion (Plantations)	SFI			FSC
• Protected areas			SFI	FSC
• Waste/Utilization			FSC	SFI
• Site damage			SFI	FSC
• Chemical Application in Timber Mgmt.			SFI/FSC	
• Chemical Application in Buffer Zones			SFI/FSC	
• Chemical Application on Non-target Species			SFI/FSC	

II.A.4 PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

This category focuses on whether the programs evaluate the agencies' responsibility to promote sustainability with *internal staff*, *outside contractors*, *landowners*, the *forestry community*, and the *public at large* (Figure 7). The average for this category is slightly higher for SFI, but only two (2) of the agencies agreed with this average rating. Three (3) agencies rated FSC higher than SFI, and one (1) agency rated them the same.

For the four (4) elements comprising this category, no more than half of the agencies ever agree that one system performed better than the other. On average, agencies rated SFI higher than FSC in promoting sustainability with *internal staff*, *outside contractors*, and the *forestry community*. FSC is rated higher than SFI in promoting sustainability with *landowners* and the *public at large*.

Figure 7. Promoting Sustainability in the Standards



The averages in this category are substantially determined by the outlier scores from a few agencies. *Agency C* rated FSC consistently lower across this category, as did *Agency A*—whereas *Agency B* gave high scores to FSC for all five elements. *Agency B* consistently gave SFI its lowest ratings. The rest of the agencies scored SFI similarly to FSC.

Table 7. Promoting Sustainability

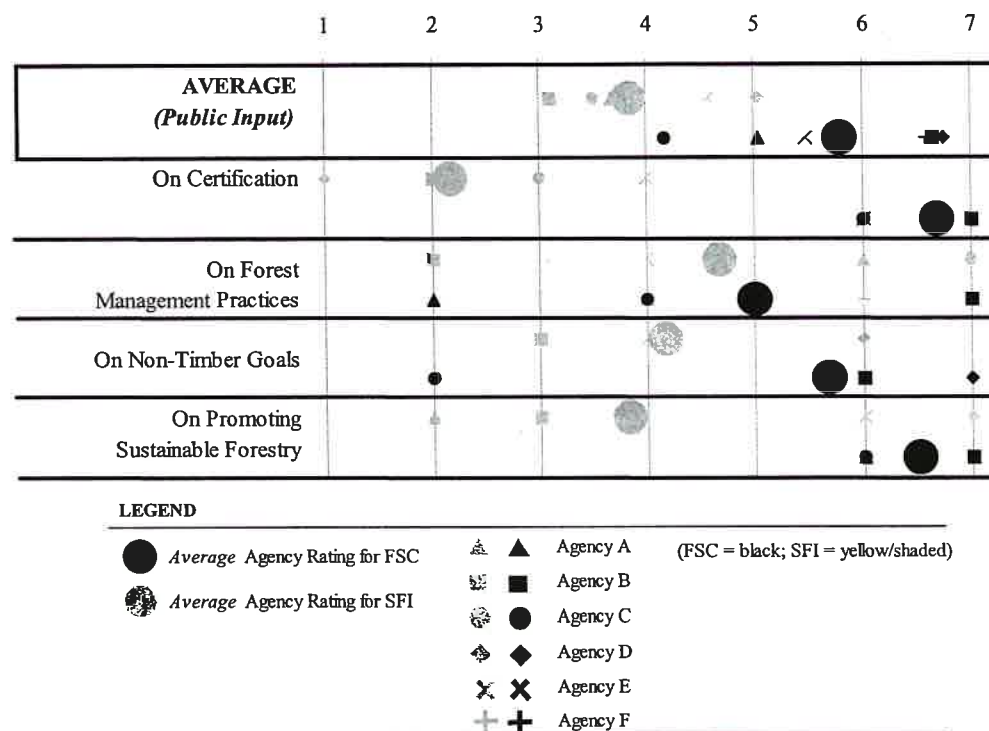
	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Promoting Sustainability</i>				
• Forest Management Staff			FSC	SFI
• Contractors			FSC	SFI
• Neighboring Landowners		SFI	FSC	
• Forest community			SFI/FSC	
• Public at Large			SFI/FSC	

Overall, ratings in this category for both programs fell in the *medium* performance range. SFI falls in the *high* performance range in promoting sustainability with *forest management staff* and *contractors*, but in the *low* performance range for *private landowners*.

II.A.5 PUBLIC INPUT IN MANAGEMENT

This category focuses on how well each program evaluated whether the agencies provided adequate opportunities for public input on various aspects of forest management, including the certification itself (**Figure 8**). The elements specifically addressed public input on *certification*, *forest management practices*, *non-timber resource management*, and *sustainable forest management*. When scores for the four elements are averaged, all six agencies concurred in rating FSC higher than SFI.

Figure 8. Public Input in Management



Despite the substantial difference in the averages, there is still great variability among agencies' ratings for individual elements (**Table 8**). The agencies unanimously rate FSC higher in *allowing public input on the certification*. More than half also agreed in rating FSC higher for evaluating whether the agency allows for public input on *non-timber management goals*, and *promotes sustainable forestry*. However, there was less agreement on which program had stronger requirements on public input concerning *poor management practices*. Scores for both systems range from 2 to 7 for this element.

Table 8. Public Input in Management

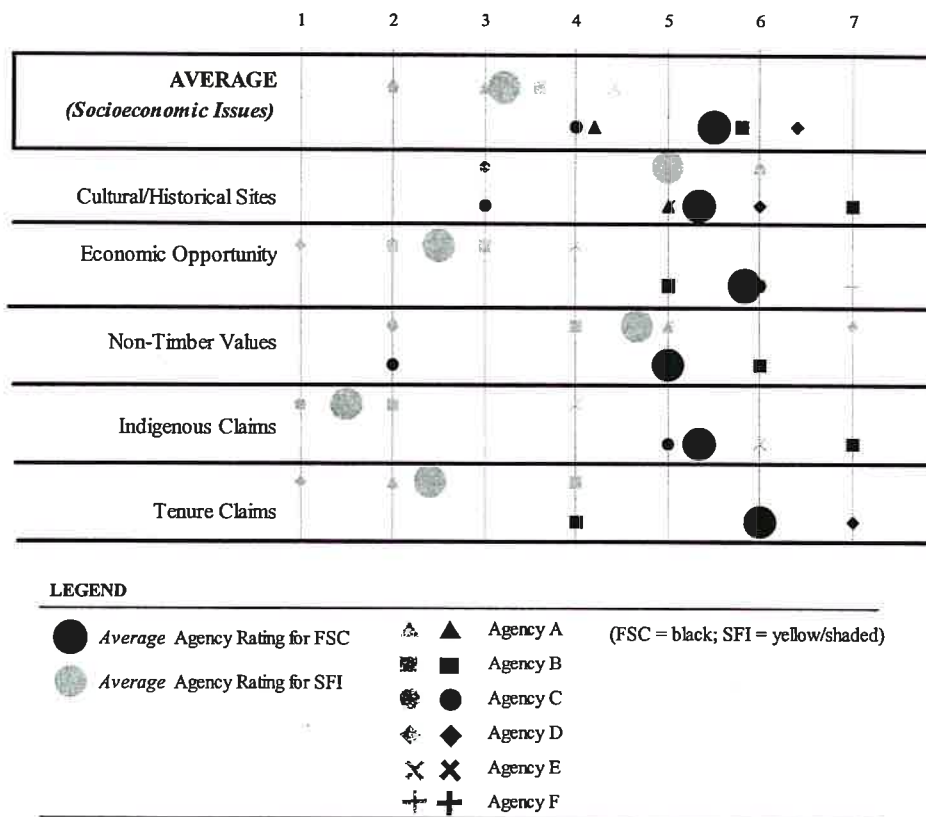
	Min./Absent (1-3)	Low (4 +)	Medium (5+)	High (6+)
<i>Public Input</i>				
• On Certification	SFI			FSC
• On Forest Management Practices		SFI	FSC	
• On Non-timber Goals		SFI	FSC	
• On Promoting Sustainable Forestry	SFI			FSC

Overall, averaged FSC ratings fell in the *medium* performance range, and averaged SFI ratings fell in the *minimal/absent* performance range. By element, FSC ratings fall in the *medium* performance range in considering input for *non-timber goals* and *forest management practices*; and in the *high* performance range for considering input on *certification* and *sustainable forestry*. SFI ratings fall in the *minimal/absent* performance range for public input on *certification* and on *sustainable forestry*, but in the *low* range for public input on *forest management practices* and *non-timber goals*.

II.A.6 ADEQUATE COVERAGE OF SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES

This category focused on whether the standards required the agency to address several socioeconomic issues, including identifying and protecting areas of *cultural/historic importance*, managing for *non-timber values*, generating *economic opportunities for local communities*, *protecting indigenous peoples rights*, and demonstrating *long-term forest-use rights/tenure* for land and resources (**Figure 9**). Average ratings for the elements indicate that all six agencies felt that FSC addressed this category more substantially than SFI. FSC was also rated higher than SFI for each element.

Figure 9. Socioeconomic Issues



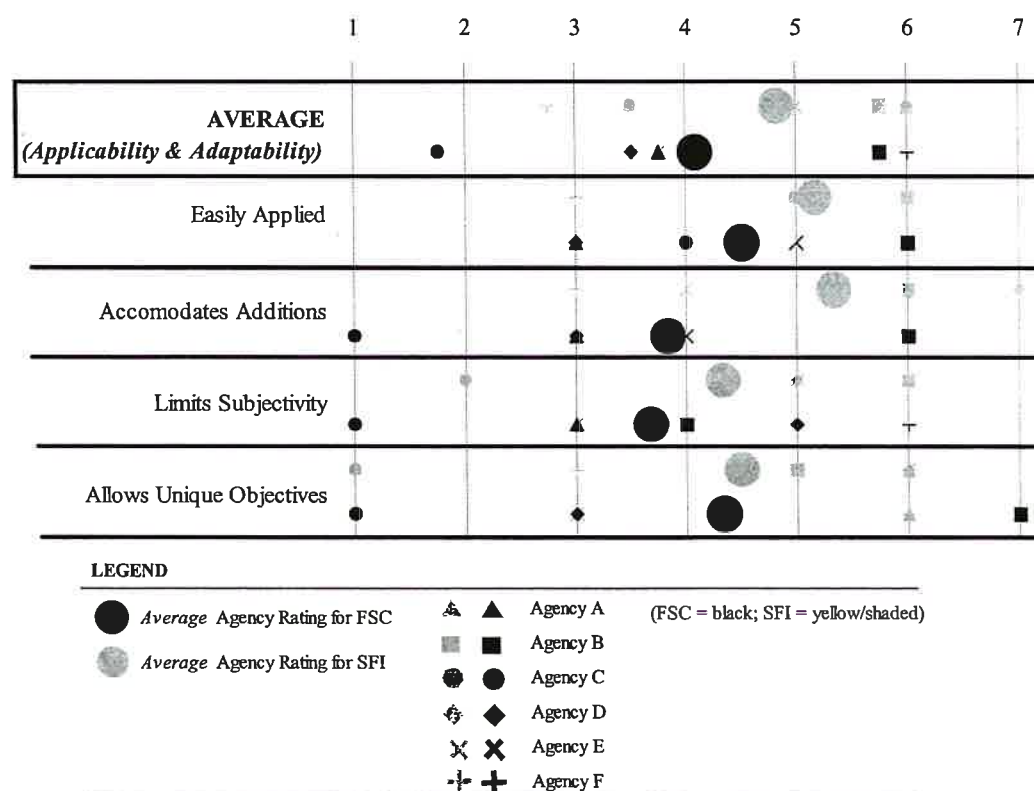
There is little difference in the average rating for how well the standards address *non-timber values* and *unique cultural and historic sites*—and in each case one (1) agency rated SFI higher. However the majority of the agencies concurred in rating FSC substantially higher than SFI in addressing local *economic opportunity*, *indigenous claims*, and other claims of *tenure*. For these elements, SFI ratings fell in the *minimal/absent* performance range. Overall, the category average for FSC fell in the *medium* performance range, while the category average for SFI fell in the *minimal/absent* range (**Table 9**).

Table 9. Socioeconomic Issues

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Socioeconomic Issues</i>				
• Local economies	SFI		FSC	
• Non-timber values		SFI	FSC	
• Indigenous people	SFI		FSC	
• Long-term use	SFI			FSC

II.A.7 APPLICATION OF STANDARDS TO LOCAL CONTEXT

This category focused on the adaptability of the standards to new and unique contexts (**Figure 10**). Elements included: *how easily the standards could be applied* in the local/regional context; whether the standards allow for inclusion of *additional measures to strengthen the assessment*; whether the standards *limit subjective interpretation*, and whether they accommodate *unique forest management objectives* such as research areas.

Figure 10. Applicability and Adaptability

Four (4) of the six agencies rated SFI higher than FSC for the overall category of *adaptability*. Half or more of the agencies rated SFI higher than FSC in each element. The greatest discrepancy between the systems concerned *accommodation of additional measures* in the standard. However, there is extremely wide variability among the agencies. In allowing *unique objectives*, agencies reported scores ranging from 1 to 6 for both programs (and to 7 for FSC). There is also wide dispersion in the ratings for the other elements.

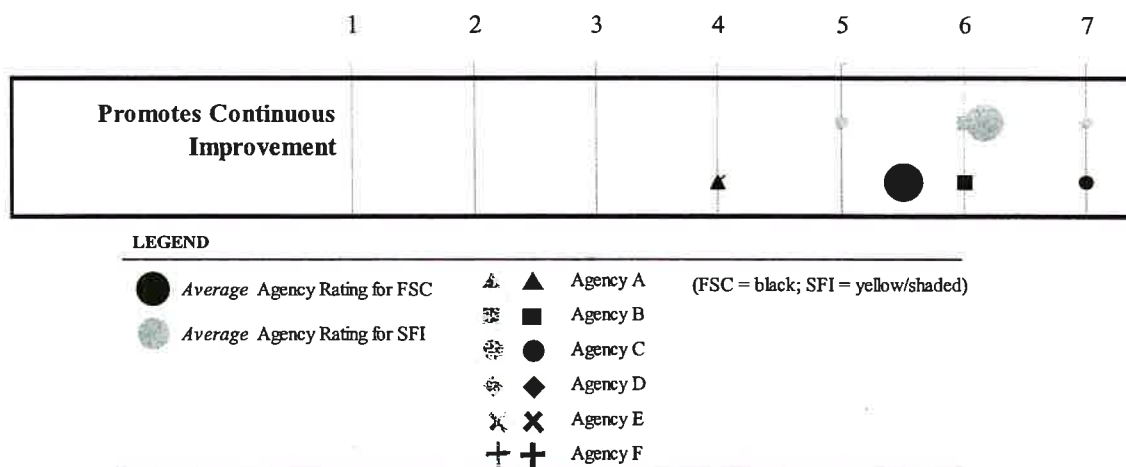
Table 10. Applicability and Adaptability

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Local Context:</i>				
• Easily applied		FSC	SFI	
• Accommodates Additions	FSC		SFI	
• Limits subjectivity	FSC	SFI		
• Unique objectives		SFI/FSC		

Overall, the combined rating in this category was higher for SFI, but fell in the *low* performance range for both programs (**Table 10**). The capacity to adapt the standard to a specific context by adding *additional measures*, and *limit subjectivity* in application, was considered *minimal/absent* from the FSC program. For the SFI program, the *ease of application* and the capacity to add *additional measures* were both rated in the *medium* performance range.

II.A.8 REQUIREMENT FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This category includes one element focused on whether the standards require improvement of management practices over time. On average the agencies rated SFI higher than FSC for requiring continuous improvement, but only three out of the six agencies agreed with this conclusion (**Figure 11**). One agency rated FSC higher than SFI, and two agencies rated the programs equally. Average FSC ratings fell in the *medium* performance range for this category while the average SFI ratings fell in the *high* performance range (**Table 11**).

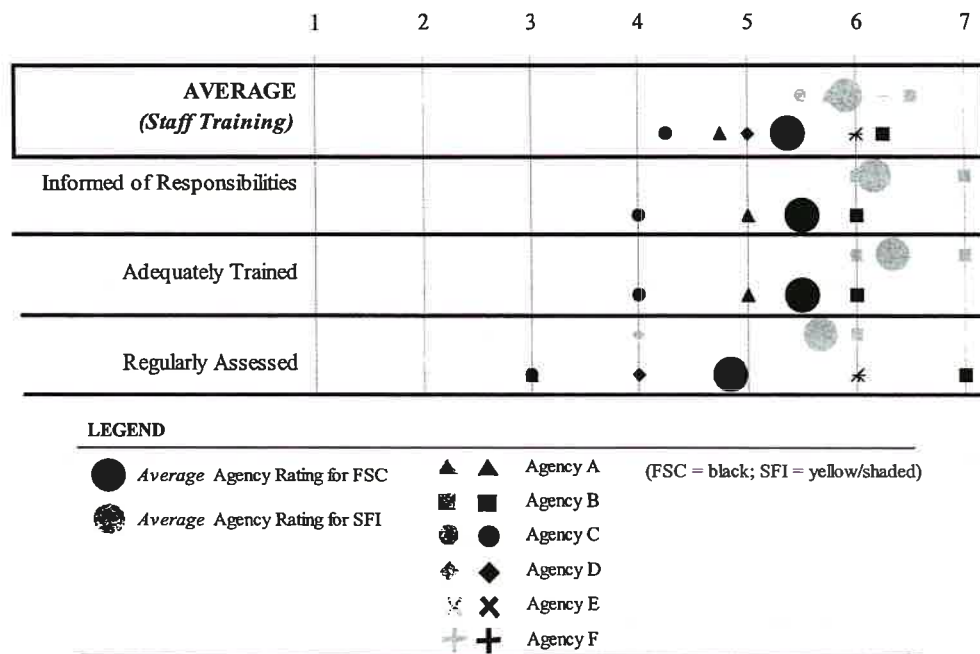
Figure 11. Promoting Continuous Improvement**Table 11.** Promoting Continuous Improvement

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Continuous Improvement</i>			FSC	SFI

II.A.9 REQUIREMENT FOR STAFF TRAINING

This category focused on whether the standards require that relevant personnel are *informed of their responsibilities*, *adequately trained*, and *regularly assessed for performance* (Figure 12). The average ratings across these elements were higher for SFI than FSC for four (4) of the six agencies.

Figure 12. Staff Training Requirements



Agencies also rated SFI higher than FSC for every element of this category. There was greatest agreement in rating SFI higher for requiring that personnel are *adequately trained* and *informed of their responsibilities*. There was less agreement in rating SFI higher on requiring *regular assessment of personnel*.

Table 12. Staff Training Requirements

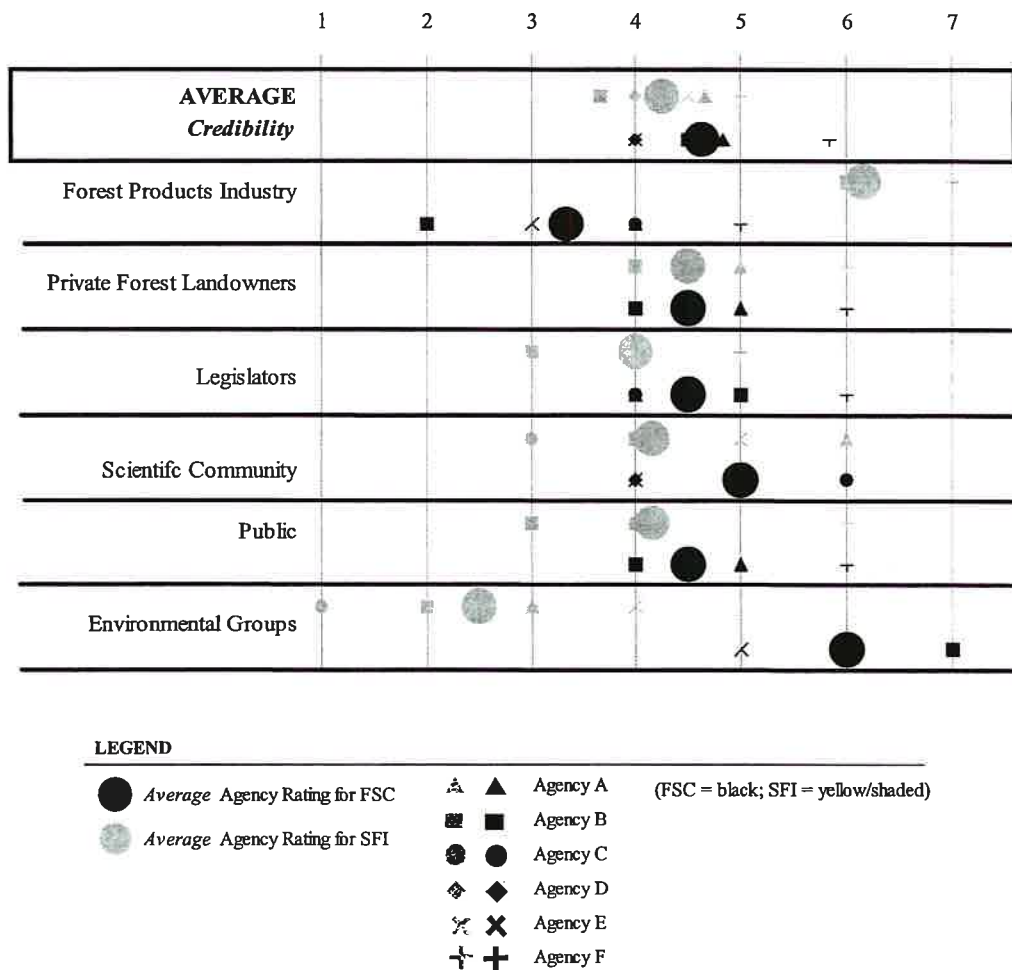
	Min./Absent (1-3)	Low (4 +)	Medium (5+)	High (6+)
Staff Training				
• Informed of Responsibilities			FSC	SFI
• Adequately Trained			FSC	SFI
• Regularly Assessed		FSC	SFI	

For the category as a whole, averages for FSC and SFI fell in the *medium* performance range (Table 12). The average ratings for SFI in requiring that employees are *informed of their responsibilities* and *adequately trained* fell in the *high* performance range, whereas the FSC ratings for both elements fell in the *medium* performance range. FSC ratings on requiring *personnel to be regularly assessed* were also lower than SFI, falling in the *low* performance range.

