






Forest Stewardship Council®



Development and Transfer of National Forest Stewardship Standards to the FSC Principles and Criteria Version 5-1

FSC-PRO-60-006 V2-0 EN

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

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

Introduction

The FSC membership approved the FSC Principles and Criteria (P&C V5-1) for responsible forest management in February 2012. The approval initiated a need for all existing National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS) to be revised to address the new requirements of P&C V5-1.

Subsequent to the approval of the revised P&C V5-1, FSC and its global membership launched a process to develop a set of International Generic Indicators (IGI). The process was completed by March 2015, when the Board of Directors approved the IGI Standard (FSC-STD-60-004).

This Procedure establishes the process for the development of new and transfer of existing NFSS to the P&C V5-1 and establishes how to use the IGI as a starting point in the process.

The development of this Procedure was agreed upon between the FSC Network and the Policy and Standards Unit (PSU) at FSC International. The Working Group that developed the Procedure was composed of FSC Network representatives from all the FSC regions. It was further agreed that the development process of this document should be simplified compared to the strict formal framework of FSC-PRO-01-001.

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A. Objective

The objective of this Procedure is to provide a methodology for developing and transferring National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSSs) to the P&C V5-1.

B. Scope

This Procedure shall be used by registered Standard Development Groups (SDGs) during the development of new NFSS and for transferring existing NFSS to the P&C V5-1. FSC will phase out this Procedure when all existing NFSS are transferred.

Other normative documents regulating the standard setting process (FSC-STD-60-002 and FSC-STD-60-006) shall be used together with this Procedure. These standards will be revised after the transfer period to incorporate relevant elements of this Procedure.

All aspects of this Procedure are considered to be normative, including the scope, effective date, references, terms and definitions, notes and tables and annexes, unless otherwise stated.

C. Effective Date

Approval date	01 June.2015
Publication date	01 June 2015
Effective date	01 June 2015
Period of validity	until 31 May 2020 (or until replaced or withdrawn)

D. References

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

FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship

FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF Eligibility Criteria

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

FSC-STD-60-004 International Generic Indicators

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

FSC-TPT-60-007 Proposal for the transfer of Forest Stewardship Standards to the Principles and Criteria Version 5

FSC-TPT-60-008 Transfer Matrix

E. Terms and Definitions

The terms and definitions given in *FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms*, *FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship* and *FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0 EN FSC International Generic Indicators*, and the following apply:

Instructions for Standard Developers: Instructions for Standard Developers provide specific direction to SDGs and FSC-accredited Certification Bodies (CBs). The compulsory nature of each Instruction is reflected in its language, expressed according to the ISO ‘verbal forms for the expression of provisions’:

- “Shall”: indicates requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform to the standard.
- “Should”: indicates that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required. A Standard Developer can meet these requirements in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated and justified.
- “May”: indicates a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.
- “Can”: is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or causal.

NOTE 1: FSC expects SDGs to read and analyse all Instructions in the IGI. This is expressed by the Board decision, stating: “*Standard Development Groups shall consider the Instructions.*”

Normative element: a single aspect within one Criterion, which needs to be addressed by at least one indicator.

Starting point: Information in the IGI standard, including each indicator, pertinent instructions for standards developers, and any other requirements in the standard (e.g., Annexes) shall first be taken into account when SDGs start to adopt, adapt, drop or add indicators as appropriate to national or regional level during the development and transfer of NFSS.

1. General requirements

- 1.1. Standard Development Groups (SDGs) shall be registered by the FSC Policy and Standards Unit (PSU) for the development of new and the transfer of existing National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSSs).
- 1.2. SDGs developing a new NFSS shall meet the requirements of this Procedure and those of *FSC-STD-60-006 Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards*.
- 1.3. SDGs transferring an existing NFSS shall meet the requirements of this Procedure and those of *FSC-STD-60-006 Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards*, except for Clauses 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.7 (Section 7 Preparatory drafting and consultation) and Section 9 (Forest testing).

NOTE 2: SDGs can decide if transferred and revised NFSS should be forest tested for assessing the auditability of the standard or for consulting illiterate communities affected by the revision of the standard.

