



Forest Stewardship Council®



Approval of Forest Stewardship Standards


FSC-PRO-10-606 V2-0 EN


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Contact for comments: FSC International Center
- Policy and Standards Unit -
Charles-de-Gaulle-Str. 5
53113 Bonn
Germany

 +49-(0)228-36766-0

 +49-(0)228-36766-30

 policy.standards@fsc.org

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APPROVAL OF FOREST STEWARDSHIP STANDARDS

FSC-PRO-10-606 V2-0 EN

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organization established to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC's vision is that the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.

Contents

| | |
|---------|--|
| A | Scope |
| B | Effective date |
| C | References |
| D | Terms and definitions |
| | |
| 1 | General Principles |
| 2 | The Approval Process |
| 3 | Preliminary decision making |
| 4 | Finalizing the decision and communication |
| | |
| Annex 1 | Policy and Standards Committee decision form |
| Annex 2 | PSU Recommendation Note Template |

A Objective

The objective of this document is to provide a procedure for the FSC Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) to ensure a consistent decision making process for the approval of Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS). These include:

- National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS)
- Interim National Standards (INS)
- Interim Regional Standards (IRS)
- Regional Forest Stewardship Standards (RFS)
- Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) Standards

NOTE: This is a PSC and Policy and Standards Unit (PSU) internal standard operating procedure. It is therefore not subject to the rules and regulations outlined in FSC-PRO-01-001, the procedure for the development and revision of FSC normative documents.

B Scope

This procedure is based on the FSC Board of Directors - Standards Committee: Terms of Reference (approved in May 2005) and is binding for FSC staff as well as for members of the PSC and the FSC Board of Directors.

The procedure is publicly available to provide guidance to interested parties including Standard Development Groups (SDG) and Certification Bodies (CBs).

C Normative dates

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Approval date | 06 July 2017 |
| Publication date | 25 July 2017 |
| Effective date | 06 July 2017 |
| Period of validity | until replaced or withdrawn |

D References

The following referenced documents are relevant for the application of this document. For references without a version number, the latest version of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria

FSC-STD-01-002 FSC glossary of terms

FSC-STD-60-002 Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards

FSC-STD-60-006 Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards

FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0 EN International Generic Indicators

FSC-PRO-60-006 V2-0 EN Development and Transfer of National Forest Stewardship Standards to the FSC Principles and Criteria Version 5-1

FSC-PRO-60-007 V1-0 EN Structure, Content and Development of Interim National Standards

FSC-PRO-01-005 (V3-0) EN Processing Appeals

FSC-GUI-60-002 V1-0 EN Guideline for Standard Developers for addressing risk of unacceptable activities in regard to scale and intensity

PSU Standards Evaluation Checklists (internal)

E Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this procedure, the terms and definitions given in *FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms* and the following apply:

Criterion (pl. criteria)

A means of judging whether or not a Principle (of forest stewardship) has been fulfilled (Source: FSC-STD-01-001).

FSC Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS)

The FSC Principles and Criteria together with the addition of indicators that are adapted to regional (trans-national, supra-national), national and/or sub-national conditions in order to be implemented at the forest management unit (FMU) level constitute an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard.

FSC Principles and Criteria for forest stewardship (P&C)

The 10 Principles and associated Criteria specified in the FSC document 'FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship' (Source: FSC-STD-01-001).

Indicators

A quantitative or qualitative variable which can be measured or described, and which provides a means of judging whether a management unit complies with the requirements of an FSC Criterion. Indicators and the associated thresholds thereby define the requirements for responsible forest management at the level of the management unit and are the primary basis of forest evaluation (Source: FSC-STD-01-002).

Interim National Standards (INS)

The FSC Principles and Criteria together with the International Generic Indicators (IGI) that are adopted or adapted to the national conditions by a Technical Working Group (TWG), composed mainly of FSC accredited Certification Bodies (CBs). It specifies the requirements with which The Organization must conform to in order to obtain FSC certification in countries that do not have National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS).

