



Forest Stewardship Council®



Approval of Interim National Standards (INS) and low complex National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS)

FSC-PRO-10-607 V1-0 EN



Title	Approval of Interim National Standards (INS) and low complex National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS)
Document reference code	FSC-PRO-10-607 V1-0 EN
Scope	Internal, publicly available
Approval date and body	January 2021 by the Policy Steering Group
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FSC's vision is that the true value of forests is recognized and fully incorporated into society worldwide. FSC is the leading catalyst and defining force for improved forest management and market transformation, shifting the global forest trend toward sustainable use, conservation, restoration, and respect for all.

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Introduction

At its 82nd meeting in Germany in November 2019, the FSC Board of Directors agreed to delegate the decision-making authority over Interim National Standards (INS), including Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) INS, and low complex National Forest Stewardships Standards (NFSS) to the Policy Steering Group (PSG) at the FSC Secretariat.

This decision was made based on INS development restricting adding or dropping of indicators, as stipulated by FSC-PRO-60-007 *Structure, Content and Development of Interim National Standards*. Additionally, the Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) was mandated to develop criteria for identifying low complex NFSS in consultation with the Policy and Steering Committee (PSC), the Forest Network Core Group and PSU Regional Managers.

A Objective

The objective of this document is to ensure a consistent and high-quality process for the assessment and decision making of Interim National Standards (INS) and low complex National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS).

The addendum of this document describes the criteria for identifying low complex NFSS.

B Scope

The scope of this document is the assessment and approval of:

- Interim National Standards (INS), including Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) INS, developed following the procedure FSC-PRO-60-007 *Structure, Content and Development of Interim National Standards* and,
- Low complex National Forest Stewardships Standards (NFSS), developed according FSC-STD-60-006 *Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards*.

C Effective and validity dates

Approval date	12 January 2021
Publication date	09 March 2021
Effective date	as approval date
Period of validity	until replaced or withdrawn

D References

The following references are relevant for development and approval of the INS and low complex NFSS. Any latest version of reference documents (including any amendments) applies.

- *FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship*
- *FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms*
- *FSC-STD-60-004 International Generic Indicators*
- *FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF Eligibility Criteria*
- *FSC-PRO-60-007 Structure, Content and Development of Interim National Standards*
- *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-PRO-60-006 Development and Transfer of National Forest Stewardship Standards to the FSC Principles and Criteria*
- *FSC-GUI-60-002 Guideline for Standard Developers for addressing risk of unacceptable activities in regard to scale and intensity*
- *FSC-GUI-60-005 Promoting Gender Equality in National Forest Stewardship Standards*

E Terms and definitions

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

Forest Stewardship Standards (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. (Source: FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2)

Note: The standard may have a national or regional scope. It specifies the requirements which The Organization must conform with in order to obtain FSC FM certification and have a national or a regional scope. In some instances where an FSS does not include NTFPs in the scope, SDGs may develop a set of NTFPs indicators independently of the FSS development process and submit them for approval.

Interim National Standard (INS): The FSC Principles and Criteria together with the International Generic Indicators (IGI) that are adopted or adapted to the national conditions by a TWG. It specifies the requirements with which The Organization must conform in order to obtain FSC certification in countries that are lacking NFSS. (Source: FSC-PRO-60-007).

Note: The standard may have a national or regional scope. In some instances where an FSS does not include NTFPs in the scope, TWGs or CBs may develop a set of NTFPs indicators independently of the INS development process and submit them for approval.

Low complex NFSS: National FSS that implies low complexity according to the criteria listed in the addendum of this procedure.

National Standard: For the purpose of this document, the term National Standard refers to INS and low complex NFSS.

Policy Steering Group (PSG): Steering committee with a fixed composition of FSC senior management team members established to govern policy development and revision processes in accordance with FSC-PRO-01-001 *Development and revision of FSC normative documents*.

The FSC International Board of Directors delegated the decision making on Interim National Standards and lower complexity National Forest Stewardship Standards to the PSG, at Board Meeting 82.

Standard Developer: For the purpose of this document, the term Standard Developer refers to Technical Working Groups (TWG) or certification bodies (CBs) developing INS and Standard Development Groups (SDGs) developing NFSS.

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.

PART I. Assessment

1. Assignment of PSU reviewer

- 1.1 Upon registration of a National Standard development process, PSU shall assign a Policy Manager (the Manager) to serve as a point person for the Standard Developer and to assess the draft National Standard.

Note: PSU may assign a different Manager for the assessment of the National Standard at any time in the process.

- 1.2 As part of the registration process PSU shall instruct Standard Developers to submit the final draft of the National Standard together with the mandatory documents to the Forest Management (FM) programme of FSC (at forestmanagement@fsc.org).

2. Receipt of a draft National Standard

- 2.1 The Manager shall check the completeness of the draft National Standard and confirm that all mandatory documents have been submitted within two (2) weeks of receiving a draft National Standard in PSU and get back to the standard developer accordingly.

Mandatory documents for INS submission as per section 6 and clause 11.2 in FSC-PRO-60-007:

- INS draft
- Adaptation records
- A list of the TWG members' names and their affiliation
- A list of individuals/ organizations invited to comment on the INS
- Copies of all correspondence and/or comments received from stakeholders on the INS
- Minutes of stakeholder meetings
- Synopsis of the main issues and the standard developer's decisions

Mandatory documents for NFSS submission as per FSC-STD-60-006 and the Document Control shared with standard developers:

- NFSS draft (including all mandatory sections, e.g. High Conservation Values (HCV) framework)
- Transfer matrix
- National process report
- Copy of national announcement of the process
- Terms of Reference (ToR) for Standard Development Group (SDG)
- An updated list of the consultative forum members
- A formal recommendation by the SDG before each consultation that the standard is ready for consultation
- NFSS drafts (1st, 2nd and field tested)
- Minutes of SDG meetings in which drafts were signed off
- Motion from SDG members that the NFSS has undergone sufficient consultation and merits the approval by FSC

- Summary analysis of public consultation, including a list of individuals/ organizations invited to comment on the INS.
- Report on the use of IGIs instructions

- 2.2 Once the completeness of the submission has been confirmed, the Manager shall inform the Standard Developer, the Forest Management Senior Expert and the PSU Chief Policy Officer about the timelines for the assessment of the draft National Standard, and register the submission to PSU in the National Standards database.
- 2.3 Completed submissions should be processed by PSU within two (2) months of receipt of the submission. Based on the assessment result, the standard is either sent back to the standard developer for further elaboration or forwarded to the PSG for decision making.

