



Directive

FSC DIRECTIVE ON FSC FOREST MANAGEMENT EVALUATIONS

FSC-DIR-20-007 EN



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INTRODUCTION

FSC compiles Advice Notes into single documents which are called “Directives”. A Directive includes all Advice Notes issued in relation to a relevant set of requirements.

The objective of this document is to standardize understanding and implementation of the requirements by certification bodies and certificate holders.

The content of the Directive will be incorporated into the related standards during the subsequent revision, as feasible.

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A SCOPE

This Directive provides FSC's formal interpretation of requirements related to Forest Management.

This Directive applies to forest management accredited certification bodies, to organizations applying for or holding FSC Forest Management certification and to standard developers.

All aspects of this Directive are considered normative, including the scope, effective and validity dates, references, terms and definitions, footnotes, graphics, tables, and annexes, unless otherwise stated.

Notes, information/guidance boxes and examples are not considered normative

B REFERENCES

The following documents are indispensable for the application of this document.

For references without a version number, the latest version of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies:

FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0	Policy to Address Conversion
FSC-POL-01-004 V2-0	Policy for Association
FSC-POL-10-004 (2005)	Scope of Application of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0	FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification
FSC-STD-01-001	FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
FSC-STD-01-001 V4-0	FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
FSC-STD-01-001 V5-0	FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3	FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
FSC-STD-20-002 V3-0	Structure, Content and Local Adaptation of Generic Forest Stewardship Standards
FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0	Forest Management Evaluations
FSC-STD-20-007a V1-0	Forest Management Evaluations Addendum – Forest Certification Reports
FSC-STD-20-007b V1-0	Forest Management Evaluations Addendum – Forest Certification Public Summary Reports
FSC-STD-60-002 V1-0	Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards
FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0	International Generic Indicators
FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1	International Generic Indicators
FSC-GUI-30-010	Intact Forest Landscapes Guidance for Forest Managers Guidance Document

The following FSC normative documents have been replaced by this Directive:

FSC-GUI-20-200	FSC Guidelines for Certification Bodies (Version March 2005)
FSC-ADV-20-006	Certification of windbreaks
FSC-ADV-20-007	Certification of forest remnants
FSC-ADV-30-502	FSC certification of bamboo
FSC-ADV-30-602	Conversion of plantation to non forest land
FSC-ADV-50-001	Shiitake mushrooms labelled with the FSC trademarks

C TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions included in <FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms> apply.

Further advice-related definitions may be provided in the context of each advice.

Verbal forms for the expression of provisions:

[Adapted from ISO/IEC Directives Part 2 Principles and Rules for the structure and drafting of ISO and IEC documents]

- “shall”:
indicates requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform with 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 ‘should requirement’ can be met 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.

D ABBREVIATIONS

- ASI** Accreditation Services International
- CAR** Corrective action request
- CB** Certification body
- CITES** Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
- FAO** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- FM** Forest Management
- FM/CoC** Forest Management/Chain of Custody
- FMU** Forest Management Unit
- FSC** Forest Stewardship Council
- HCV** High Conservation Values
- ICL** Indigenous cultural landscapes
- IFL** Intact Forest Landscape
- M&E** Monitoring & Evaluation
- MCU** Markets and Communications Unit

- MU** Management Unit
- NTFPs** Non-Timber Forest Products
- P&C** Principles and Criteria
- PSC** Policy and Standards Committee
- PSU** Performance and Standards Unit
- RMU** Resource Management Unit
- SLIMF** Small and low intensity managed forests

PART 1 GENERAL ISSUES

1. The FSC Directive is providing certification bodies and other stakeholders with clear advices on the implementation of FSC's international policies and standards. A directive is designed to provide formal advice in relation to a single specific issue or question raised with the FSC International Center. All advices on a series of issues related to a specific FSC international policy or standard are collected in one document to improve accessibility of interpretations for certification bodies, certificate holders and interested parties.
2. If a certification body is in doubt about the correct implementation of an FSC policy or standard, the certification body must request clarification from the FSC Policy and Standards Unit. If required, such clarification will be provided in the form of a new directive.
3. Prior to the finalisation of an advice, a certification body may make its own decision in relation to a question for which clarification has been sought. In such a case, responsibility for the consequences of the decision shall rest exclusively with the certification body concerned. Formal advice subsequently provided by the FSC International Center will be applicable retrospectively.
4. The advices provided in this document represent the formal position of the FSC International Center unless and until it is superseded by the approval of a more recent policy, standard, or advice. In such cases the requirements specified in the more recent document shall take precedence.
5. Certification bodies are required to comply with the most recent formal advices, and ASI (Accreditation Services International) will base its evaluations and issue of corrective actions on these.
6. Finalised advices are approved by the FSC Director General Head or the FSC Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) to the FSC Board of Directors. If a certification body wishes to contest the advice provided it may do so by requesting a formal review and decision by the PSC. Until and unless such a review and decision has been finalised, the certification body shall continue to comply with the position of the FSC International Center.
7. Directives are under continual review and may be revised or withdrawn in response to new information, experience or changing circumstances, for example by the development of new policies or standards approved by the FSC Board of Directors.

PART 2 FSC ADVICES

ADVICE-20-007-01 Scope of forest certification

ADVICE-20-007-01	Scope of forest certification
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 EN Clause 1.1 FSC-POL-10-004 (2005) EN
Effective date	June 1998
Terms & definitions	
Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trees may be grown in a wide variety of systems in order to yield a wide variety of products. FSC was founded on the basis that both plantation and natural forests should be within the scope of certification. However there are a number of production systems that cannot clearly be described as 'forests'. 2. Such production systems include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Very short rotation crops such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conifers, traditionally Norway Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>) grown for use as Christmas trees. - Poplar (<i>Populus</i> spp.) and other species coppiced on short rotations (e.g. 4 - 7 years) for use as fuel. - Willow (<i>Salix</i> spp.) and other species coppiced on short rotations for production of shoots for e.g. basketwork and production of hurdles. 2.2 Orchards; 2.3 Silvo-pastoral production systems; 2.4 Agro-forestry production systems; 2.5 Plantations managed for Non Timber Forest Products (e.g. rubber, oil palm, coconuts). 3. Are such production systems within the scope of FSC certification?
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The term 'forest' denotes a formation dominated by trees. It is defined by the Shorter Oxford Dictionary as 'An extensive tract of land covered with trees and undergrowth sometimes intermingled with pasture'. 2. A 'tree' in turn is defined as 'A perennial plant having a self-supporting woody main stem or trunk (which usually develops woody branches at some distance from the ground), and growing to a considerable height and size. Extended to bushes or shrubs of erect growth and having a single stem; and even some perennial herbaceous plants which grow to a great height, as the banana or plantain'. 3. However, such linguistic definitions of the word 'forest' may not however be useful for the purpose of defining the scope of certification. Many stakeholders draw a strong distinction between a 'forest' and a 'plantation'. An area growing a very short rotation crop of trees would not normally be described as a forest, because the trees have not yet developed their 'considerable height and size'. Nevertheless, the area may consist of 'an extensive tract of land covered with trees and undergrowth'. If the same area was left to grow without intervention it

	<p>would very likely develop into a forest. Similar problems apply to other production systems, such as orchards.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. FSC accepts a broad approach to the scope of FSC accreditation of forest stewardship. For the purposes of defining scope the FSC Principles and Criteria may potentially be applicable to any <i>'tract of land dominated by trees'</i>. 5. The second determinant of scope is whether such a tract of land dominated by trees can be managed in compliance with the <i>FSC P&C</i>, and maintain the ecological functions and values required by the <i>FSC P&C</i>. Satisfaction of this requirement depends on the particular production system in question rather than on the product type, or the tree species as such. 6. Whether the ecological functions and values required by the FSC Principles and Criteria can be maintained has to be judged on a case by case basis. The decision includes consideration of the species involved as well as the production system itself. 7. Very short rotation tree crops <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7.1 The FSC Principles and Criteria include a number of requirements which may require the development of mature trees. These include criteria 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4, and in the case of plantations, criteria 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, and 10.5. 7.2 Forest management units or systems in which the main management objective is the production of short rotation products would not be expected to meet these criteria. Such management systems are therefore likely to be outside the scope of FSC-accredited forest certification. 7.3 Some areas of short rotation tree crops may however form part of a larger area devoted mainly to longer cycles or to forest conservation or restoration. There is nothing in principle which prevents such products being produced in the context of a forest management unit that complies with the FSC Principles and Criteria, in which case the products are eligible to carry the FSC Logo. 7.4 Regional Forest Stewardship Standards may provide further clarification as to the limits of area of short rotation tree crop that can be regarded as forming part of a wider forest management unit, eligible to meet the requirements of the <i>FSC P&C</i>. 5. Oil palm. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Oil palm (<i>Elaeis guineensis</i>) is a tropical African forest palm. Its native habitat was the moist tropical forest of the Gulf of Guinea, from about Nigeria to the Republic of Congo. Fruits of the palm have been collected since ancient times, and cultivation by the forest peoples may have taken place as long as 5000 years ago. It grows to a height of about 15m and can live to around 80 years of age. The earliest plantations are thought to have been established through natural germination following removal of the native forest canopy ('Tropical plants' W. Lötschert & G. Beese, HarperCollins Publishers, 1994).
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	<p>5.2 A typical production system for oil palm involves trees being grown to adulthood. Fruit may be harvested year round. Trees are typically felled and replaced when more than 30 - 40 years of age. Whilst management is typically intensive, there is no reason in principle why trees should not be grown in a way that allows the development of an undercover, in combination with other species along watercourses and in protected areas, thus allowing the ecological functions and values of a forest to develop.</p> <p>5.3 In <i>principle</i> therefore, there is no reason why an oil palm plantation should not be eligible for certification.</p> <p>5.4 In practice whether an oil palm plantation can be certified would depend on compliance with the FSC P&C, as it would for a plantation of any other species.</p> <p>6. Similar arguments may be advanced for other species such as rubber, cacao, brazil nut trees, apples, oranges or olives.</p> <p>7. In the case of silvo-pastoral, agroforestry and medium to long rotation coppice systems decisions would have to be made on a case by case basis. FSC recognises that there may be no clear-cut distinction between a system which is sufficiently close to maintaining the ecological functions and values required by the FSC P&C to be certifiable, and one which does not. In such cases it is recommended to agree with the FSC Secretariat whether the system in question is within the scope of the FSC certification system before entering into an evaluation contract with the client.</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-02 V3-0 Certification of primary forests

ADVICE-20-007-02 V3-0	Certification of primary forests
Normative reference	FSC-STD-60-004 International Generic Indicators, Principle 9 FSC-STD-60-004 International Generic Indicators, Criterion 10.1 FSC-STD-20-007 V4-0 Forest Management Evaluations, Clause 1.1 FSC-STD-30-010 Controlled Forest Management, Principle 9 FSC-STD-30-010 Controlled Forest Management, Criterion 10.1
Approval date	05 June 2024 by the FSC Board of Directors
Effective date	For Organizations holding Forest Management Certification ¹ and implementing <FSC-STD-01-004 FSC Regulatory Module>: 1 July 2024 For all other Organizations holding Forest Management Certification: 1 October 2024
Transition end date	31 December 2025 NOTE: A transition period is not applicable for Organizations implementing <FSC-STD-01-004 FSC Regulatory Module>.
Scope	This Advice Note applies to Organizations holding Forest Management Certification and certification bodies accredited for Forest Management Certification.
Terms & definitions	Naturally regenerating forest: Forest predominantly composed of trees established through natural regeneration; it includes any of the following:

¹ Including Organizations certified against <FSC-STD-30-010 V3-0 Controlled Forest Management>.