- 1.4. SDGs developing or transferring NFSSs shall also meet the requirements of *FSC-STD-60-002 Structure and content of National Forest Stewardship Standards*.
- 1.5. In order to register, SDGs shall complete and send to PSU the FSC Template, *FSC-TPT-60-007 Proposal to develop and transfer Forest Stewardship Standards to the Principles and Criteria Version 5-1*.
- 1.6. The formal development and transfer of a NFSS shall not commence before receiving official notification from PSU that the SDG is registered.
- 1.7. SDGs should carry out the development and transfer of NFSS within the timeline specified in the *FSC-TPT-60-007*.
- 1.8. If a SDG cannot meet the given timeline, it shall submit a request to PSU for extension, before the expiry date of the process.
- 1.9. If a SDG fails to complete the NFSS in the extended timeframe, PSU reserves the right to suspend the SDG. PSU will then install a technical working group to develop an Interim National Standard (INS).
- 1.10. NFSSs developed or transferred in accordance with this Procedure shall have a five (5) year validity after the effective date.

2. Using the IGI

2.1. The IGI together with the Instructions for Standards Developers and the Annexes shall be used as the starting point for the development and transfer of NFSSs.

2.2. While developing or transferring a NFSS, each IGI shall be considered¹ by using one of the following options:

a) Adopting an IGI

The SDG copies an IGI into the NFSS as it is written in *FSC-STD-60-004 FSC International Generic Indicators*.

b) Adapting an IGI

The SDG reviews and revises an IGI in order to address terminology, scope, or effectiveness in measuring conformance to a Criterion in a regional/national context. This may take multiple forms:

- I. Revision of the wording and structure of an IGI to include terminology and use language appropriate in the regional/national context, while maintaining the intended scope and outcome of the IGI.
- II. Adding locally relevant thresholds, other national/regional norms, or best practices to an IGI to improve intended outcomes and consistency in measuring conformance with a Criterion.
- III. Splitting an IGI to allow more effective and efficient measures of conformance to a Criterion without narrowing the intended outcome of the IGI.
- IV. Using an existing indicator from an approved NFSS instead of an IGI where it corresponds directly with the elements of the IGI and with the relevant Criterion. In this case, language, and terminology shall be aligned with that which is used in the IGI as appropriate.

NOTE 3: The alignment of language and terminology refers to preferred indicator design and terms which are used in the P&C V5-1 and the IGI (e.g., using HCV instead of HCVF).

- V. Expanding or focusing the scope of an IGI in order to better achieve intended outcomes and conformance to the Criterion based on national or regional context. This option results in narrowing or expanding the intended outcome of the IGI.

NOTE 4: Item V is intended for those IGI that contain multiple or complex requirements.

c) Dropping

The SDG may leave out an IGI where it is determined to be inapplicable or otherwise non-contributing in measuring conformance to a Criterion in a national or regional context.

¹ „*Shall be considered*“ means: All IGI must be read and analysed by the SDG before deciding on and applying the ‘adopt, adapt, drop, add’ options.

NOTE 5: An IGI may be considered inapplicable where the indicator addresses a condition that currently does not exist and will likely not exist in the national or regional context for the period of validity of the standard.

An IGI may be considered non-contributing where the SDG agrees that leaving out an IGI will allow better overall performance of the standard, while not lowering conformance to any particular Criterion.

d) Adding a new indicator

The SDG may suggest additional indicators in order to better establish conformance to a Criterion in the regional/national context. Additional indicators shall comply with Section 4 of *FSC-STD-60-002 Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards*.

NOTE 6: If new indicators are added as a result of implementing the requirement of an instruction, there is no need to provide justification.

- 2.3. Options b) (adapting), c) (dropping) and d) (adding) require written justifications when submitting the NFSS for approval. Justifications may be brief and may address multiple IGI simultaneously if the conditions and rationale for the decisions are uniform. Justifications shall not conflict with FSC Policies, Standards, Advice Notes or Procedures and shall be supported by a chamber balanced working group.

3. Transferring an existing NFSS

- 3.1. Countries with an approved NFSS with full or limited scope (e.g. SLIMFs, Plantations, NTFP, etc.) or a draft NFSS shall follow the requirements in this section and in the standards referenced in Paragraph D above.
- 3.2. The SDG shall transfer their existing NFSS to the structure and content of the P&C V5-1.
- 3.3. The following steps are recommended to conduct the transfer:
- I. Identify indicators in the existing NFSS which cover the normative elements in the Criteria of P&C V5-1 and transfer them to the new NFSS structure. The transfer may be done by using the Transfer Matrix in *FSC-TPT-60-008* (Annex 1).
 - II. Compare each transferred indicator with the corresponding IGI and choose whether the transferred indicator or the IGI best covers the normative element in the Criterion for the particular regional/national context. Justify the choice in accordance with Clause 2.3.

NOTE 7: It is possible to use several indicators from a NFSS to fulfil one IGI, but in such a case it's recommended using the IGI instead.