3. Assessment of the National Standard

- 3.1 The Manager shall undertake an assessment of the process to develop the draft National Standard, checking compliance with all applicable requirements provided in the Assessment Report templates for INS (based on FSC-PRO-60-007 *Structure, Content and Development of Interim National Standards*) or for low complexity NFSS (based on FSC-STD-60-006 *Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards*). (See Annex 2. Template for INS Assessment Report (informative) and Annex 3. Template for low complex NFSS Assessment Report before approval (informative)).

- 3.2 The Manager shall undertake an assessment of the content of the draft National Standard and mandatory documents, checking compliance with all applicable content requirements provided in the adaptation records and the Assessment Report template (for INS) or the transfer matrix and the Assessment Report template (for low complexity NFSS). (See Annex 2. Template for INS Assessment Report (informative) and Annex 3. Template for low complex NFSS Assessment Report before approval (informative)).

Note: As part of this process, the Manager shall check whether the Standard Developer has duly considered all stakeholder input by reviewing the submitted stakeholder records including the minutes from stakeholder meetings and synopsis of the main issues and the standard developer's decisions.

Note: The Manager shall check whether the stakeholder records comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements, protecting data privacy, such as individual names, photos, video etc. Where consent was not provided, the Manager shall inform the Standard Developer that data management and liability remain with them.

- 3.3 If during the review major non-conformities with the procedural or content requirements are identified, the Manager shall request that the Standard Developer submits additional information, corresponding corrective procedural steps, or changes to the standard content within the following three (3) weeks.
- 3.4 The Manager shall complete the review, finalize the Assessment Report and prepare the Recommendation Note (see example in Annex 1. Template for the Recommendation Note for approval of draft National Standards by PSG) within two (2) weeks after receiving the complete submission of the additional or revised information.

3.5 PSU may commission the review of a draft National Standard or sections of it (e.g. the High Conservation Value (HCV) framework) to an external peer reviewer.

4. Review by Forest Management (FM) Senior Expert

- 4.1 When the Manager considers a draft National Standard ready for approval or for approval with conditions, they shall share the draft and mandatory documents listed under clause 2.1, together with the Assessment Report and the Recommendation Note, including a summary of the assessment, major issues identified during the assessment of the standard and a recommendation, with the FM Senior Expert.
- 4.2 The Manager shall identify whether there are any outstanding issues requiring particular attention by the FM Senior Expert.
- 4.3 The FM Senior Expert shall conduct a final review of the documents within 2 (two) weeks, focusing on major issues identified during the assessment, outstanding issues, if any, and difficult, relevant or potentially controversial indicators.
- 4.4 The FM Senior Expert shall confirm whether the draft National Standard is ready for approval, and if not, which would be the conditions for its approval.
- 4.5 The FM Senior Expert shall reflect the outcomes of the assessment in the Recommendation Note.

5. Recommendation from PSU Chief Policy Officer

- 5.1 Once the FM Senior Expert has completed the review, the Manager shall submit the draft National Standard and mandatory documents listed under clause 2.1, together with the Assessment Report and the Recommendation Note, to PSU Chief Policy Officer, who shall within ten (10) days:
 - a) recommend the approval or approval with conditions of the draft National Standard to PSG, or
 - b) request that a further review is conducted by the Manager, or
 - c) request that further information or revisions are provided by the Standard Developer.
- 5.2 The Chief Policy Officer or the Director of Policy Operations may propose that a draft National Standard or a specific part of it is submitted to the Policy and Standard Committee (PSC) instead of PSG, if there are major concerns to be brought to the attention of this committee.

Note: The process for approval of National Standards by PSC is described in FSC-PRO-10-606 *Approval of Forest Stewardship Standards*.

PART II. Decision

6. Decision making

- 6.1 The Manager shall, at least one (1) week prior to a scheduled PSG meeting, upload the draft National Standard together with the Assessment Report and Recommendation Note to the PSG SharePoint.
- 6.2 Prior to the scheduled PSG meeting the PSG members may provide comments, queries and additional requests for information with the aim of addressing these during the meeting.
- 6.3 At the scheduled PSG meeting, PSG shall make a decision on the draft National Standard considering the Recommendation Note, and any additional information provided by PSU.
- 6.4 PSG has four options when making a decision about a draft National Standard submitted through PSU for consideration:
 - a) Approve the draft National Standard;
 - b) Approve the draft National Standard, upon completion of conditions;
 - c) Return the draft standard to PSU or the Standard Developer for additional work prior to re-submission for approval.
 - d) In situations where the PSG cannot reach a consensus decision on approval or approval with conditions, the PSG may defer the decision-making process to the Policy and Steering Committee (PSC).
- 6.5 If the PSG has taken a decision to approve a National Standard with conditions, the PSG may delegate authority to close the conditions and the authority to approve the standard to the PSU Director or Chief Policy Officer.
- 6.6 The PSG may also delegate the authority to the PSU Director of Policy Operations or Chief Policy Officer to allow the partial meeting of a condition and to approve the standard in those circumstances where the Standard Developer has demonstrated that it has made every effort to meet the condition and has provided satisfactory justification to the PSU Director of Policy Operations or Chief Policy Officer as to why the condition could not be fully met. These decisions do not require further ratification by the PSG.