	<p>a) forests for which it is not possible to distinguish whether planted or naturally regenerated;</p> <p>b) forests with a mix of naturally regenerated native tree species and planted or seeded trees, and where the naturally regenerated trees are expected to constitute the major part of the growing stock at stand maturity;</p> <p>c) coppice from trees originally established through natural regeneration;</p> <p>d) naturally regenerated trees of introduced species.</p> <p>(Source: Regulation (European Union) 2023/1115 on deforestation-free products).</p> <p>Planted forest: Forest predominantly composed of trees established through planting and/or deliberate seeding, provided that the planted or seeded trees are expected to constitute more than 50 % of the growing stock at maturity; it includes coppice from trees that were originally planted or seeded. (Source: Regulation (European Union) 2023/1115 on deforestation-free products).</p> <p>Primary forest: Naturally regenerated forest of native tree species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed. (Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Terms and Definitions provided under Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025).</p> <p>NOTE: Primary forests are home to Indigenous Peoples and local communities and are the basis of their identity, culture, belief system, traditional knowledge, and livelihoods. A forest meeting the primary forest definition above would not be excluded due to the presence of these communities.</p>
Background	<p>When the FSC Principles and Criteria were first approved in October 1994, FSC Principle 9 referred to the requirements for certification of 'primary' forests. Principle 9 was subsequently reviewed and replaced by the concept of 'High Conservation Value Forests', which was approved by the FSC members and Board of Directors in January 1999. In 2012, the term High Conservation Values (HCVs), including six HCV categories, was introduced with the FSC Principles and Criteria V5, covering not only forests, but also other ecosystems.</p> <p>In 2024, this Advice Note has been revised to reflect the latest FAO definition of primary forests and to clarify how FSC requirements prevent the conversion of primary forests to planted forests in accordance with the Regulation (European Union) 2023/1115 on deforestation-free products.</p>
Version history	<p>V1-0: Approved in March 2005</p> <p>V2-0: Approved in 2010</p> <p>V3-0: Approved in June 2024</p>
Advice	<p>1. Certification of primary forests is possible within the FSC system when forest management is in conformity with the requirements of the</p>

	<p>applicable Forest Stewardship Standard, including but not limited to the High Conservation Value (HCV) requirements in Principle 9.</p> <p>The use of artificial regeneration after harvesting in a primary forest does not result in an area to be classified as planted forest when conducted in line with Criterion 10.1 of <FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship>, which requires The Organization to regenerate vegetation cover to pre-harvesting or more natural conditions.</p> <p>2. Forests that would meet the definition of planted forests but where it is not possible to distinguish at maturity whether they were planted or naturally regenerated, are considered to be naturally regenerating forest.</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-03 Certification of concessions

ADVICE-20-007-03	Certification of concessions
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 EN Clause 1.1 FSC-STD-01-001 Criterion 1.6
Effective date	March 2005
Terms & definitions	<i>Forest concession</i> : system of awarding harvesting rights to individuals, private companies and/or communities who assume the risk and responsibility of forest resources exploitation and/or management.
Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forest land is often managed and/or harvested on a concession system. The landowner, typically a state, leases the right to harvest the concession area to a private company for a specified length of time. The concession is issued subject to terms and conditions agreed between the land owner and the concessionaire which vary widely from one case to another. The landowner has the right to revoke the concession if the terms of the agreement are not met. Concessions may be leased for short time periods (e.g. 5 years), based on harvesting rights, or for much longer (e.g. 30 years) based on harvesting rights and many management responsibilities. Even the longest concessions rarely reflect the life cycle of the harvested species. 2. The concession system raises a number of issues for certification bodies and FSC. Firstly, it represents a division of responsibilities between the owner and the manager. Criterion 1.6 of the FSC Principles and Criteria refers to the forest managers' commitment to adhere to the FSC P&C, rather than the forest owner's. This criterion requires clarification in the case of a concession system. 3. Secondly, Criterion 2.1 asks for 'clear evidence of long-term forest use rights to the land'. Whilst the legal rights of concessionaires are often clear, it is not clear whether these can be considered 'long-term'. The situation is compounded when a concessionaire applies for certification towards the end of a concession period.
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Division of management responsibilities between owners and managers is very common in forestry. It occurs on all scales from the very large to the very small. In such cases the manager's freedom to manage the land in accordance with the FSC P&C may be constrained

	<p>by the owner's management objectives. However committed the manager is to implementation of the P&C, the manager may be over-ruled by the owner. It is therefore essential that the manager has explicit authorisation from the owner to manage the forest in compliance with the FSC P&C. In the case of concession systems the certification body must be satisfied that the manager has full authority to implement the FSC P&C in the concession area. It must be clear to the manager that if the owner imposes constraints which prevent implementation of the P&C, the certificate will be withdrawn.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Short concession lengths have been symptomatic of short-term interest in the forest. However the length of a concession does not of itself determine whether good management will or will not take place, nor whether the owners or managers are committed to the FSC Principles and Criteria. Ownership of forest land can change, even where the land is owned by the forest manager. Long concessions may change hands before their expiry date. 3. FSC does not consider that a short concession length necessarily precludes certification. In some cases, very short logging concessions or harvesting licences may be issued by owners (including states) committed to good long term management. Similarly the number of years that a concession has to run does not determine whether certification is possible or not. A forest manager coming to the end of a 50 year concession is just as eligible for certification as a forest manager at the start of a 50 year concession. The key factor is whether there is convincing evidence of management for the long-term stewardship of the forest. The certification body shall document this evidence in the relevant audit report. 4. In evaluating long-term commitment to the FSC Principles and Criteria, FSC is looking for evidence of resources invested in long term management - for example in research, inventory, management planning, roading, controlled harvesting, post harvest inventory and forest protection. These are considered in other FSC Criteria. 5. In evaluating long-term forest use rights to the land, FSC is looking for clear long-term use rights of the owner. These may be partially delegated to a responsible authority, such as a concessionaire, for a shorter or longer period. FSC is then looking for clear evidence of this delegation of authority, together with the owner's commitment that the delegated authority has the right to manage the land in compliance with the FSC P&C. 6. When ownership or management changes during the period of validity of a certificate, the certification body must withdraw the certificate, and may re-issue it in the name of the new owner/manager only if the certification body is satisfied that the conditions on which certification depends are still being complied with.
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ADVICE-20-007-04 Mining and Quarrying

ADVICE-20-007-04	Mining and Quarrying
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 EN Clause 1.2 b) and 8.14 FSC-POL-20-003 The excision of areas from the scope of certification
Effective date	March 2005
Terms & definitions	
Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In many countries mining and mineral rights are separated from rights of ownership or rights to manage land for forestry or other purposes. Often these rights are dealt with by different government departments, and may be exercised by different and independent entities. 2. This can lead to major conflicts between a forest management enterprise trying to implement forest stewardship in compliance with the FSC P&C, and other enterprises engaged in mineral prospecting or extraction.
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The basis of certification is the implementation of the FSC Principles and Criteria in the forest. 2. If mining can be carried out in a forest area without compromising the implementation of the FSC Principles and Criteria, then that forest area may be certified. 3. In some circumstances it may be acceptable to excise areas in which mining takes place from the scope of the certificate, and/or to accept limited areas within the scope of the certificate in which the full set of requirements are not fully met. Specific criteria and indicators for assessing these situations are specified in <i>FSC-POL-20-003</i>.

ADVICE-20-007-05 Non Timber Forest Products

ADVICE-20-007-05	Non Timber Forest Products
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 EN Clause 1.1
Effective date	March 2005 (revised 2015)
Terms & definitions	
Background	It has been recognised for some time that additional guidance is required with respect to the level of evaluation that is required, especially when there is harvesting of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) for commercial sales, or when non-commercial harvesting of NTFPs has important impacts. Special guidelines are also required for the labelling of NTFPs.
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Certification bodies must take account of the potential impacts of the harvesting or collection of NTFPs as part of the normal evaluation for compliance of a forest management enterprise with the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard. The potential impacts of such harvesting or collection must be considered whether or not the client proposes to use the FSC Trademarks to promote those products. 2. At the 12th FSC Board meeting, January 1998, the FSC Board approved a policy to allow FSC certification and labelling of NTFPs with immediate effect. NTFPs from certified forests may carry the FSC

	<p>Logo on-product, and may be promoted with the FSC Logo and Trademarks off-product.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. If a client wants to make on-product or off-product claims, the certification body must evaluate the management system used for the specific NTFP. The NTFP evaluation may take place during the main certification evaluation, or may be carried out at any time afterwards. 4. The certification body shall use standards prepared or adapted in the region for that NTFP, or it shall prepare its own NTFP standards by a process of national or regional consultation similar to the process currently used for the local adaptation of certification body generic standards (see FSC-STD-20-002). The standard shall at least include NTFP-specific indicators for the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria 1.1, 2.1, 4.2, 5.6, 6.1, 6.6, 7.1, and 8.2 5. The certification body shall submit the standard to FSC International in order to request a formal decision from the Policy and Standards Committee prior to using the standard. 6. Standards developed by FSC National Initiatives for the certification of NTFPs may be submitted to the FSC International Center for FSC approval. Once approved, such standards shall be used by any FSC-accredited certification body as the basis for FSC certification of NTFPs within the scope of the approved standard. 7. Certification bodies shall take account of existing NTFP standards in a region, case by case, whenever they are contracted to certify and label NTFPs, even when the standards are not formally approved by FSC. 8. The certification body must include NTFPs in the scope of the applicable joint FM/COC certificate in order for the NTFPs to be labelled or promoted subsequently using the FSC trademarks. 9. On-product labelling of NTFPs using the FSC trademarks shall only be permitted on the basis of a chain of custody certificate or joint FM/COC certificate issued by an FSC-accredited certification body which includes the specified NTFP product(s) within its scope. 10. In order to issue a chain of custody certificate for an NTFP product, the certification body shall first describe the proposed product(s) and related claim(s) to the Trademark Department of FSC Global Development, including a description of all non FSC-certified ingredients that may be included in the product. The certification body must receive written permission that the FSC trademarks may be used to promote the product(s) on the basis of the proposed claim(s), prior to the issue of an FSC-endorsed certificate. The Trademark Department shall not withhold such permission unreasonably. The certification body shall then evaluate its client's chain of custody control systems to verify the proposed claim. 11. The Trademark Department of FSC Global Development and FSC reserve the right to register the FSC Trademarks for the appropriate classes and to charge the certification body at cost for this service. The cost may be passed on to the client which has requested the sub-licence to use the FSC Trademarks for labels or market claims. The cost is likely to be around US\$500 per trademark per country and category, and typically takes 3 - 6 months. The certification body
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	<p>should inform its client of the probable cost of registration at an early stage.</p> <p>12. Claims and labels shall use a form of words adapted as appropriate from the FSC Trademark Standards. All parties may take a flexible approach, with full consultation between the certification body, the FSC Trademark Department, and the client. The certification body shall evaluate all on- and off-product claims in relation to the certification of the product, and ensure that they are not misleading.</p> <p>13. The FSC Trademarks shall not be associated in any way with NTFPs unless they come from forests fully certified within the FSC system.</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-06 FSC certification of bamboo