II.A.10 OVERALL CREDIBILITY WITH MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

Elements in this category focused on how credible the agencies felt each certification program is with particular constituencies (**Figure 13**). On average, combining all elements (constituencies) agencies felt that FSC enjoys more credibility with a broad range of stakeholders. The agencies were unanimous on two elements--in rating SFI higher in *credibility with the forest products industry*, and in rating FSC *higher with environmental groups*. Averaging across agencies, FSC was perceived as more credible with the *scientific community* and the *public*, but the two systems were considered to have a similar level of credibility with *private forest landowners*. However there is substantial variation in agency ratings among these three elements.

Figure 13. Program Credibility



In their credibility with the *forest products industry* and *environmental groups*, SFI and FSC ratings fall in the *high* performance range, respectively (**Table 13**). For the other elements, the two systems both fall in a *low* performance range—with the exception of FSC’s credibility with the *scientific community*, which falls in the *medium* performance range.

Table 13. Program Credibility

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Credibility</i>				
• Industry	FSC			SFI
• Landowners		FSC/SFI		
• Legislators		FSC/SFI		
• Scientific community		SFI	FSC	
• Public		SFI/FSC		
• Environmentalists	SFI			FSC

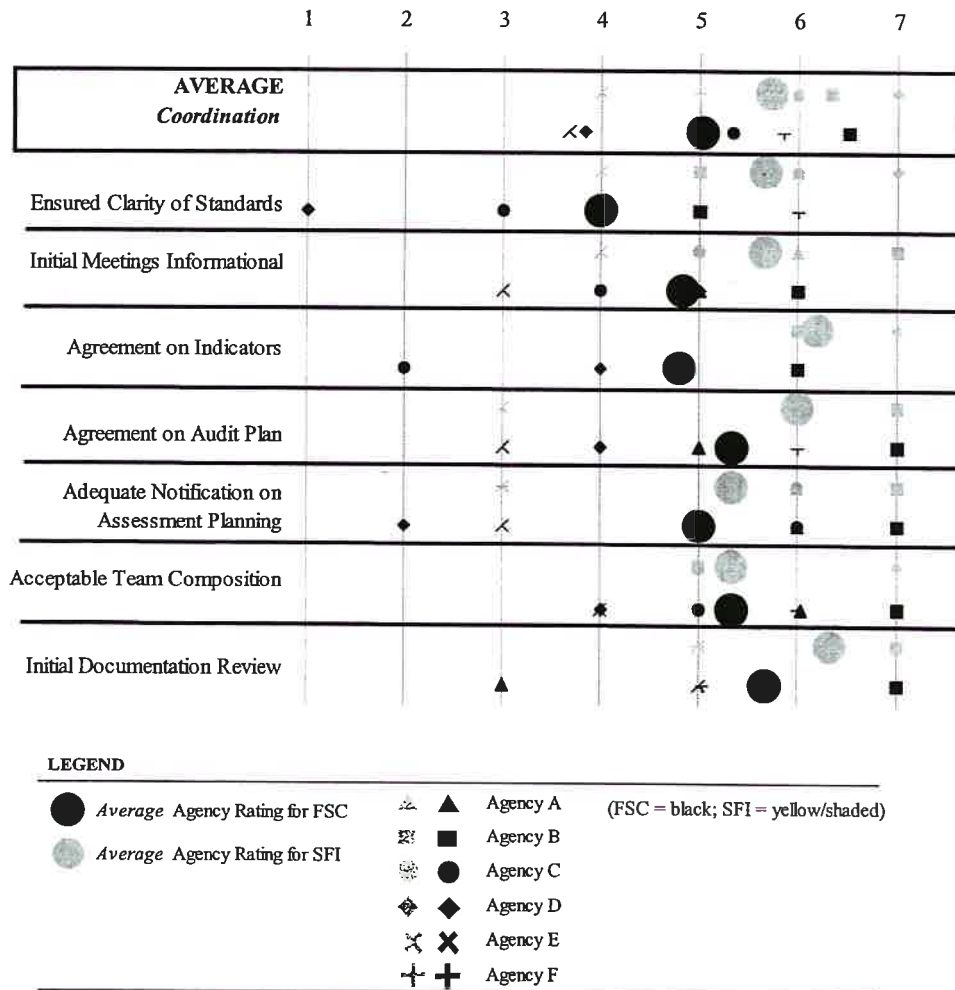
II.A. 11 STANDARDS SUMMARY

Overall the *Standards* section of the survey included ten (10) categories and 49 elements. Among the 10 categories, FSC was rated higher for half (5) and SFI was rated higher for the other half. The greatest difference is evident in the average ratings for *public involvement* and *socioeconomic issues*, both for which SFI was rated substantially lower than FSC. In general, the agencies felt that these areas are not addressed by the SFI *Standard*. The FSC *Standard* was considered more *comprehensive*, especially on *biological issues*; and overall, was thought to be more *credible* for a majority of stakeholders. The SFI *Standard* was rated higher on issues of *staff training* and in compelling *continual improvement*. Agencies also felt that the SFI *Standard* is more *clear*, and more *applicable and adaptable* at the local level. SFI was also rated slightly higher than FSC for the way in which it *promotes sustainability*.

SECTION II-B: ASSESSMENT PROCESS

II.B.1 COORDINATION OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This category focused on how well the auditors coordinated the assessment process (**Figure 13**). The elements that addressed coordination of the assessment process included: *clarification* of the standards by the assessors; the use of *informational planning meetings* to clarify and explain the assessment process; establishing *agreement on the assessment indicators* that would be used; ensuring *agreement on the assessment plan*; providing *adequate notification* on documentation and other needs for the assessment; seeking *agreement on the acceptable assessment team members*, and *reviewing sufficient documentation* to initially advise agencies on needs for the assessment. For the average rating across all elements elements, four (4) agencies rated SFI higher than FSC.

Figure 14. Coordination of the Assessment Process

Additionally, averaging across all agencies, SFI was rated higher than FSC for every element. However, despite these differences in average ratings, less than half of the agencies concurred in rating SFI higher for four of the seven elements. These elements included *agreement on indicators*, *agreement on plan*, *adequate notification*, and *sufficient documentation*. The agencies were most in agreement in rating SFI higher in the use of *initial informational meetings*. In general, the agency scores for this category were quite variable. The range for FSC ratings is especially wide, spanning 6 points for two of the elements (ensuring *clarity* of the standards and providing *adequate notification* on assessment planning).

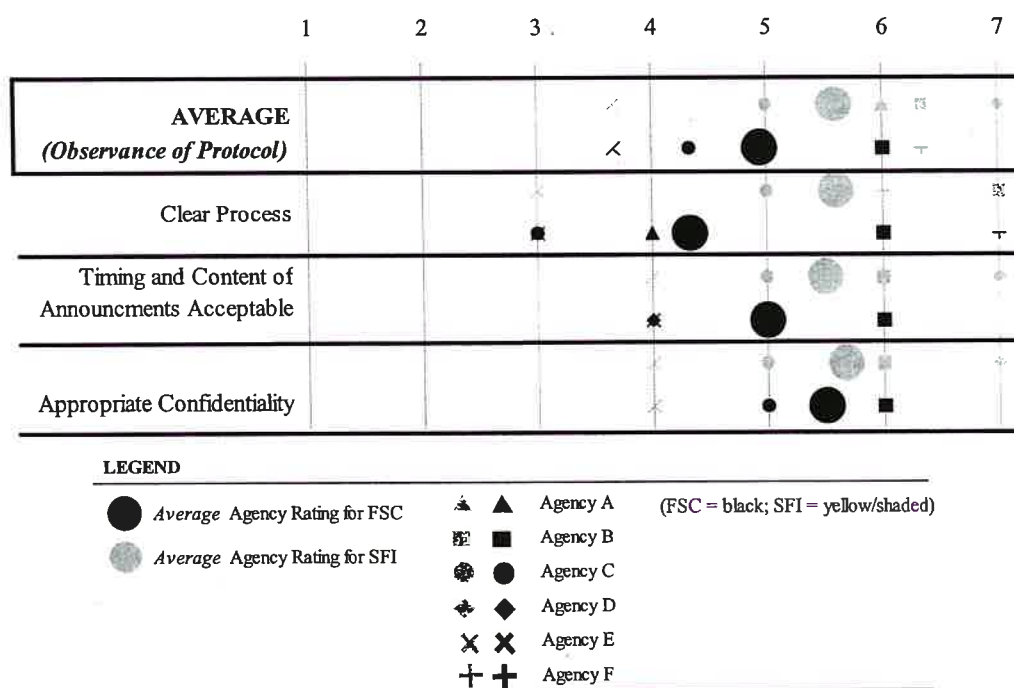
The average category rating for both the FSC and SFI fell in the *medium* performance range (Table 14). SFI ratings fell in the *high* performance range for three elements—*agreement on indicators*, *agreement on the audit plan*, and in *conducting initial documentation review*. FSC ratings fell in the *low* performance range for three elements—in *clarifying standards*, in *conducting informational meetings*, and in seeking *agreement on indicators*. Ratings for both systems fell in the *medium* performance range for the remainder of the elements.

Table 14. Coordination of the Assessment Process

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
Coordination:				
• Clarified Standards		FSC	SFI	
• Meeting Informative		FSC	SFI	
• Agreement On Indicators		FSC		SFI
• Plan Accepted			FSC	SFI
• Adequate Notification			FSC/SFI	
• Team Accepted			FSC/SFI	
• Sufficient Documentation			FSC	SFI

II.B.2 OBSERVANCE OF PROTOCOL

This category focused on *the clarity of the process* (e.g. timetables and responsibilities); *the timing and content of public announcements*; and ensuring *appropriate confidentiality* in the exchange of information and release of assessment reports (**Figure 14**). Averaging across these three elements, the agencies rated SFI higher than FSC.

Figure 15. Observance of Protocol

The greatest difference between the two programs in this category is in *clarity* of the certification process, with SFI higher. SFI was also rated higher for two of the remaining elements, however less than half of the agencies agreed in each case. The lowest level of agreement, and where the scores are therefore closest, is for ensuring *appropriate confidentiality*. In this case, individual agency scores overlap through a similar range.

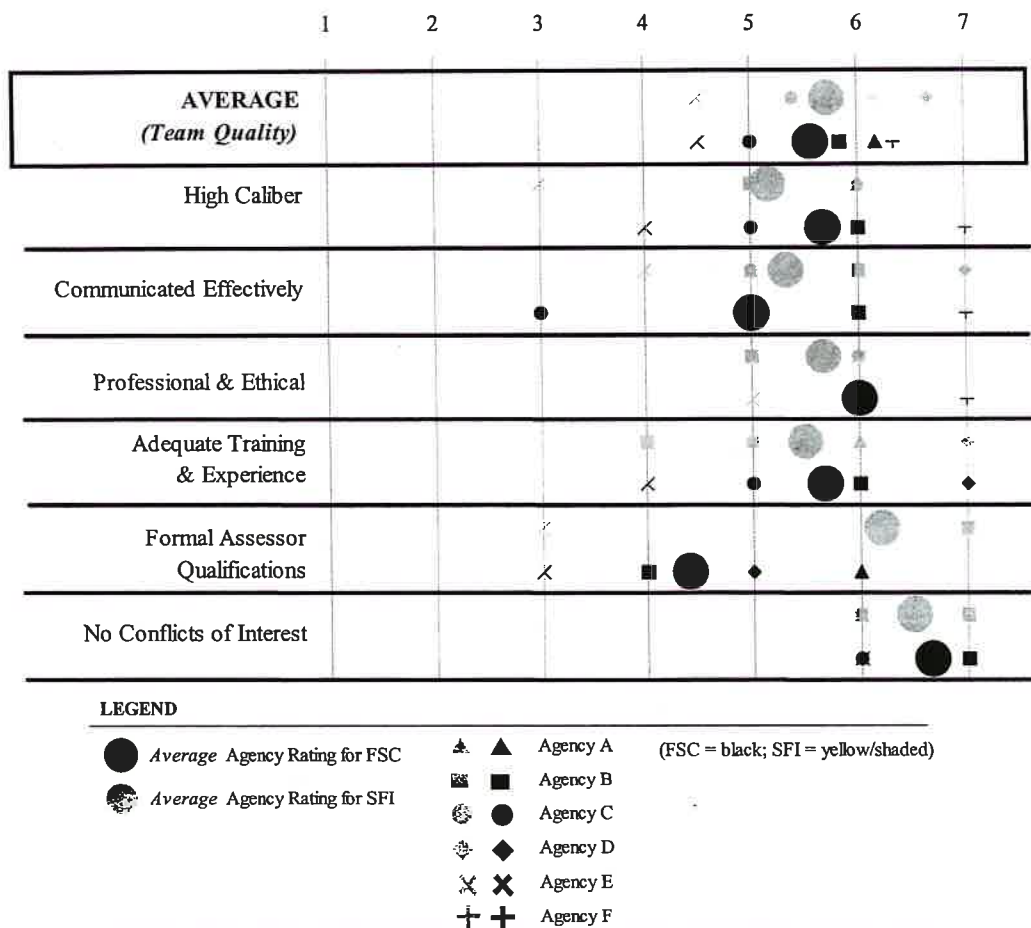
Overall, FSC ratings fell in the *low* performance range while SFI ratings fell in the *medium* performance range. The low performance range for FSC is primarily due to the lower average rating that the agencies attributed to the *clarity* of the FSC protocol. Otherwise the systems are both rated in the *medium* performance range for the rest of the elements.

Table 15. Observance of Protocol

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Protocol:</i>				
• Clear Process		FSC	SFI	
• Timing and Content of Announcements			FSC/SFI	
• Appropriate Confidentiality			SFI/FSC	

II.B.3 TEAM QUALITY

This category focused on overall quality of the audit teams (**Figure 16**). The data on team quality included elements concerning assessor qualifications, as well as the quality of communication. The 6 elements consider: *caliber of team members*; *communication skills*; *professionalism*; *professional training*; and *formal assessor qualifications*. Averaged across all elements, agencies rated SFI slightly higher than FSC. This is substantially determined by the much lower average rating for FSC in *formal assessor qualifications*. Despite the higher average for this category, SFI is rated higher for only two (2) of the six (6) elements—*effective communication* and *formal assessor training*. Average ratings for FSC were higher for four (4) of the six (6) elements—*overall caliber of the assessors*, *professionalism and ethics*, *adequacy of training and experience*, and *freedom from conflicts of interest*. In general however, the ratings were quite similar and individual agency ratings extend over the same range.

Figure 16. Team Quality

Ratings for both systems fall in the *medium* performance range across three elements, including *assessor caliber*, *effectiveness of communication*, and *adequacy of training and experience* (**Table 16**). SFI is rated in the *high* performance range for *professionalism & ethics*, *formal assessor qualifications*, and *freedom from conflicts of interest*. FSC is rated *high* for *professionalism & ethics*, but in the *low* range on *formal assessor qualifications*. Overall, across all agencies and elements FSC and SFI are both rated in the *medium* performance range.

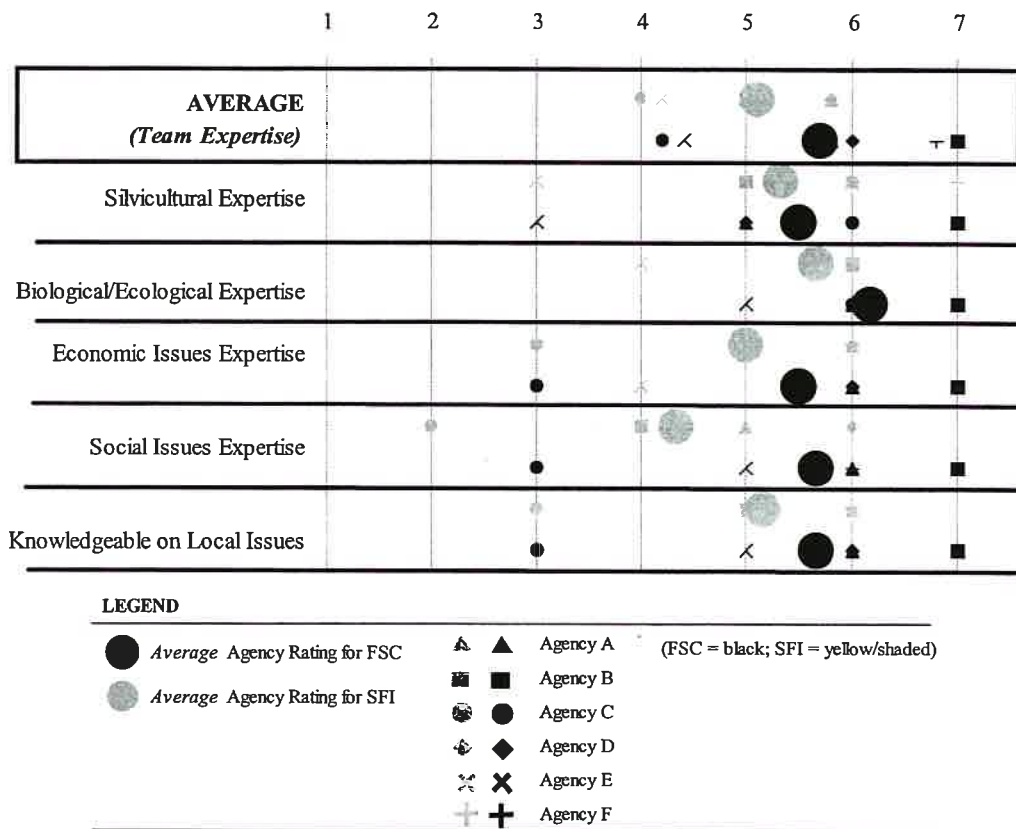
Table 16. Team Quality

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
Team Quality:				
• High Caliber			FSC/SFI	
• Communicated Effectively			FSC/SFI	
• Professional & Ethical			FSC	SFI
• Adequate Training & Experience			FSC/SFI	
• Formal Assessor Qualifications		FSC		SFI
• No Conflict of Interest				FSC/SFI

II.B.4 TEAM EXPERTISE

This section focuses on the level and types of expertise represented on the assessment teams for each program, including expertise in *silviculture*, *biology/ecology*, *economics*, *social issues*, and *local issues*. FSC was rated higher for the category overall, however there is a large degree of overlap in scores and average ratings are generally close. The only substantial disparity appears to be the difference in *expertise on social issues*. In the other elements individual agency ratings extend over the same range of scores. SFI receives only one rating of 7 (for *silvicultural expertise*), while FSC receives at least one rating of 7 for all elements (by two agencies). As in other categories the outliers in either direction are consistently given by the same agencies—substantially influencing the averages.

Figure 17. Assessment Team Expertise



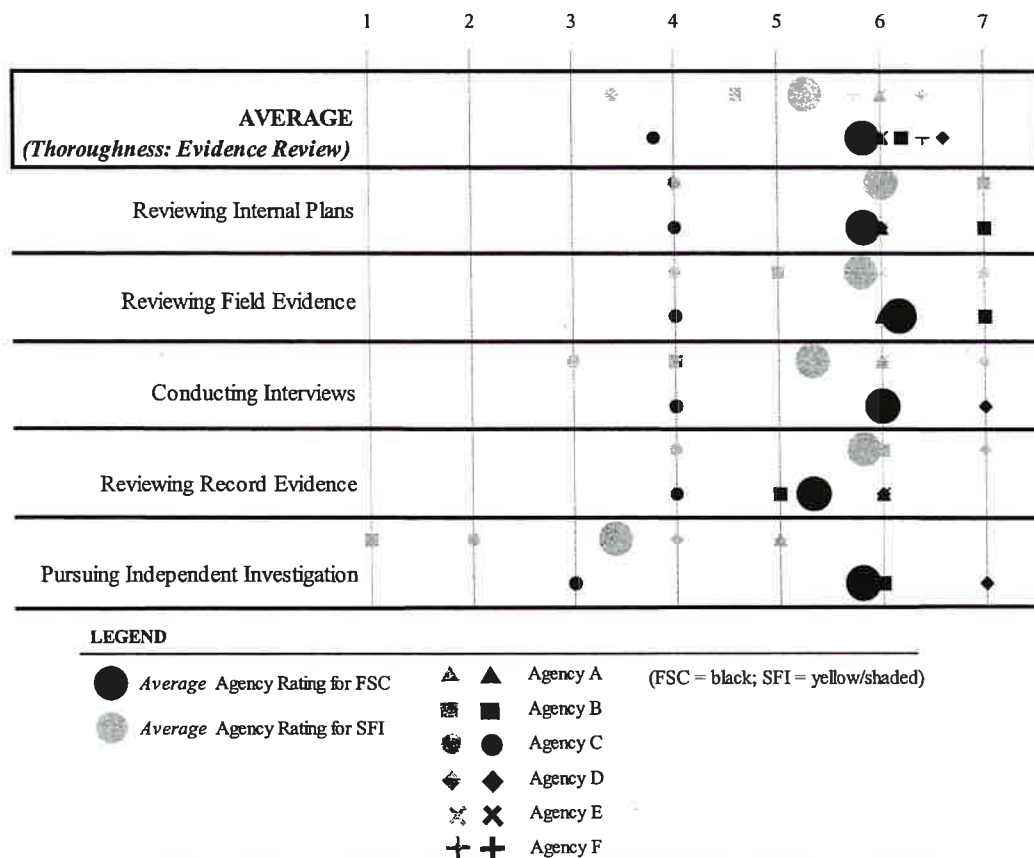
The only average rating to fall in the *high* performance range is the rating for *biological/ecological expertise* of the FSC assessment team (Table 17). Meanwhile the lowest average rating is for expertise in *social issues* on the SFI audit teams. Other average ratings, including the average for the whole category, fall in the *medium* performance range.

Table 17. Assessment Team Expertise

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Team Expertise</i>				
• Silvicultural Expertise			FSC/SFI	
• Biological Expertise			SFI	FSC
• Economic Expertise			FSC/SFI	
• Social Expertise		SFI	FSC	
• Overall Expertise			FSC/SFI	

II.B.5 THOROUGHNESS: EVIDENCE REVIEW

This category focuses on the type of evidence used by the assessors for determining compliance with the *Standards*, including: *review of internal plans*; collection of *evidence in the field*; conducting *interviews with key personnel/contractors*; *reviewing records* for a broad scope of management activities; and *pursuing investigation* independent of the materials furnished by the agency (**Figure 18**). Overall, the average for this category is higher for FSC than SFI. Among the five elements, the average score for FSC is higher for three (3)--on *reviewing field evidence*, *conducting interviews*, and on *pursuing independent investigation*. SFI is rated higher in *reviewing internal plans* and on considering *record evidence*. However, only in *pursuing independent investigation*--for which FSC is higher--is there a substantial difference in the ratings for the two programs. This is the only element for which the higher average reflects a higher score from three (3) or more agencies.