Interim Regional Standards (IRS)

The FSC Principles and Criteria together with the IGI that are adopted or adapted to a group of countries, or in some parts of a country, by a TWG composed mainly of FSC accredited CBs. It specifies the requirements with which The Organization must conform to in order to obtain FSC certification in countries that do not have NFSS for a specified region.

International Generic indicators (IGIs)

An indicator designed to be applicable in any country or region for judging whether a management unit complies with the requirements of an FSC Criterion. IGIs are adopted, adapted or dropped with justification when developing Forest Stewardship Standards (Source: FSC-STD-60-004).

National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS)

The FSC Principles and Criteria together with associated indicators that are adapted to national conditions by an FSC registered Standards Development Group (SDG). It specifies the requirements with which The Organization must conform to in order to obtain FSC certification.

Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) standards

The FSC Principles and Criteria together with associated indicators that are adapted to national conditions by either an FSC registered SDG or TWG. It specifies the requirements with which The Organization must conform to in order to obtain FSC certification of NTFPs.

Principle

An essential rule or element; in FSC's case, of forest stewardship (Source: FSC-STD-01-001).

Regional Forest Stewardship Standards (RFSS)

The FSC Principles and Criteria together with associated indicators that are adapted to regional conditions by an FSC registered SDG. It specifies the requirements with which The Organization must conform to in order to obtain FSC certification.

Standards Development Group (SDG)

The body formally recognized by FSC to develop trans-national, supra-national, national and/or sub-national standards in its specified territory in accordance with FSC requirements. The Standards Development Group is not required to be an independent legal entity. It may be a committee or working group established for the purpose of standards development either as a function within a National Office or separate from it. It may be a separate organization contracted by the FSC National Office, FSC Regional Office or FSC Policy and Standards Unit to carry out standards development on its behalf (Source: FSC-STD-60-006).

Technical Working Group (TWG)

In this document, Technical Working Group is defined as a temporary body registered by the PSU for the development of an INS or IRS, consisting of at least one representative from each FSC-accredited certification body conducting, or aiming to conduct, FM/COC or CW/FM assessments in the country or region.

Verbal forms for the expression of provisions

[Adapted from ISO/IEC Directives Part 2: Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards]

“*shall*”: indicates requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform to the standard.

“*should*”: indicates that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required. A certification body can meet these requirements in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated and justified.

“*may*”: indicates a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.

“*can*”: is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or causal.

F Abbreviations used

FSC Forest Stewardship Council

FSS Forest Stewardship Standard

IGI International Generic Indicator

INS Interim National Standard

IRS Interim Regional Standard

NFSS National Forest Stewardship Standard

NO National Office

NTFP Non-timber forest product

PSC Policy and Standards Committee

PSU Policy and Standards Unit (at FSC International)

RFSS Regional Forest Stewardship Standards

SIR Scale, intensity and risk

SDG Standard Development Group (chamber balanced)

STD Standard

TWG Technical Working Group (no need to be chamber balanced)