ADVICE-20-007-06	FSC certification of bamboo
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 EN Clause 1.1
Effective date	13 May 2004
Terms & definitions	
Background	Can certification bodies certify/ label bamboo?
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where bamboo occurs within the matrix of an FSC-certified natural forest or plantation it may be certified/ labeled as a Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) following FSC's general guidance for NTFPs. 2. If bamboo is itself grown as a plantation crop, or is itself the principal component of a 'natural forest' it may or may not be possible to certify under the FSC system, depending on the specific situation. The key question is whether the area of bamboo is within FSC's definition of a 'natural forest' or 'plantation', and then whether the management of the area meets the requirements of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship. Potential applicants for certification are advised to request a 'scoping visit' from an FSC accredited certification body to seek advice on this before proceeding to a full evaluation. 3. Within the FSC system a forest or a tree plantation may be considered for certification if it meets either the definition of 'natural forest' or a 'plantation' (see glossary to FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship). If an area of bamboo can be considered natural forest or part thereof, or a plantation, can be managed in compliance with the FSC P&C, and maintain the ecological functions and values required by the FSC P&C, then it may be evaluated and certified within the FSC system. Satisfaction of these requirements depends on the particular production system in question rather than on the product type, or the tree/bamboo species as such. 4. There are many species of bamboo, the larger of which may be considered treelike. Larger areas of such bamboo are often referred to as 'bamboo forests'. Such areas may be considered as 'natural forests' within FSC's definition, and may be evaluated for certification based on the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship. 5. Bamboo of any size may also occur naturally as patches within a natural forest or plantation matrix. In this case the bamboo may be

	<p>considered as a non-timber forest product, and be certified as such within the FSC system.</p> <p>6. In the case of plantation grown bamboo a decision would need to be made by the certification body as to whether it comes within the FSC definition of 'plantation', and whether the management system can meet the FSC Principles and Criteria. This decision may be based on such factors as the size of the bamboo stems, the length of the rotation, the presence or absence of other trees within the matrix, and the extent to which ecological functions are maintained.</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-07 Cultivated Shiitake mushrooms

ADVICE-20-007-07	Cultivated Shiitake mushrooms
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 EN Clause 1.1
Effective date	16 September 2005 (revised 2010)
Terms & definitions	
Background	Can cultivated Shiitake mushrooms be FSC-certified or be marketed with the FSC Logo or associated claims? If so, what kinds of claims would be permitted?
Advice	<p>1. 'Wild harvested' mushrooms from FSC-certified forests are considered to be a non-timber forest project and eligible for certification and labelling under existing rules and regulations.</p> <p>2. The cultivation of the Shiitake is not directly related to the forest management and the Shiitake is not in this case a wild-grown product harvested from the forest. Cultivated Shiitake mushrooms therefore are not considered eligible as an 'FSC-certified' non-timber forest product, based on the described means of cultivation. The case depends on whether other claims can be made using the FSC logo, based on the substrate used, or location of cultivation. Responsibility for providing advice and approval about the use of FSC trademarks for this case rests with the Trademark Department of FSC Global Development.</p> <p>FSC proposes the following regarding labeling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mushrooms that are grown on FSC-certified logs (solid, or re-constituted) may be marketed using the FSC trademarks. The logs themselves shall be "FSC pure" (100% FSC), coming from an FSC-certified forest and covered by a valid FM/CoC or CoC certificate. b) Whether cultivated mushrooms are grown within or outside of an FSC-certified forest area is not considered relevant. c) Mushrooms not grown on FSC-certified logs and which are not 'wild harvested' from FSC-certified forests, may not be promoted using the FSC trademarks. d) The statement associated with the FSC trademarks must be in relation to the FSC-certified logs where the mushrooms were cultivated. Examples include: "These Shiitake mushrooms and

	<p>Criteria” or “The process of cultivation of these Shiitake mushrooms takes place on FSC-certified logs.”</p> <p>e) FSC is open to consider other proposed claims suggested by Nominated Agents or Certification Bodies. Such claims shall be in line with the advice given by MCU above.</p> <p>f) Claims may not be made about cultivated mushrooms based on the location of the cultivation unit.</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-08 Single species sustained yield

ADVICE-20-007-08	Single species sustained yield
Normative reference	FSC-STD-01-001 Criterion 5.6
Effective date	March 2005
Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In any natural forest there is a succession of trees of different species at different scales. At scales varying from a single tree gap, to the aftermath of a flood, forest fire, hurricane or landslip there is a succession from colonizing trees to the trees typical of an older forest. No forest is in a steady state at all scales. 2. A typical pattern of ‘management’ of natural forests worldwide has been to successively harvest the most valuable species of the most useful size-classes, with varying degrees of consideration of the consequences for future management of the forest. This has often been combined with techniques to discourage or eliminate the less commercially valuable species. This pattern may generate a succession of ‘commercial’ species as the most valuable are repeatedly removed until they become either commercially or locally extinct. In this way the forest may become commercially and environmentally degraded until it is abandoned, often to be burnt or converted to agriculture. 3. Between the extremes of non-intervention and unsustainable exploitation are forest managers trying to achieve a commercial harvest of wood and non wood products whilst maintaining the social and environmental values of the forest. Nevertheless, any commercial harvesting of trees will influence the natural succession, at a scale dependent on the scale of harvesting. Many management systems in fact intentionally distort both the species and size-class distribution in order to favour ‘commercial’ species of ‘commercial’ sizes. Such distortions must have an effect on the distribution of biodiversity within the forest. 4. Furthermore there may be an inherent conflict between some impacts of harvesting or management, and the longer term distribution of species and age-classes within the forest. Many commercial species, including mahogany (<i>Swietenia spp.</i>) are essentially light demanding. Higher intensity logging will create more light, improving regeneration, but increasing disturbance. Single tree logging will allow less light, reducing regeneration, but causing less disturbance. There may therefore be inherent trade-offs between the objectives of reducing short term environmental impact, and the longer term environmental objective of regeneration. Opinion amongst conservation scientists

	<p>appears to be divided as to the environmentally preferable option (e.g. see P. Rice, Scientific American March 1997). Similar conflicts are common in temperate as well as tropical ecosystems.</p> <p>5. How should a certification body determine in similar circumstances whether a particular forest management enterprise is carrying out unsustainable exploitation of the forest, or is implementing long term forest stewardship?</p>
Advice	<p>1. The FSC International Center considers that it would be counterproductive to insist that companies slavishly work to ensure single species sustained yield, when the implication is a high level of immediate environmental impact, a high financial cost, and unknown long term environmental impacts.</p> <p>2. However, in situations in which logging is likely to lead to long term changes in species and size-class distribution it is essential that representative areas, and areas of particular conservation value, are protected from logging.</p> <p>3. Where there are doubts as to the impact of logging on long term yields of forest products it becomes especially important to implement the monitoring requirements of Principle 8. Criterion 8.2 states:</p> <p><i>'Forest management should include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators:</i></p> <p>a) <i>Yield of all forest products harvested.</i></p> <p>b) <i>Growth rates, regeneration and condition of the forest.</i></p> <p>c) <i>Composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna.</i></p> <p>d) <i>Environmental and social impacts of harvesting and other operations.</i></p> <p>e) <i>Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management.'</i></p>

ADVICE-20-007-09 Clearance of encroaching forest

ADVICE-20-007-09	Clearance of encroaching forest
Normative reference	FSC-STD-01-001 Criterion 6.10
Effective date	March 2005
Terms & definitions	
Background	<p>1. The FSC P&C actively promote the conservation, and in some cases restoration of forests.</p> <p>2. Is it acceptable to clear areas in which trees are encroaching onto unforested land?</p>
Advice	<p>1. Encouragement of natural regeneration on non forested land may often contribute to compliance with of Principles 6 and 10. However clearance of natural regeneration and even early secondary forest is not forbidden, as long as this does not conflict with other FSC Criteria, and in particular with the requirements of Criterion 6.10.</p> <p>2. In all cases, any specific requirements should be specified as Indicators in the applicable Forest Stewardship Standards, and evaluation shall take place to ensure compliance with the specified</p>

	<p>indicators. The following remarks are related to the development and evaluation of indicators.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. When encroachment by natural regeneration is degrading the (non-forest) habitat of a rare, threatened or endangered species or where such encroachment is by exotic species, clearance may be required in order to comply with FSC criteria (e.g. Criteria 6.2, 6.9, 10.7). 4. In general certification bodies should ensure that such clearance operations are explicitly justified in the evaluation report, and that they do not compromise other environmental management objectives (e.g. with respect to Criterion 6.3). 5. So long as such clearance operations are carried out within the context of an integrated forest management plan for the whole area and in compliance with the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard the resulting forest products may be sold as certified.
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ADVICE-20-007-10 Conversion of plantation to non forest land

ADVICE-20-007-10	Conversion of plantation to non forest land
Normative reference	FSC-STD-01-001 Criterion 6.10
Effective date	29 March 2004 (revised 2010)
Terms & definitions	
Background	<p>If areas of plantation are converted to non-forest land:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) how does this affect the certification status of the whole forest management unit; 2) can the wood from such converted areas be sold as FSC-certified?
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FSC Criterion 6.10 permits the conversion of limited areas of plantation to non-forest land uses as part of an FSC-certified management area under certain circumstances. Wood from the converted area may therefore be sold as FSC-certified. 2. Conversion in circumstances other than compliance with FSC Criterion 6.10 cannot take place within an FSC-certified area. If such conversion takes place it would lead to the removal of the FSC certificate for the whole forest management unit 3. Specific areas of plantation may be identified for conversion and be excised from the FSC-certified area in compliance with FSC-POL-20-003 FSC Policy on the excision of areas from the scope of certification. The wood from such excised areas cannot be considered as FSC-certified, and cannot be sold as FSC-certified.

ADVICE-20-007-11 Products of land clearance

ADVICE-20-007-11	Products of land clearance
Normative reference	FSC-STD-01-001 Criterion 6.10
Effective date	March 2005 (revised 2010)
Terms & definitions	
Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trees may be cleared from land for a variety of reasons, many of which are economically, socially or environmentally benign: for example, removal of encroaching scrub from pastureland, conversion to agriculture within an approved land management plan, removal of invading exotic species from unforested land, salvage of timber before or after dam construction. 2. Convincing arguments may be made as to the positive environmental or other impacts of these operations even though they are not themselves examples of sustainable forest management.
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FSC exists to support forest stewardship. Whilst there are many environmentally benign sources of timber, if they are not derived from management that complies with the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard, they cannot generally be considered as 'FSC-certified'. 2. In some circumstances wood that is the result of conversion to plantation or non-forest land use may be sold as FSC-certified, when this takes place within the context of a larger area which is in compliance with the requirements of the applicable forest stewardship standard, and is itself in compliance with the requirements of Criterion 6.10. 3. In some circumstances activities may take place within a certified area that do not comply with the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard, but which are limited in scale and which are beyond the control of the forest managers. In the specific circumstances defined in sections 1a, 2a, 3a and 4a of <i>FSC-POL-20-003 FSC Policy on the excision of areas from the scope of certification</i> wood resulting from such activities and that can be salvaged may be sold as FSC-certified.