Figure 18. Thoroughness of Evidence Review

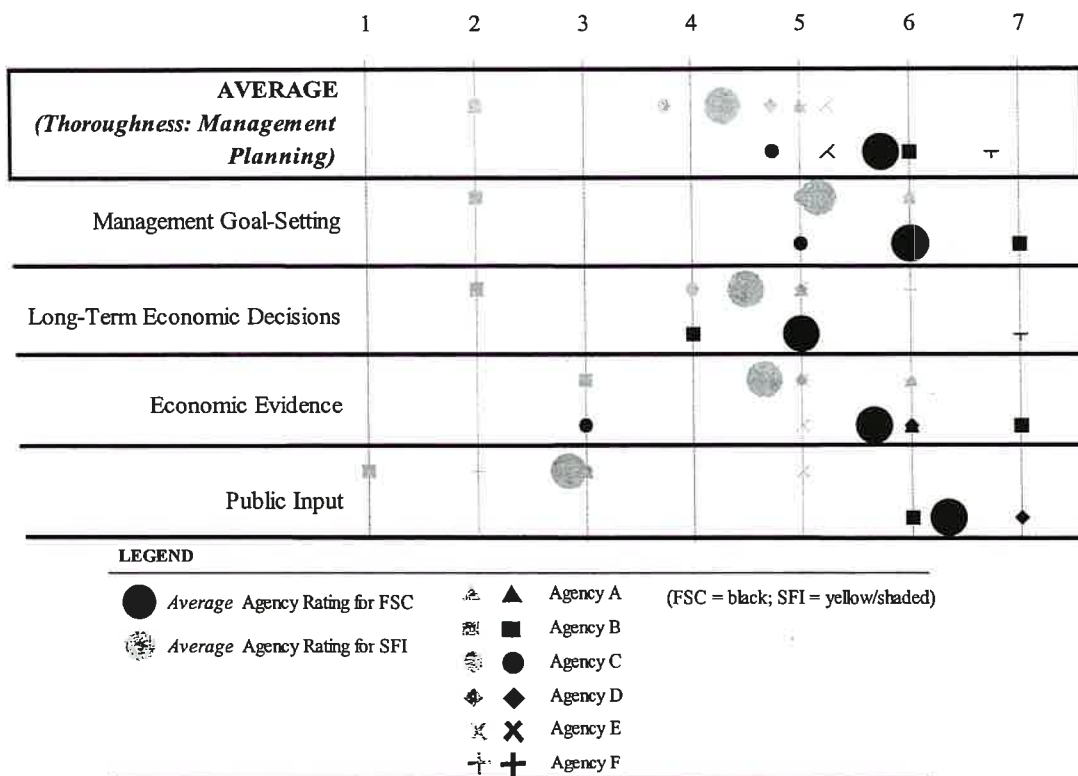
Element to element there is a great deal of variability in the agreement between agencies on which system performed better. But overall, across all agencies and elements, ratings for both programs fall in the *medium* performance range (**Table 18**). FSC ratings fall in the *high* performance range for *collecting field evidence*, and *interviewing personnel*; while SFI ratings fall in the *high* performance range for *reviewing internal plans*. Only one rating falls in the *minimal/absent* performance range--SFI in *conducting independent investigation*.

Table 18. Thoroughness of Evidence Review

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Thoroughness: Evidence Review</i>				
• Internal Plans			FSC	SFI
• Collect field evidence			SFI	FSC
• Interview personnel			SFI	FSC
• Review records			FSC/SFI	
• Conduct independent investigation	SFI		FSC	

II.B.6 THOROUGHNESS: MANAGEMENT PLANNING

This category focuses on how thoroughly the assessment processes for each program evaluates aspects of *management planning*. The agencies were asked to evaluate whether the programs investigated *goal setting in management*, the articulation of *long-term economic decisions*; the *economic evidence* necessary to comprehend the planning context; and the consideration of *public -input* in management objectives (**Figure 19**). Overall, the average score for this category is higher for FSC than SFI. Average agency ratings were also higher for FSC on each element. The greatest disparity in ratings--with FSC higher--is in the evaluation of whether the agencies consider *public input*. With the exception of public input, agency scores are spread across an overlapping range for all elements and there is no unanimity among agencies in rating one program higher than the other.

Figure 19. Thoroughness on Management Planning

Overall, the average category rating for FSC falls in the *medium* range, while the average category rating for SFI falls in the *low* performance range (Table 19). Two (2) of the ratings for SFI fall in the *low* range, with one considered *minimal/absent* (public input). Except for public input, which falls in the *high* performance range, average ratings for the FSC program fall in the *medium* performance range for each element.

Table 19. Thoroughness on Management Planning

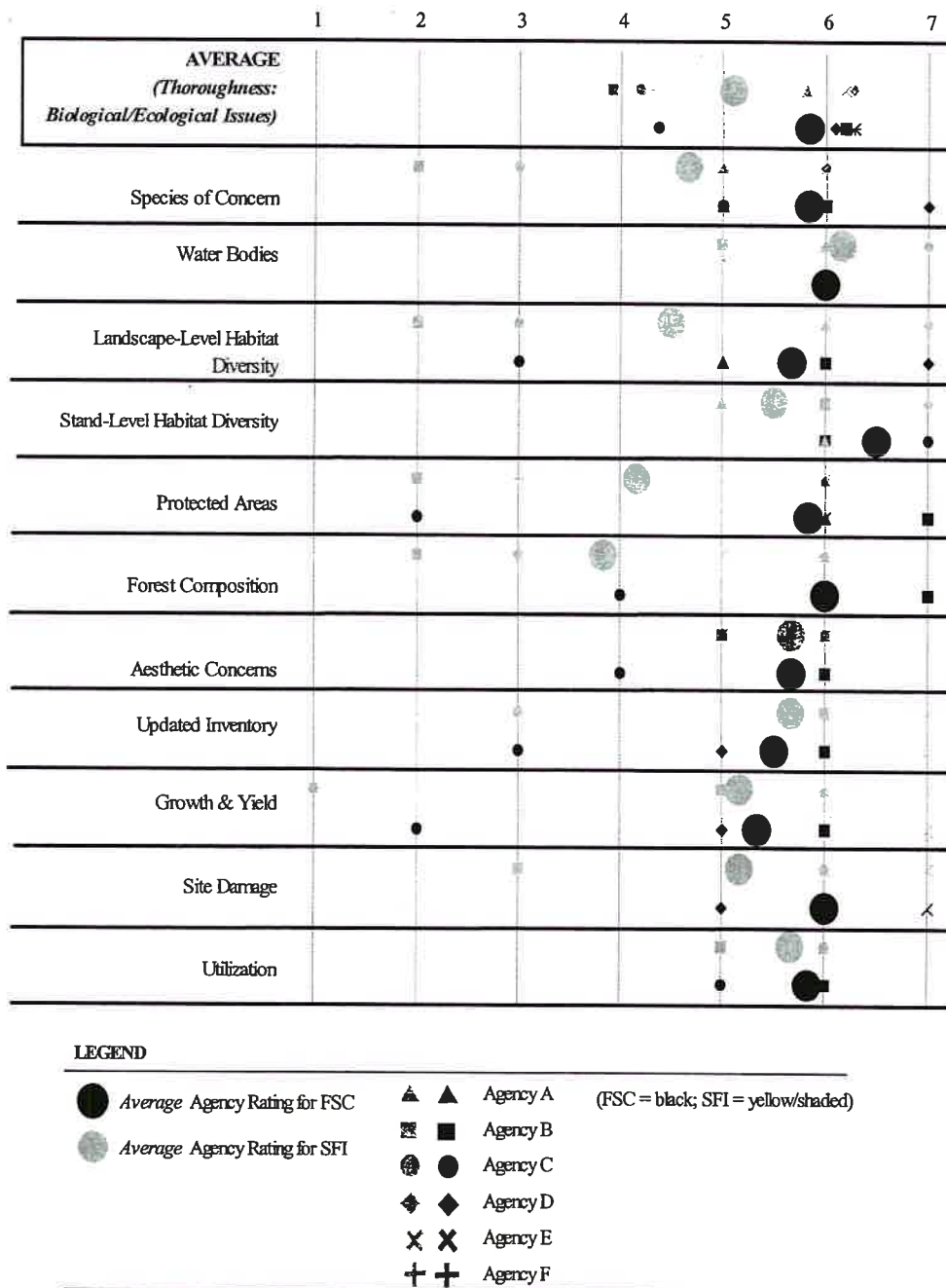
	Min./Absent (1-3)	Low (4 +)	Medium (5+)	High (6+)
Thoroughness: Management Planning				
• Management Goal Setting			FSC	SFI
• Long-term economic decisions			FSC/SFI	
• Review economic information.		SFI	FSC	
• Public input	SFI			FSC

II.B.7 Thoroughness: On Biological/Ecological Issues

This category focuses on the thoroughness of the assessments of each program in addressing *biological/ecological* aspects of forest management. In all, agencies were asked to rate performance across 11 elements including: *species of concern, water bodies, landscape-level habitat diversity, stand-level habitat diversity, protected areas, forest composition, aesthetic concerns, updated inventory, growth and yield, site damage, and utilization* (Figure 20). These elements cover a wide array of biological resources, which require various approaches, using both field and documentation-based assessment. The

agencies were given no guidance on what constitutes adequate or rigorous levels of evaluation as may be employed by program auditing firms.

Figure 20. Thoroughness: Biological/Ecological Issues



Averaging across all elements and agencies, FSC scored higher than SFI in this category. Of the eleven (11) elements FSC is rated higher in nine (9), and SFI is rated higher in two (2)—*protecting water bodies*, and *maintaining updated inventory*. The greatest disparities in the ratings are in the degree to which the assessment process addressed *protected areas* and *forest composition*, and to a lesser extent, *species of*

concern, landscape-level habitat diversity, and stand-level habitat diversity. In all five cases the average agency rating for FSC was higher by at least a point. Additionally, in all five cases agency ratings for SFI are spread across at least five (5) points. In addressing *forest composition* SFI receive ratings from 1 to 6, and for *landscape-level habitat diversity* SFI received ratings from 2 to 7. Besides these five, the average scores for the remainder of the elements are quite close--always falling between 5 and 6 for both programs.

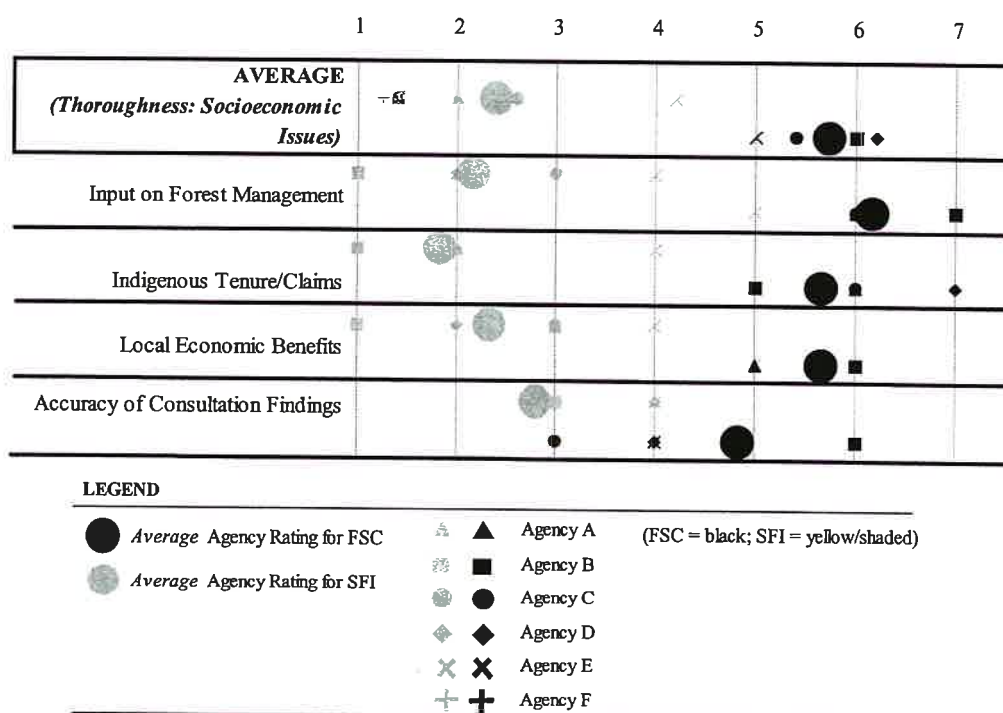
Table 20. Thoroughness: Biological/Ecological Issues

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Thoroughness: Biological/Ecological Issues</i>				
• Species of Concern		SFI	FSC	
• Water Bodies			FSC	SFI
• Landscape-Level Habitat Diversity		SFI	FSC	
• Stand-Level Habitat Diversity			SFI	FSC
• Protected Areas		SFI	FSC	
• Forest Composition	SFI			FSC
• Aesthetic Concerns			SFI /FSC	
• Updated Inventory			SFI /FSC	
• Growth & Yield			SFI /FSC	
• Site Damage			SFI	FSC
• Utilization			SFI /FSC	

Combining all elements the average rating for both programs falls in the *medium* performance range. For only one element did the average score fall in the *minimal/absent* performance range--the SFI program in addressing *forest composition*.

II.B.8 THOROUGHNESS: SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES

This category focuses on how much the assessors addressed socioeconomic issues, such as *indigenous claims/tenure* and *local economic benefits*. The elements also addressed how the assessors evaluated if agencies used *public input*, and whether the outside *stakeholder information* they collected was *accurate* (Figure 21). All six agencies concurred that FSC addressed these issues to a much greater extent than SFI. With the exception of **Agency E**--which rated SFI higher than other agencies--the spread of the scores is relatively narrow compared to other categories. Overall, the agencies unanimously agreed that FSC better addressed elements of this category--rating FSC substantially higher than SFI for all elements.

Figure 21. Thoroughness: Socioeconomic Issues

Overall, FSC average ratings fell within the *medium* performance range and SFI ratings fell within the *minimal/absent* performance range (Table 21). FSC was rated *high* on evaluating the use of *outside input in forest management*, *medium* on evaluating the attention managers give to *indigenous tenure/claims* and *providing local economic benefits*, but *low* on the *accuracy of the consultation findings*.

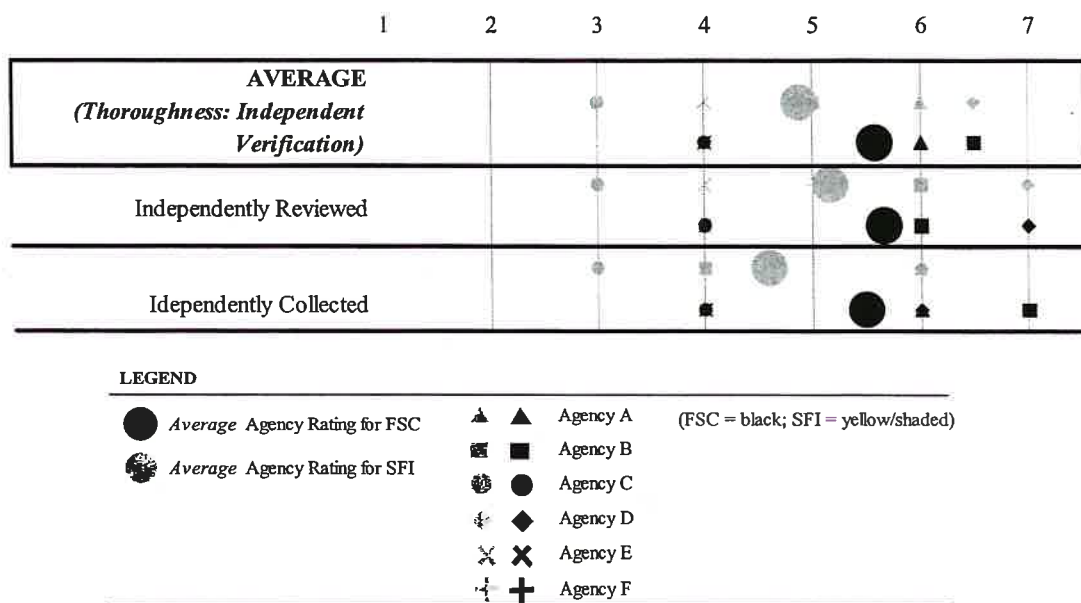
Table 21. Thoroughness: Socioeconomic Issues

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Thoroughness: Socioeconomic Issues</i>				
• Input on Forest Management	SFI			FSC
• Indigenous Tenure/Claims	SFI		FSC	
• Local Economic Benefits	SFI		FSC	
• Accuracy of Consultation Findings	SFI	FSC		

II.B.8 THOROUGHNESS IN DATA VERIFICATION

This category focused on how well auditors independently reviewed and verified documentation and data provided by the agencies during the assessment process (**Figure 22**). The average across both elements rates FSC higher than SFI in this section, but only three (3) out of six agencies are in concurrence. The three other agencies gave the same score to both programs. The average rating for SFI was higher on the *independent review of data* than on the *independence of collection*.

Figure 22. Thoroughness: Independent Verification



Overall, the average FSC rating fell in the *medium* performance range, and SFI ratings fell in the *low* performance range (**Table 22**).

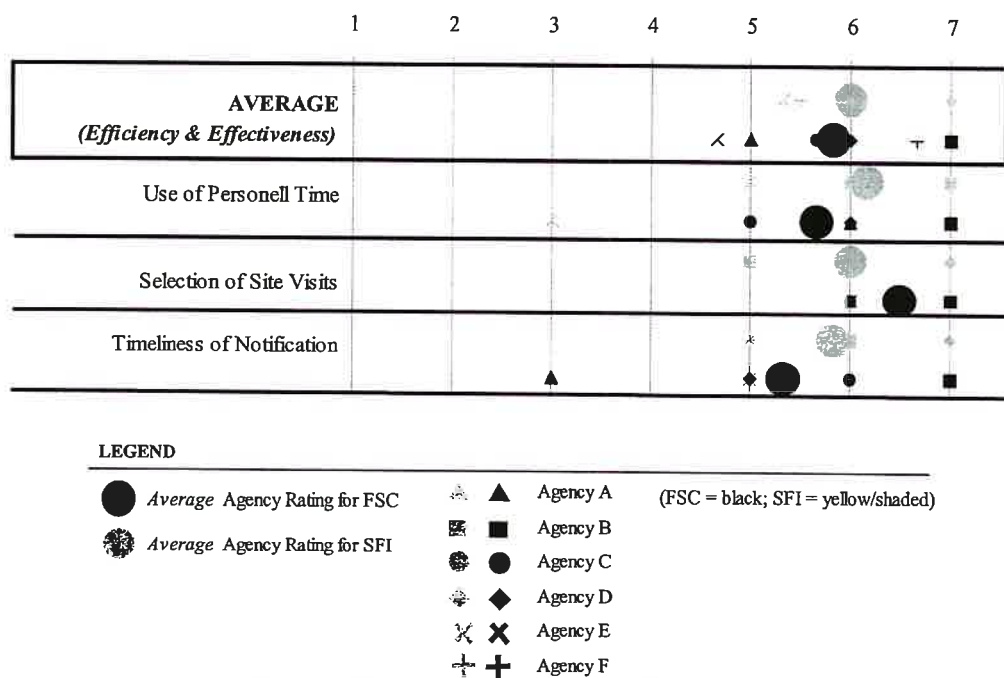
Table 22. Thoroughness: Independent Verification

	Min./Absent (1-3)	Low (4 +)	Medium (5+)	High (6+)
<i>Thoroughness: Data Verification</i>				
• Independent Reviewed			FSC/SFI	
• Independent Collected		SFI	FSC	

II.B.8 EFFICIENCY

This category focused on how efficient and effective the auditors were in conducting the assessment (**Figure 23**). The agencies scored SFI higher than FSC for this category. SFI was higher than FSC in two out of three elements—*effectively using personnel* and *providing timely notification*. However, FSC was rated higher in *visiting a representative range of sites*. The low average rating for FSC is substantially due to the especially low ratings from one agency on the *timeliness of notification*. The other agencies rated FSC and SFI within the same range of scores (5-7)

Figure 23. Efficiency & Effectiveness



Overall, ratings for both the FSC and SFI fell in the *medium* performance range for this category. Both FSC and SFI were rated in the *high* performance range on the efficiency of site selection/visitation. They are both also rated in the *medium* performance range in the *timeliness of notification* on needs for the assessment process.

Table 23. Efficiency & Effectiveness

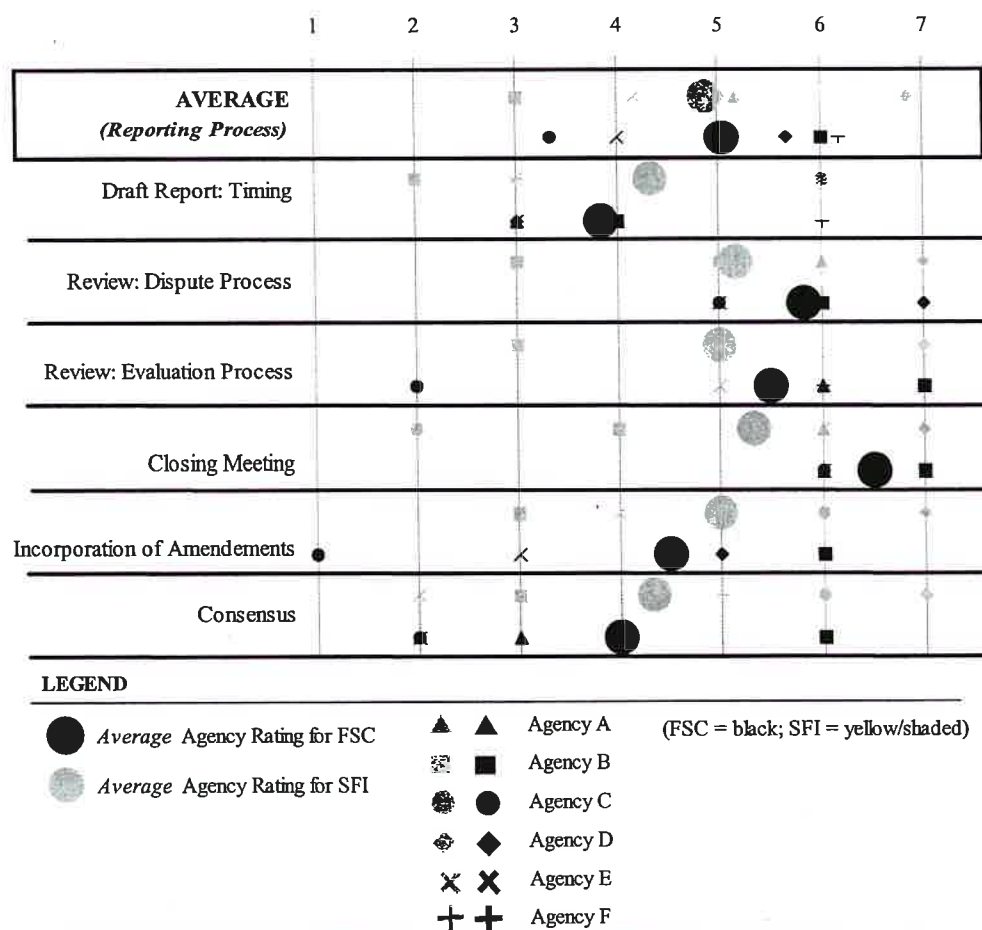
	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Efficiency & Effectiveness</i>				
• Use of Personnel Time			FSC	SFI
• Selection of Site Visits				FSC/SFI
• Timeliness of Notification			FSC/SFI	

II.B.8 REPORTING PROCESS

The reporting process category of the reverse evaluation considered the protocol of delivery and revision, as well as the breadth and clarity of the content of the assessment report (**Figure 24**). This category included six elements: *release of the draft report*, facilitating a *process to review* and *dispute* findings; *holding a closing meeting* to explain the findings and next-steps; *incorporating amendments* agreed to by the auditors; and seeking *consensus* on the overall findings of the certification assessment. The two programs differ in their requirements of auditors for carrying out these policies. Moreover, there is variation among the approaches used by assessors--even for the same programs.

