






Forest Stewardship Council®



# The Development and Revision of FSC® Normative Documents

FSC-PRO-01-001 V3-1 EN

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## THE DEVELOPMENT AND REVISION OF FSC NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS

FSC-PRO-01-001 V3-1 EN

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organization established to promote 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.

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## A Objective

The objective of this Procedure is to provide a clear and unambiguous methodology to develop, review, and revise all normative documents in the FSC Normative Framework in order to promote stability and predictability within the FSC system. To achieve this objective the procedure:

- Embraces FSC chamber balanced goals and inputs;
- Requires robust levels of stakeholder participation in order to ensure a high level of transparency;
- Provides accurate and comprehensive requirements for development, review, revision, application and withdrawal of normative documents;
- Ensures consistency and predictability in the development and revision process of FSC normative documents;
- Ensures that the implementation of FSC normative documents takes place in a realistic manner so that the objectives of the document and thus of FSC, can be consistently met;
- Incorporates fairness, and checks and balances;
- Complies with international best practices for standards setting.

## B Scope

This document specifies the requirements and procedures to be followed by FSC for the development, approval and revision of all documents that comprise the FSC Normative Framework, with the exception of National Forest Stewardship Standards<sup>1</sup>.

All aspects of this Procedure are considered to be normative, including the scope, effective date, references, terms and definitions, tables and annexes, unless otherwise stated. As part of the FSC Normative Framework, this Procedure is subject to the review and revision cycle as described in this Procedure.

NOTE: This Procedure does not apply to the development of internal FSC policies, standards and procedures, as they are part of the organization's Quality Management System (QMS).

## C Effective and validity dates

Approval date	V3-0: 13 March 2013; V3-1: 25 March 2015
Publication date	V3-0: 01 July 2013; V3-1: 01 January 2016
Effective date	V3-0: 01 July 2013; V3-1: 01 January 2016
Period of validity	until replaced or withdrawn

## D References

The following referenced documents are relevant for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

*FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms*

*ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards v6 (2014)*

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<sup>1</sup> The development and revision of National Forest Stewardship Standards is guided by a separate Standard: FSC-STD-60-006.

## FSC normative documents superseded and replaced by this standard

This Procedure replaces *FSC-PRO-01-002* as the requirements have been incorporated into this document. This Procedure supersedes all previous versions of *FSC-PRO-01-001*.

### **E Terms and definitions**

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

**Administrative Revision:** non-substantive revision to correct typographical, grammatical and administrative mistakes.

**Advice Note:** errata or addenda to normative documents.

**Chamber balanced Working Group:** a group of selected FSC members with professional experience in the field of question, to advise and provide content related input to the development or revision process of a FSC normative document, equally representing the perspectives of the social, environmental and economic chamber of the FSC membership (and southern and northern perspectives in case of a sub-chamber balanced Working Group).

**Change request:** a documented and justified request from any stakeholder for adding, deleting or changing a requirement of an approved and valid FSC normative document.

**Consensus:** general agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests.

NOTE: Consensus should be the result of a process seeking to take into account the views of interested parties, particularly those directly affected, and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. It need not imply unanimity (adapted from ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004).

**Consultative Forum:** is an e-mail list of stakeholders who choose to be more closely involved in developing or revising a FSC normative document. Participants have the opportunity to provide input during the drafting and re-drafting stage of a normative document prior to general public consultation.

#### **Defined dates and time frames associated with the implementation of a normative document (in order of events):**

**Approval date:** the date on which the FSC normative document is approved by the approval body.

**Publication date:** the date on which the approved FSC normative document is announced and published on the FSC website (usually a minimum of 90 days prior to the effective date).

**Effective date:** the date on which the published FSC normative document becomes applicable for use.

**Transition period:** the period of time (usually 1 year) after the effective date in which the new version of a FSC normative document is phased-in and in parallel the old version is phased-out (where it exists). To allow for gradual introduction, both versions are valid for an overlapping period of time. Six (6) months after the end of the transition period, certificates issued against the old version are considered invalid.