ADVICE-20-007-12 Financial evaluation

ADVICE-20-007-12	Financial evaluation
Normative reference	FSC-STD-01-001 Criterion 5.1
Effective date	March 2005
Terms & definitions	
Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FSC's mission is to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. The FSC P&C are designed to implement this mission. There has however continued to be debate as to the extent to which FSC-accredited certification bodies should undertake evaluation and certification of the financial aspects of forest management.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Some FSC members have considered that evaluation of financial aspects should be interpreted very widely, to include for example the source of funding for forest management, and the methods of fundraising and marketing. Other FSC members believe that financial evaluation should be interpreted more narrowly, on the grounds that this is beyond the intent of the FSC Principles and Criteria, and that financial auditing is beyond the area of expertise of FSC and FSC-accredited certification bodies, and is best left to other agencies.
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic criteria are specified in a number of the FSC Principles, especially Principle 5. More widely the whole set of social and environmental requirements is designed to enhance long-term economic sustainability of the operation. 2. Certification bodies are required to evaluate a forest management enterprise for compliance with the requirements of the applicable FSC Forest Stewardship Standard. Certification bodies are not required by FSC to evaluate compliance with additional requirements. 3. Certification bodies must ensure that claims about certification are accurate and are not misleading. The FSC certification system does not provide a financial audit, and does not provide or imply a guarantee of financial returns. Certification bodies must ensure that their clients do not make such claims either explicitly or by implication.

ADVICE-20-007-13 Certification of windbreaks

ADVICE-20-007-13	Certification of windbreaks
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 EN Clause 1.1
Effective date	8 April 2005 (revised 2010)
Terms & definitions	
Background	Are windbreaks within the scope of the FSC certification system?
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small forest areas have been certified under the FSC system in a number of situations – for example as small woodlots, and as riverine features. Whilst it is unlikely that a single line of trees would be able to comply with the FSC P&C or the definition of “forest area”, a linear feature which is some tens of metres wide could be within the scope of FSC certification. 2. If a windbreak meets FSC’s broad definition of a forest (or plantation) and its management complies with the FSC Principles and Criteria, then it may be certified within the FSC system. 3. The certification body has to determine, on a case-by-case basis whether the management of a windbreak complies with the FSC P&C, in accordance with a national or locally adapted FSC Forest Stewardship Standard.

ADVICE-20-007-14 Certification of forest remnants

ADVICE-20-007-14	Certification of forest remnants
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 EN Clause 1.1
Effective date	8 April 2005 (revised 2010)
Terms & definitions	
Background	Where an area of forest has been cleared for agriculture, can the remnant of the forest subsequently be certified under the FSC system?
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The issue under consideration in this advice relates to remnant forest areas left after conversion of forestland to agriculture. 2. The scope of FSC certification does not include agricultural land or agricultural land management practices. Agricultural products are not within the scope of FSC certification and labelling. 3. FSC does not at present have any policy or standard that addresses the issue of forestland converted to agriculture prior to the application for certification of the remnant forest. 4. For now, certification of forest remnants should be based on the management of the remnants themselves, and their compliance (or non-compliance) with the FSC P&C. 5. Under current FSC policies, the management of forest remnants may be evaluated for compliance with the FSC Principles and Criteria (FSC P&C), and if it complies, subsequently be certified.

ADVICE-20-007-15 Certification of Management Units (MUs) with areas converted from natural forest to plantations between 01 November 1994 and 01 April 2013

ADVICE-20-007-15	Certification of Management Units (MUs) with areas converted from natural forest to plantations between 01 November 1994 and 01 April 2013
Normative reference	FSC-POL-20-003 FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the scope of certification FSC-STD-01-001 V4-0 Criterion 10.9 FSC-STD-01-001 V5-0 Criterion 6.10
Effective date	01 May 2013
Terms & definitions	<p>Management Unit: A spatial area or areas submitted for FSC certification with clearly defined boundaries managed to a set of explicit long term management objectives which are expressed in a management plan. This area or areas include(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all facilities and area(s) within or adjacent to this spatial area or areas under legal title or management control of, or operated by or on behalf of The Organization, for the purpose of contributing to the management objectives; and • all facilities and area(s) outside, and not adjacent to this spatial area or areas and operated by or on behalf of The Organization, solely for the purpose of contributing to the management objectives. <p>(Source: Glossary of Terms, in: Principles and Criteria V5)</p>

Background	<p>There are situations where a single Management Unit (MU) contains a mosaic of heterogeneous stand conditions, including plantation stands established on areas converted from natural forests after 1994. In these situations, Organizations are constrained from entering the whole MU into FSC certification as MUs containing natural forests converted after 1994 are not eligible to be FSC certified.</p> <p>Under defined conditions (see “FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the scope of certification”, FSC-POL-20-003) areas which are not eligible for certification may be ‘excised’ from the scope of the certificate (but remain part of the MU) whilst the remaining area can receive full FSC certification.</p> <p>This Advice has been developed to provide an alternative option for situations where the specific conditions of the existing Excision Policy cannot be applied, but where an Organization would like to receive certification to demonstrate their commitment to responsible forest management.</p>
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In order to certify MUs in situations as described above, the Organization shall split the existing MU containing post-1994 conversion plantations into 2 or more subunits to separate the post-1994 plantation areas from the potentially certifiable areas. 2. Each subunit created by this separation shall be clearly identifiable on maps and on the ground. 3. The subunit(s) containing the post-1994 conversion plantations shall be certified to the FSC Controlled Wood Standard (FSC-STD-30-010) before or at the same time as the full FSC certification of the other subunit(s). 4. A segregation system for forest products originating from the different subunits shall be implemented as part of the internal Chain of Custody to avoid false claims. 5. Any conversion within the MU must have ceased not less than two (2) years before the certificates can be issued.

ADVICE-20-007-016 Wind turbine establishment within FSC certified areas

ADVICE-20-007-016	Wind turbine establishment within FSC certified areas
Normative reference	FSC-STD-01-001 V4-0 EN (2004) C1.1, C6.1, C6.10 FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0 EN (2004) FSC-POL-01-004 V2-0 EN (2011)
Effective date	23 July 2012
Terms & definitions	<p>Affected area: the area that needs to be converted so that the wind turbines are operational.</p> <p>Very limited portion: The area affected shall not exceed 0.5% of the area of the MU in any one year, nor affect a total of more than 5% of the area of the MU. Source: FSC-STD-01-002 (V1-0) EN FSC Glossary of Terms.</p> <p>In the context of this advice only, the following shall apply in addition: It is recognized that in the case of wind turbine establishment annual conversion limits may not be practical to apply. Therefore only the total 5% area</p>

	<p>restriction shall be applied. In the case of groups of SLIMFs this threshold can be applied at the level of the Resource Management Unit (RMU), as defined in FSC-STD-30-005 (V1-0) EN FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups.</p>
<p>Background</p>	<p>FSC recognizes that wind turbines can have positive environmental benefits by providing renewable energy. However, there are several factors to consider if wind turbines are proposed within an FSC certified Management Unit (MU). These factors include forest conversion, maintaining High Conservation Values and Environmental Impact Assessment, as well as compliance with applicable laws and regulations.</p> <p>This Advice has been developed on request to provide clarification on <u>existing</u> rules for certificate holders who want to establish wind turbines on their FSC certified land. This Advice is not intended to create new requirements.</p>
<p>Advice</p>	<p>1 Compliance with the applicable FSC Forest Stewardship Standard</p> <p>1.1 The establishment of wind turbines within FSC certified MUs constitutes conversion where the vegetation is changed from forest or plantation to non-forest land use. It is important to note that wind turbines cannot be considered as forest or social-related infrastructure.</p> <p>1.2 In the case of conversion such establishments shall comply with <u>all</u> aspects of Criterion 6.10 in <i>FSC-STD-01-001 V4-0 EN FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship</i>, which states:</p> <p><i>C 6.10 Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur, except in circumstances where conversion:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit; and</i> b) <i>does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and</i> c) <i>will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long term conservation benefits across the forest management unit.</i> <p>1.3 Demonstrating compliance with Criterion 6.10 c) may be a challenge given the nature of the establishment of wind turbines. One example for acceptable evidence of compliance would be strong stakeholder support, including from local communities, on the clear, substantial, additional, secure, long term conservation benefits that wind turbines deliver to the FMU. National Offices may develop further guidance (to be approved by PSU) on means to demonstrate compliance with Criterion 6.10 c).</p> <p>1.4 In addition to demonstrating compliance with Criterion 6.10, the establishment of wind turbines must also comply with all other elements of the applicable FSC Forest Stewardship Standard. Other elements of particular relevance are:</p> <p>Criterion 1.1: compliance with relevant laws and regulations;</p> <p>Criterion 3.2: protecting the resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples or communities; <i>and</i></p> <p>Criterion 6.1: Environmental Impact Assessment.</p>

2 Compliance with the Policy on Excision

If the proposed establishment of wind turbines does not meet the requirements of the applicable FSC Forest Stewardship Standard, as explained above, the affected area may be excised from the scope of the FSC certificate, as specified in *FSC-POL-20-003 FSC Policy on the excision of areas from the scope of certification*.

In summary, this Policy offers two possible solutions, depending on whether or not the affected area remains under the control of the forest manager:

2.1 In situations where there are specific areas of the forest in which full compliance with the requirements of the applicable FSC Forest Stewardship Standard cannot be achieved for reasons beyond the control of the managers the following criteria apply:

- a) Management shall make all reasonable efforts to avoid any negative impact of the excised area on the certified area;
- b) Management shall promptly and appropriately respond to any negative impact;
- c) The overall management plan for the certified FMU shall take full account of the potential impacts;
- d) The affected area is a very limited portion of the FMU.

2.2 On occasions when it is acceptable to excise specific areas from the scope of an evaluation for reasons which remain under the control of the manager, the following criteria apply:

- a) The management of the excised area shall not prevent compliance with FSC standards in the remaining FMU;
- b) The excised area shall be well defined and clearly distinguished from the remaining FMU;
- c) Management of the excised areas shall be verified by the certification body as being in compliance with FSC-STD-30-010;
- d) Management shall implement systems to ensure that any forest products coming from the excised area are not mixed with the products from the certified area;
- e) Management shall provide a full list of all forest areas excised, and a rationale for excision.

NOTE: Please see the “FSC Policy on the excision of areas from the scope of certification” (FSC-POL-20-003) for the full set of requirements for forest managers and certification bodies.

ADVICE-20-007-17 Applicable National and Local Laws and Regulations

ADVICE-20-007-17	Applicable National and Local Laws and Regulations
Normative reference	FSC-STD-01-001 V4-0 (2004) FSC-STD-60-002 V1-0 (2009) FSC-STD-20-002 V3-0 (2009)
Effective date	01 March 2013 (revised 10 July 2014) No Forest Stewardship Standard -either approved by FSC or CB-adapted- shall be used after this date without the application of this Advice Note.
Background	<p>Criterion 1.1 of the FSC Principles and Criteria (V4-0) states that “Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements”.</p> <p>National Standards are required to include 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.</p> <p>Given recent development with government legality initiatives, such as the US Lacey Act and EU Timber Regulation, it is important that the scope of the list of laws required by FSC is clear and consistent with the definition of “applicable legislation” as outlined in such regulations.</p>
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prior to main/re-evaluation and surveillance audits after 01 March 2013, Certification Bodies shall use Table 1 (below) to compile a list of applicable legislation to be evaluated for each country where they operate. 2. The Certification Bodies shall consider existing national lists from approved FSC National Forest Stewardship Standards, Certification Body Adapted Standards and other reputable sources in order to compile the list. 3. Certification Bodies shall apply this list in relation to the evaluation of Forest Management Operations to the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard when evaluating Criterion 1.1 and any other Criteria where existing legislation requires compliance of a Forest Management Operation. Any legal requirements that have not been previously evaluated shall be evaluated in the next audit after the effective date.
<p>Table 1: Minimum list of applicable laws, regulations and nationally-ratified international treaties, conventions and agreements.</p>	
1. Legal rights to harvest	
1.1 Land tenure and management rights	Legislation covering land tenure rights, including customary rights as well as management rights that includes the use of legal methods to obtain tenure rights and management rights. It also covers legal business registration and tax registration, including relevant legal required licenses.
1.2 Concession licenses	Legislation regulating procedures for the issuing of forest concession licenses, including use of legal methods to obtain concession license. Especially bribery, corruption and nepotism are well-known issues in connection with concession licenses.