- III. Identify normative elements in the Criteria of P&C V5-1 that are not covered by a transferred indicator and fill them with the corresponding IGI as written in *FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0 EN FSC International Generic Indicators*.

- IV. Verify that all normative elements, including Instructions for Standard Developers and other requirements (like Annexes), are covered by appropriate indicators.
 - V. Go through each indicator (transferred and selected IGI) to adopt or adapt its wording, drop them or add new indicators as per Clause 2.2 and 2.3.
 - VI. Verify Criterion by Criterion that the set of indicators is coherent, without gaps and redundancies and consistent in language and terminology.
 - VII. Finally, review the new NFSS as a whole to edit it, check references and consistency.
- 3.4. When transferring the standard, the SDG shall evaluate the new NFSS for compliance with FSC-STD-60-002 considering the modifications in Clause 4.2. Detected nonconformities shall be addressed before submitting the NFSS for approval. Completed matrices may be submitted to the PSU for review.

4. Developing a new NFSS

- 4.1. Countries that do not have an approved or draft NFSS shall follow the requirements in this Section for developing new NFSS.
- 4.2. Requirements on structure and content as specified in *FSC-STD-60-002* shall be followed for the development of a new NFSS with the following modifications:
 - I. Clause 2.1 in *FSC-STD-60-002* shall read as follows: *“The standard shall be structured as a hierarchy of Principles, Criteria and associated indicators. As content, structure and numbering of the hierarchical levels of Principles and Criteria is already provided by FSC, national SDGs are responsible for developing the indicators and verifiers. The FSC IGI (FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0 EN) shall be used as a starting point for the development of the standard to facilitate compliance with this requirement for a hierarchical framework.”*
 - II. Clause 4.1 in *FSC-STD-60-002* shall read as follows: *“The standard shall specify at least one indicator for each normative element of every Criterion in accordance to the requirements of this standard. The FSC IGI (FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0 EN) together with the Instructions for Standards Developers shall be used as the starting point for the development of national indicators.”*
 - III. Clauses 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 (above) shall be applied in addition to Section 4 of *FSC-STD-60-002*.

5. Addressing Scale Intensity and Risk (SIR)

- 5.1. Where a Principle or Criterion in the P&C V5-1 requires the consideration of Scale, Intensity and Risk (also referred to as “SIR indicators”), SDGs may decide to develop additional variations of indicators and verifiers for low, medium and high impact organisations.

NOTE 8: The impact that comes as a result of the inter-relationship of Scale, Intensity and Risk determines the variation of a SIR indicator an organisation has to comply with. More information on the inter-relationship of Scale, Intensity and Risk is explained in the SIR Guideline (under development).

- 5.2. In the absence of the SIR Guideline, PSU recommends the development of at least one SIR indicator variation for low impact organizations that may offer simplified options for these organizations to demonstrate compliance with the Criterion (previously known as SLIMF indicators).
- 5.3. A SDG may decide to have additional variations of SIR indicators for different types of Organizations, but from PSU's perspective it's not meaningful to have more than three variations to address Scale, Intensity and Risk.

6. Addressing additional requirements for Ecosystem Services

- 6.1. The SDG shall adopt or adapt IGI 5.1.3 if the NFSS is intended to allow the organization to make FSC promotional claims on the maintenance and/or enhancement of Ecosystem Services. Otherwise IGI 5.1.3 shall be dropped.

NOTE 9: Dropping IGI 5.1.3 would prohibit organizations in the country from making FSC promotional claims on the maintenance and/or enhancement of Ecosystem Services.

- 6.2. If IGI 5.1.3 is adopted or adapted, the indicators listed in Annex C of the IGI Standard shall be adopted or adapted, and located as follows:

- a) 'General Indicators' from Section I should be included in an Annex of the NFSS entitled "Additional Requirements for Ecosystem Services".

NOTE 10: This will allow for a consistent point of reference for additional Ecosystem Services requirements in forest stewardship assessments.

- b) 'Management indicators' included in Section II should either:

- Be included in the same Annex; or
- Be added as indicators in the body of the NFSS, under related Criteria, if the SDG believes these Management indicators would contribute to better comply with those Criteria in the regional/national context.

- 6.3. SDGs that dropped IGI 5.1.3 in the first place may apply for an extraordinary revision with PSU at any time to add indicators for IGI 5.1.3 according to the rules in this Section.

7. Incomplete documents referenced in the IGI standard

- 7.1. There are some important documents (e.g. HCV Guideline, Ecosystems Procedure, SIR Guideline) referenced in the IGI Standard that are not yet finalized. SDGs should proceed with the development and transfer of their NFSS and seek advice from PSU. As soon as these documents are available, PSU will inform the FSC Network and communicates the time to update NFSS to conform to any newly published document.