**Period of validity:** period of time for which a normative document is valid, that lasts from the effective date until it is withdrawn or replaced by a new version.

NOTE: each normative document shall include a section on defined dates.

**Directives:** compilations of Advice Notes.

**FSC Global Network:** the FSC A.C. and its wholly owned subsidiaries, the FSC Regional Offices, the FSC endorsed Network Partners and registered FSC members.

**FSC Normative Framework:** the collection of FSC Policies, Standards, and Procedures which are mandatory for FSC accredited Certification Bodies, Certificate Holders, and Applicants (and any other party as specified in a document's scope) to be followed. Includes Advice Notes where these exist (stand-alone or compiled in Directives).

**Policy:** a documented principle. The objective of every FSC Policy shall be to further the mission of FSC in line with the aims and aspirations of its members, and taking equal account of the concerns and interests of the three FSC chambers, and its 'northern' and 'southern' membership.

**Standard:** a document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules or characteristics for products, services or related activities, processes and methods, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context (adapted from ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004).

**Procedure:** describes the processes used to meet requirements of FSC's Policies and Standards. Procedures establish clarity, accountability and responsibility, provide specific controls for risk management, define expectations for work processes and products, and may serve as training tools.

**Guidance:** technical information outlining some means of compliance with the requirements of a normative document. Guidance in the FSC system is considered to be informative only.

**Interpretation:** a formal normative clarification provided by the FSC Policy and Standards Unit to requirements included in documents of the FSC Normative Framework.

**Review:** Activity of checking a normative document to determine whether it is to be reaffirmed, revised or withdrawn.

**Revision:** Introduction of all necessary changes to the substance and presentation of a normative document.

**Steering Committee:** a group consisting of the FSC Managing Director, the FSC Policy and Standards Director and the Coordinator that is established to guide and supervise the development or revision process of a normative document.

**Technical consultation:** targeted internal consultation to receive feedback on a FSC normative document during the drafting or re-drafting stage before the document is released for public consultation.

**Technical Expert:** an experienced specialist in the field of question, invited to participate in Working Groups discussions as resource person.

**Technical Working Group:** a group of selected experts with professional experience in the field of question, to advise and provide content related input to the development or revision process of a FSC normative document.

**Verbal forms for the expression of provisions**

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

“*shall*”: indicates requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform 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 certification body can meet these requirements in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated and justified.

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

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

## **1 General principles**

- 1.1 The decision to develop or revise normative documents shall be made by the FSC Board of Directors.

NOTE: The FSC Board of Directors may involve designated Committees in the decision making process, subject to oversight by the FSC Board of Directors. Wherever the FSC Board of Directors is mentioned in this procedure, it includes reference to any designated Committee the Board has installed to act on its behalf.

- 1.2 All documents in the FSC Normative Framework shall be presented to the FSC Board of Directors for approval, with the exception of the 'FSC Principles and Criteria' which need to be approved by the FSC membership and administrative revisions which are approved by the FSC Policy Director.
- 1.3 The Steering Committee will determine whether or not to initiate or continue development or revision of normative documents in situations where there are outstanding policy issues. The Steering Committee may determine that outstanding policy issues may need to be resolved through prior or concurrent activities to clarify FSC's position or intentions.

## **2 Establishing the need for a new normative document**

- 2.1 Proposals to develop a new normative document can be made by any stakeholder.

- 2.2 A proposal shall meet the following formal requirements:

- a) A justification of the need for a new normative document, including an assessment of how the proposed document will meet that need;
- b) Reference to any background papers, FSC discussion papers, previous decisions by the FSC Board of Directors, approved FSC General Assembly motions, etc., that support the need to develop the proposed normative document;
- c) Specification of clear aims and objectives of the new normative document, in particular those objectives that focus on social, environmental and/or economic aspects;
- d) Explanation on how the aims and objectives contribute to FSC's mission;
- e) Additionally in the case of standards a documentation of what other standards exist or are in the process of development which meet all or part of the expressed need; and an assessment of how broadly the final standard is intended to be applied.