1.3 Management and harvesting planning	Any legal requirements for management planning, including conducting forest inventories, having a forest management plan and related planning and monitoring, as well as approval of these by competent authorities.
1.4 Harvesting permits	Legislation regulating the issuing of harvesting permits, licenses or other legal document required for specific harvesting operations. It includes the use of legal methods to obtain the permit. Corruption is a well-known issue in connection with the issuing of harvesting permits.
2. Taxes and fees	
2.1 Payment of royalties and harvesting fees	Legislation covering payment of all legally required forest harvesting specific fees such as royalties, stumpage fees and other volume based fees. It also includes payments of the fees based on correct classification of quantities, qualities and species. Incorrect classification of forest products is a well-known issue often combined with bribery of officials in charge of controlling the classification.
2.2 Value added taxes and other sales taxes	Legislation covering different types of sales taxes which apply to the material being sold, including selling material as growing forest (standing stock sales).
2.3 Income and profit taxes	Legislation covering income and profit taxes related to the profit derived from sale of forest products and harvesting activities. This category is also related to income from the sale of timber and does not include other taxes generally applicable for companies or related to salary payments.
3. Timber harvesting activities	
3.1 Timber harvesting regulations	Any legal requirements for harvesting techniques and technology including selective cutting, shelter wood regenerations, clear felling, transport of timber from felling site and seasonal limitations etc. Typically this includes regulations on the size of felling areas, minimum age and/or diameter for felling activities and elements that shall be preserved during felling etc. Establishment of skidding or hauling trails, road construction, drainage systems and bridges etc. shall also be considered as well as planning and monitoring of harvesting activities. Any legally binding codes for harvesting practices shall be considered.
3.2 Protected sites and species	Covers legislation related to protected areas as well as protected, rare or endangered species, including their habitats and potential habitats.
3.3 Environmental requirements	Covers legislation related to environmental impact assessment in connection with harvesting, acceptable level for soil damage, establishment of buffer zones (e.g. along water courses, open areas, breeding sites), maintenance of retention trees on felling site, seasonal limitation of harvesting time, and environmental requirements for forest machineries.
3.4 Health and safety	Legally required personal protection equipment for persons involved in harvesting activities, use of safe felling and transport practice, establishment of protection zones around harvesting sites, and safety requirements to machinery used. Legally required safety requirements in relation to chemical usage. The health and safety requirements that shall

	be considered relate to operations in the forest (not office work, or other activities less related to actual forest operations).
3.5 Legal employment	Legal requirements for employment of personnel involved in harvesting activities including requirement for contracts and working permits, requirements for obligatory insurances, requirements for competence certificates and other training requirements, and payment of social and income taxes withhold by employer. Furthermore, the points cover observance of minimum working age and minimum age for personal involved in hazardous work, legislation against forced and compulsory labour, and discrimination and freedom of association.
4. Third parties' rights	
4.1 Customary rights	Legislation covering customary rights relevant to forest harvesting activities including requirements covering sharing of benefits and indigenous rights.
4.2 Free prior and informed consent	Legislation covering "free prior and informed consent" in connection with transfer of forest management rights and customary rights to the organisation in charge of the harvesting operation.
4.3 Indigenous peoples rights	Legislation that regulates the rights of indigenous people as far as it's related to forestry activities. Possible aspects to consider are land tenure, right to use certain forest related resources or practice traditional activities, which may involve forest lands.
5. Trade and transport NOTE: This section covers requirements for forest management operations as well as processing and trade.	
5.1 Classification of species, quantities, qualities	Legislation regulating how harvested material is classified in terms of species, volumes and qualities in connection with trade and transport. Incorrect classification of harvested material is a well-known method to reduce/avoid payment of legality prescribed taxes and fees.
5.2 Trade and transport	All required trading permits shall exist as well as legally required transport document which accompany transport of wood from forest operation.
5.2 Offshore trading and transfer pricing	Legislation regulating offshore trading. Offshore trading with related companies placed in tax havens combined with artificial transfer prices is a well-known way to avoid payment of legally prescribed taxes and fees to the country of harvest and considered as an important generator of funds that can be used for payment of bribery and black money to the forest operation and personal involved in the harvesting operation. Many countries have established legislation covering transfer pricing and offshore trading. It should be noted that only transfer pricing and offshore trading as far as it is legally prohibited in the country, can be included here.
5.4 Custom regulations	Custom legislation covering areas such as export/import licenses, product classification (codes, quantities, qualities and species).

5.5 CITES	CITES permits (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, also known as the Washington Convention).
6. Due diligence/due care	
6.1 Due diligence/due care procedures	Legislation requiring due diligence/due care procedures, including e.g. due diligence/due care systems, declaration obligations, and/or the keeping of trade related documents etc.

ADVICE-20-007-18 V3-0 Protection of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs)

ADVICE-20-007-18 V3-0	Protection of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs)
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 Forest Management Evaluations, Clause 8.4 FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 International Generic Indicators FSC-GUI-30-010 Intact Forest Landscape Guidance for Forest Managers. Annex 1 Management of IFL Non-Core Area: Reduced Impact Logging in Tropical Natural Forests
Approval date	V1-0: December 2016 (by FSC Director General) V2-0: December 2022 (by FSC Director General) V3-0: 03 June 2024 (by FSC Board of Directors)
Effective date	V3-0: 01 July 2024
Expiry date	This Advice Note expires in a country once a Forest Stewardship Standard based on FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 becomes effective in the country and the transition period towards that Forest Stewardship Standard is completed.
Scope	This Advice Note applies to all FM and FM/CoC certificate holders and certification bodies operating in countries where Intact Forest Landscapes exist according to Global Forest Watch maps, and where there is no approved and effective Forest Stewardship Standard based on FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, or the certificate holders have not yet transitioned to it.
Terms and definitions	<p>Indigenous cultural landscapes (ICL): living landscapes to which Indigenous Peoples attribute environmental, social, cultural and economic value because of their enduring relationship with the land, water, fauna, flora and spirits and their present and future importance to their cultural identity. An Indigenous cultural landscape is characterized by features that have been maintained through long-term interactions based on land-care knowledge, and adaptive livelihood practices. They are landscapes over which Indigenous Peoples exercise responsibility for stewardship (FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).</p> <p>Intact Forest Landscape (IFL): a territory within today's global extent of forest cover which contains forest and non-forest ecosystems minimally influenced by human economic activity, with an area of at least 500 km² (50,000 ha) and a minimal width of 10 km (measured as the diameter of a circle that is entirely inscribed within the boundaries of the territory) (Source: Intact Forests / Global Forest Watch. Glossary definition as provided on Intact Forests website. 2006-2014; FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0).</p>

	<p>The Organization: The person or entity holding or applying for certification and therefore responsible for demonstrating compliance with the requirements upon which FSC certification is based (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).</p>
Background	<p>Motion 65:2014 called for the protection of the vast majority of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs) within certified management units. This has been implemented through IFL-specific requirements in FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0 for the incorporation into Forest Stewardship Standards, and through Advice Note ADV-20-007-018 V1-0 for areas where there is no approved Forest Stewardship Standards based on FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0.</p> <p>At the General Assembly in 2022, the FSC membership recognized the challenges in implementing the IFL requirements by approving Motion 23:2020 and the associated Implementation Note, which are calling for a review and revision of the current approach.</p> <p>While this review and revision process is ongoing and until a comprehensive global approach has been developed and agreed, FSC was requested to develop an Advice Note indicating criteria for an interim rule.</p> <p>In December 2022 ADV-20-007-018 V1-0 has been revised to reflect the interim rule.</p> <p>In June 2024 ADV-20-007-18 V2-0 has been revised to extend the deadline of the interim rule while a revised approach becomes available in key countries.</p>
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forest Management operations, including harvesting and road building, shall not impact more than 20% of IFLs within the management unit and shall not reduce any IFLs below the 50,000 ha threshold in the landscape. 2. Until 30 June 2026, Forest Management operations, including harvesting and road building, may proceed on a needs basis beyond the 20% threshold, if The Organization: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Operates in a country in Latin America (including the Amazon) or in Central Africa and has held FM or FM/CoC certification at least since 14 October 2022, 2.2 Has exhausted all feasible options to harvest in non-IFL areas, 2.3 Does not impact more than 50% of IFLs within the management unit, 2.4 Does not reduce any IFLs below the 50,000 ha threshold in the landscape, 2.5 Follows the regular harvesting planning or approved management plans, 2.6 Implements minimal impact logging techniques considering Annex 1 of FSC-GUI-30-010 or Reduced-Impact Logging for

	<p>Climate Change Mitigation (RIL-C)² delivering measurable climate change mitigation outcomes,</p> <p>2.7 Applies the minimal impact logging techniques especially in road construction and minimizing fragmentation, e.g., by prioritizing the edges of IFLs rather than the centres,</p> <p>2.8 Has presented and analysed the status and plans for HCV-2 management in the management unit.</p> <p>3. The Organization shall use Global Forest Watch IFL maps or an alternative IFL inventory using the same methodology³, such as Global Forest Watch Canada, with 01 January 2017 as a baseline.</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-19 Forest Management Auditing Time

ADVICE-20-007-19	Forest Management Auditing Time
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 (V3-0) Forest management evaluations, clause 2.2
Approval date	15 June 2018
Effective date	1 January 2019 – Suspended as of 1 January 2020
Scope	<p>This advice note applies to all certification bodies (CBs) with Forest Management (FM) in their accreditation scope.</p> <p>2019 will serve as a testing period for this advice note to monitor the impact of its implementation. CBs are required to fully conform to the advice note, but will not receive any corrective action request (CAR) from Accreditation Services International (ASI) in case of major nonconformity. In cases where auditing time determined on the basis of this advice note significantly exceeds the auditing time as originally planned by the CB (especially in the case of groups of small management units (MUs), CBs are advised to contact the FSC Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) directly for analysis and conclusion, prior to conducting that audit. Towards the end of 2019, PSU will analyze the auditing times of all 2019 FM audits on the basis of the documented audit schedules in the public audit reports to evaluate the impact of this advice note. This may then result in a revision of the advice note.</p>
Terms and definitions	<p>Auditing time: Auditing time includes the collective time spent by an auditor or audit team including technical experts in performing an FSC forest management audit on-site; interfacing with the organization, personnel on-site and stakeholders; reviewing documents, processes and records; evaluation of sites. Auditing time typically begins with the opening meeting and ends with the closing meeting.</p>

² The Organization may use the methodology presented by The Nature Conservancy, TerraCarbon LLC, 2016a. Methodology for improved forest management through reduced impact logging (RIL-C). <https://verra.org/methodology/vm0035-methodology-for-improved-forest-management-through-reduced-impact-logging-v1-0/>

³ See: Global Forest Watch inventory methodology at: <https://intactforests.org/method.html>