1 General Principles

- 1.1 Formal decision making authority in relation to approval of FSC Forest Stewardship Standards rests with the FSC Board of Directors. The FSC Board of Directors may delegate its powers to a formal committee charged with this duty, subject to oversight by the FSC Board of Directors.
- 1.2 The FSC Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) has been delegated by the FSC Board of Directors to approve Forest Stewardship Standards.
- 1.3 The FSC Policy and Standards Unit (PSU) acts as the Secretariat to the PSC and shall prepare a Recommendation Note for each Forest Stewardship Standards that is submitted by an FSC National Office, registered Standards Development Group (SDG) or registered Technical Working Group (TWG-the development of INS or IRS) for formal decision. The PSU Recommendation Note should not be more than twelve (12) pages and shall include:
 - A decision request cover sheet with a list and explanation of all documents and materials associated with the standard;
 - A recommendation by the Policy and Standards Director that all FSC procedures and rules relevant to the development and endorsement of a Forest Stewardship Standard have been followed and that the Standard is ready for PSC consideration and decision;
 - Recommendations about any major issues with the Standard that should be evaluated by the PSC, including major issues resolved between the SDG and PSU that require PSC consideration, and any issues not resolved between SDG and PSU;
 - Recommendations about approval by the PSC, including recommendations about any potential conditions on approval that the PSC should consider;
 - A brief outline of the forest sector and forest conditions in the country;
 - A summarized description of the standard development process applied by the SDG together with PSU's evaluation of the SDG process and conclusions on compliance with FSC requirements;
 - A summarized description of the content of the standard together with PSU's evaluation of the contents and conclusions on compliance with FSC requirements;
 - Identification of the numbers of International Generic Indicators (IGI) that have been adopted, adapted, or dropped and the number of new Indicators that have been added;
 - A summary of the comments and issues identified by external reviewers; and,
 - Any other key information deemed relevant by PSU for decision-making by the PSC.
- 1.4 Together with the Recommendation Note, PSU shall submit the following Key Documents to the PSC:
 - A copy of the Forest Stewardship Standards that has been submitted for formal approval;
 - The PSU detailed evaluation of the Standard and a summary of the interactions between PSU and SDG and final conclusions by the PSU on any outstanding process or content matters raised by the PSU;
 - A Transfer Matrix showing all Indicators in the Standard, the consistency of these Indicators with the IGI, and any PSU or external reviewer comments;
 - A draft of the PSC Forest Stewardship Standards Decision Form for

- PSC consideration and decision;
 - Third party evaluations of the NFSS; and,
 - Any other documents of significance.
- 1.5 In addition to the Recommendation Note and the Key Documents, PSU may provide additional Supplemental Documents. These documents may vary by country but could include, for example:
- Membership of the SDG;
 - Stakeholder consultation process;
 - Details of public meetings; and,
 - Any other supplemental information deemed potentially useful for the PSC.
- 1.6 All related information (PSU checklists with analysis of process and content) shall be available to the PSC through the PSC Intranet and on request.
- 1.7 The PSU shall only submit a Forest Stewardship Standard to the PSC if in its evaluation it believes all relevant requirements have been met and it deems the standard ready for consideration by the PSC, and ready for approval or conditional approval.

2 The Approval Process

- 2.1 The PSU Policy Manager for Forest Stewardship Standards (the Manager) shall, at least five (5) weeks prior to a scheduled PSC meeting, submit the Recommendation Note on the standard (the PSC version as per Clause 1.3 above) to the PSC, and email the PSC members to advise that all documents related to a NFSS are posted on the PSC intranet site and invite questions and requests for additional information.
- 2.2 Prior to the PSC meeting scheduled to consider the decision on the standard the Manager shall have responded to any comments, queries and additional information requests with the aim of addressing these prior to the meeting.
- 2.3 The Manager shall collate and keep records of these communications on issues raised in relation to the standard and the response of the PSU, in order to annex them to the decision form and minutes.

3 Decision making

- 3.1 At the scheduled PSC meeting that has quorum (at least 4 of 6 members present and one from each chamber) the PSC may make a decision on a Forest Stewardship Standard following consideration of the Recommendation Note, PSU Evaluation and any additional information provided by PSU and any recommendations provided by PSU relating to the standard.
- 3.2 The Chairperson of the PSC shall structure and facilitate discussion on the submitted Forest Stewardship Standard and PSU documents and, with approval of PSC members, shall record and sign the decision reached in consensus by the members of the PSC.
- 3.3 The PSC shall normally seek to make a decision on a standard at the first scheduled meeting following submission to the PSC, or in exceptional circumstances shall make a decision within a maximum of three scheduled meetings that have quorum.
- 3.4 PSC decisions shall be made by consensus.