Average scores for the category on the reporting process are quite close for the two programs--with FSC scoring slightly higher. However, half of the agencies rated SFI higher than FSC. For all elements there is widespread variation among the agency ratings. The average score for FSC is higher on three (3) elements--the *dispute process*, the *evaluation process*, and the *closing meeting*. Average scores for SFI are higher on three (3) elements--the *timing of the draft report*, the *incorporation of amendments*, and *seeking consensus*.

Figure 24. Reporting Process



The greatest disparity between the two programs is in the use of the *closing meeting*--in which case the SFI average rating is a point lower than FSC. The score is substantially influenced by an outlier rating

from one agency. However, the handful of outlier scores in this category suggest that this process was especially variable among assessment teams.

Overall, the SFI score for this category fell in the *low* performance range, while FSC fell in the *medium* performance range (Table 24). By element only one score fell in the *minimal/absent* performance range-- FSC on *timing of the draft report*. Also, only one score fell in high performance range-- FSC in holding a *closing meeting*. FSC and SFI scores fell the same performance range for three elements---*dispute process (medium)*, *evaluation process (medium)*, and *seeking consensus (low)*.

Table 24. Reporting Process

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Reporting Process</i>				
• Draft Report: Timing	FSC	SFI		
• Review: Dispute Process			SFI/FSC	
• Review: Evaluation Process			SFI/FSC	
• Closing Meeting			SFI	FSC
• Incorporation of Amendments		FSC	SFI	
• Consensus		SFI/FSC		

II.B.8 PROCESS SUMMARY

The *process* section of the reverse evaluation study included eleven (11) categories and 56 specific elements. Overall FSC was rated higher for thoroughness in the *application of standards*, thoroughness on *socioeconomic issues*, *team quality*, and thoroughness in *data verification*. SFI was rated higher for *coordination* of the assessment process, *observance of protocol*, and *efficiency & effectiveness*. The only category of the *process* that was considered *minimal/absent* was the *consultation of stakeholders* by SFI and *timeliness of report submittals* by FSC. The two programs were closely rated in the categories of *team quality* and *efficiency and effectiveness*.

II.C OUTCOME

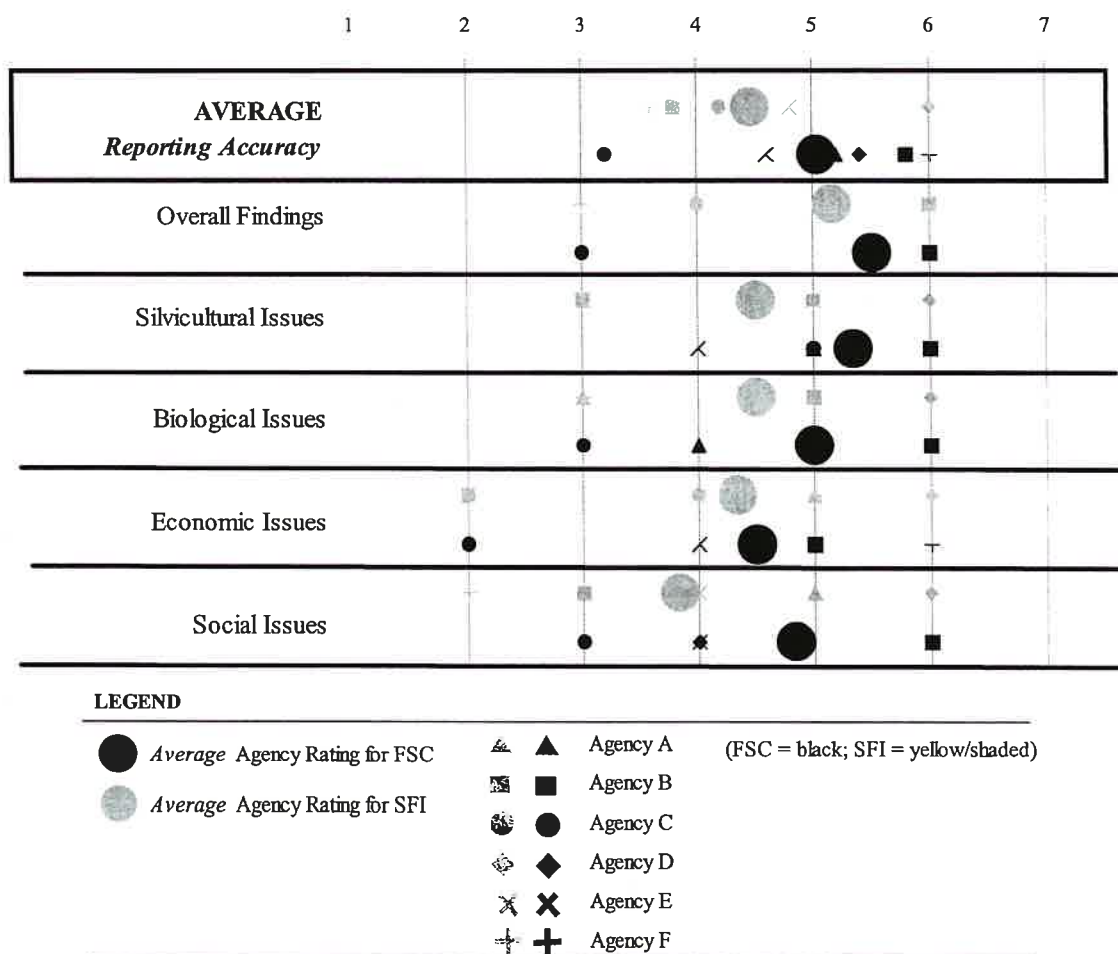
The outcome section of the reverse evaluation template looked at the several aspects of the assessment report, the process by which it was reviewed and amended, and the overall effect that the assessment will have over the long-term. This section is comprised of five (5) categories: reporting *quality*, reporting *clarity*, reporting *objectivity* and *accuracy*, *credibility* of the assessment, and finally, *value* of the assessment.

II.C.1 OBJECTIVITY AND ACCURACY

This category focused on whether the auditors used sufficient and accurate information to support their assessment findings (Figure 25). The elements include: accuracy of the *overall findings*, and the accuracy of the findings on the *silvicultural*, *biological/ecological*, *economic*, and *social* aspects of forest management. The average score for this category is higher for FSC than SFI, but only three (3) of the six (6) agencies agreed with this average rating. There were consistent differences between ratings by particular agencies. Two (2) to three (3) agencies typically rated SFI higher than FSC, while the others

rated FSC higher than SFI--however, average scores were higher for FSC on all elements. The greatest disparity is in the ratings for accuracy on *silvicultural* and *social* issues.

Figure 25. Reporting Accuracy



Overall the FSC score for *reporting accuracy* falls in the *medium* performance range, while the SFI score falls in *low* performance range (Table 25). None of the average scores fall in the *high* performance range. FSC scores fall in the *medium* performance range for three elements--on the *objectivity and accuracy of the overall findings*, on *silvicultural issues*, and on *ecological issues*; but FSC scores fall in the *low* performance range on *social issues*. SFI scores fall in the low performance range for all elements except in the *objectivity and accuracy of the overall findings (medium)* and on *social issues (minimal/absent)*.

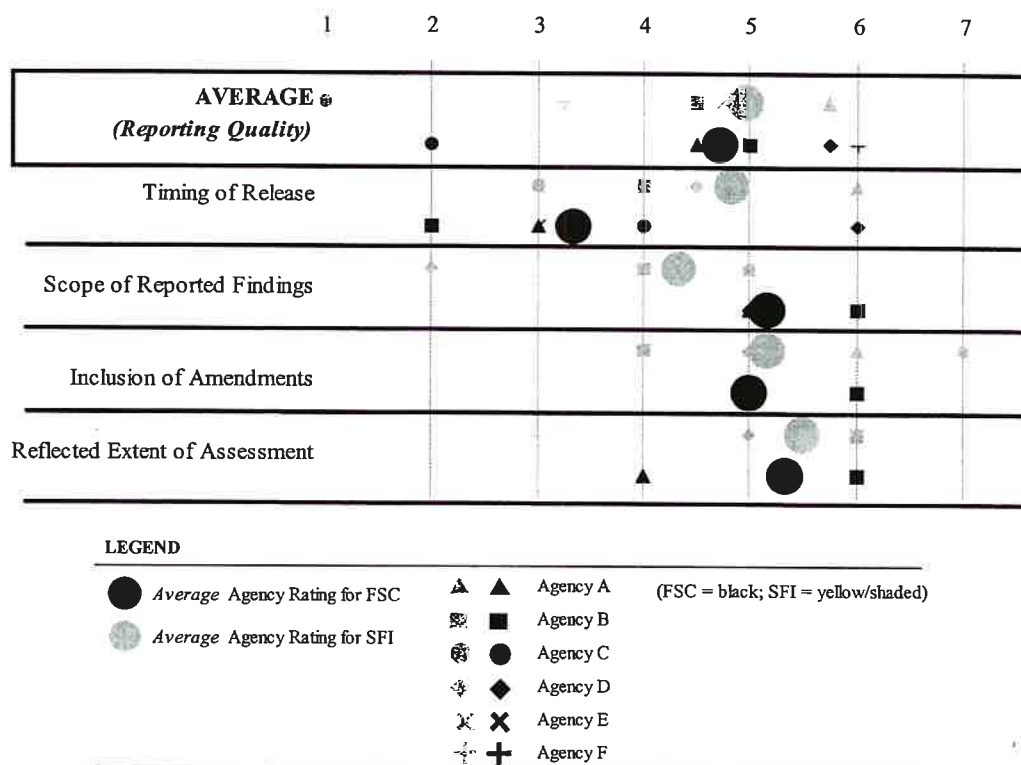
Table 25. Reporting Accuracy

OUTCOME	Min./Absent (1-3)	Low (4 +)	Medium (5+)	High (6+)
<i>Objectivity & Accuracy</i>				
• Overall Findings			FSC/SFI	
• Silvicultural Issues		SFI	FSC	
• Ecological Issues		SFI	FSC	
• Economic Issues		FSC/SFI		
• Social Issues	SFI	FSC		

II.C.2 QUALITY OF REPORTING

The category for quality of reporting considered several elements, including: the *timing of the release of the report*, the *scope of the findings* included in the report, whether the *amendments* that arose through the review process were incorporated, and whether the report reflected the *full scope of what auditors considered* in the course of the assessment. The overall score for SFI on this category is higher than the score for FSC. SFI ratings are higher for all elements in this category, except on the *scope of the reported findings* for which the majority of the agencies rated FSC higher. The disparity between the two programs is substantially determined by the large difference in scores for one element--*timing of the release of the report*.

Figure 26. Quality of Reporting



Overall, both programs are rated in the *low* performance range for this category (**Table 26**). SFI is rated in the *low* performance range on the *timing of release* and on the *scope of reported findings*, and in the *medium* performance range on *inclusion of amendments* and on the extent to which the report addressed the *full scope of the assessment*. FSC scores fall in the *medium* performance range for all elements except the *timing of the release of the report*--which was considered *minimal/absent*, or in this context, a "lower priority" for the program.

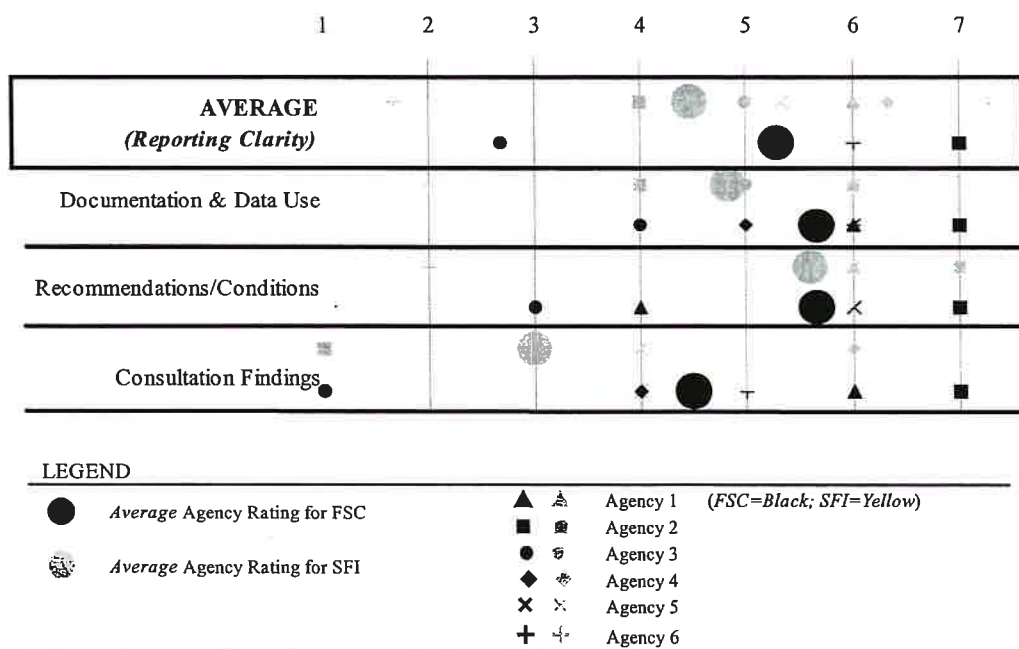
Table 26. Quality of Reporting

	Min./Absent (1-3)	Low (4 +)	Medium (5+)	High (6+)
<i>Quality of Reporting</i>				
• Timing of Release	FSC	SFI		
• Scope of Reported Findings		SFI	FSC	
• Inclusion of Amendments			SFI/FSC	
• Reflected Extent of Assessment			SFI/FSC	

II.C.3 CLARITY OF REPORTING

The category on *clarity of reporting* focused on several aspects of the assessment results submitted to the agencies, including: the clarity of the report in presenting how the *data* and *documentation* collected in the field assessment was used; the clarity of the *recommendations*, *conditions*, and/or *non-conformances* presented in the report; and the clarity of the findings generated through the *consultation* process. Overall, the average rating for these three elements is higher for FSC than SFI. There is very little difference in the average rating for the clarity of the *recommendations/conditions*, but almost a point difference for the clarity of the report in presenting how *data and documentation* was used. However the ratings from individual agencies are spread over the same range of scores for the clarity of *documentation and data use*. The average score for clarity of *consultation findings* is lowest among the three elements for both agencies—and is substantially higher for FSC. However there was substantial variability among the agencies.

Figure 27. Clarity of Reporting



Overall, the average score for all elements falls in the *medium* performance range for FSC and in the *low* performance range for SFI. The average score for FSC falls in the *medium* performance range in two (2) elements, clarity on *documentation and data use*, and clarity of *recommendations/conditions*, but in the *low* performance range on clarity of the *consultation findings*. Average scores for SFI fall in the *medium* performance range on clarity of *recommendations/conditions*, in the *low* performance range on clarity of *documentation and data use*, and *minimal/absent* range on clarity of *consultation findings*.

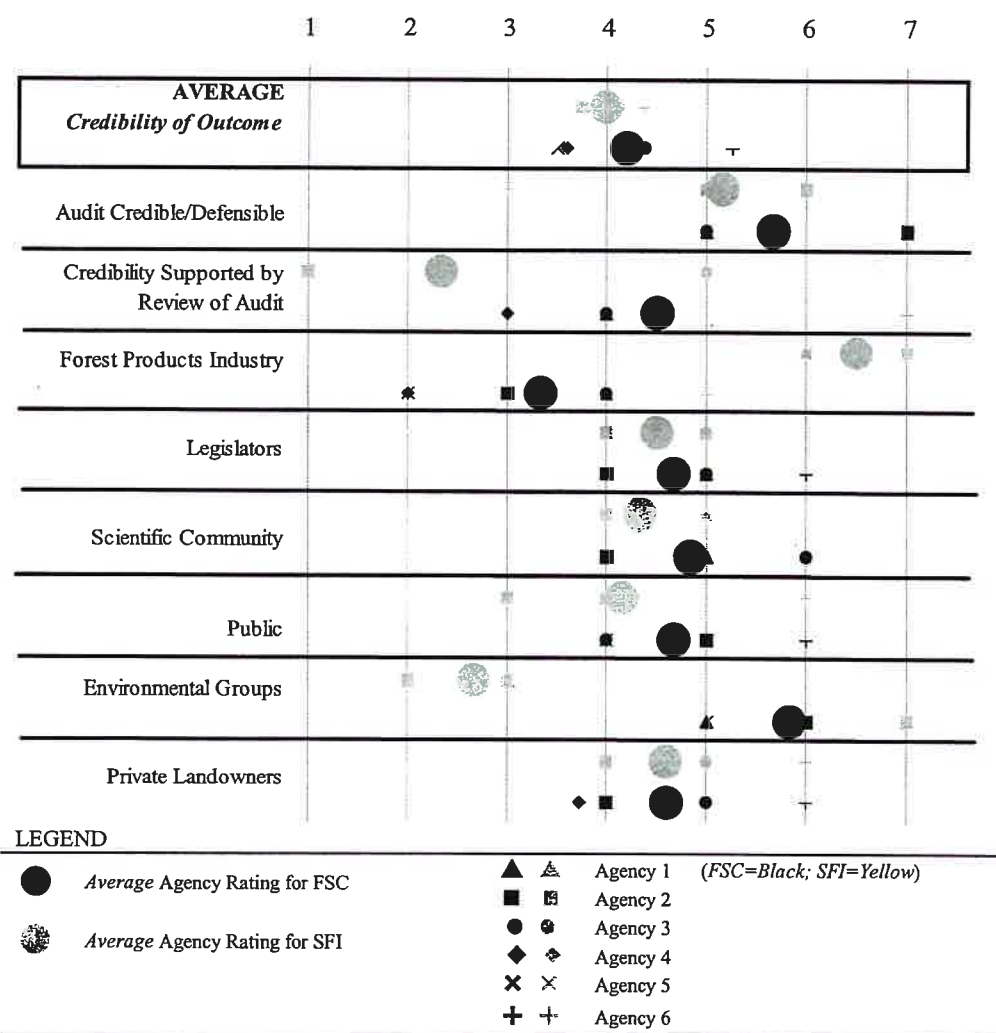
Table 27. Clarity of Reporting

	Min./Absent (1-3)	Low (4 +)	Medium (5+)	High (6+)
<i>Credibility of Outcome</i>				
• Documentation & Data Use		SFI	FSC	
• Recommendations/Conditions			SFI/FSC	
• Consultation Findings	SFI	FSC		

II.C.4 CREDIBILITY

This category focused on how credible the audit process was to agency staff, whether an review process enhanced the credibility of the audit, and whether the audit results would be viewed as credible to a variety of audiences (**Figure 28**). The agreement among the agencies in rating one system higher than the other varies substantially across the elements.

Figure 28. Credibility of Outcome



Among the several elements that address credibility with specific stakeholders (*timber industry, environmental groups, scientific community, the state legislature, private landowners, and the public at large*), the majority of the agencies are in consensus in rating SFI more credible with the *timber industry* and FSC more credible with *environmental groups*. On average, FSC is rated more credible for the rest of the constituencies, but there is little agreement on each—and the scores from individual agencies are spread across a wide range. The one exception is with *private landowners*, with whom agencies felt the FSC and SFI systems are equally credible. On average the agencies agreed that the audits were *credible and defensible*, with FSC rated higher.

Overall the average score for both programs fell in the *low* performance range. On average, agencies felt that the audit for both programs was *credible and defensible* (*medium* performance range). Ratings on FSC's credibility with the *forest products industry* and SFI's credibility with the *environmental groups* fell in the *minimal/absent* performance range. For all other constituencies, besides the *forest products industry* and *environmental groups*, average scores for the two programs fell in the *medium* performance range.

Table 28. Credibility of Outcome

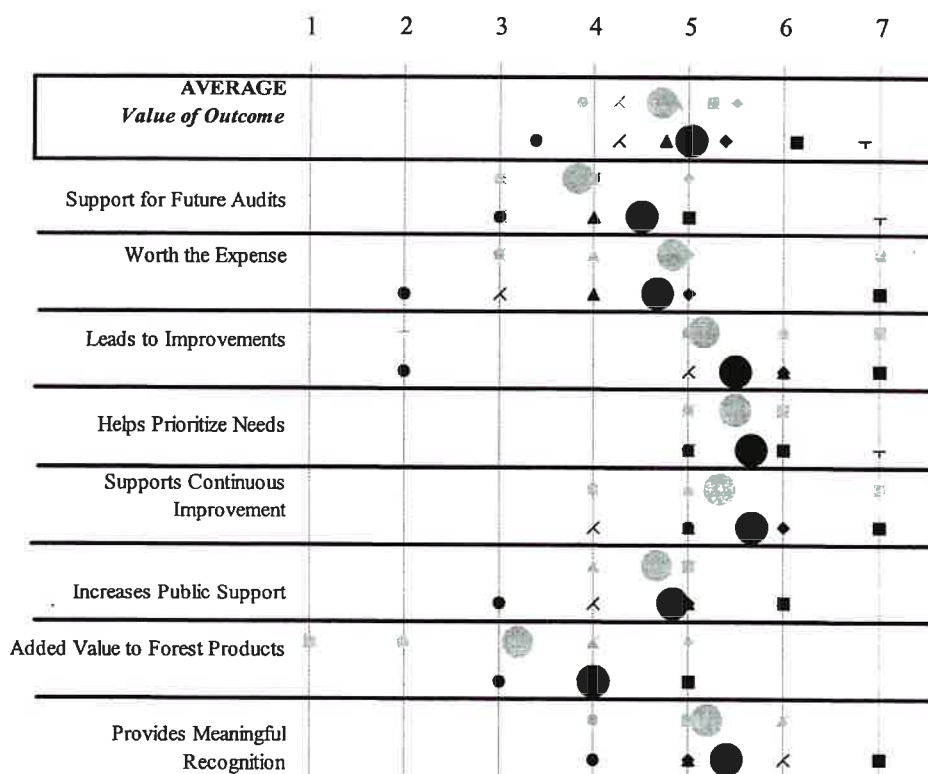
	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Credibility of Outcome</i>				
• Audit Credible and Defensible			FSC/SFI	
• Credibility Supported by Review of Audit	SFI	FSC		
• Forest Products Industry	FSC			SFI
• Legislators		FSC/SFI		
• Scientific community		FSC/SFI		
• Public		FSC/SFI		
• Environmental Groups	SFI		FSC	
• Private Landowners		FSC/SFI		

II.C.5 VALUE OF ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This category focused on whether the assessment process proved valuable in: fostering both immediate and *continual improvements* in forest management practices; *prioritizing attention* to important ecological/environmental, economic, or social issues; increasing *public support* for forest management activities of the agencies; *providing meaningful recognition* of the agency's performance; and providing a *means to label* products in the marketplace (**Figure 29**). Agencies were also asked whether they would be willing to invest in certification by *supporting future full assessments* and annual audits.