	<p>Planning, off-site document review, stakeholder consultation process according to FSC-STD-20-006 V3-0 Clause 2.6, report writing and off-site travel time are not included in auditing time.</p> <p>Auditing time is provided as person days and calculated on the basis of an 8-hour working day.</p>																																																
Background	This FSC advice note provides a framework to be used by certification bodies to determine auditing time for the planning of their FM audits.																																																
Advice	<p>1. Auditing time procedures</p> <p>1.1 CBs shall develop their own procedures to determine auditing time on the basis of this advice note. In case of group and multiple MU audits, the CB procedure shall show how factors like travel distances and complexity are taken into account to determine the auditing time, and how auditing time is distributed over group members.</p> <p>1.2 The following table determines the auditing time for audits of single MUs under ideal circumstances with well-developed infrastructure and reasonable travel times between sites to evaluate conformity in natural and semi-natural forests.</p> <p>Table 1. Basis for calculating auditing time for single MUs per size category, in 8 hours working days</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Size of MU</th> <th>Main audits</th> <th>Re-certification audits</th> <th>Surveillance audits</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>up to 1,000 ha</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1001 to 5,000 ha</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5,001 to 10,000 ha</td> <td>3</td> <td>2.5</td> <td>1.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10,001 to 25,000 ha</td> <td>4</td> <td>3.5</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25,001 to 75,000 ha</td> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>75,001 to 150,000 ha</td> <td>9</td> <td>7.5</td> <td>4.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>150,001 to 300,000 ha</td> <td>12</td> <td>10</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>300,001 to 600,000 ha</td> <td>15</td> <td>12</td> <td>7.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>600,001 to 1,500,000 ha</td> <td>20</td> <td>16</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1,500,001 to 2,500,000 ha</td> <td>add 2 days for every 150,000 ha</td> <td>add 1,5 days for every 150,000 ha</td> <td>add 1 day for every 150,000 ha</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Above 2,5 million ha</td> <td>34</td> <td>26</td> <td>17</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Size of MU	Main audits	Re-certification audits	Surveillance audits	up to 1,000 ha	1	1	0.5	1001 to 5,000 ha	2	2	1	5,001 to 10,000 ha	3	2.5	1.5	10,001 to 25,000 ha	4	3.5	2	25,001 to 75,000 ha	6	5	3	75,001 to 150,000 ha	9	7.5	4.5	150,001 to 300,000 ha	12	10	6	300,001 to 600,000 ha	15	12	7.5	600,001 to 1,500,000 ha	20	16	10	1,500,001 to 2,500,000 ha	add 2 days for every 150,000 ha	add 1,5 days for every 150,000 ha	add 1 day for every 150,000 ha	Above 2,5 million ha	34	26	17
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- 1.3 Based on the auditing time for main, surveillance, and re-certification audits, presented in table 1, the actual auditing time shall be calculated factoring in any applicable increasing and decreasing factors.
- 1.4 Increasing and decreasing factors shall be applied consecutively. The result shall be rounded up to half days. The overall lower limit for auditing time is one day for main and re-certification audits and 0,5 days for surveillance audits, or 50 % of the auditing time provided in table 1, whichever is higher.
- 1.5 In case of group and multiple MU audits, the auditing time shall be calculated as the sum of the individual auditing times of the sampled management units. This includes the time to audit the internal management system/group system.
- 1.6 Allocation of auditing time needs to be documented in a transparent way, including the justification for increasing and decreasing factors, and shall be included in the public summary reports.

2. Factors increasing auditing time

2.1 The following factors shall increase auditing time:

- 2.1.1 Infrastructure: Additional on-site travel time shall be taken into account where infrastructure is limited or the MU is very fragmented, or due to seasonal conditions. Additional travel time shall be added to the auditing time.
- 2.1.2 Difficult stakeholder context: Additional auditing days shall be considered in difficult contexts or where stakeholders need to be visited on an individual basis; e.g. remote indigenous communities in tropical forests.
- 2.1.3 Significant number of stakeholder concerns: Each new concern needs to be fully investigated. Appropriate additional time shall be allocated to investigate all relevant concerns received.
- 2.1.4 New complaints: Additional time shall be allocated to investigate new stakeholder complaints.
- 2.1.5 New country/region: When a CB is performing an FM audit in a country/region for the first time, and unless pre-evaluation has been conducted, additional time shall be allocated to ensure that the audit team is provided with enough time to investigate and evaluate conformity with unforeseen issues.
- 2.1.6 Number of open nonconformities: Additional auditing time shall be allocated for any nonconformity identified in a previous audit that needs to be evaluated in the field, and which is likely to exceed the regular audit program for that audit.
- 2.1.7 Indigenous Peoples: Additional time shall be allocated where conformity with Principle 3 is to be evaluated.
- 2.1.8 High Conservation Values: Additional time shall be allocated where HCVs are to be evaluated.

3. Factors decreasing auditing time

	<p>3.1 Factors that allow decreasing the auditing time include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <p>3.1.1 <u>Plantations</u>¹: The auditing time required for plantations can be reduced by up to 30% for operations > 10.000 ha.</p> <p>3.1.2 <u>Limited forestry activities</u>: Where the MU(s) under evaluation is solely managed for conservation or with low intensity (according to FSC-STD-01-003 V1-0 Section 3), auditing time can be reduced by 20%.</p> <p>3.1.3 <u>Group and multiple MU certificates</u>: Auditing time can be decreased by up to 30% depending on the group type, distribution of responsibilities, homogeneity of the management system, etc.</p> <p>¹ See definition of 'plantations' given in FSC-STD-01-001 V 5.2 (P&C)</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-20 Implementation of FM digital reporting

ADVICE-20-007-20	Implementation of FM digital reporting
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007a (V1-0) EN Clause 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, Section 5 and 7.1 FSC-STD-20-007b (V1-0) EN Clause 1.1
Approval date	23 September 2020 (by FSC Director General) Revised 4 December 2020 Revised 14 July 2021 Revised 20 August 2021 Revised 17 November 2021 Revised 30 March 2022 Revised 07 June 2022
Effective date	01 January 2021
Terms & definitions	<p><i>FM digital reporting template</i>: standardized template developed by FSC to harmonize data collection and reporting from FSC forest management evaluations. The FM digital reporting template is a stepping stone in introducing more advanced technology for data collection.</p> <p>The FM digital reporting template consists of an MS Excel file that specifies the scope and architecture of data to be collected.</p> <p>The FM digital reporting template is provided in 2 (two) versions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Minimal template, which includes only selected data, and b. Full template, which includes all data required.
Background	<p>Reporting requirements for forest management evaluations are provided in “FSC-STD-20-007a (V1-0) <i>EN Forest management evaluations addendum – Forest certification reports</i>” and “FSC-STD-20-007b (V1-0) <i>EN Forest management evaluations addendum – Forest certification public summary reports</i>”.</p> <p>Based on these requirements, certification bodies develop and maintain their own certification report template, which differs in structure, format and content, even though there is a certain minimum content required. The various formats of reports and structure of data cause inconsistency in public reporting thus limiting transparency, as well as significantly limiting performance and impact monitoring done by FSC. Additionally, differences in the reports limit the ability for systemic learning from the certification processes across certification bodies.</p>

	<p>The FM digital reporting template introduces changes to the scope of data reported as per FSC-STD-20-007a in order to align with the technology available, as well as to better reflect the current data availability, reality and needs.</p> <p>In 2017, the FSC membership approved Motion 16 (Harnessing audit data to improve assurance integrity, Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), and the value proposition for FSC) to address these challenges.</p> <p>This Advice Note is part of the motion implementation process. It introduces FM digital reporting template, and regulates its implementation, as a first step in standardization of reporting data.</p> <p>To enable a transition from the current reporting practices to more advanced data collection and reporting, a stepwise approach will be applied.</p>
Advice	<p>NOTE: The earlier versions of this Advice Note required the mandatory use of the FM digital reporting template in forest management evaluations, as well as to perform a functionality test of the web interface for data upload (FM module) in former Clauses 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6. These clauses have been removed as they were time-bound, and their applicability has lapsed. The numbering of clauses in this Advice Note, however, has been kept unchanged, to retain the references in earlier issued documents and correspondence that are still relevant for the implementation of this Advice Note.</p> <p>[Clause 1-3 deleted]</p> <p>4. Certification bodies conducting forest management evaluations shall submit the FM digital reporting template filled with data to FSC, according to below:</p> <p>a) By 31 July 2022, certification bodies shall submit either the Minimal or Full template for at least two (2) forest management evaluations, using version 1.2.1 of the template or later;</p> <p>NOTE: If no audit takes place within the timelines allowing the submission by 31 July 2022, the templates may be filled in based on past evaluations.</p> <p>b) Certification bodies shall submit the Full template for all forest management evaluations where the audit commences on 1 January 2023 or later, within the timelines stipulated in Clauses 3.1 and 3.2 in FSC-STD-20-007b;</p> <p>NOTE: FSC will publish the version(s) of the template to be used by 1 October 2022.</p> <p>c) Certification bodies shall submit the FM digital reporting template filled with data by email to auditreport@fsc.org with the following format of the subject line: "FM evaluation report_FSC License code_Certification decision date in the format YYYYMMDD", e.g., FM evaluation report_FSC-F000100_20220501</p> <p>NOTE 1: All fields within the FM digital reporting template are mandatory, unless otherwise stated. The error reporting functions of the template can be used in case of difficulties.</p>

	<p>NOTE 2: The submission of the template is additional to existing reporting requirements; it does not replace the certification report (see also clause 7 below).</p> <p>[Clause 5-6 deleted]</p> <p>7. Certification bodies shall continue producing certification reports as per FSC-STD-20-007a, and producing public summaries as per FSC-STD-20-007b, as well as entering the required data in FSC Salesforce.</p> <p>a) Certification bodies may use the Full template instead of the certification report required in FSC-STD-20-007a.</p> <p>NOTE: Submitting the template as per clause 4. and 7 a). above does not replace the requirement to upload it to FSC Salesforce.</p> <p>b) Certification bodies may use either version of the FM digital reporting template to support the preparation of public summaries.</p> <p>NOTE: This option does not remove the obligation on certification bodies to ensure the resulting public summary meets the requirements of FSC-STD-20-007b.</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-21 Precautionary approach towards conflicting legislation and differing interpretations of laws and regulations

ADVICE-20-007-21	Precautionary approach towards conflicting legislation and differing interpretations of laws and regulations
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0, Clause 8.20 FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0, Criterion 1.3
Approval date	1 October 2020 (by FSC Director General)
Effective date	1 November 2020
Scope	This advice note applies to all certification bodies with FM in their accreditation scope.
Background	<p>FSC certified forest management organizations have to comply with applicable laws, regulations and nationally-ratified international treaties, conventions and agreements.</p> <p>Clause 8.20 of FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 addresses “Conflicts between certification requirements and laws and regulations”, however it leaves the question open how to proceed for certification bodies in cases where there are conflicts between different laws and regulations or where different interpretations of one and the same law or regulation exist by public authorities.</p> <p>This advice note addresses these cases and will be incorporated into the next revised version of FSC-STD-20-007 accordingly.</p>
Advice	<p>1. Certification bodies shall follow a precautionary approach in cases where there are:</p> <p>a. conflicting, contradictory or otherwise inconsistent requirements for certificate holders within or between applicable national or local laws, regulations and administrative requirements;</p>