- 3.5 The PSC shall either:
- a) Approve the submitted Forest Stewardship Standard as a FSC Forest Stewardship Standard; or
 - b) Approve the submitted Forest Stewardship Standard as an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard, upon completion of conditions;
 - c) Return the submitted standard to the SDG for additional work prior to re-submission for approval; or
 - d) In situations where the PSC is unable to reach a consensus decision on approval or approval with conditions, the PSC shall defer the decision making process to the Board of Directors. The PSC shall request that the Board of Directors either:
 - provide direction to the PSC on how to address specific issues identified by the PSC and, with Board guidance, allow the PSC to continue deliberation on the Standard; or,
 - take over responsibility for decision making on the Standard from the PSC.
- 3.6 If the PSC is not in consensus and defers the decision-making process to the Board of Directors, it shall state the reasons for this decision as per normal PSC procedures, and may suggest what steps it considers necessary in order to address its concerns.
- 3.7 If the PSC has taken a positive decision to approve the standard as submitted, the Standard is formally considered approved. This decision does not require further ratification by the FSC Board of Directors.
- 3.8 If the PSC has taken a positive decision to approve a standard with conditions, the PSC may delegate authority to determine when those conditions have been met by the SDG and the authority to approve the standard to the Policy and Standards Director. The PSC may also delegate the authority to the Policy and Standards Director to allow the partial meeting of a condition and to approve the standard in those circumstances where the SDG has demonstrated that it has made every effort to meet the condition and has provided satisfactory justification to the Director as to why the condition could not be fully met. These decisions do not require further ratification by the PSC or by the FSC Board of Directors.
- 3.9 If the Standard receives approval as an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard, the Manager shall inform the applicant of the approval, or the approval with conditions, and shall initiate the next steps according to FSC-STD-60-006.
- 3.10 If a standard submitted by an SDG does not receive approval by the PSC, the PSC shall provide reasons for the decision. The Manager shall inform the applicant of the rejection by the PSC and the reasons.

4 Review of a PSC Decision with respect to a Forest Stewardship Standard

- 4.1 Upon receiving notice of a decision by the PSC to return a Standard to an SDG for further work, or of conditions imposed by the PSC on approval of a Standard, the SDG may file a request with the PSC Chair that the PSC review its decision. The SDG shall provide reasons for the request for review.
- 4.2 The PSC Chair shall immediately establish a subgroup of the PSC to address the issues raised by the SDG and to make a recommendation to the full PSC.
- 4.3 Upon receiving a request for a review from an SDG, the PSC shall complete review of the decision within ninety (90) days.
- 4.4 Upon receiving a decision from the PSC, based on its review, the SDG may use the FSC Appeals Process, FSC-PRO-01-005 (V3-0) EN.

Annex 1

**REGIONAL AND NATIONAL FOREST STEWARDSHIP STANDARDS
DECISION FORM**

1. General information

| | |
|---|--|
| 1.1 Applicant Body (NO/ SDG) | |
| 1.2 Document title | |
| 1.3 Document number | |
| 1.4 Date of submission by NO / SDG | |
| 1.5 Author of the PSU evaluation report | |
| 1.6 Date of the PSU evaluation report | |
| 1.7 Date of submission to the PSC | |
| 1.8 Name of the Chairperson of the PSC | |

2. Decision

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 2.1 Recommended decision by the PSC | |
| Date: | Signed (PSC Chair) |

3. Annexes: Record of Communications on the Standard

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Annex 2

PSU RECOMMENDATION NOTE TEMPLATE

A brief outline of the forest sector and forest conditions in the country.

A summarized description of the standard development process.

PSU evaluation of the process and conclusions on compliance with FSC requirements.

A summarized description of the standard content.

PSU evaluation of the content and conclusions on compliance with FSC requirements.

Evaluation of use of International Generic Indicators (IGIs) as starting point.

External reviewers' note

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Issues identified from evaluation to be evaluated by PSC

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Additional note deemed relevant for PSC decision if any

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Annexes: Record of communication on the standard

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Recommendation Note by the Policy and Standards Director.

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Forest Stewardship Council®

ic.fsc.org

FSC International Center GmbH
Charles-de-Gaulle-Straße 5 · 53113 Bonn · Germany