7. Notification to the Standard Developer, closure of conditions and publication

- 7.1 The Manager shall inform the Standard Developer of the approval of a National Standard within ten (10) days after the PSG decision.
- 7.2 When possible, PSU shall address the conditions for approval. If the closure of conditions requires the involvement of the Standard Developer, they shall address the conditions within four (4) weeks.
- 7.3 The Manager shall verify that the Standard Developer has addressed the conditions or provided satisfactory justification and submit a request to close the conditions to the PSU Director of Policy Operations or Chief Policy Officer.

- 7.4 Typographical errors and minor inconsistencies in the approved National Standard may be corrected by PSU at any time before the publication with the approval of the PSU Director of Policy Operations or the Chief Policy Officer.
- 7.5 Once the conditions have been closed, the Manager shall proceed with the publication of the National Standard, including formatting, agreeing on the publication date with the Standard Developer, communications, etc.
- 7.6 The Manager shall ensure that the approved National Standard is published in the FSC website at least in English or Spanish within two (2) months of the final approval and that the publication is communicated on the FSC website and to the Certification Bodies, FSC Network Partners, FSC members and the Policy and Standards Committee (PSC).

Annex 1. Template for the Recommendation Note for approval of draft National Standards by PSG (informative)



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Recommendation Note

**Interim National Standard/
National Forest Stewardship Standard
of**

Country
Standard code

Description

Title	Interim National Standard\National Forest Stewardship Standard\NTPF INS of <i>Country Name</i>
Document reference code	Code and description
Status	Draft for decision
Scope	
Approval body	Policy Steering Group (PSG)
Submission date to PSU	dd/mm/year
Target approval date	dd/mm/year
Proposed effective date	dd/mm/year
Proposed validity period	Until revised, replaced or withdrawn
Standard Developer	
PSU reviewer	
Author of the recommendation note	
Date\Last updated	

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A. PSU Assessment Outcome

- 1. **Process assessment**
- 2. **Content assessment**

B. Issues discussed with FM Senior Expert and PSU Chief Policy Officer

The following issues were discussed with the FM Senior Expert and the PSU Chief Policy Officer and have now been addressed by the Technical Working Group (TWG)/Certification Body (CB):

Issues	PSU comments	TWG/CB response	PSU response after TWG/CB feedback
			(Green color represents that the comment has been addressed at the satisfaction of PSU)
			(Yellow color represents that the comment has been partially addressed at the satisfaction of PSU)
			(Red color represents that the comment has not been addressed at the satisfaction of PSU)

C. Recommendation Note by PSU Chief Policy Officer

Annex 2. Template for INS Assessment Report (informative)



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Assessment report

Interim National Standard of Country

Standard code

Description

Title	Interim National Standard of country
Document reference code	Code
Process	TWG or GFSS
Status	Draft for approval by PSG
Scope	
Target approval date	dd month YYYY
Approval body	Policy Steering Group (PSG)
Proposed effective date	Dd month YYYY (three months after publication date)
Transition period¹	12 months from the effective date
Proposed validity period	Until revised, replaced or withdrawn
Standard developed by	
Contact and document owner	FSC International Center - Performance and Standards Unit - Adenauerallee 134 53113 Bonn, Germany  +49-(0)228-36766-0  +49-(0)228-36766-30  psu@fsc.org

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¹ The transition period is the timeline in which there is a parallel phase-in of the new version and phase-out of the old version of the standard. Six (6) months after the end of the transition period, certificates issued against the old version are considered invalid.

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1. Checklist Process Assessment

FSC Standard used for process assessment (Normative reference: FSC-PRO-60-007 V1-2 EN *Structure, Content and Development of Interim National Standards*):

Requirements	Evaluation/ Comment	TWG/CB feedback	PSU response after TWG/CB feedback
1. Technical Working Group (TWG) 1.1. A TWG shall be registered with PSU prior to the development of an INS, consisting of at least one representative from each certification body active in the country or region accredited for forest management certification	(Green color represents that the requirement is met)		
1.2. All TWGs shall be registered within twelve (12) months of the approval of the procedure FSC-PRO-60-007 V1-2 EN. NOTE: This Clause only applies to those countries in which CBs are certifying forest management according to their adapted generic standards at the time of approval of this procedure.	(Yellow color represents that the requirement is partially met)		
1.3. A TWG cannot be registered in a country that already has a Standard Development Group (SDG) registered with PSU.	(Red color represents that the requirement is not met)		
1.4. In order to get registered, each TWG shall submit a work plan (including a timetable, a list of expected refundable expenses and a list of participating CB representatives) to PSU.			
1.5. The TWG should be coordinated, when possible, by the FSC-accredited CB with the highest number of certificates in the country.			
1.6. In the countries where no National Standards exist, the first CB signing a certification contract shall coordinate the TWG, unless another CB voluntarily takes the initiative to get registered as coordinator and they both agree			