	<p>b. differing interpretations of the above listed legal instruments by public authorities.</p> <p>2. A precautionary approach towards these cases implies that:</p> <p>a. the more or most restrictive requirements shall be applied as constituting the relevant legal basis;</p> <p>b. the more or most rigorous interpretation by public authorities shall be used to determine the practical implementation of relevant requirements.</p> <p>3. Certification bodies shall have a procedure for using the precautionary approach by identifying relevant conflicts in consultation with the relevant FSC Network Partners.</p> <p>4. In above cases where the most restrictive requirements or most rigorous interpretation cannot be determined, the certification body shall seek clarification through a formal interpretation by the FSC Performance and Standards Unit, following PSU-PRO-10-201 <i>Enquiry Procedure</i>.</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-22 Advice Note on requirements for certificate holders introduced by the Policy to Address Conversion and M37/2021

ADVICE-20-007-22	Advice Note on requirements for certificate holders introduced by the Policy to Address Conversion and M37/2021
Normative reference	FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 Policy to Address Conversion FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators
Approval date	02 May 2023 (by Director Policy Operations)
Effective date	01 July 2023
Expiry Date	<p>This Advice Note expires in a country once a Forest Stewardship Standard based on FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 becomes effective in the country and the transition period towards that Forest Stewardship Standard is completed.</p> <p>NOTE: Once The Organization has transitioned to the revised Forest Stewardship Standard, The Organization is no longer required to conform with this Advice Note.</p>
Scope	This Advice Note applies to any person or entity holding or applying for FSC Forest Management certification and certification bodies with Forest Management in their accreditation scope when conducting an evaluation.
Terms and Definitions	<p>Conversion: A lasting change of natural forest cover or High Conservation Value areas, induced by human activity. This may be characterized by significant loss of species diversity, habitat diversity, structural complexity, ecosystem functionality or livelihoods and cultural values. The definition of conversion covers gradual forest degradation as well as rapid forest transformation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induced by human activity: In contrast to drastic changes caused by natural calamities like hurricanes or volcanic eruptions. It also applies in cases of naturally ignited fires where human activities (e.g. draining of peatlands) have significantly increased the risk of fire.

- **Lasting change of natural forest cover:** Permanent or long-term change of natural forest cover. Temporary changes of forest cover or structure (e.g. harvesting followed by regeneration in accordance with the FSC normative framework) is not considered conversion.
- **Lasting change of High Conservation Value (HCV) areas:** Permanent or long-term change of any of the High Conservation Values. Temporary changes of HCV areas that do not negatively and permanently impact the values (e.g. harvesting followed by regeneration in accordance with Principle 9) is not considered a lasting change.
- **Significant loss of species diversity:** Loss of species is considered significant where rare species and threatened species or other locally important, keystone and/or flagship species are lost, whether in terms of numbers of individuals or in terms of number of species. This refers to both displacement and extinction.

NOTE: The establishment of ancillary infrastructure necessary to implement the objectives of responsible forest management (e.g. forest roads, skid trails, log landings, fire protection, etc.) is not considered conversion.

NOTE: This definition applies in the context of Criteria 6.9 and 6.11, i.e., from 31 December 2020 on (see definition of conversion in <[FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 Policy to Address Conversion](#)>).

Direct involvement: Situations in which the associated organization or individual is first-hand responsible for the unacceptable activities (Source: FSC-POL-01-004 V2-0).

High Conservation Value (HCV): Any of the following values:

- HCV1: Species Diversity. Concentrations of biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened or endangered species, that are significant at global, regional or national levels.
- HCV 2: Landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics. Intact Forest Landscapes, large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.
- HCV 3: Ecosystems and habitats. Rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia.
- HCV 4: Critical ecosystem services. Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.
- HCV 5: Community needs. Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of local communities or Indigenous Peoples (for example for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water), identified through engagement with these communities or Indigenous Peoples.
- HCV 6: Cultural values. Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic or religious/sacred importance for the traditional cultures of local communities or Indigenous Peoples, identified through engagement with these local communities or Indigenous Peoples. (Source: based on FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

	<p>High Conservation Value Areas: Zones and physical spaces which possess and/or are needed for the existence and maintenance of identified High Conservation Values (source: FSC-STD-60-004).</p> <p>Indirect involvement: Situations in which the associated organization or individual, with a minimum ownership or voting power of 51%, is involved as a parent or sister company, subsidiary, shareholder or Board of Directors to an organization directly involved in unacceptable activities. Indirect involvement also includes activities performed by subcontractors when acting on behalf of the associated organization or individual (Source: FSC-POL-01-004 V2-0).</p> <p>The Organization: The person or entity holding or applying for certification and therefore responsible for demonstrating compliance with the requirements upon which FSC certification is based.</p> <p>Very limited portion: The affected area shall not exceed 5% of the Management Unit, irrespective of whether the conversion activities have taken place prior to or after The Organization is awarded with FSC Forest Management certification (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0).</p>
Background	<p>At the 9th FSC General Assembly in October 2022, Motion 37/2021 <i>Required changes to the FSC Principles and Criteria to implement the Policy to Address Conversion</i> was passed by the membership. This motion contained key changes to Criteria 6.9 and 6.10, and a new Criterion 6.11 of <u><FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship></u>, including the introduction of a new cut-off date of 31 December 2020 and the possibility to certify land converted between 1 December 1994 and this date, if remedy for social and environmental harms caused by the conversion is provided. Following the updates to FSC-STD-01-001, the corresponding International Generic Indicators under FSC-STD-60-004 have been aligned following <u><FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 The Development and Revision of FSC Requirements></u>, Section 12: Alignments between requirements.</p> <p>Forest Stewardship Standards will be revised to reflect these changes according to <u><ADVICE-60-006-02 V1-0 Advice Note on Incorporation of new or revised International Generic Indicators introduced in future versions of FSC-STD-60-004 into National Standard (National Forest Stewardship Standards and Interim National Standards)></u>.</p> <p>This Advice Note regulates how these changes to the Principles and Criteria and to the International Generic Indicators affect any person or entity holding or applying for FSC Forest Management certification until the relevant requirements have been incorporated into the relevant Forest Stewardship Standard.</p>
Advice	<p>From the effective date of this Advice Note and until a revised Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS) incorporating the changes resulting from M37/2021 becomes effective in a country and the transition period towards that Forest Stewardship Standard is completed:</p>

1. The revised Criteria 6.9 and 6.10, and the new Criterion 6.11 in <FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship> supersede the corresponding criteria laid out in the existing FSS.
2. The Organization shall conform with the International Generic Indicators under Criteria 6.9 and 6.10, and the new Criterion 6.11* in <FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators>.
3. Advice 2 shall prevail over conflicting, inconsistent, or otherwise incompatible requirements in existing FSS.

***International Generic Indicators under Criteria 6.9 and 6.10, and the new Criterion 6.11**

6.9.1 There is no conversion of natural forest or High Conservation Value Areas to plantations, or to non-forest land-use, nor transformation of plantations on sites directly converted from natural forest to non-forest land-use, except when it:

- 1) Affects a very limited portion of the Management Unit, and
- 2) Will produce clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation and social benefits in the Management Unit, and
- 3) Does not damage or threaten High Conservation Values, nor any sites or resources necessary to maintain or enhance those High Conservation Values.

6.10.1 Based on Best Available Information, accurate data is compiled on all conversions between 1 December 1994 and 31 December 2020 within the Management Unit.

6.10.2 Areas converted from natural forest to plantation between 1 December 1994 and 31 December 2020 are not certified, except where:

- 1) The conversion affected a very limited portion of the Management Unit and is producing clear, substantial, additional, secure long-term conservation benefits in the Management Unit, or
- 2) The Organization which was directly or indirectly involved in the conversion demonstrates restitution of all social harms and proportionate remedy of environmental harms as specified in the applicable FSC Remedy Framework, or
- 3) The Organization which was not involved in conversion but has acquired Management Units where conversion has taken place demonstrates restitution of priority social harms and partial remedy of environmental harms as specified in the applicable FSC Remedy Framework, or
- 4) The Organization qualifies as a small-scale smallholder.

6.11.1 Based on Best Available Information, accurate data is compiled on all conversions of natural forests and High Conservation Value Areas after 31 December 2020 within the Management Unit.

6.11.2 Areas where natural forests or High Conservation Value Areas have been converted after 31 December 2020 are not certified, except where the conversion:

- 1) Affected a very limited portion of the Management Unit, and

	<p>2) Is producing clear, substantial, additional, secure long-term conservation and social benefits in the Management Unit, and</p> <p>3) Did not threaten High Conservation Values, nor any sites or resources necessary to maintain or enhance those High Conservation Values.</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-23 V2-0 Maximum hectare threshold for ‘very limited portion’

ADVICE-20-007-23 V2-0	Maximum hectare threshold for ‘very limited portion’
Normative reference	FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship, Criteria 6.9, 6.10 and 6.11. FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators. FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 Policy to Address Conversion.
Approval date	20 July 2024 (by FSC Director General)
Effective date	1 October 2023
Scope	<p>This Advice Note applies to Standard Developers, to organizations applying for or holding FSC Forest Management certification and to certification bodies accredited for Forest Management certification.</p> <p>NOTE: In this context, FSC Forest Management certification refers to certification against a Forest Stewardship Standard or <<u>FSC-STD-30-010 Controlled Wood Standard for FM enterprises</u>> or <<u>FSC-STD-30-010 Controlled Forest Management</u>>.</p> <p>This Advice Note does not apply retroactively to any form of conversion prior to its effective date. This includes both conversion that has already taken place, as well as conversion that was planned and agreed upon through contracts or similar written commitments but has not yet been completed at the time of the advice note’s effective date.</p>
Terms and Definitions	<p>Conversion: A lasting change of natural forest cover or High Conservation Value areas, induced by human activity. This may be characterized by significant loss of species diversity, habitat diversity, structural complexity, ecosystem functionality or livelihoods and cultural values. The definition of conversion covers gradual forest degradation as well as rapid forest transformation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induced by human activity: In contrast to drastic changes caused by natural calamities like hurricanes or volcanic eruptions. It also applies in cases of naturally ignited fires where human activities (e.g. draining of peatlands) have significantly increased the risk of fire. • Lasting change of natural forest cover: Permanent or long-term change of natural forest cover. Temporary changes of forest cover or structure (e.g. harvesting followed by regeneration in accordance with the FSC normative framework) is not considered conversion. • Lasting change of High Conservation Value (HCV) area: Permanent or long-term change of any of the High Conservation Values. Temporary changes of HCV areas that do not negatively and permanently impact the values (e.g. harvesting followed by regeneration in accordance with Principle 9) is not considered a lasting change.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant loss of species diversity: Loss of species is considered significant where rare species and threatened species or other locally important, keystone and/or flagship species are lost, whether in terms of numbers of individuals or in terms of number of species. This refers to both displacement and extinction. <p>NOTE: The establishment of ancillary infrastructure necessary to implement the objectives of responsible forest management (e.g. forest roads, skid trails, log landings, fire protection, etc.) is not considered conversion. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1).</p> <p>NOTE: This definition applies in the context of Criteria 6.9 and 6.11, i.e., after 31 December 2020 (see definition of conversion in <u><FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 Policy to Address Conversion></u>).</p> <p>Very limited portion: The affected area shall not exceed 5% of the management unit, irrespective of whether the conversion activities have taken place prior to or after The Organization is awarded with FSC forest management certification. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3).</p>
Background	<p>FSC does not accept the conversion of natural forests, nor conversion of HCV areas in savannahs, grasslands, peatlands and wetlands and the transformation of plantations on sites directly converted from natural forest except in cases where it affects a ‘very limited portion’ of the management unit, produces conservation benefits and does not damage or threaten High Conservation Values (HCVs).</p> <p>Areas converted from natural forests between 1 December 1994 and 31 December 2020 that do not meet these conditions are only eligible for certification if remedy for the environmental and social harms caused by the conversion is provided, while areas converted after 31 December 2020 are not eligible for certification.</p> <p>The definition of ‘very limited portion’ in the FSC Principles and Criteria specifies that to be considered a ‘very limited portion’, the area shall not exceed 5% of the management unit, irrespective of whether the conversion activities have taken place prior to or after the organization has obtained FSC Forest Management certification.</p> <p>This Advice Note was developed in response to the Implementation Note to Motion 37/2021: <i>Required changes to the FSC Principles and Criteria to implement the Policy to Address Conversion</i>, approved by FSC members at the 9th FSC General Assembly, which called for the establishment of a maximum limit in hectares for the concept of ‘very limited portion’.</p> <p>This second version of the Advice Note was drafted to address concerns arisen after the publication of its first version. The main concerns regarding the first version were related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the option provided to the Standard Development Groups to change (increase or decrease) the maximum threshold of 1,000 ha in the Forest Stewardship Standard, and - the retroactivity of the hectare threshold and the challenges this might have posed for certificate holders.
Version history	V1-0: Approved 13 July 2023

	V2-0: Approved 20 July 2024
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 'very limited portion' of a management unit referred to in Criteria 6.9, 6.10 and 6.11 shall not exceed 1,000 (one thousand) hectares. 2. Chamber balanced Standard Development Groups may set a lower hectareage threshold than the one laid out in Clause 1 (above) following FSC requirements for standard setting processes.