Averaging across all elements and agencies, FSC was rated slightly higher for this category, however only two (2) out of six (6) agencies agreed. In seven (7) out of eight (8) elements, the average rating for FSC was higher than the average rating for SFI. Only on one element, addressing whether the assessments would be *worth the expense*, did SFI rate higher than FSC.

Figure 29. Value of Outcome



LEGEND

●	Average Agency Rating for FSC	▲	Agency 1 (FSC=Black; SFI=Yellow)
●		■	Agency 2
●		●	Agency 3
●		◆	Agency 4
●		×	Agency 5
●		+	Agency 6
●			

Overall the average score for SFI in this category fell in the *low* performance range, while the average score for FSC fell in the *medium* performance range. For six (6) of the eight (8) elements the scores for the two programs fell in the same performance range—either *medium* or *low*. For only two elements did the average score for a program fall in the *minimal/absent* performance range—SFI on whether the agency would *support future audits*, and whether the label offers *added value to forest products*. On the latter element (*value offered by a label*) both programs were rated relatively low by most agencies.

Table 29. Value of Outcome

	<i>Min./Absent (1-3)</i>	<i>Low (4 +)</i>	<i>Medium (5+)</i>	<i>High (6+)</i>
<i>Value of Outcome</i>				
• Support for Future Audits	SFI	FSC		
• Worth the Expense		FSC/SFI		
• Leads to Improvements			FSC/SFI	
• Helps Prioritize Needs			FSC/SFI	
• Supports Continuous Improvement			FSC/SFI	
• Increases Public Support		FSC/SFI		
• Added Value to Forest Products	SFI	FSC		
• Provides Meaningful Recognition			FSC/SFI	

II.C.6 Outcome Summary

The *Outcome* section of the reverse evaluation considered aspects of the certification process itself, as well as the types of values that the two programs offered the agencies. The categories included in this consider elements of reporting (*content*, *protocol*, and *dispute resolution*); the *accuracy* and *objectivity* of the certification assessment, the *credibility* of the outcome, and the overall *value* of certification. On average, both systems were rated in the 4-5 range. No more than two-thirds of the agencies (or 4 out of the 6) concurred on which system performed better across all elements in each category. The lowest level of agreement was on the reporting process, for which two of the six rated FSC higher across the elements.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

This analysis was an outgrowth of an initiative to examine the applicability of independent, third-party certification programs on public forest lands in the United States. Of particular interest in this study was how any changes in the management of public lands required in order to comply with independent certification standards would be reconciled with forest management guidelines to the agency provided through statutes, regulations, land management plans and other public policies. In 1998, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania became the first state to participate in the study. While the FSC certification of the entire 2.1 million acres of state forest managed by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry resulted in no significant departures from the management direction in existing public policy, it did identify a number of shortcomings, or "conditions," that the Bureau of Forestry would have to rectify over the ensuing four years (and have verified through annual audits) in order to retain its certification. Far from being a departure from existing public policy, the actions taken to correct the conditions identified during the certification assessment were seen by many as accelerating implementation of a strategic plan that earlier had been issued by the Bureau of Forestry, thus bringing about significant improvements in management of the state forests.

The Pinchot Institute then sought to expand the study to include other states, recognizing that variation from one state to another—not only in biophysical terms, but in social and economic aspects and ways in which different state forestry agencies' missions are defined. By this time, a second independent, third-party certification system had become established in the US, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). This provided the Pinchot Institute with the additional opportunity of having forest resources managers compare the relevance and performance of these two different programs, as well as that of independent, third-party certification as a general mechanism.

In 2001, the Pinchot Institute undertook the first comprehensive field-based comparative analysis of the two leading certification programs in the United States, that of the Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. Four public forest management agencies in four states and two university systems participated in the study:

- Tennessee Division of Forestry (158,000 acres)
- Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (450,000 acres)
- North Carolina Department of Forestry (61,000 acres)
- Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park (500 acres)
- North Carolina State University (12,000 acres)
- Duke University (8,000 acres)

In each instance, two certification assessments were performed, one each by a certifier organization representing FSC and a certifier organization representing SFI. These assessments were performed on the same lands, and at essentially the same time. There are several certifier organizations in the United States representing each of the two leading programs. The certifier organizations performing the FSC and SFI assessments varied among the states, depending upon which was selected by the state resource management agency on the basis of bids submitted in response to a Request for Proposals issued in each state.

Initially, none of the six participating agencies was recommended for SFI certification. In each instance, the SFI auditor had identified one or more major non-conformances with SFI requirements. Some of these negative findings were based on forest practices observed in the field, but many were based on shortcomings in required documentation, such as forest management plans and current forest inventories. Subsequently, three of the states took actions to correct these non-conformances and are now SFI certified.

FSC auditors initially recommended three of the six agencies for certification, all with conditions that will need to be rectified on a specific schedule over the course of the next four years (and verified through FSC annual audits) in order to retain certification. Subsequently, a fourth agency took action to correct certain shortcomings in its forest management sufficient to qualify for FSC certification, again with additional conditions that will need to be addressed during the next four years to retain certification.

At the completion of the assessments, each of the agencies participated in a “reverse evaluation,” in which their personnel assessed the relevance of independent, third-party certification to the agency’s mission and goals, and the degree to which the certification process facilitated improvements in the conservation and sustainable management of forests under their stewardship. In addition, the participating agencies were asked to rate the SFI and FSC assessments relative to one another. The reverse evaluations were conducted using a “template” of questions developed by the Pinchot Institute in consultation with representatives of the Forest Stewardship Council-US and the American Forest and Paper Association, as well as the members of an advisory committee representing a diversity of perspectives and professional expertise. Each agency was given the opportunity to modify this set of questions to better reflect their particular circumstances or information needs, but each agency chose to use the standard template of questions. The reverse evaluation addressed three categories, each with several “elements”:

1. *Standards* for forest management practices (49 elements);
2. The *Process* by which the certification assessment was carried out (56 elements); and,
3. The value of the *Outcome* for the agency (27 elements).

Overall, the participating agencies regarded certification as relevant to their respective missions and goals, and helpful in identifying opportunities for improving forest management practices—both programs were rated *medium* or *high* on 54 of the total of 134 elements in the reverse evaluation. Both programs were rated *medium* or *excellent* on 19 of the 49 elements under *Standards*, 31 of the 56 elements under *Process*, and 4 of the 27 elements under *Outcome*.

Table 30. Elements in which certification programs rated "medium" or "high" :

	Both programs	FSC	SFI
Standards (49 elements)	19	36	25
Process (56 elements)	31	45	36
Outcome (27 elements)	4	7	5

Agency personnel viewed each program as having different strengths and weaknesses. Elements in which the SFI program was consistently rated higher were:

- Clearer guidelines, more easily *applied to the local context*
- Clearer and *better-coordinated* assessment process
- More rigorous in requiring *continuous improvement* over time
- More rigorous in terms of required *staff training*

Elements in which the FSC program was consistently rated higher were:

- More *comprehensive*
- More adequate coverage of *biological/ecological* and *social issues* in the standards, field auditing and final reporting
- More *relevant* to state agencies’ forest management objectives

For many elements in the reverse evaluation, there was substantial variation among the responses of the participating agencies, but for other elements their responses were very similar. The graphical displays of agencies' responses contained in the body of the report highlight the degree of variation both among the several agencies and among multiple elements--and are important to an accurate interpretation of the information from this study.

Independent, third-party certification of forest management practices is a relatively new mechanism in the United States, and this study is intended to address critical information needs on certification overall and on the relative features of each of the leading certification programs currently available in the United States. It is important to note that substantial differences between the FSC and SFI systems should not necessarily be interpreted as weaknesses or shortcomings of one system or the other. Other studies have documented that the two programs began with different purposes in mind, and that they continue to have somewhat different objectives.⁵ To some degree, the differences between the two systems can be viewed as complementary, and there is increasing interest among both public and private forest managers in seeking certification under both FSC and SFI programs.

It is also important to note that both the FSC and SFI programs are continuing to evolve. The stimulus for this evolution appears to be arising from competition between the two programs, mutual learning from experimentation and experience, and the independent desire within each program to enhance its effectiveness at facilitating improvements in forest management practices. This study is based on the features of each program at the time the study was conducted. Since the data was collected for this study, both FSC and SFI have made changes aimed at improving their relevance and performance. Indeed, it is hoped that one of the benefits of this study will be the identification of areas in which each of the major certification systems can be further improved.

The information in this report will be of value not only to public forest management agencies, but to forest land managers of all kinds. For public forest land managers, certification can serve to provide independent assurance to citizens that their forests are being well managed for a variety of uses, and that important conservation values are being protected for future generations. For all forest managers, including private forest landowners, certification is becoming increasingly important as a voluntary, non-regulatory mechanism for identifying opportunities to improve forest management practices on both public and private lands, and for publicly recognizing the achievements of resources managers whose efforts can serve as tangible, observable models for improving the conservation and sustainable management of America's forests.

It is hoped that this report will help forest managers to make more informed judgments about the potential value of certification to their efforts, and their decision whether to pursue certification. Because the information in this report is based fundamentally on the views of resource managers who have recently experienced field trials of both the FSC and SFI programs, it addresses many of the questions and concerns that other resource managers typically have about how certification might relate to their own circumstances. And because several of these trials have resulted in actual certification under one or both of the FSC and SFI programs, the forests themselves will continue to serve as living laboratories, and examples to other forest managers who may find that responsible forest management is, or can be, within their capabilities.

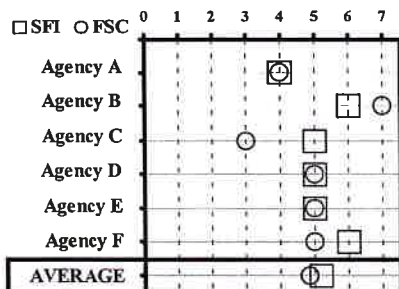
⁵ *Comparative Analysis of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Programs: A consensus statement on the salient similarities and differences.* October 2001. Meridian Institute. <http://www.merid.org/comparison>

APPENDICES

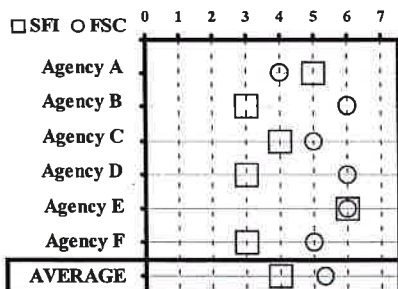
A. Exhibits (1 – 134)	...56
B. Statements on Changes in Programs	...68
C. Advisory Committee Members	...71
D. Reverse Assessment Template	...72