Requirements	Evaluation/ Comment	TWG/CB feedback	PSU response after TWG/CB feedback
1.7. Decisions of the TWG shall be made by consensus and take into consideration the comments from stakeholders. When a TWG cannot achieve consensus, the differences shall be reported to PSU when the TWG submits the INS/IRS for approval.			
1.8. All INS shall be finalized and submitted to PSU for approval by the PSG no later than 12 months after the registration of a TWG			
2. Stakeholder consultation 2.1. The TWG shall identify the key stakeholders in the region or country including the following categories: a) Any FSC Network Partner; b) The state forest service(s) or equivalent; c) NGOs that are involved or have an interest in social or environmental aspects of forest management; d) Indigenous Peoples; e) Representatives of affected stakeholders and local communities that are involved or have an interest in forest management; f) Labour organisations or unions of forestry sector workers; g) Representatives of forest owners associations; h) Forest research and education institutions; i) Forest industries and associations.			
2.2. The TWG shall include in the work plan two (2) full rounds of public consultation for the INS/IRS as a default and at least one stakeholder meeting.			
2.3. Indigenous Peoples representatives shall be engaged for developing indicators for Principle 3 and the definition of customary land.			
2.4. A public consultation round shall consist of a period of at least sixty (60) days. In exceptional circumstances, the period can be reduced to no less than thirty (30) days by agreement between the TWG and PSU. If the first round of public consultation shows general support to the draft INS/IRS and there are no substantive, unresolved issues, then a second round can be omitted by agreement between the TWG and PSU.			
2.5. The TWG shall use consultation methods that are culturally appropriate (as defined by ISEAL Code of Good			

Requirements	Evaluation/ Comment	TWG/CB feedback	PSU response after TWG/CB feedback
Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards) for the consulted stakeholder group(s).			
2.6. In addition to outreach to the stakeholders listed above, PSU will also publish the draft INS/IRS on the FSC website (national, regional or international) at the start of each public consultation round.			
2.7. The TWG shall record, analyse and consider all stakeholder comments in the development of the next draft.			
3. Records 3.1. The coordinator of a TWG shall be responsible for compiling the following records: a) A list of the TWG members' names and their affiliation. b) A list of individuals/ organizations invited to comment on the INS. c) Copies of all correspondence and/or comments received from stakeholders on the INS/IRS. d) Minutes of stakeholder meetings.			
3.2. The records referenced above shall be sent to PSU when the TWG submits the INS/IRS for approval.			
4. Language 4.1. INS/IRS may be developed in one or more of the languages of the region or country to which they apply. However, for approval by the PSG or PSC the standard shall be submitted in English or Spanish.			

2. Checklist for Content Assessment

FSC Standards used for content assessment:

FSC-PRO-60-007 V1-2 EN *Structure, Content and Development of Interim National Standard*

FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 EN *International Generic Indicators*

FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2 EN *FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship*

Requirements	Evaluation/ Comment	Normative and non-normative reference	TWG/CB Feedback	PSU response after TWG/CB feedback
1. Structure and numbering of INS/IRS				
1.1 An INS/IRS includes a hierarchy of principles, criteria and associated indicators	(Green color represents that the requirement is met)	FSC-PRO-60-007		
1.2 The level of principles and criteria consists of each FSC Principle and Criterion in the same order, the same numbering and the same wording as they occur in the latest approved version of FSC-STD-01-001 <i>FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship</i>	(Yellow color represents that the requirement is partially met)	FSC-PRO-60-007 FSC-STD-01-001		
2. Content of INS/IRS				
2.1 Document code for INS/IRS is appropriately assigned	(Red color represents that the requirement is not met)	FSC-PRO-60-007		
2.2 The scope of application (regional or national level, NTFPs, types of The Organizations, forest types, products, etc.) at which the standard has to be used is defined		FSC-PRO-60-007		
2.3 A version number and the proposed effective and validity dates are defined		FSC-PRO-60-007		
2.4 A preamble is included summarizing the development process of the INS/IRS		FSC-PRO-60-007		
2.5 Annexes are included into the standard as follows: a) A list of applicable laws, regulations and nationally-ratified international treaties, conventions and agreements. b) Annexes B, C, E and G from the IGI Standard (FSC-STD-60-004). Annexes B and G adapted to national conditions. c) A list of, or reference to official lists of, endangered species in the country or region.		FSC-PRO-60-007		

Requirements	Evaluation/ Comment	Normative and non-normative reference	TWG/CB Feedback	PSU response after TWG/CB feedback
d) A national HCV Framework addressing all HCV categories and Motion 65 (GA 2014) on Intact Forest Landscapes.				
2.6 INS/IRS includes FSC Glossary of terms as an annex		FSC-PRO-60-007		
2.7 A rationale when an FSC Principle or Criterion is considered to be adapted in a given situation is provided		FSC-PRO-60-007		
2.8 INS/IRS may include guidance notes to help auditors, forest managers or others in using the standard. Such guidance notes may be added as annexes to the standard, linked to an indicator, or be published in a separate document. The standard states that these guidance notes are not mandatory.		FSC-PRO-60-007		
2.9 FSC certification of NTFPs shall be conducted using an INS/IRS that specifies NTFP in its scope. The TWG shall specifically review the requirements under Criteria 1.3, 1.5, 2.3, 2.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 8.2, 8.5, 10.7, and 10.11 and consider applicability for the development of indicators. The laws and regulations regarding the particular NTFP, the NTFP specific training needs, the NTFP related elements of the FM plan and the NTFP specific monitoring needs have to be included to the Annexes 1, 2, 5 and 6 of the INS template. Trademark use and labelling rules related to NTFP are covered when adapting Criterion 8.5.		FSC-PRO-60-007		
2.10 INS/IRS complies with all latest versions of approved FSC normative frameworks.		FSC-PRO-60-007		
3. Indicators and verifiers				
3.1 Development of indicators: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 EN was used as the starting point for INS/IRS		FSC-STD-60-004		

