

Voting Procedure for the Election of a Multistakeholders Working Group

First published by
World Bank/WWF Alliance

Author
Pierre Hauselmann



a series of instruments to support and empower multistakeholder working groups in developing forest certification standards

Prepared and produced by



22 Av. des Cerisiers
CH 1009 Pully
Switzerland
www.piec.org

The WWF and IKEA Co-operation on Forest Projects
A Partnership to promote responsible forestry

Keywords:

Decision and ground rules, FSC requirements, Initiating a national working group, participation, Stakeholder and stakeholder assessment

Links with other Instruments in the Pathfinder:

Consensus Building/Conflict Resolution toolkit, Certification for the people, Initiating a national working group, Standards in the FSC system

Disclaimer and acknowledgements:

The content of this instrument is the sole responsibility of its authors and does not imply official endorsement by the other organizations that have participated in the Pathfinder project..


This instrument is placed in the PathFinder with the kind authorisation of the World Bank/WWF Alliance. It was developed for the Multistakeholder Working Group Toolkit (www.piec.org/mswg_toolkit).

Copyrights

NWG election procedures: © 2002 World Bank/WWF Alliance

Cover picture: © WWF-Canon / Kevin Schafer





Voting procedure for the election of a Multistakeholders Working Group

1. Introduction

This tool is the explanation on the use of the Excel spreadsheet used to count votes (Annex 1 - 3 chamber system and Annex 2 - 4 chamber system).

This tool is to be used for the election of a national/ regional working group, according to FSC requirements. Its application supposes that preliminary work has led a group of stakeholders together in an Assembly, with the purpose of establishing such a working group. Other tools are available to guide to this stage.

2. Distribution into different chambers

Distribute participants in as many chambers as the WG will have. The usual number for FSC is 3, but 4 are possible if local circumstances require it (e.g. for government or indigenous group representatives). In a typical founding meeting, a first part is attributed to presentation and discussions on certification, the role and duties of WG and their members, the chamber system, etc. At that stage, a confirmation of the wish to establish a WG should be obtained from the assembly. If this confirmation is obtained, participants should distribute themselves into the different chamber. A deadline after which modifications / new voting participants will not be accepted needs to be set. This is important because it is based on the number of individual within each chamber of the assembly that the individual weighting power of each individual will be calculated. See below for the rationale for the chamber system and the weighted power of individuals.

Criteria for the environmental chamber: environmental organisation representatives or individuals active in carry out environmental activities.

Criteria for the social chamber: social organisation representatives, such as unions, development aid and villagers organisations, indigenous people groups, etc.

Criteria for the economic chamber: representatives from timber trade unions, consultants, certification bodies, etc. In general, those who have a financial interest in the forest product trade.

Criteria for a fourth chamber: local conditions do not allow incorporating all stakeholder groups within the 3 chambers mentioned above.

The distribution of individuals into the different chambers should not be contested by any participant in the Assembly. In case of disagreement, all effort to resolve it shall be undertaken.

3. Decision making power of each chamber

To avoid that an interest group can dominate the others in the process, each chamber has to have the same voting power, independently of the number of members of this chamber. This means that in a situation with 3 chambers, each will have 33.3% of the total voting power. In a case where a 4 chambers system is chosen (e.g. Madagascar, Canada or Belgium), each chamber has a total voting power of 25%. The voting power of each chamber is then divided into the number of members of this chamber.

For example (see also the spreadsheet tab "Example"):

60 people participate in the founding assembly, as follow

Environmental chamber:	15
Social chamber:	10
Economic chamber:	20
Government chamber:	15

Each chamber has a total voting power of 25%

Each individual will have the following voting power:

Within the environmental chamber:	$25\% : 15 = 1.7\%$
Within the social chamber:	$25\% : 10 = 2.5\%$
Within the economic chamber:	$25\% : 20 = 1.3\%$
Within the governmental chamber:	$25\% : 15 = 1.7\%$

5. Working group election

The number of working group members must take both the required number of chambers and the number of regions to represent into account. Each chamber should have an equal number of members of representatives within the WG. In addition, the number of WG members should be kept sufficiently low to allow an efficient work. Although there are no rule on the matter, 15 to 16 members seem an operational maximum.

To elect WG members, chamber specific voting forms need to be distributed, so that the individual weighting power can be easily applied. If the number of participants by chamber (tab "Assembly") and the name of the candidates (tab "Candidates") have been entered into the spreadsheet, forms will be automatically produced (tabs "Forms - env./soc./econ." & tab "Form- 4th" if relevant"). These need to be printed in as many copies as there are representatives of each chamber within the Assembly.

Each voting participant in the Assembly will get one bulletin and will fill it so as to represent her / his ideal working group, respecting the chamber system (i.e. the number

of chambers and the number of member of each chamber). In addition additional specific requirement (e.g. further distribution by region) will need to be respected. For example, if the WG has to have 16 members distributed into 4 chambers, with representatives from 4 regions, each voting participant will have to vote for one name by region and by chamber.

Ballots are counted and weighted according to the individual voting power of each. The example in the spreadsheet illustrates this.

6. Alternative method

Representatives of each region agree to present only one candidate per chamber, which implies that a consensus within the region has to be found. If such a consensus is quickly reached, this can simplify the procedure, because the election will be tacit, but if such is not the case, the method described above will need to be implemented.

7. The spreadsheet model to count ballots

There are two spreadsheet models: one for cases with 3 chambers, one for cases with 4 chambers. Each spreadsheet (or workbook according to Excel terminology) has several tabs, which have the following functions.

The "Assembly" tab allows entering the number of the Assembly participants, under each chamber.

The "Candidates" tab allows the introduction of the candidate names, the region where they come from, if relevant, and their gender. The two latter elements will ease the election of a balanced group.

The "Forms - env.", "Forms - soc.", etc tabs. are used to print voting forms. It is important not to distribute more bulletins by chamber than the numbers introduced in the spreadsheet, since this will invalidate the individual weighting power. To avoid confusion, it is strongly recommended not to print more voting forms than the identified number of member by chamber.

The "Election" tab is used to count ballots and identify elected working group members. The name and chamber of candidates are automatically filled when the two first tabs were filled. The number of votes for each candidate is entered in the white area of the spreadsheet, under each chamber (hence the use of differentiating voting forms from each chamber). The total number of vote per candidate is calculated automatically (in the blue area), and so are the weighted totals (yellow area). Those who have the grates weighted totals within a chamber are elected, up to the number of members previously decided per chamber.

The "Example" tab is used to illustrate the voting procedure and the effect of the weighting system. It is possible to change data from this spreadsheet without influencing the real data if already entered. It is thus a useful tool to explain and simulate different situations.