Appendix A—Exhibits

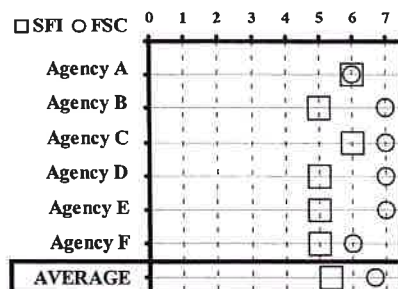
(E1) Clarity of the Standards



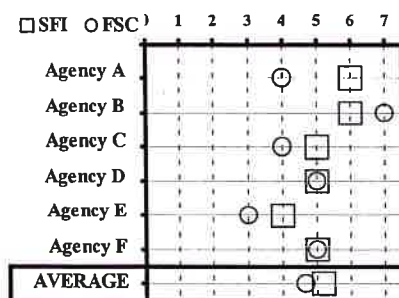
(E2) Complete



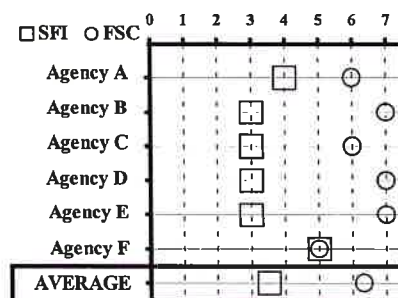
(E3) Adequate on Ecological Issues



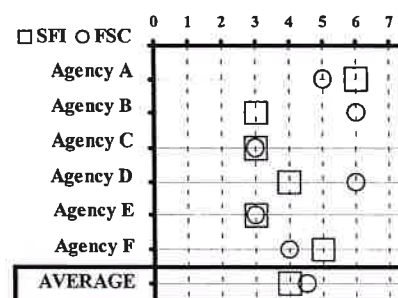
(E4) Adequate on Economic Issues



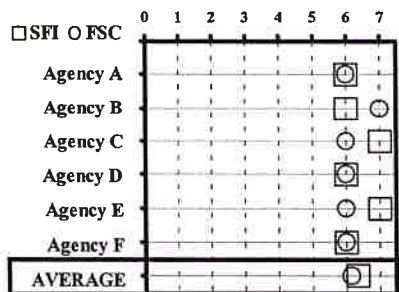
(E5) Adequate on Social Issues



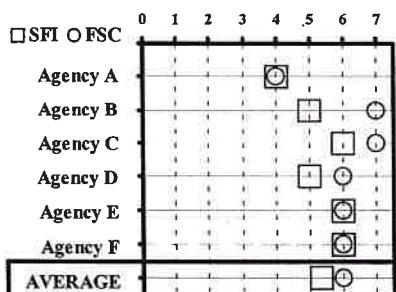
(E6) Appropriate Balance of Issues



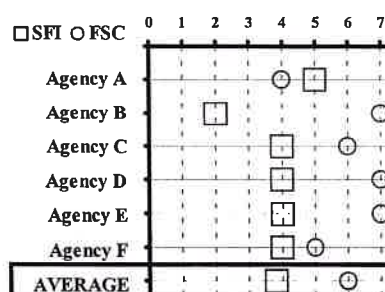
(E7) Protection of Water Quality



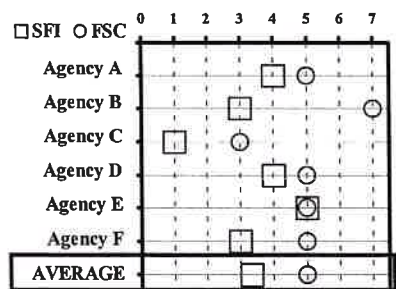
(E8) Protection of R,T,&E Species



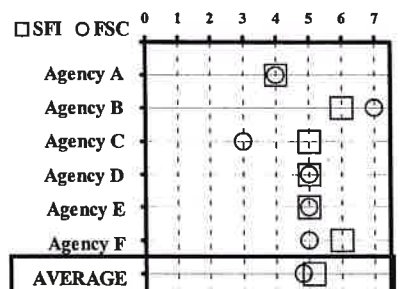
(E9) Guidelines for Exotic Species



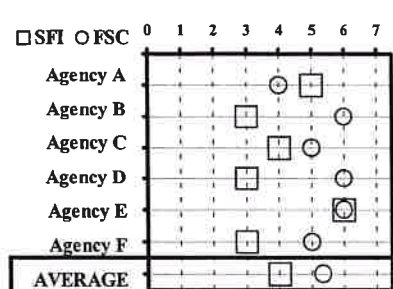
(E10) Guidelines on Genetic Diversity



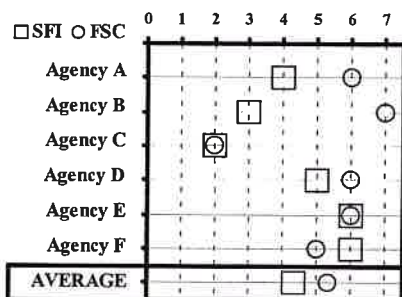
(E11) Protection of Wildlife Habitat



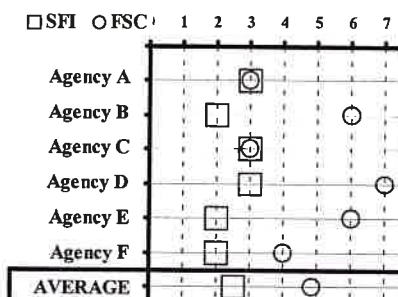
(E12) Sustainable Harvest



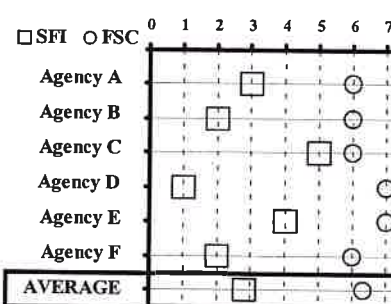
(E13) Forest Structure & Composition



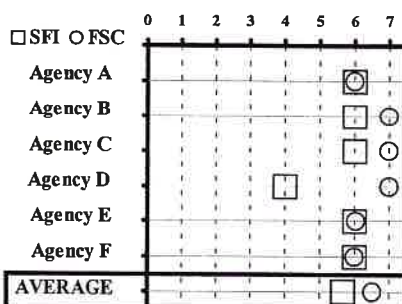
(E14) Natural Regeneration



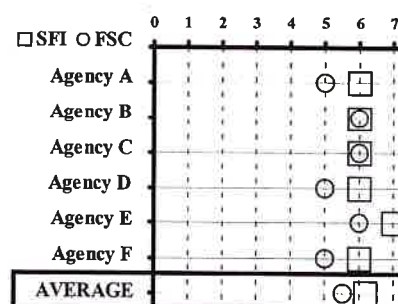
(E15) Plantations & Conversion



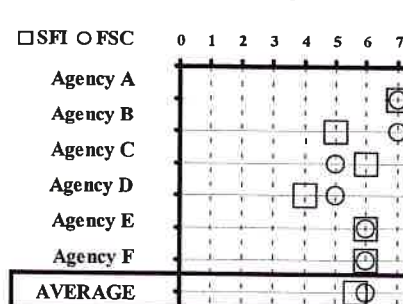
(E16) Protected Areas



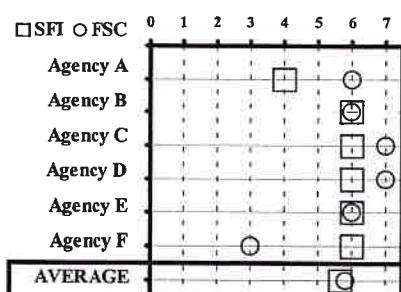
(E17) Harvest Utilization & Waste



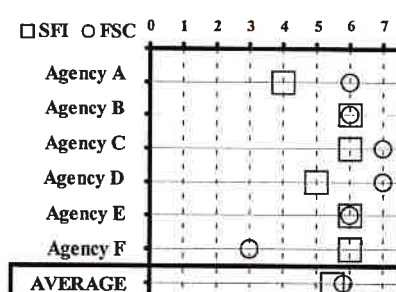
(E18) Residual Site Damage



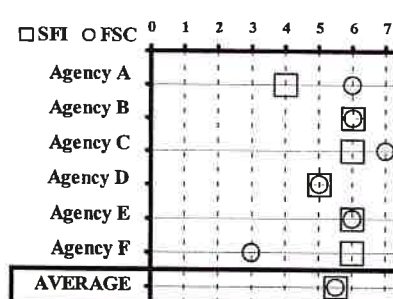
(E19) Chemical Use—Management



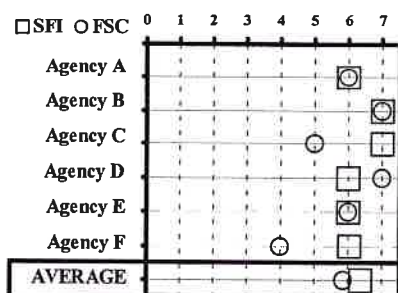
(E20) Chemical Use—Buffers



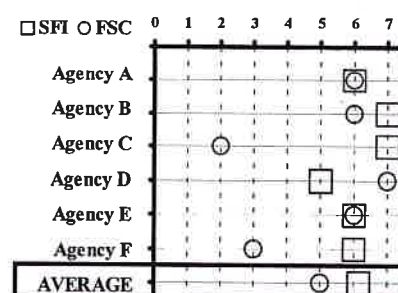
(E21) Chemical Use—Non-Target Areas



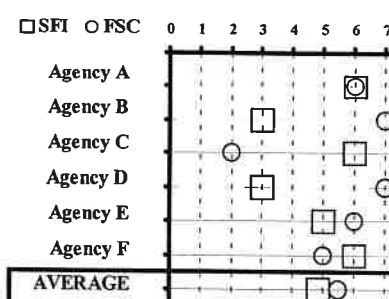
(E22) Promotion—Forest Mgmt. Staff



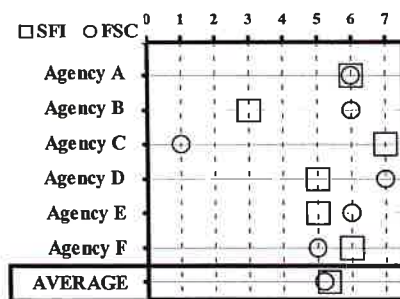
(E23) Promotion—Contractors



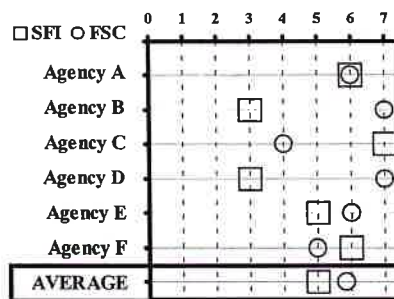
(E24) Promotion—Neighbors



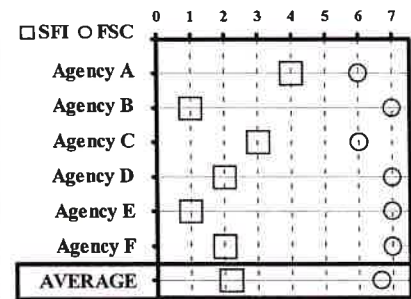
(E25) Promotion—Forestry Community



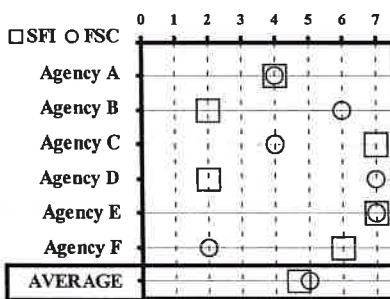
(E26) Promotion—Public at Large



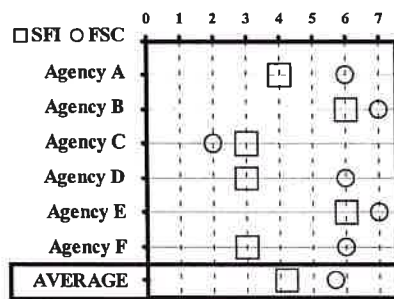
(E27) Input—On Certification



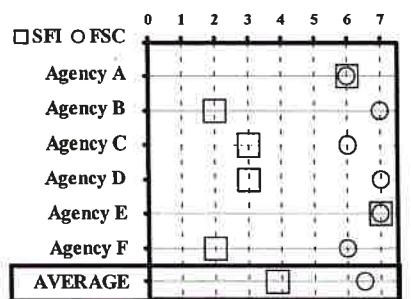
(E28) Input - On Forest Management



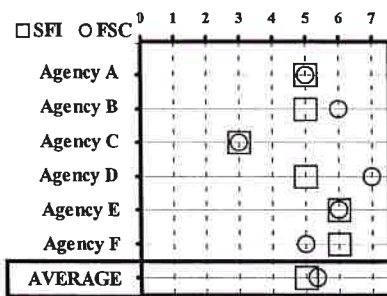
(E29) Input - On Management Goals



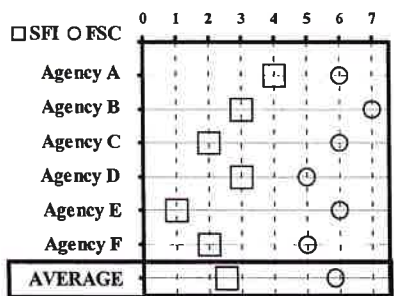
(E30) Promotion of Sustainability



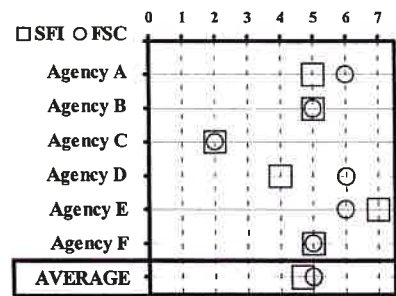
(E31) Unique Cultural & Historic Sites



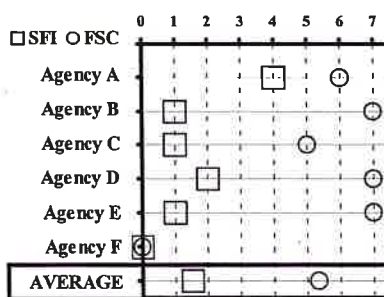
(E32) Local Economic Activity



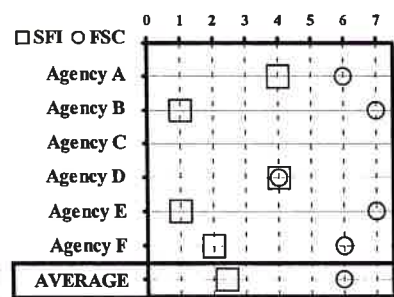
(E33) Non-Timber Values



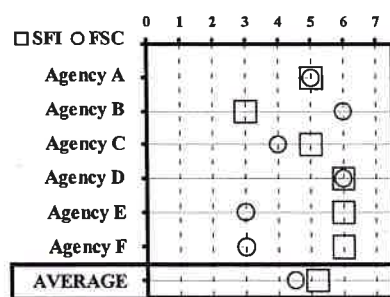
(E34) Indigenous Claims



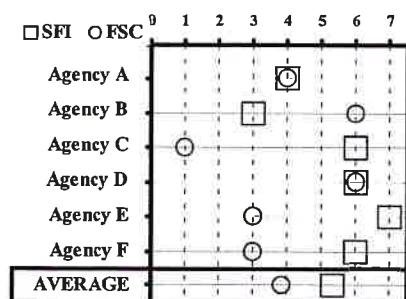
(E35) Tenurial Claims



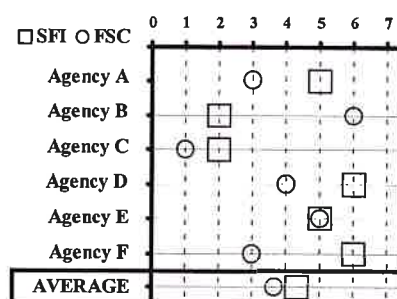
(E36) Local Applicability



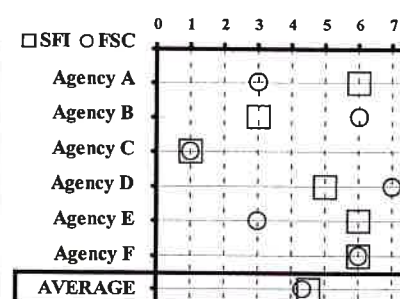
(E37) Accommodates Additions



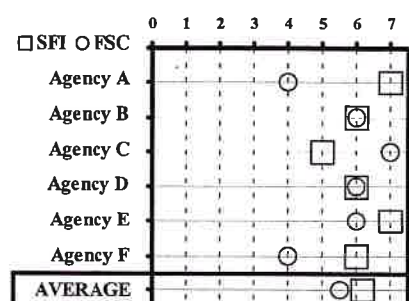
(E38) Limits Subjectivity



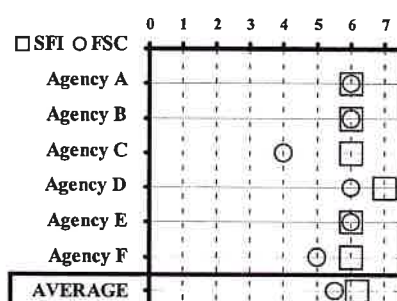
(E39) Allows Unique Objectives



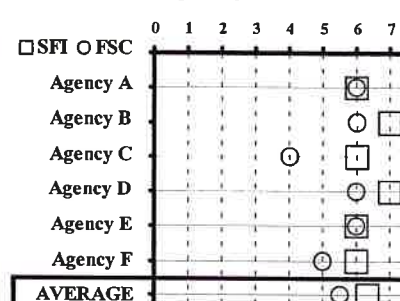
(E40) Continuous Improvement



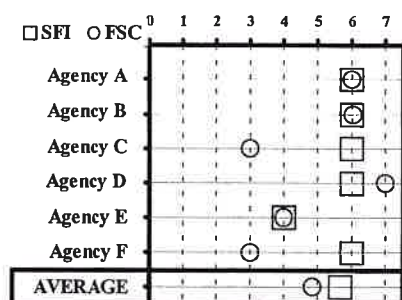
(E41) Staff Aware of Responsibilities



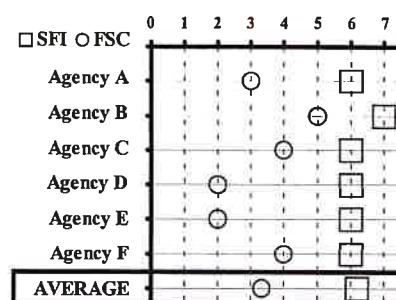
(E42) Staff Adequately Trained



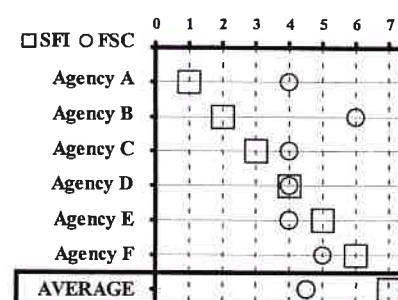
(E43) Staff Regularly Assessed



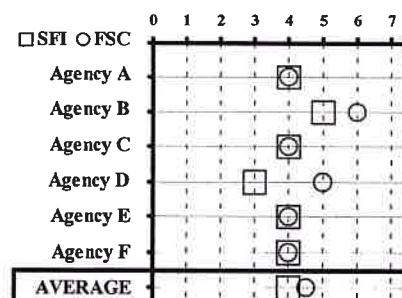
(E44) Credible w/ Timber Industry



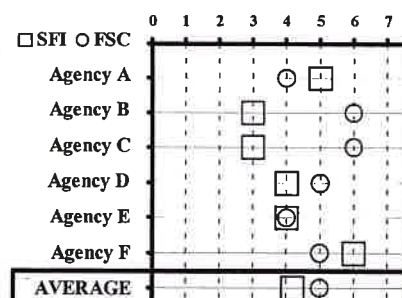
(E45) Credible w/ Forest Landowners



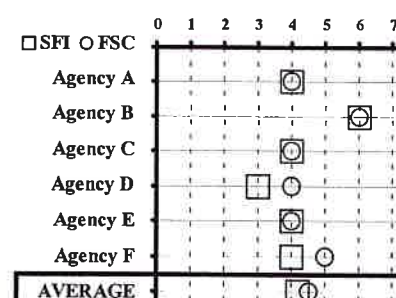
(E46) Credible w/ Legislators



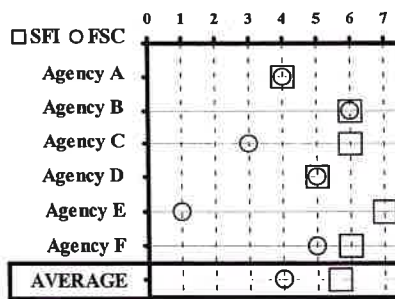
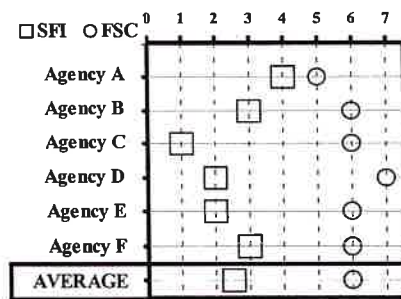
(E47) Credible w/ Scientists



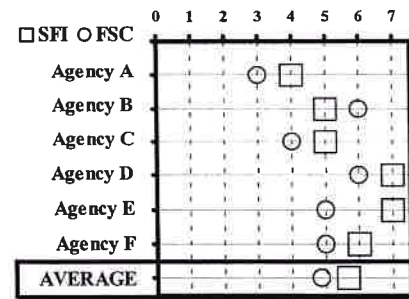
(E48) Credible w/ General Public



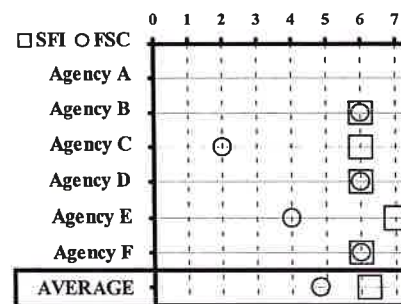
(E49) Credible w/ Environmental NGOs (E50) Auditors Clarified Standards