Requirements	Evaluation/ Comment	Normative and non-normative reference	TWG/CB Feedback	PSU response after TWG/CB feedback
3.2 Where IGI are not adapted to address the national context or scale, intensity or risk (SIR), they are adopted into an INS/IRS as presented in FSC-STD-60-004		FSC-PRO-60-007		
3.3 Adaptation is justified when submitting the INS/IRS for approval. Justifications do not conflict with FSC policies, standards, directives or procedures. Adaptation was based on stakeholder support.		FSC-PRO-60-007		
3.4 FSC-GUI-60-002 SIR Guideline for Standards Developers and approved National Risk Assessments or Centralized National Risk Assessments, if such exist, shall be considered when developing the INS/IRS.		FSC-PRO-60-007		
3.5 Each adapted indicator is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and tangible, according to Clause 4.4 in FSC-STD-60-002 Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards.		FSC-PRO-60-007		
3.6 Every indicator should include examples of means of verification. But verifiers are not mandatory		FSC-PRO-60-007		

Annex 1. Adaptation Matrix

Annex 2. The FSC Interim National Standard for country

Annex 3. Template for low complex NFSS Assessment Report (informative)



National Forest Stewardship Standards pre-approval assessment report.
[Country or region]
FSC-RP-V01-01-EN

Type of Document:	FSC Performance and Standards Unit Report
Scope of Document:	National Forest Stewardship Standards assessment.
Unit Responsible for drafting this Report:	Performance and Standards Unit (PSU)
Author of Report:	
Contact Information:	
Date last updated	
Deadline for submitting feedback to PSU with all requested documentation:	

Name of National Forest Stewardship Standard:	
Code of National Forest Stewardship Standard:	
Date submitted for assessment:	
Deadline for submitting feedback with all requested documentation:	
Name of Group that developed the standard:	
Facilitator of group:	
Address:	
Date:	

Introduction

This report details all the elements to be evaluated by the Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) during the assessment of low complex National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS). The following terms are used to determine nature of PSU's comments:

CONDITIONS – to be incorporated in the NFSS (that is, content related conditions) or missing process documents (process related condition) to be sent to PSU. Failure to incorporate conditions may result in standard not being submitted on time to the Policy Steering Group (PSG) for decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS – to be incorporated in the standard at the discretion of the registered Standard Development Group; Failure to incorporate recommendations does not affect the standard being submitted to the FSC Policy Steering Group (PSG) for decision.

A section on general comment is included. These comments are considered of equal importance as conditions for sending the NFSS for approval. Please address issues raised in the general comment section or get in touch with PSU staff and explain.

Summary of Assessment:

The FSC Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) has developed the documents in Table 1 below that registered Standards Development Groups (SDGs) are to use in the process of developing NFSS, or the process of transferring existing NFSS from the old Principles and Criteria (P&C version 4) to the new FSC P&C version 5. These include the following process and content documents:

Table1:

Document Code	Name	Comment
FSC-STD-60-006 (V1-2) EN	Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards	Process document
FSC-PRO-60-006 V2-0 EN	Development and Transfer of National Forest Stewardship Standards to the FSC Principles and Criteria Version 5-1	Process document
FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards	Content document
FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 EN	International Generic Indicators	Content document
FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2 EN	FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship	Content document

Other normative and non-normative documents like Guidance, Directives, Policies and Interpretations are to be consulted as needed during the process. FSC staff is to be kept updated and consulted whenever the SDG needs to.

1. Process evaluation summary

At the end of an NFSS process, the standard is submitted to the PSU for evaluation against the documents in Table 1 above. The [country or region] NFSS is evaluated and PSU concludes if the process followed all FSC's normative requirements accordingly.

2. Content evaluation summary

The evaluation of the content is accompanied by detailed comments made in the FSC Transfer Matrix that is annexed to this report (see Annex 3). Please refer to this matrix to have a complete impression of the evaluation.

The use of the IGI standard is to check for consistency and compare indicators suggested in the international document with those at national level. This standard serves as a starting point for the development of all FSC NFSS. Process document FSC-PRO-60-006 requires that the SDG should review the IGI standard and decide if to adopt, adapt, drop or suggest new indicators. This makes the IGI document one of the main content quality evaluation bases for NFSS by the FSC PSU. Justification is normally required when an indicator in the IGI document is not used or is modified, as such giving SDGs the required flexibility to bring in their national reality to the NFSS. Chart 1 below provides information on the extent of the use of IGIs by the [country or region] SDG (i.e. adoption) and on the proportions of dropped or adapted IGIs and added new indicators.

Chart 1: Proportion of adopted, adapted and dropped IGIs and added new indicators in the [country or region] NFSS**Summary of major content needs in NFSS**

See transfer matrix for more on this section.

External reviewer comments:

Checklist for Process Assessment

FSC Standard used for process assessment		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN: Process Requirements for the Development and Maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards.	
		FSC-PRO-60-006 V2-0 EN: Development and Transfer of National Forest Stewardship Standards to the FSC Principles and Criteria Version 5-1	
Requirements	Evaluation/ Comment (whether the requirement has been met satisfactorily or not)	Normative and non-normative reference	SDG Feedback (if required)
1.Proposal 1.1. Proposals to develop Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS) may originate from discussion by the FSC International Board of Directors, the FSC General Assembly, or from proposals by FSC members, FSC National Offices, members of FSC staff or staff of Assurance Services International (ASI).	(Green color represents that the requirement is met)	FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
1.2. The formal decision to register development of an NFSS shall be taken by the Head of the PSU Chief Policy Officer, taking account of the approved strategic planning documentation, work plans and other instructions of the Executive Director.	(Yellow color represents that the requirement is partially met)	FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
1.3. All elements of the proposal and standard developed shall be submitted to FSC in either English or Spanish.	(Red color represents that the requirement is not met)	FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
1.4. Development of a proposed FSC NFSS shall not proceed prior to formal notification of registration from the FSC PSU.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
2. Official announcement of a new standard under development 2.1. An announcement shall be sent to all key stakeholder groups within the territory once the process has been officially registered by FSC PSU		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
3. Facilitation and Chairing 3.1. The body which proposed the standards development		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	