8. Phase-in of approved NFSS

- 8.1. Approved NFSS shall be implemented, in accordance with its scope and standard effective date.
- 8.2. The standard effective date may be up to three (3) months following the announcement of the standard's approval; in order to allow Certification Bodies to adjust their systems and to inform their auditors. In exceptional circumstances, a longer period can be agreed.
- 8.3. The phase-in period of the approved NFSS shall be twelve (12) months following the effective date, unless otherwise decided by the FSC Board of Directors (see Figure 1).
- 8.4. All Certificate Holders and applicants for certification shall be evaluated against the new NFSS after the effective date.
- 8.5. Certificates issued to the previous version of the NFSS or an INS will be considered invalid by FSC after six months of the end of the phase-in period (i.e. eighteen (18) months after the effective date of the new NFSS) without any further notification.

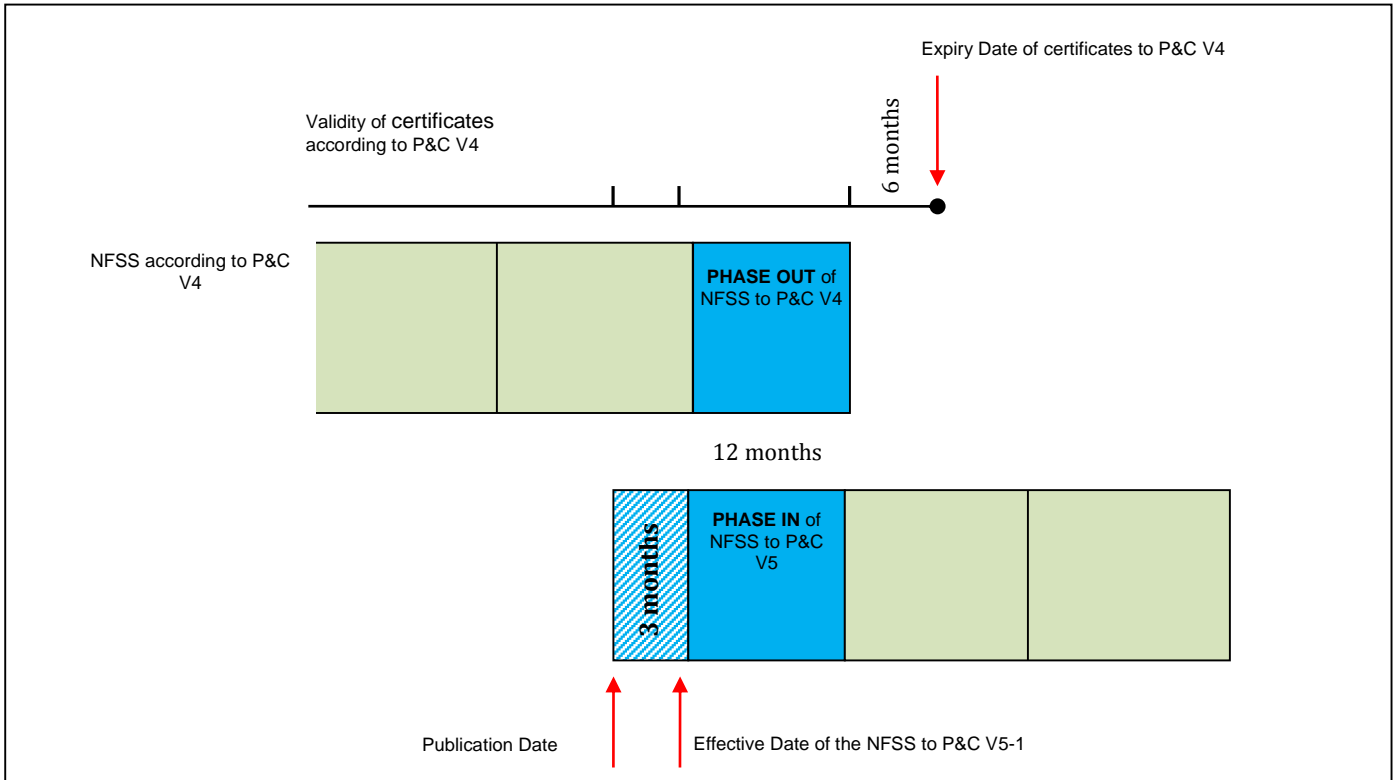


Fig. 1: Transition from NFSS (P&C V4) to NFSS (P&C V5-1).