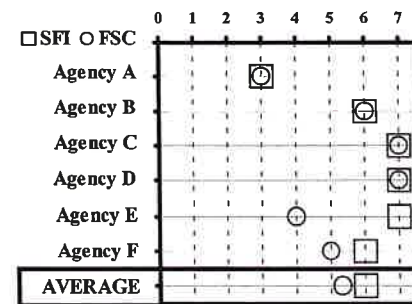
(E51) . . . Informational Meetings



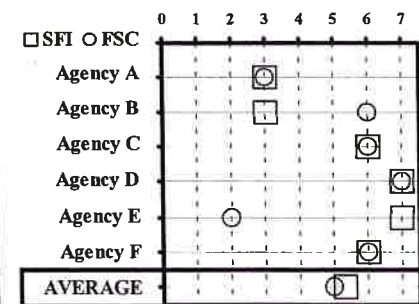
(E52) . . . Agreement on Indicators



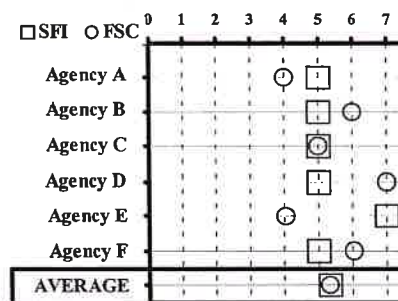
(E53) . . . Agreement on Plan



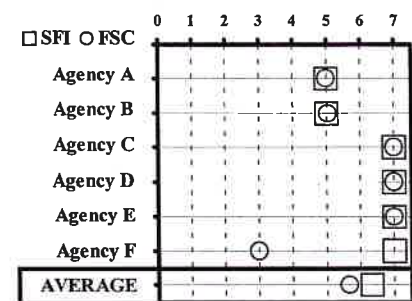
(E54) . . . Adequate Notification



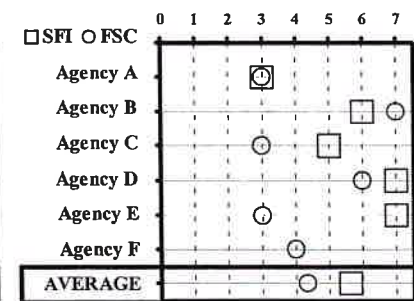
(E55) Audit Team Acceptable



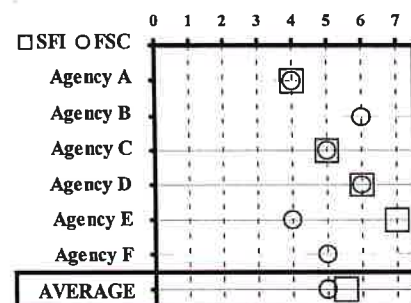
(E56) Adequacy of Documentation



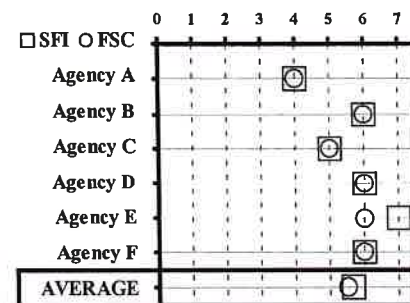
(E57) Audit Process Clear



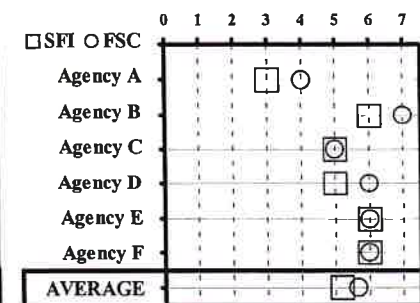
(E58) Announcements Adequate



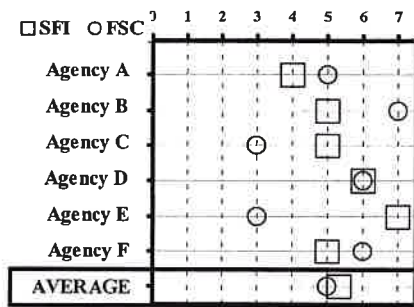
(E59) Adequate Confidentiality



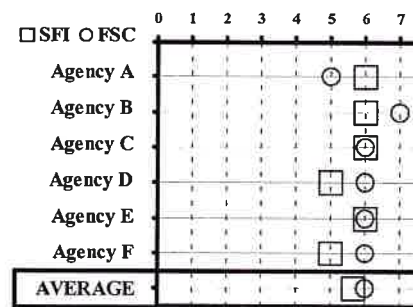
(E60) Team - High Caliber



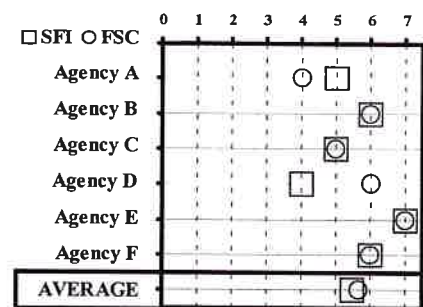
(E61) Team - Communicated Well



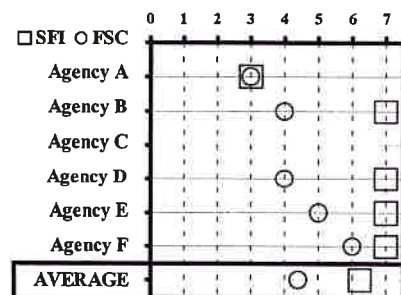
(E62) Team - Professional & Ethical



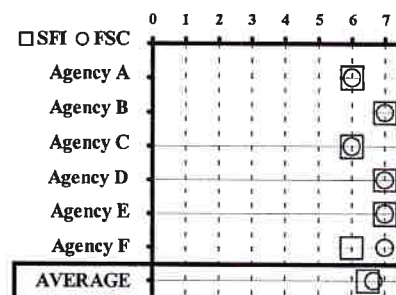
(E63) Team - Training & Experience



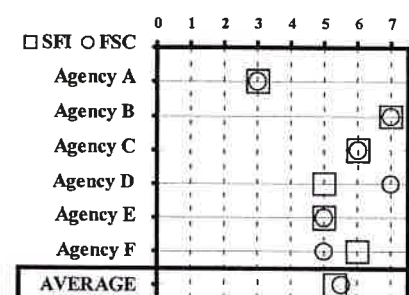
(E64) Team - Assessor Qualifications



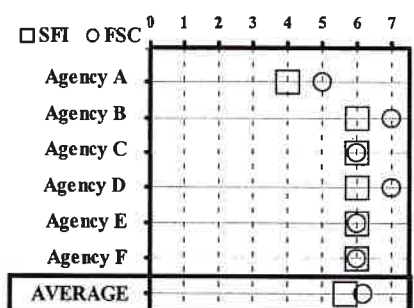
(E65) Team - Conflicts of Interest



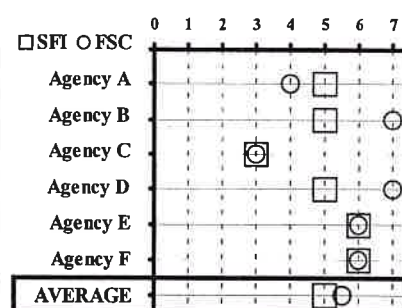
(E66) Expertise - Silvicultural



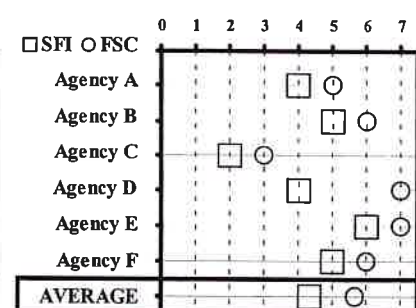
(E67) Expertise - Biological/Ecological



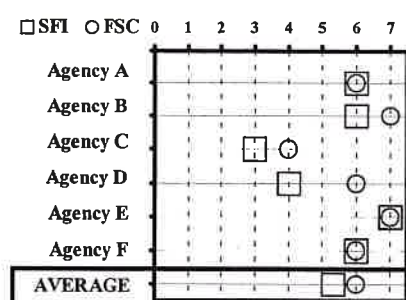
(E68) Expertise - Economic



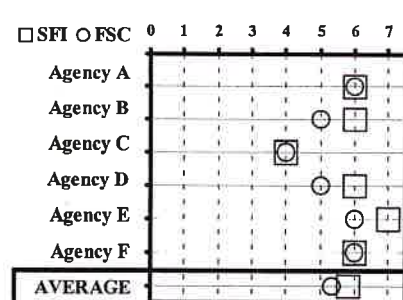
(E69) Expertise - Social Issues



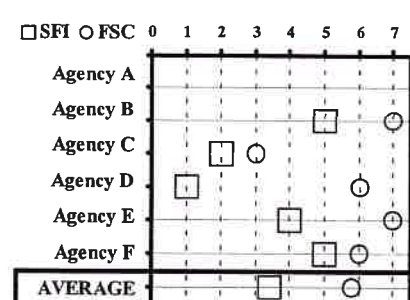
(E73) Data - Interviews



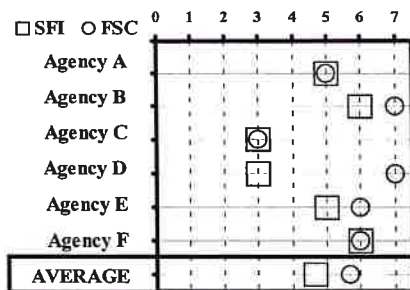
(E74) Data - Records



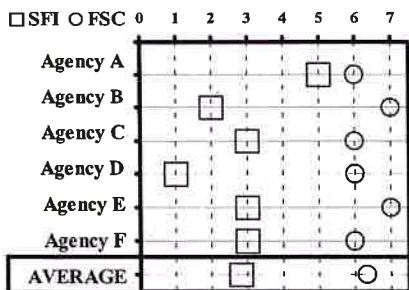
(E75) Independence of Investigation



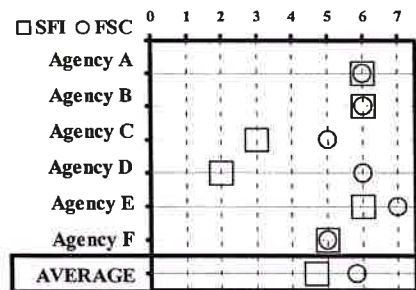
(E79) Considered Economic Evidence



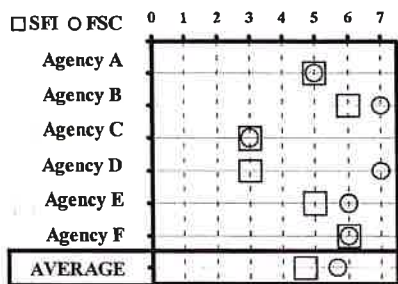
(E80) Evaluated Use of Public Input



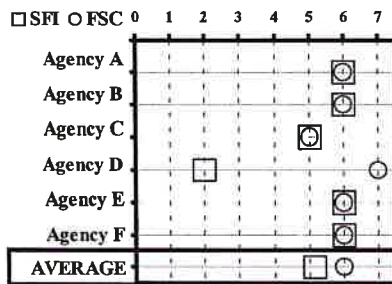
(E81) . . .Species of Concern



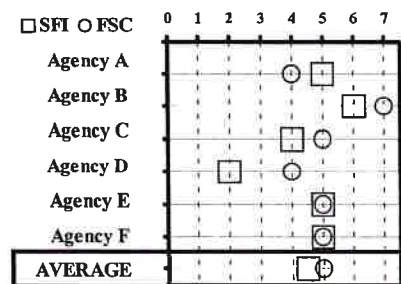
(E76) Use of Economic Evidence



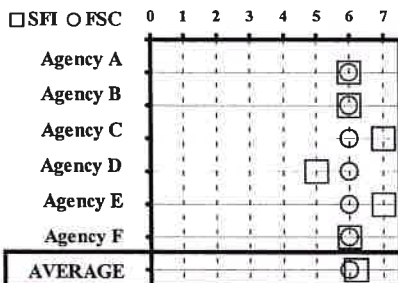
(E77) Evaluated Management Goals



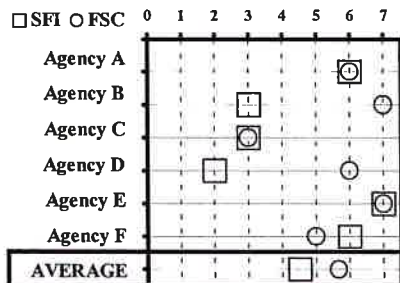
(E78) Evaluated Economic Decisions



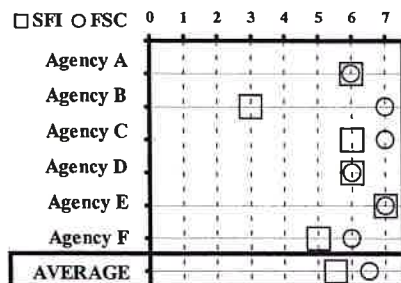
(E82) . . .Water Bodies



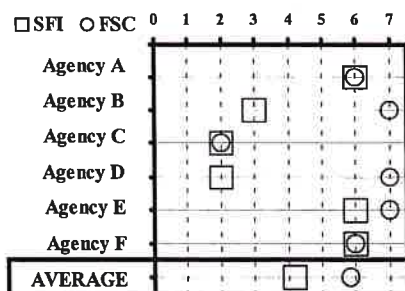
(E83) . . .Habitat Diversity, Landscape



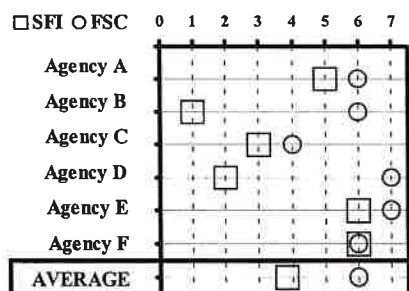
(E84) . . .Habitat Diversity, Stand



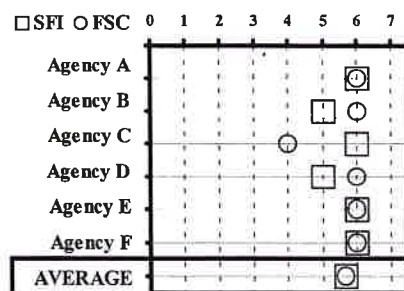
(E85) . . .Protected Areas



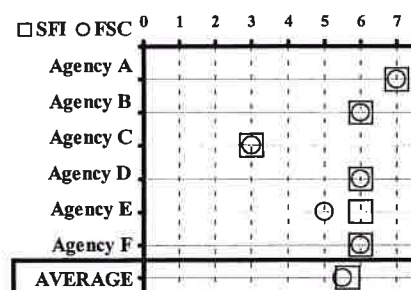
(E86) . . .Forest Composition



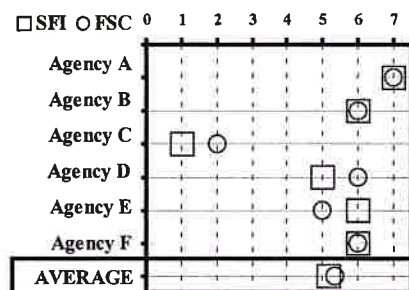
(E87) . . .Aesthetic/Visual Quality



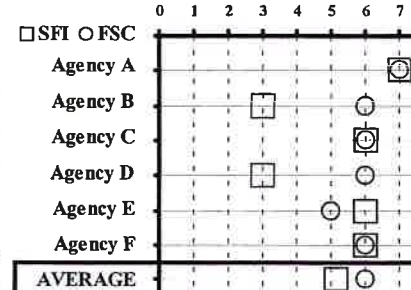
(E88) ...Updated Inventory



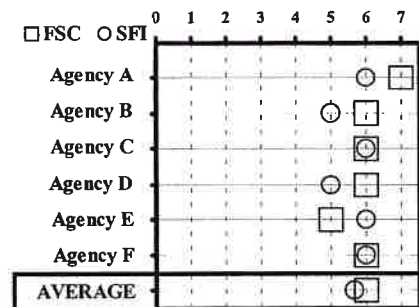
(E89) ...Growth & Yield



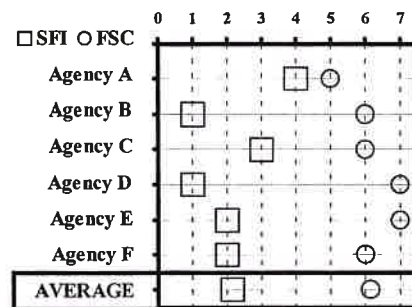
(E90) ...Site Damage



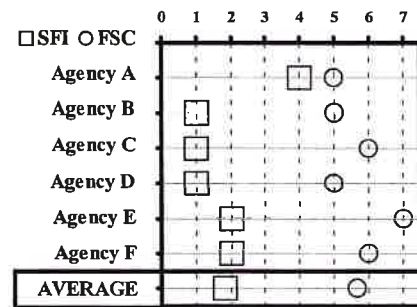
(E91) ...Waste/Utilization



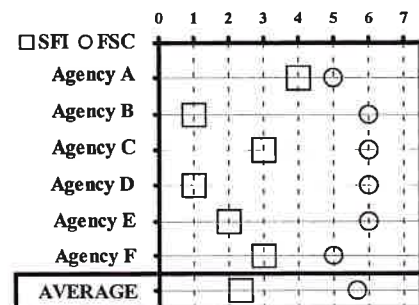
(E92) ...Input on Management



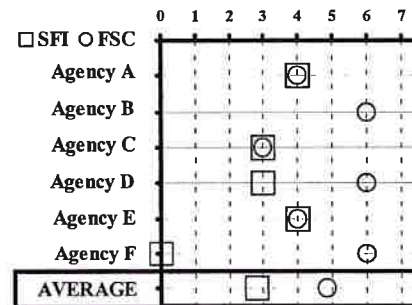
(E93) ...Indigenous Claims / Tenure



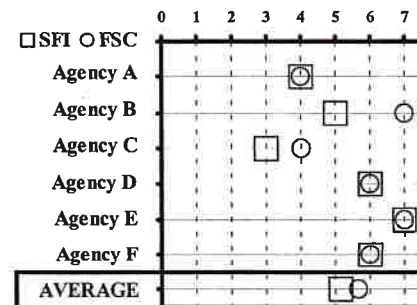
(E94) ...Local Economic Benefits



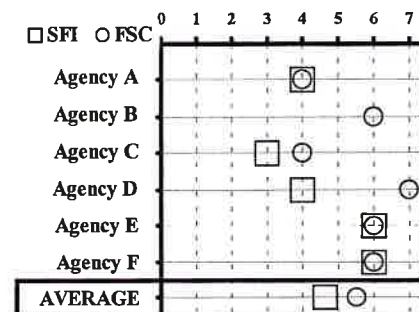
(E95) Accuracy of Stakeholder Input



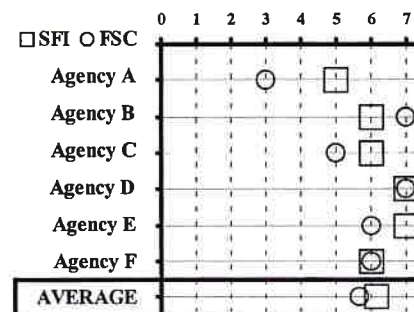
(E96) Independently Reviewed



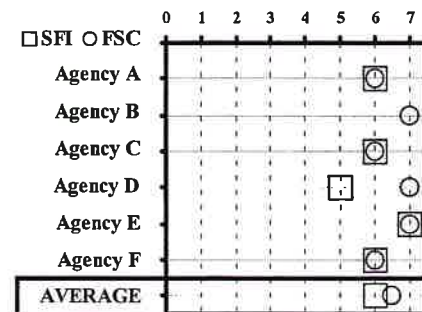
(E97) Independently Collected



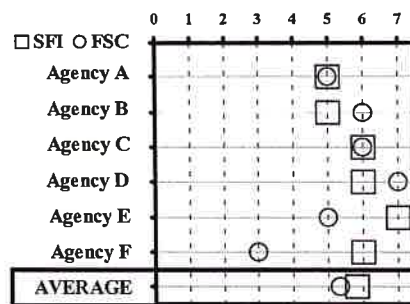
(E98) Efficiency w/ Personnel Time



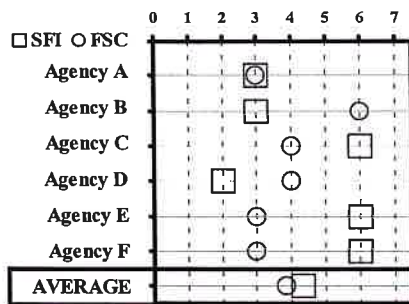
(E99) Efficiency on Site Visits



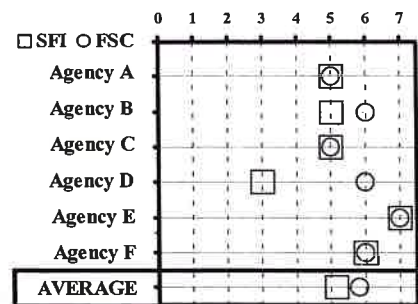
(E100) Timeliness of Notification



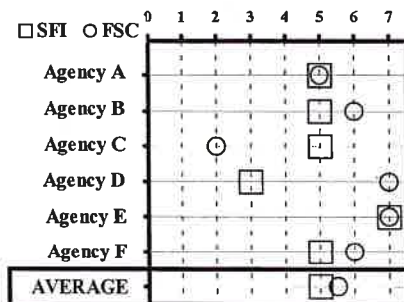
(E101) Timing of Draft Report



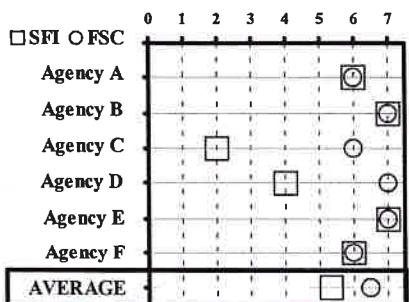
(E102) Review: Dispute Process



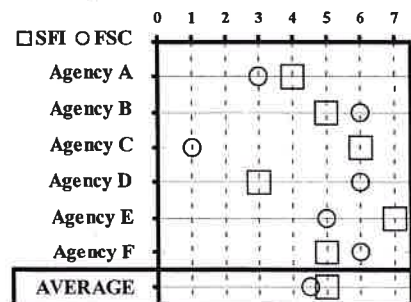
(E103) Review - Evaluation Process



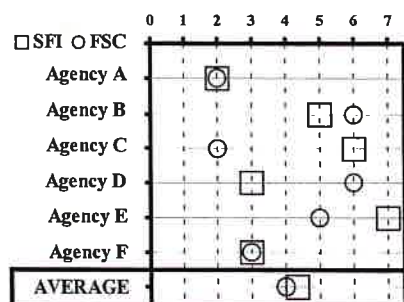
(E104) Review - Closing Meeting



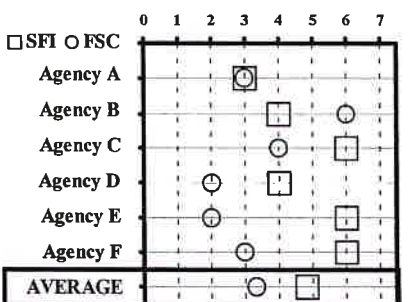
(E105) Review - Amendments



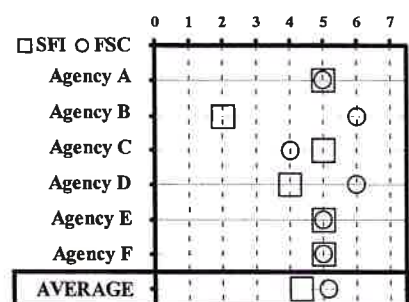
(E106) Review - Consensus



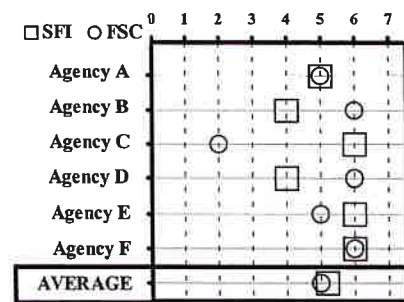
(E107) Report - Timing



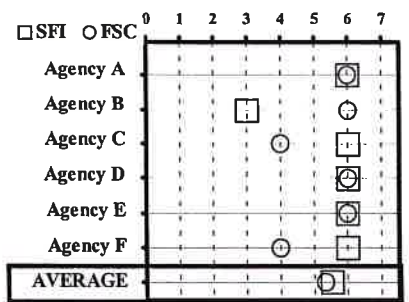
(E108) Report - Scope of Findings



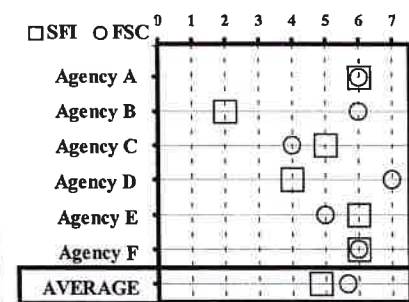
(E109) Report - Used Amendments



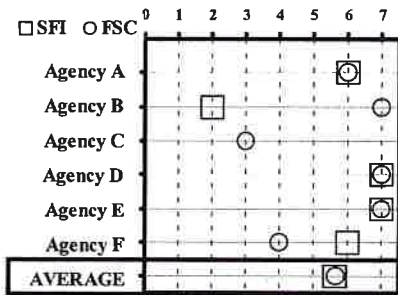
(E110) Report - Extent of Assessment



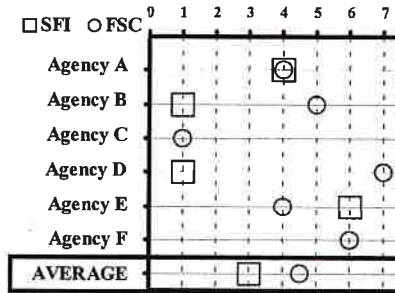
(E111) Clarity - Data Use



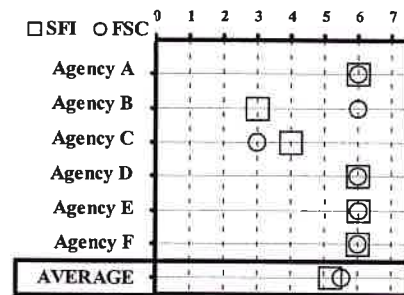
(E112) Clarity - Recommendations



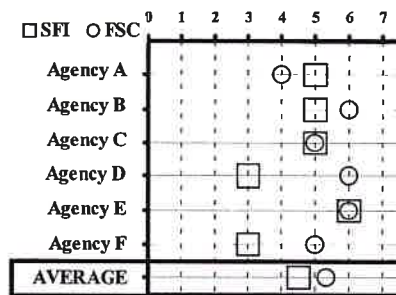
(E113) Clarity - Stakeholder Data



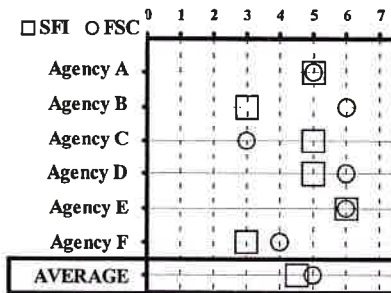
(E114) Accuracy - Overall Findings



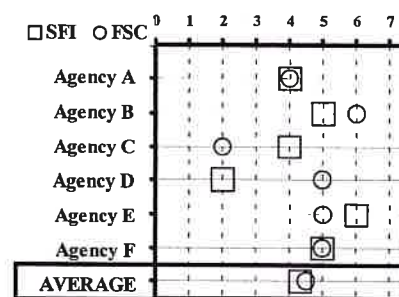
(E115) Accuracy-Silvicultural Findings



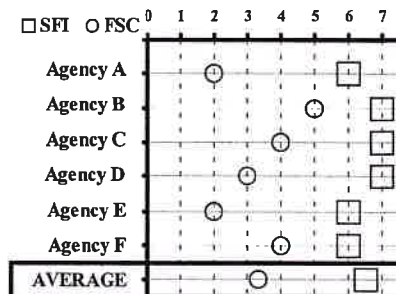
(E116) Accuracy - Biological Findings



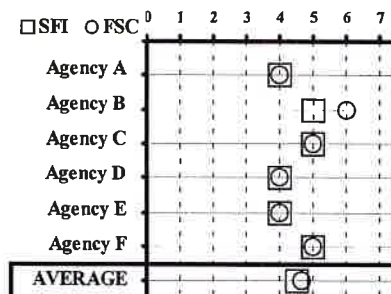
(E117) Accuracy - Economic Findings



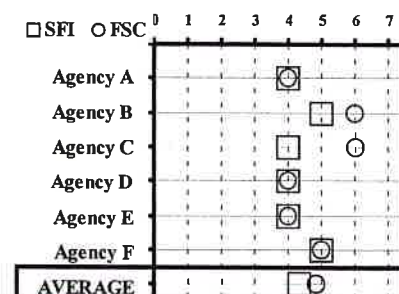
(E121) Credible w/ Timber Industry



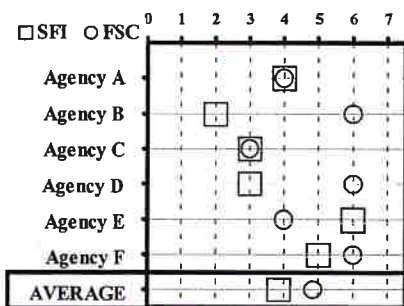
(E122) Credible w/ Legislators



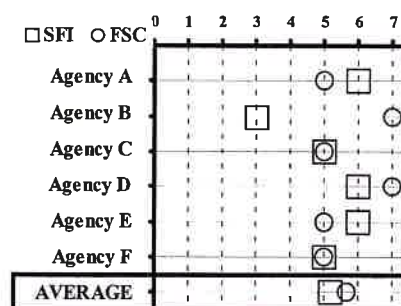
(E123) Credible w/ Scientists



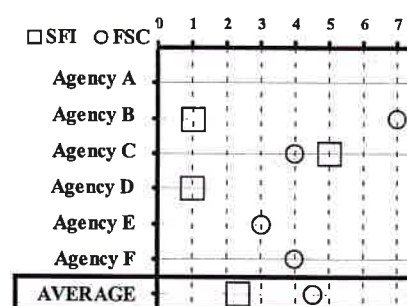
(E118) Accuracy - Social Findings



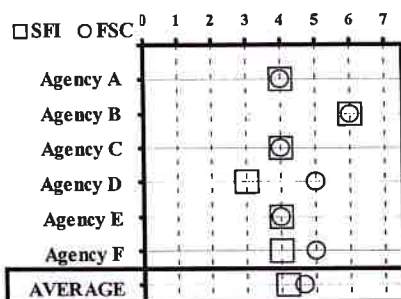
(E119) Audit Credible & Defensible



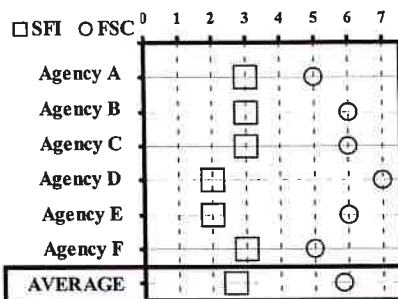
(E120) Peer Review



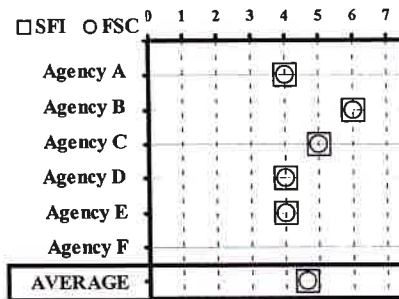
(E124) Credible w/ Public



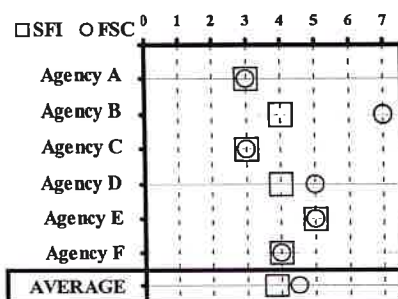
(E125) Credible w/ Environmental NGO



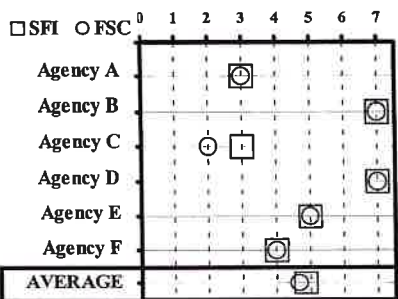
(E126) Credible w/ Landowners



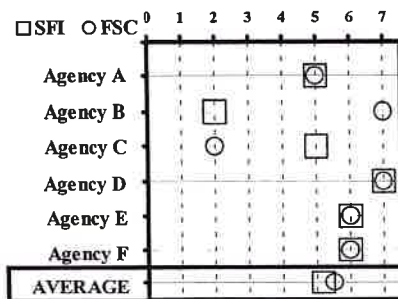
(E127) Would Support Future Audits



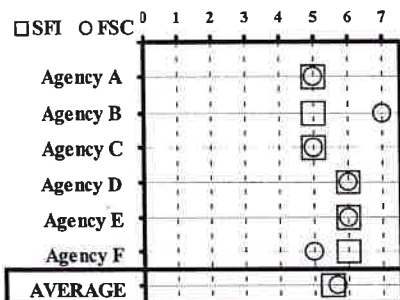
(E128) Worth Paying For



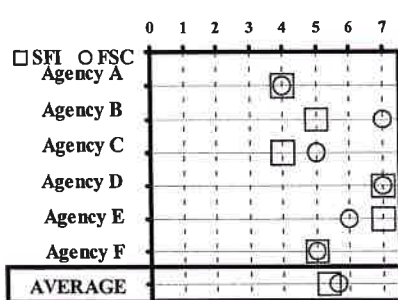
(E129) Leads to Improvements



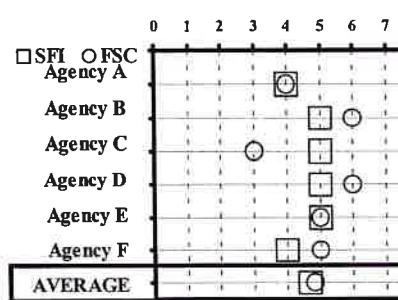
(E130) Input - Prioritizes Needs



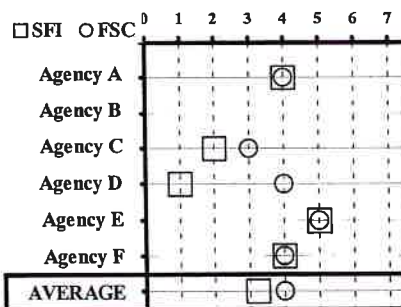
(E131) Encourages Improvement



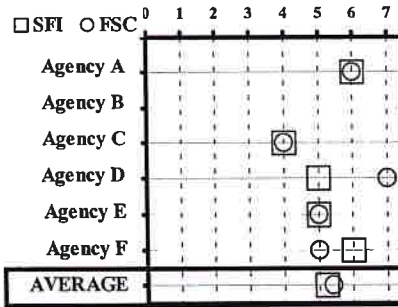
(E132) Increases Public Support



(E133) Label Valuable for Products



(E134) Meaningful Recognition



APPENDIX B

UPDATES IN CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

*This material describes the changes in the programs since the field assessments were completed. Such changes, in the assessment process and the standards that are used, may result in a certification process that is materially different than the assessments that are used for the basis of this comparative evaluation. **Both programs were invited to submit updates on significant changes.***

October 2001

**Summary of Enhancements to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) Program Adopted
by the Sustainable Forestry Board (SFB) at its Meeting on August 17, 2001 for
Implementation Beginning January 1, 2002**

OVERVIEW

“These program enhancements are the result of the most comprehensive and thorough review of the SFISM Standard since the programs’ launch in 1994,” said SFB Chairman Rich Holley, CEO of Plum Creek Timber Company. “The SFI program is a strong and credible standard for sustainable forestry and these changes provide further evidence of the open approach and strong commitment that SFI Program Participants are taking to continually improve the standard -- already among the most rigorous in the world and today the most widely applied forest certification program in North America.”