shall identify the person (or positions) responsible for implementing each element identified in FSC-STD-60-006 (V1-2) EN			
3.2 Facilitation and chairing provision shall ensure that the SDG operates responsibly and in accordance with its ToR and the applicable procedures.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
3.3. Facilitation and chairing provision shall ensure that all members of the SDG have the opportunity to express their opinions and concerns, and shall aim to find consensus in all recommendations of the SDG.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
3.4. Facilitation and chairing provision shall ensure that there is effective communication with the appointed member of Staff within the FSC Performance and Standards Unit at all stages of development of the standard.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
4. The role of SDG during the process 4.1 An SDG shall be established for the development of the National Forest Stewardship Standards.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
4.2 The SDG shall have three separate chambers representing social, environmental and economic interests, with at least two representatives in each chamber, and equal number of people (or equal weighting) in each chamber.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
4.3 Members of the SDG shall be selected on the basis of their, (a) expert knowledge and/or experience of the issue under consideration;(b) up-to-date knowledge and experience of FSC's systems and procedures; (c) representation of points of view from the corresponding FSC chamber, and the points of view of small, medium and large enterprises affected by the standard; (d) understanding of the potential impact of the standard on affected stakeholders; (e) understanding of and support for FSC's mission and vision; (f) ability to review and comment on documents submitted in the working		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	

language(s) established for the SDG			
4.4. All members of the SDG shall receive and commit to the ToR and work plan prior to commencement of the standard development.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
4.5. Technical experts may be appointed to participate in SDG discussions. These technical experts shall have a voice in the SDG discussions but no formal role in its decision making processes.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
4.6 When drafting the standard the SDG shall: (a) take into account all relevant FSC documents pertaining to the process (b) provide detailed input to the development of the NFSS in accordance with its terms of reference; (c) sign off all drafts of the standard before they are submitted for consultation; (d) formally recommend that the final draft standard be submitted to FSC for approval as an FSC NFSS		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
4.7 The SDG shall be chaired by a person or persons appointed by consensus of the group.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
4.8. The Chair(s) should be independent from any one chamber and broker consensus rather than represent one chamber.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
5. Terms of Reference and Work plan 5.1. The SDG shall agree on the terms of reference, the work plan and budget for the development of the proposed standard.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
5.2. The terms of reference for the SDG shall include at least the following: (a) the approved version of the proposal; (b) the procedures to be followed, including those required by this standard; (c) the agreed working language(s) for the Standards Development Group; (d) all documents related to the process of the development of		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	

FSC Forest Stewardship Standards; (e) any additional specific requirements to complete the work; (f) timetable for the standard development process.			
5.3 The work plan shall include at least the following:(a) the setting up and support of the SDG; (b) the setting up and support of a Consultative Forum (c) drafting, consulting on, and redrafting standard(s) (d) the SDG shall test the standard in the forest prior to submission of a final draft to FSC for approval, (e) specification of a communications plan for the standard development process which shall establish the working language(s) for the standards development and most appropriate form of communication to stakeholder groups;(f) detailed timetable for the standard development process, including an estimated date when the completed standard(s) will be submitted to FSC for the approval process.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
5.4 The terms of reference, work plan and budget shall be signed off by the SDG and submitted to the FSC PSU allowing two (2) weeks for comment prior to commencement of the standards development.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
6. Consultative Forum 6.1 The SDG shall be responsible for setting up a Consultative Forum for the standard development process.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
6.2 The Consultative Forum shall at a minimum include individuals and/or organizations reflecting the full range of stakeholders affected by the standard(s) under development at the national level		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
6.3 The Consultative forum shall be consulted and kept informed at each stage of the standard development; their comments being addressed and recorded		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
7. Preparatory drafting and consultation 7.1 A person (or position) shall be identified as responsible for		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	

compiling the standard on behalf of the SDG. This shall include record keeping, minute taking and circulation of papers to the Standard Development Group and Consultative Forum.			
7.2 The role of the SDG members shall be to scrutinize and recommend drafts; review and advise on comments submitted by stakeholders; and suggest wording on specific aspects that might achieve consensus support of all members of the Standard Development Group.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
7.3 At a minimum, the following drafts shall be prepared: (a) a first draft, which shall be widely distributed to stakeholders for comment; (b) a second draft, which takes into account the initial stakeholders comments and shall be tested in the forest; (c) a 'forest-tested' draft, which takes into account the results of the testing in the forest, and shall be widely distributed to stakeholders for comment; (d) a 'pre-approval' draft, which takes into account stakeholder comments on the forest-tested draft		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
7.4 Drafts for public consultation shall be officially announced as identified in the communications plan together with a summary of the key points and a formal comments form, and shall be circulated to: (a) all members of the Standard Development Group; (b) all members of the Consultative Forum; (c) all FSC National Initiatives and National and Regional Offices within the region; (d) all FSC-accredited certification bodies operating in the region; (e) all key stakeholder groups identified under Annex A; and, (f) the FSC Performance and Standards Unit.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
7.5. The period to submit comments on the first draft for public consultation shall be a minimum of sixty (60) days from the date of publication. The period for consultation on intermediate drafts shall be a minimum of thirty (30) days from the date of		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	

publication. The period for consultation on the final draft prior to decision making shall be sixty (60) days from the date of publication.			
7.6 All formal comments shall be kept on file.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
7.7 A report on the formal comments shall be prepared which includes: (a) a summary of the issues raised; (b) an analysis of the range of stakeholder groups who have submitted comments; (c) a general response to the comments;(d) an indication of how the comments have been taken into account in the subsequent public draft standard; and (e) a copy of all the formal comments as an annex.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
7.8. SDG shall analyse the sources of the comments to ensure that formal comments have been received from representatives of all the key stakeholder groups identified as being impacted by the implementation of the proposed standard.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
7.9 The SDG shall be proactive in seeking input from representatives of stakeholder groups. Special provision to ensure that formal comments are received from representatives of any marginalized groups that may be affected by the standard shall be made and potential impacts of the standard on such groups shall be explicitly identified and taken into account in the development of the standard.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
8 Content	See content section of the assessment		
9. Forest testing			
9.1 New standards shall be tested in the forest before it is submitted to FSC for approval.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
9.2 Ideally, the standard should be tested in the range of conditions in which it is applicable, including both large and small forests, and in a representative range of forest types within the specified scope.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
9.3 The standard shall be tested by an FSC-accredited		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	