ADVICE-20-007-24 Deforestation-free products from FSC certified management units

ADVICE-20-007-24	Deforestation-free products from FSC certified management units
Normative reference	<p>FSC-POL-20-003 FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship FSC-STD-30-010 V3-0 Controlled Forest Management FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators</p> <p>The following advice notes in FSC-DIR-20-007 FSC Directive on Forest Management Evaluations will be aligned with ADVICE-20-007-24: ADVICE-20-007-09 <i>Clearance of encroaching forest</i> ADVICE-20-007-10 <i>Conversion of plantation to non-forest land</i> ADVICE-20-007-11 <i>Products of land clearance</i></p>
Approval date	05 June 2024 by the FSC Board of Directors
Effective date	For Organizations holding Forest Management Certification ⁴ and implementing <FSC-STD-01-004 FSC Regulatory Module>: 1 July 2024 For all other Organizations holding Forest Management Certification: 1 October 2024 ⁵
Transition date	31 December 2025 NOTE: A transition period is not applicable for Organizations implementing <FSC-STD-01-004 FSC Regulatory Module>.
Scope	This Advice Note applies to Organizations holding Forest Management Certification and certification bodies accredited for Forest Management Certification.
Terms and Definitions	<p>Agricultural plantation: Land with tree stands in agricultural production systems, such as fruit tree plantations, oil palm plantations, olive orchards and agroforestry systems where crops are grown under tree cover; it includes all plantations of relevant commodities other than wood; agricultural plantations are excluded from the definition of 'forest'.</p> <p>Agricultural use: Use of land for the purpose of agriculture, including for agricultural plantations and set-aside agricultural areas, and for rearing livestock (Source: Regulation (European Union) 2023/1115 on deforestation-free products).</p> <p>Naturally regenerating forests: Forest predominantly composed of trees established through natural regeneration; it includes any of the following:</p>

⁴ Including Organizations certified against <FSC-STD-30-010 V3-0 Controlled Forest Management>.

⁵ The Advice Note applies to forest products harvested after 29th June 2023, the date when the Regulation (European Union) 2023/1115 on deforestation-free products came into force.

	<p>a) forests for which it is not possible to distinguish whether planted or naturally regenerated;</p> <p>b) forests with a mix of naturally regenerated native tree species and planted or seeded trees, and where the naturally regenerated trees are expected to constitute the major part of the growing stock at stand maturity;</p> <p>c) coppice from trees originally established through natural regeneration;</p> <p>d) naturally regenerated trees of introduced species.</p> <p>(Source: Regulation (European Union) 2023/1115 on deforestation-free products).</p> <p>Other wooded land: Land not classified as ‘forest’ spanning more than 0,5 hectares, with trees higher than 5 metres and a canopy cover of 5 to 10 %, or trees able to reach those thresholds in situ, or with a combined cover of shrubs, bushes and trees above 10 %, excluding land that is predominantly under agricultural or urban land use. (Source: Regulation (European Union) 2023/1115 on deforestation-free products).</p> <p>Primary forest: Naturally regenerated forest of native tree species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed. (Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Terms and Definitions provided under Global Forest Resources Assessment 2025).</p> <p>NOTE: Primary forests are home to Indigenous Peoples and local communities and are the basis of their identity, culture, belief system, traditional knowledge, and livelihoods. A forest meeting the primary forest definition above would not be excluded due to the presence of these communities.</p>
Background	<p>With the approval of <FSC-POL-01-007 Policy to Address Conversion>, FSC reaffirmed its commitment to contribute to global initiatives aimed to end deforestation and to promote conservation, restoration and restitution.</p> <p>FSC generally exceeds the deforestation rule set by Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 (EUDR), which only addresses the conversion to agricultural use by also prohibiting conversion to any non-forest land use. In addition, the FSC rules on forest degradation are stricter than those in the Regulation. However, differences between the EUDR and the FSC requirements do arise in the following specific scenarios:</p> <p>A. Non-human induced deforestation (see clause 1.): Although FSC is an effective measure to prevent non-human induced deforestation, for instance, by requiring The Organization to assess risks and implement activities to reduce potential negative impacts from natural hazards, the FSC definition of conversion does not cover non-human induced deforestation.</p> <p>B. Deforestation under minimal conversion (see clause 2.): Criterion 6.9 of <FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship> allows minimal conversion when it:</p> <p>a) affects a very limited portion of the management unit, and</p> <p>b) is producing clear, substantial, additional, secure long-term, conservation and social benefits in the management unit, and</p>

	<p>c) does not threaten High Conservation Values, nor any sites or resources necessary to maintain or enhance those High Conservation Values.</p> <p>While conversion to agricultural use does not typically produce clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation and social benefits in the management unit, it cannot be disregarded, especially when occurring in the form of agricultural plantations such as agroforestry systems.</p> <p>C. Forest degradation under minimal conversion (see clause 3.): Certain scenarios of forest degradation (see clause 3), as defined by EUDR, may occur under the minimal conversion rule.</p> <p>D. Lasting transformation of plantations on land that was not natural forest (see clause 2.): Transformation of plantations not on sites directly converted from natural forest to non-forest land use is not regulated under Criterion 6.9 of <FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship>, but if it involves a lasting change to agricultural use, would be considered deforestation under EUDR.</p> <p>E. Reasons beyond the control of the forest manager (see clauses 2. and 3.): For situations where there are requirements of the FSC Forest Stewardship Standard that are not met for reasons beyond the control of the forest manager in a very limited portion of the management unit, <FSC-POL-20-003 FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification> does not explicitly prohibit the sale of forest products from the affected areas as FSC certified.</p> <p>F. Conversion of naturally regenerated trees of introduced species (see clause 3.): EUDR considers the conversion of naturally regenerating forest, which includes naturally regenerated trees of introduced species, into plantation forest or into other wooded land as forest degradation. Forests predominantly composed of naturally regenerated trees of introduced species are not covered by the FSC definition of natural forest and are therefore not covered by the conversion requirements.</p> <p>G. Categorization of rubber plantations (see clauses 4. and 5.): FSC does not consider rubber plantations to be agricultural plantations and thus agricultural use, as defined by EUDR. Transformation of plantations to rubber plantations is not regulated under Criteria 6.9 and 6.11 of <FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship>. However, this would be considered deforestation under EUDR, and the products of rubber plantations transformed after 31 December 2020 would not be considered deforestation-free.</p> <p>FSC has developed this advice note, in alignment with the intention of the Policy to Address Conversion, to address potential gaps between FSC Forest Management requirements and the EUDR deforestation and degradation requirements. This alignment does ensure that all forest products sourced from FSC certified management units are deforestation-free.</p>
Version history	V1-0: Approved in June 2024
Advice	Non-human induced deforestation (Scenario A, above):

	<p>1. In cases of conversion of natural forests or lasting transformation of plantations into agricultural use which is not human induced (e.g., after a natural disaster), The Organization shall not sell forest products resulting from such conversion or transformation as FSC certified.</p> <p>NOTE: This applies only in cases where The Organization has already identified at the time of selling relevant forest products that the future land will be designated for agricultural use.</p> <p>Deforestation under minimal conversion; lasting transformation of plantations on land that was not natural forest; and reasons beyond the control of the forest manager (Scenarios B, D and E, above):</p> <p>2. In exceptional cases of conversion of natural forests or lasting transformation of plantations into agricultural use allowed by FSC, The Organization shall not sell forest products resulting from such conversion or transformation as FSC certified.</p> <p>NOTE: This applies only in cases where The Organization has already identified at the time of selling relevant forest products that the future land will be designated for agricultural use.</p> <p>Forest degradation under minimal conversion; reasons beyond the control of the forest manager; and conversion of naturally regenerated trees of introduced species (Scenarios C, E, and F, above):</p> <p>3. In exceptional cases of conversion of primary forests or naturally regenerating forests into plantations or other wooded land allowed by FSC, The Organization shall not sell forest products resulting from these activities as FSC certified.</p> <p>NOTE: The removal of invasive species and potential subsequent planting of other, non-invasive species in the interest of protection or ecosystem restoration is not considered conversion under the above requirement.</p> <p>Categorization of rubber plantations (Scenario G, above):</p> <p>4. In cases of transformation of plantations into rubber plantations, The Organization shall not sell forest products resulting from such transformation as FSC certified.</p> <p>5. In cases of transformation of plantations into rubber plantations after 31 December 2020, The Organization shall not sell forest products resulting from such rubber plantations as FSC certified.</p>
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ADVICE-20-007-25 Extension of transition period for Version 4-0 of FSC-STD-20-007

ADVICE-20-007-25	Extension of transition period for Version 4-0 of FSC-STD-20-007
Normative reference	FSC-STD-20-007 V4-0 Forest Management Evaluations
Approval date	11 November 2024
Effective date	18 November 2024
Scope	This Advice Note applies to certification bodies accredited for Forest Management Certification.
Terms and Definitions	–
Background	<p>FSC is undergoing a system review process by the German national accreditation body (Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle - DAkkS), to enable full implementation of the Regulation (EC) 765/2008 on Requirements for Accreditation and Market Surveillance.</p> <p>FSC-STD-20-007 V4-0 is in transition until 31 December 2024, while in parallel the system review process by DAkkS is ongoing. While German certification bodies are already accredited by DAkkS against V3-0 of FSC-STD-20-007, a move to V4-0 will only be possible for them once the DAkkS FSC system review process and re-accreditation of CBs will have been completed.</p> <p>To enable German certification bodies to remain operational and to implement antitrust regulations this advice note will be applicable to all certification bodies.</p>
Advice	<p>1. The transition period for certification bodies to move from Version 3-0 to Version 4-0 of FSC-STD-20-007 is extended until 31 December 2025.</p> <p>NOTE: During the transition period V3-0 of FSC-STD-20-007 remains valid.</p>



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