Drawing from the most comprehensive SFI Program Participant and open public review and comment period in the history of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Standard, the Sustainable Forestry Board has adopted an extensive set of changes to the SFI Standard and associated Verification Procedures. The changes are the culmination of several months of committee and task group work and a 40-day open public comment period. The Board sought comment from all interested parties on every aspect of the SFI Standard – Principles, Objectives, Performance Measures, Core Indicators, and Other Indicators. The SFI Verification Procedures and Qualifications for Verifiers were similarly open for a more technical but no less thorough review.

TYPES OF CHANGES

Program enhancements could be categorized in one of four areas:

- Those yielding greater program specificity and thus a greater degree of measurability;
- Those formalizing original intent or which were implicit but unwritten;
- Structural or programmatic changes that are part of the broader application of the standard and the natural maturing of the program; and
- Editorial changes to enhance program understanding and consistency in application.

OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Since its inception the SFI program was intended as a program that can be adapted to many types of forestry operations. That said, the breadth and depth of the program clearly are more applicable in larger corporate settings than on small non-industrial ownerships. Building on a mutual recognition agreement with the American Tree Farm System® – a standard that specifically designed for smaller non-industrial owners – the program added needed flexibility to ensure that the Standard is appropriately adapted to the scope and scale of the operation. For example, it is common for large integrated companies to use sophisticated Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to aid in resource analysis and planning. Such technology may not be readily available to organizations with just a few employees and little or no land ownership.

PROGRAM REACH OR INTENT

To ensure a common understanding and to further reinforce SFI's intent to "build upon" forestry and environmental laws and regulations, a sixth overarching principle – *legal compliance* – has been added.

Similarly, the SFI program has always encompassed the three prongs of sustainability – environmental protection, social responsibility and economic viability. We continue to believe that the market place is the best judge of economic viability. And, as we have already stated, the explicit focus of the SFI program has been on environmental compatibility of sound forestry operations. Social responsibility has always been a key component of all aspects of the SFI from the programs inception. We have reinforced this commitment by formally addressing social responsibility in the SFIS. These changes speak to the commitment of SFI to set clear and unequivocal measures for SFI Program Participants and for those who look to the Standard as an assurance of quality forest management.

To promote consistency of application across the system, Core Indicators formerly applied only to third-party certifications, are now applicable for all Program Participants.

REVIEW CYCLE

Since its inception in 1994, the SFI program has been opened on an almost annual basis for program changes and enhancements. While such was necessary in the early days of the program, at this stage of maturity and given the expansive reach of the program, annual changes can be highly disruptive to Program Participants trying to implement changes. Thus, with the adoption of these changes the SFB is instituting a planned review cycle that will retain one of the SFI program's foundational commitments to "continual improvement" to build on new scientific information. The next round of reviews and calls for public comment will be in 2004 with the SFB adopting any necessary program enhancements in the fall of 2004 for implementation beginning on January 1, 2005.

SPECIFIC CHANGES

Some of the more recognizable and significant changes are as follows:

SITE PRODUCTIVITY

- Expanded the types of planning and analysis activities to promote not only forest production but also to enhance conservation of critical resources.
- Added provisions to address the use of exotic tree species to avoid unintended environmental impacts.
- Strengthened procedures for use of forest chemicals including provisions to minimize use and ensure application of materials with low ecological impacts.
- Expanded field observational measures to ensure minimization of site impacts on productivity – e.g. rutting and compaction.
- Clarified the intent to minimize road construction so as to keep as much land in productive forests as is practical.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- Enhanced provisions on application of BMPs to protect water quality.
- Required plans to address wet weather harvesting and potential site impacts.
- Greatly expanded commitments to protect non-forested wetlands and to use available natural heritage data to protect known sites of high ecological value.
- Raised training requirements to address threatened and endangered species.

- Expanded provisions to promote wildlife habitat criteria at the forest stand and landscape levels.
- Added new provisions to encourage Program Participants to expand programs to protect critically imperiled sites and species.
- Reinforced SFI's commitment to a sound scientific foundation and the application of new information.
- Broadened training requirements to improve aesthetics of managed forests.

PROCUREMENT

- Among the most significant and far-reaching changes is the requirement for "verifiable" systems to monitor that wood coming from non-owned lands is produced legally and in keeping with BMPs.
- Raised expectations for participation in regional governmental resource assessments.

CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

- Strengthened provisions to ensure program implementation and reporting of progress within Program Participant organizations.

CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

- Instituted a new auditor accreditation program that ensures that all training and professional credentialing requirements are met and that application in the field meets expectations.
- Clarified expectations that audit teams have all necessary professional expertise represented building on the current provision as the only broad forestry standard in the U.S. that *requires* professional foresters on every certification team.
- Institutionalized the current practice of audits being based upon both system- and field-reviews.
- Formalized the practice of interviewing outside parties where appropriate.
- For all program participants planning to use the on-product label, added periodic surveillance audits between recertifications to further enhance program quality and accountability.
- Added a formal appeals and disputes resolution process outside of the current ISO framework that will allow any party to raise claims about Program Participant conformance.

AUDITOR QUALIFICATIONS

- Raised minimum training and experience requirements for certifications to that of Environmental Management Systems Lead Auditor.

APPENDIX C

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The authors of this report sincerely appreciate the insights contributed by the Advisory Committee members throughout this effort. Their guidance and their patience have made this a better process and a better product.

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APPENDIX D

REVERSE ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE



REVERSE EVALUATION TEMPLATE

Pilot Certification Projects on Public Lands

PINCHOT INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION

This questionnaire or “Template” is in three sections, covering separate *parts* of the Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative programs. These are:

(Section I)	Standards ¹	The formal “Principles/Objectives” and “Criteria/Performance Measures”
(Section II)	Assessment Process	The assessment protocols and measures employed by the audit teams
(Section III)	Outcome	The content of the report and associated end-products

The *Reverse Evaluation Template* considers many elements of the above program parts. The template is for use by land managers to evaluate the *Standards, Process, and Outcome* of the certification assessment performed on the lands they manage for their state agency/organization. Most of the elements will be followed by three sets of ratings. Please rate them in the following manner:

First, consider the Relevance and Importance of each element to your agency/organization. The scale of 1 through 5 should be read as follows:

“For your agency/organization, this element of the (Standard/Process/Outcome) was _____”

- 1- Irrelevant and Unimportant
- 2- Somewhat Relevant but Unimportant
- 3- Somewhat Relevant and Somewhat Important
- 4- Relevant and Important
- 5- Extremely Relevant and Extremely Important

Next, separately specify whether these element were true for the FSC and SFI (Standard/Process/Outcome). The scale of 1 through 7 should be read as follows:

“_____ that this was true of the SFI/FSC (Standard/Process/Outcome)

- 1- I Strongly Disagree. . .
- 2- I Disagree. . .
- 3- I Don’t Think (so). . .
- 4- I’m Not Sure. . .
- 5- I Think (so). . .
- 6- I Agree. . .
- 7- I Strongly Agree. . .

Example

Element	Importance & Relevance					Forest Stewardship Council							Sustainable Forestry Initiative						
The standard was developed by German foresters.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In this example the respondent feels that it may be *somewhat relevant* that the “standard was developed by German foresters”, but *unimportant*. The respondent *is not sure* whether this is true about the FSC standard (after all there may have been some Germans involved, but *disagrees* that this is true about the SFI standard (because it was developed by the American Forest and Paper Association). *Hopefully not all the ratings will be this easy.*

(Section I) The Program Standard

In this section please consider only the written standards as provided by each certification program and as presented by the assessment organization. Two later sections will cover how the assessment process was carried out and the subsequent outcome. Many statements will describe elements that may or may not be covered by each program. Please rate:

- How relevant and important it is to your agency (1=irrelevant & unimportant, through 5= extremely relevant and important)
- Whether you feel it was a part of the FSC standard (1=strongly disagree, to 7=strongly agree)
- Whether you felt it was a part of the SFI standard (1=strongly disagree, to 7=strongly agree)

On the back of each sheet is a blank form matching the questions on the front side. Please provide additional explanations where appropriate. Please explain ratings that are especially different between the two systems.

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
(SECTION I) THE PROGRAM STANDARD				
1	• The program's standards are clear.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(A) HOW COMPREHENSIVE IS THE STANDARD?				
2	• Overall, the standard addresses all relevant sustainable forest management issues faced by the state agency/organization.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3	• The programs standards cover an adequate range of: • Ecological and environmental concerns	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4	• Economic concerns	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5	• Social concerns (e.g. community relations and workers' rights)	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7	• Standards cover an appropriate ¹ balance between the economic, environmental, and social concerns.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(1) BIOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS				
8	• Standard encompasses measures for protection of biological resources, by: • Requiring protection of water quality (e.g. buffer zones, minimizing erosion, and incorporating measures for broad-scale watershed protection	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9	• Specifying guidelines protecting rare, threatened, endangered species and their habitats (e.g. nesting and feeding grounds).	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10	• Specifying guidelines for exotic and locally-adapted species.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11	• Specifying guidelines on genetic diversity.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12	• Requiring protection of wildlife habitat (e.g. snags, dens, downed trees, understory species, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13	• Requiring sustainable harvest levels	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

¹ "Appropriateness" as determined by the land manager (i.e. does the balance seem reasonable to you, a public-forestslands manager)

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
14	• Specifying guidelines for regionally appropriate forest composition and structural diversity	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15	• Specifying guidelines for favoring pre-established natural regeneration of desirable species	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16	• Specifying guidelines and limitations on forest conversion and plantation management.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17	• Requiring identification and establishment of protected areas containing unique flora and fauna.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18	• Addressing harvest utilization (e.g. high stumps).	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19	• Addressing residual site damage.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20	• Specifying guidelines and restrictions on the application of pesticides and herbicides in: o <i>Timber management areas</i>	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22	o <i>Buffers</i>	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23	o <i>Non-target areas</i>	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) SOCIOECONOMIC CONCERNS				
24	• Standard requires the agency/organization to <i>promote</i> sustainable forestry with: • Forest management staff	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25	• Contractors	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26	• Neighboring landowners	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27	• Forestry community	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28	• Public at large	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29	• Standard requires that the agency/organization provide opportunities for the public to: • Provide input on certification	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30	• Raise concerns with poor forest management practices	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
31	• Advocate other forest-management objectives (e.g. recreation)	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
32	• Standard clearly specifies the responsibility of the agency/organization to: • Identify and protect areas of cultural or historical importance.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
33	• Generate economic opportunities for local communities	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
34	• Manage for non-timber values (e.g. recreation).	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
35	• Protect legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
36	• Maintain and demonstrate long-term forest-use rights for land and resources.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(B) HOW APPROPRIATE IS THE STANDARD?				
(1) RELEVANT				
37	• Standard is easily applied to the local /regional context	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
38	• When adapted to the local/regional context, the standard: • Accommodates additional measures that strengthen the assessment	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
39	• Limits subjective interpretation that weakens its rigor or intent	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
40	• Accommodates unique forest management objectives where appropriate (e.g.. research areas).	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) EFFECTIVE				
41	• Standard requires improvement of management practices over time.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
42	• Standard required that relevant personnel are: • Informed of their responsibilities	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
43	• Adequately trained.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
44	• Regularly assessed.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
(3) SATISFIES CONSTITUENCY				
43	Standard requires opportunities for interest groups to participate and be informed of the commitment of the agency/organization to sustainable forestry.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
46	- The standard/certification program is <i>regarded</i>² as credible by: - Timber Industry	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
47	Forest Landowners	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
48	Legislators	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
49	Scientific Community	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
50	Public at Large	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
51	Environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS):	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

² Please interpret how certification is perceived by these stakeholders, based on prior experience, and responses from the public received to date. The answers to these elements will be used not to assess the credibility of the systems, but to better understand the benefits of certification as perceived by the agency.

(Section II) The Assessment Process

In this section please consider only the assessment process as carried out by the assessment organizations. Many statements will describe steps/measures that may or may not be part of the assessment required by each program. Please rate:

- How relevant and important it is to your agency (1=irrelevant & unimportant, through 5= extremely relevant and important)
- Whether you feel it was a part of the FSC process (1=strongly disagree, to 7=strongly agree)
- Whether you felt it was a part of the SFI process (1=strongly disagree, to 7=strongly agree)

On the back of each sheet is a blank form matching the questions on the front side. Please provide additional explanations where appropriate. Please explain ratings that are especially different between the two systems.

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
(SECTION II) THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS				
52	• I knew what the standards would be at the outset of the process.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(A) HOW DID THE PREPARATION PROCESS PROCEED?				
(1) COORDINATION & INVOLVEMENT				
53	• Initial meeting(s) informed managers of the requirements of the assessment process (e.g. timeline, personnel time, etc.).	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
54	• Both the lead assessor and the agency/organization agreed on the indicators that would be used for assessment	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
55	• The comprehensive assessment plan that guides the process was accepted by the agency/organization.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
56	• Assessors adequately notified the agency/organization about changes in the assessment plan.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
57	• The chosen assessment team members were acceptable.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) TRANSPARENCY & CONFIDENTIALITY				
58	• The assessment process (e.g. timetables and responsibilities) was clear and understandable.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
59	• Assessors maintained appropriate confidentiality of information and documents, by:	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
60	• Adhering to agreed timing and content of public announcements.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
61	• Observing agreed discretionary role of the agency/organization for circulating documents, drafts, and final report.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(3) TEAM QUALITY & OBJECTIVITY				
62	• Overall, members of the assessment team were of high caliber and are well respected in the state's forestry community.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
63	• Assessment team members communicated effectively.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
64	● Assessors conducted themselves in a professional and ethical manner.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
65	● Each team member had necessary education, formal and on-the-job training, and experience.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
66	● Lead assessor had a certificate indicating successful completion of a lead assessors training course and is accredited by a national standards or accreditation body.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
67	● Assessment team had sufficient expertise to evaluate:	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
	● Silvicultural aspects of forest management.			
68	● Biological and ecological issues in forest management.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
69	● Economic aspects of timber management.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
70	● Social aspects of public forestland management.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
71	● Overall, the assessment team's expertise was suitable for the specific environmental issues faced by the agency/organization.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
72	● Assessors did not have a conflict of interest with the agency/organization (i.e. the assessment team was totally independent of the agency/organization being audited).	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(B) HOW WAS THE FIELD ASSESSMENT PERFORMED?				
(1) COMPREHENSIVENESS				
73	● The assessors evaluated conformance with the standard by:	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
	● Determining the existence of internal plans and documentation.			
74	● Collecting field evidence.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
75	● Interviewing knowledgeable personnel.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
76	● Reviewing monitoring or compliance records.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
77	● Pursuing independent investigation.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
78	Overall the assessors considered sufficient information to understand the economic decisions affecting forest management.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
79	- Assessors reviewed an adequate scope of documentation and field management operations to determine if the agency/organization is: - Defining clear management objectives	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
80	Identifying and monitoring species of concern.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
81	Protecting water bodies and riparian areas.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
82	- Maintaining regionally important wildlife habitat diversity: - Across the landscape (e.g. age classes and forest types) - At the stand-level (e.g. snags, dens, downed trees, understory species, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
83	Identifying and establishing protected areas.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
84	Managing for regionally appropriate diversity in forest composition and structure.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
85	Minimizing impacts to visually sensitive areas.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
86	- Ensuring timber sustainability by: - Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date inventory. - Monitoring growth and yield.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
87	Minimizing residual site damage.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
88	Requiring efficient forest product utilization.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
89	Making sound economic decisions over the long-term.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
90	Considering and incorporating public input in forest management decisions.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
93	- Assessors consulted an adequate range of stakeholders to determine if the agency/organization is: - Providing opportunities for the public to voice concerns over forest management.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
94	Respecting indigenous land rights/claims within or adjacent to holdings.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
95	Providing economic benefits to communities near forest holdings.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) ACCURACY				
96	All assessments, analyses, or evidence provided by the agency/organization were independently reviewed for accuracy and consistency.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
97	Documentation and field-based evidence independently collected by the assessors was accurate.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
98	Evaluations and analyses developed through interviews or consultation with stakeholder groups was accurate.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(3) ORGANIZATION & EFFICIENCY				
99	Prior to the audit, the lead assessor determined whether sufficient documentation and evidence exists to initiate the audit, and notifies the agency/organization of its determination.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
100	- The audit was conducted in an efficient and effective manner, by: - Effectively utilizing agency/organization personnel time	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
101	Visiting a representative range of timber management operations	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
102	Providing timely and explicit notification of necessary documentation	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(C) HOW DID THE REPORTING PROCESS PROCEED?				
(1) REPORT RELEASE				
103	Assessor provided a draft report to the agency/organization in the agreed manner (i.e. timing and content).	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
104	- Assessor provided a final report to the agency/organization: - By the agreed deadline.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
105	Containing the full scope of factual findings and analyses.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
106	Demonstrating careful consideration of amendments to the draft	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
	(2) DISPUTE RESOLUTION			
107	Overall the agency/organization had an opportunity effectively to respond to issues and concerns raised in the assessment.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
108	- The assessment team administrator attempted to resolve any dispute of fact/interpretation, by: - Holding a closing meeting to present and discuss audit findings.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
109	Allowing the agency/organization to raise its own issues and concerns about the assessment process.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
110	Carefully considering issues that are raised and incorporating revisions where appropriate.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
111	The lead assessor and agency/organization came to consensus on all substantive issues.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
	(3) CLARITY OF REPORTING FORMAT/PROCESS			
112	The final report reflected the scope and extent of the assessment that was agreed to in the planning meetings.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
113	- The final report clearly presented: - Findings from review of documentation and independently collected data.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
114	Findings from consultations with stakeholders.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
115	Findings of non-conformance, recommendations, conditions, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
116	Agency/organization and auditing organization worked together to prepare an audit summary for public disclosure.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(Section III) The Assessment Outcome

In this section please consider only the assessment outcome as presented by the assessment organizations. Many statements will describe elements that may or may not be part of the deliverables/report required by each program.

Please rate:

- How relevant and important it is to your agency (1=irrelevant & unimportant, through 5= extremely relevant and important)**
- Whether you feel it was a part of the FSC outcome (1=strongly disagree, to 7=strongly agree)**
- Whether you felt it was a part of the SFI outcome (1=strongly disagree, to 7=strongly agree)**

On the back of each sheet is a blank form matching the questions on the front side. Please provide additional explanations where appropriate. Please explain ratings that are especially different between the two systems.

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
(SECTION III) OUTCOME				
(A) WAS THE OUTCOME OF THE ASSESSMENT VALID?				
(1) OBJECTIVITY & ACCURACY				
117	Overall, the findings and conclusions were based upon sufficient evidence demonstrating whether the requirements of the standards are achieved.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
118	- The assessors used sufficient and accurate evidence to support their conclusions on: - Silvicultural concerns	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
119	Ecological and biological concerns.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
120	Economic concerns	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
121	Social concerns	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) CREDIBILITY				
122	Overall, your agency feels that the audit process was credible and defensible.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
123	A peer review process enhanced the credibility of the assessment.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
124	- The assessment results will be regarded³ as credible by the: - Timber Industry	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
125	Legislators	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
126	Scientific Community	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
127	Public at Large	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
128	Environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS):	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

³ Please rate how credible the actual assessment might appear to each of these categories of stakeholder, based on prior interactions with them over forest management issues, and feedback resulting from the assessment. For this element we are interested in how the agency feels the actual assessment process will be regarded once fully publicized.

#	ELEMENT	Relevance & Importance	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
129	• Forest Landowners	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(B) WAS THE ASSESSMENT VALUABLE?				
130	• Based on this experience, agency/organization would pay for this certification assessment in the future.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
131	• If recommended for certification, the agency will pay for annual audits/ and re-certification according to the re-audit schedule.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(1) PROSCRIBES CLEAR PROCESS FOR IMPROVEMENT				
132	• The assessment team's recommendations will result in immediate and concrete improvements in forest management practices.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
133	• The assessment process helped the agency/organization to prioritize attention to important ecological/environmental, economic or social concerns	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
134	• The audit process will result in continual improvement of the agency/organization's forest management practices over the long term.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) OFFERS PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF PERFORMANCE				
135	• The assessment process will help increase public support for the forest management activities of the agency/organization.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
136	• The certification program offers a valuable means to label state forest products in the marketplace.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
137	• If merited, the formal certificate issued by the auditing organization provided meaningful recognition of the agency/organization's performance.	1 2 3 4 5	FSC 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	SFI 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