certification body and one representative of the SDG with technical expertise in forest management in the area of scope should also attend.			
9.4 Testing shall include the full range of indicators included in the standard, and shall consider the auditability of the standard as a whole as well as the socio-economic impacts of compliance.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
9.5 A report on the results of the testing shall be made publicly available on request.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
9.6 The findings from the forest testing shall be considered and agreed by the SDG. The resulting draft shall form the 'forest-tested' draft of the standard.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
10. Draft standard(s) submitted for decision making 10.1 Prior to submission of the standard to FSC for approval, a formal motion shall be put before the SDG members that the draft standard: (a) has undergone sufficient consultation and testing; (b) meets the aims and objectives specified in the terms of reference of the SDG; (c) merits approval by FSC.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
10.2. When a draft standard has the formal recommendation of the SDG it shall be published as identified in the communications plan.		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	
10.3. A report shall be prepared on behalf of the SDG. The report shall: (a) summarize the standard development process, taking into account any deviations from the original work plan; (b) explain the main issues and concerns raised during the process, and explain how these have been addressed; (c) include a clear description of any departures from these procedures, demonstrating compliance with the requirements of section 16 FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN; (d) include as Annexes a list of the names and affiliations of the members of the SDG, and the names and affiliations (including specification whether the stakeholder is		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	

an FSC member, and, if so, of which chamber and sub-chamber) of all stakeholders that have submitted comments during the standard development process; (e) include the motion of recommendation of the Standard Development Group, and the results of this motion; (f) a translation into English of the 'pre-approval' draft recommended for the approval of FSC; (g) a copy of all formal comments received during the final period of public consultation.			
10.4 The finalized report shall be sent to the FSC Performance and Standards Unit for formal approval		FSC-STD-60-006 V1-2 EN	

Checklist for Content Assessment

FSC Standard used for content assessment		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards	
		FSC-STD-60-004 V2 EN International Generic Indicators	
		FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2 EN FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship	
Requirements	Evaluation/ Comment (whether the requirement has been met satisfactorily or not)	Normative and non-normative reference	SDG Feedback (if required)
1. Structure of NFSS			
1.1 Document code for NFSS is appropriately assigned	(Green color represents that the requirement is met)	FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
1.2 NFSS include an introduction	(Yellow color represents that the requirement is partially met)	FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
1.3 NFSS introduction has no doubtful statement	(Red color represents that the requirement is not met)	FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
1.4 Specification of scope: NFSS clearly specifies the geographical, Ecological, political scope to which it applies		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
1.5 NFSS includes a pre-ambule/preface		N/A	
1.6 NFSS includes FSC Normative reference documents relevant for the implementation of the standard		N/A	

1.7 NFSS includes a space for PSU to insert effective date		N/A	
1.8 NFSS includes a table of contents		N/A	
1.9 FSC Hierarchical Framework: NFSS are structured in the order: Principle -Criterion-Indicator-verifier-Guidance (where needed)		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
2. Numbering in NFSS			
2.1 The numbering of Principles and Criteria within the standard shall be the same as in FSC-STD-01-001 <i>FSC Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship</i> .		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
2.2 Indicators shall be numbered with the initial numbers of the relevant FSC Criterion, followed by numbering for each indicator within the criterion.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3. Content of NFSS			
3.1 NFSS includes wording of FSC P&C as originally approved.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.2 NFSS includes justified additional Criteria		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.3 NFSS includes a justification for considering an FSC criterion not applicable		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.4 NFSS complies with all latest versions of approved FSC normative frameworks		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.5 NFSS shall not state that only those conventions to which the country is a signatory are to be respected		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.6 NFSS includes definitions to identify any categories of users to whom special provisions are applicable.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.7 Where NFSS includes guidance or applicability notes, it is clearly stated that these notes are not normative		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.8 Development of indicators: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	

0 EN shall be used as the starting point for NFSS			
3.9 Each indicator specifies one aspect of compliance.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.10 When an FSC Criterion includes several requirements, associated indicators shall be developed for each requirement.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.11 Each indicator refers to a single aspect of performance to be evaluated. An indicator which includes more than one aspect to be evaluated shall list these aspects separately as sub-divisions of the indicator		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.12 Indicators specify outcomes or levels (i.e. thresholds) of performance that are measurable during an evaluation at a reasonable cost. The level of performance required to comply with the indicators should be clear to the reader.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.13 Indicators are not defined in terms of design or descriptive characteristics, and do not favour a particular technology or patented item.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.14 Indicators only include elements that contribute to the achievement of the objective of the applicable FSC Criterion.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.15 Indicators are written using a clear and consistent vocabulary, free from subjective elements.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
3.16 Every indicator should include examples of means of verification.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
4. Assessing the use of IGIs in NFSS	Please refer to the FSC Transfer Matrix that was used during the process of developing the [country or region] NFSS for more information on how to improve requirements in the standard.		
Please provide an indication of how many IGIs have been:			
Adopted	See Transfer Matrix for details	FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 EN	

Adapted	(summary sheet)	FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 EN	
Dropped		FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 EN	
New indicators added		FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 EN	
Total IGIs		FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 EN	
Total Indicators in the [country or region] NFSS		FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 EN	
5. Scale Intensity and Risk in NFSS (Content)			
5.1 NFSS addresses Scale Intensity and Risks at least for those P&C where this is explicitly stated		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
5.2 The standard shall include clear guidance as to the category of forest management units to which any exemptions or alternative indicators apply.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
6. Annexes of NFSS			
At least the following Annexes are provided in the NFSS			
A) a list of the national and local forest laws and administrative requirements which apply in the country or region in which the standard is to be used,		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
B) a list of the multilateral environmental agreements and conventions that the country has ratified and the ILO Conventions listed in FSC-POL-30-401 FSC and the ILO Conventions which must be complied with in all FSC certified forests,		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
C) a list of, or reference to official lists of, endangered species in the country or region in which the standard is to be used.		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
D) NFSS has HCV interpretations or a tool for HCV assessment is annexed in the NFSS		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	
E) NFSS includes FSC Glossary of terms in an annex		FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN	

Transfer Matrix - FSC-TPT-60-008 (Attachment)

The FSC National Forest Stewardship Standard of [country or region] (Attachment)
Document Control – National Forest Stewardship Standard (Attachment)

Annex 4. Template for PSG decision on National Standard approval (informative)



Interim National Standard\ Low complex National Forest Stewardship Standard Decision Form

[Document Code](#)

1. General information

1.1 Standard Developer	
1.2 Document name	
1.3 Document code	
1.4 Date of submission to PSU	
1.5 Author(s) of the PSU evaluation report	
1.6 Date of the PSU evaluation report	
1.7 Date of submission to the PSG	

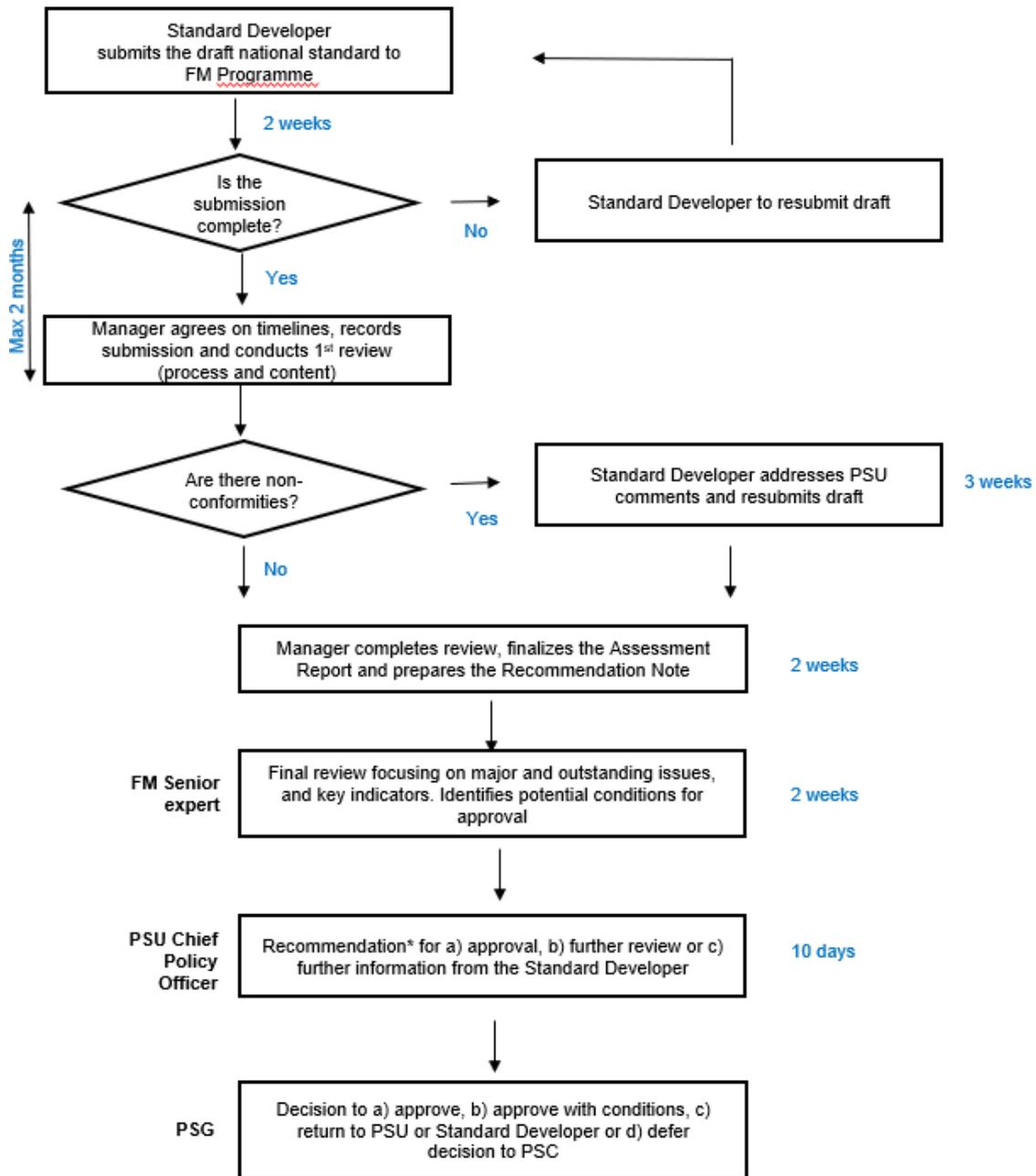
2. Decision

2.1 Decision by PSG	
Date	

3. Conditions

Approval Conditions (if any)	Rationale

Annex 5: Flow chart assessment and decision-making process



*The Chief Policy Officer or the Director Policy Operations may propose that a draft National Standard or a specific part of it is submitted to the Policy and Standard Committee (PSC), if there are major concerns to be brought to the attention of this committee.