- 2.3 Proposals to develop a new normative document shall be submitted in writing to the FSC Policy Director for technical review and compliance check with the formal requirements as specified in Clause 2.2, above.

- 2.4 The FSC Policy Director shall confirm receipt of the proposal and within ninety (90) days shall either:

- a) Confirm that the requirements of Clause 2.2 have been met and the proposal shall move to the next stage of the process; *or*
- b) Reject the proposal and communicate the reasons for rejection; *or*



- c) Request further work prior to re-submission.
- 2.5 Where the requirements of Clause 2.2 have been met, the FSC Policy Director shall complete the proposal by adding the following information:
- a) Reference to how the proposed normative document relates to other FSC normative documents and analysis of the likely impact it will have on them;
  - b) An assessment of risks in implementing the normative document and how to mitigate these, including identification of factors that could have a negative impact on the ability of the normative document to achieve its objectives; unintended consequences that could arise from its implementation; and possible mitigation measures that could be taken to address these potential risks;
  - c) The results of a stakeholder mapping exercise or updated version of an existing stakeholder map to identify all stakeholders that will be affected by the new normative document and the potential impacts upon them;
  - d) Stakeholder participation goals to establish clear targets for stakeholder engagement;
  - e) Specification whether pilot testing is recommended;
  - f) An estimated budget for the development process of the new normative document;
  - g) The potential resources including funding for the proposed development process.
- 2.6 The final proposal shall be circulated for review and comments to:
- a) The FSC Global Network;
  - b) The FSC Board of Directors;
  - c) All FSC accredited Certification Bodies.
- 2.7 The period to submit comments on a proposal shall be at least thirty (30) days from its publication.
- NOTE: Where proposals are translated, the period to submit comments shall be at least thirty (30) days from the publication of the translated version.
- 2.8 The FSC Policy Director shall take into account all comments and inputs received and revise the proposal as necessary.
- 2.9 The FSC Policy Director shall submit the final proposal (together with a synopsis of all comments and inputs received) to the FSC Board for decision making at their next scheduled meeting.
- 2.10 The FSC Board of Directors shall either:
- a) Approve the proposal; *or*
  - b) Reject the proposal and communicate the reasons for rejection; *or*
  - c) Request further work on the proposal prior to re-submission.
- NOTE: Decisions by FSC Board of Directors may be appealed (see Clause 19.1).

- 2.11 The decision to approve the development of a normative document shall take into account approved strategic and operational plans and other decisions of the FSC Board of Directors.
- 2.12 The proposal and the decision shall be recorded and filed.
- 2.13 The formal decision to develop or revise a normative document shall be officially announced, e.g. through publication in FSC newsletters, and on the FSC website ([www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org)).
- 2.13.1 The announcement shall be circulated to:
- a) The FSC Global Network;
  - b) All FSC accredited Certification Bodies;
  - c) Standard setting bodies with related or similar standards.
- 2.13.2 The announcement shall include:
- a) Summary of the development proposal or review report, including the scope, objectives, and rationale for the proposed normative document;
  - b) The justification of the need to develop or revise the normative document;
  - c) The FSC document code that is proposed for the normative document;
  - d) Contact information and information on opportunities for contributing to the consultation, including an invitation to participate in the Consultative Forum;
  - e) Key steps and time schedule of the development or revision process, including pilot testing, where planned;
  - f) Information on the Working Group and Working Group members, where available;
  - g) Information on the decision-making process, including how decisions are made and who makes them;
  - h) Invitation for comments on the Summary of the development proposal or review report.

### **3 Establishment of operational bodies**

#### **Coordinator**

- 3.1 A Coordinator shall be appointed by the FSC Policy Director to manage each development and revision process. The Coordinator shall be responsible for:
- a) Setting up, administering and managing the Working Group;
  - b) Setting up, administering and managing the Consultative Forum;
  - c) Drafting the normative document.

NOTE: The Coordinator will regularly be a FSC Policy Manager, but may be another properly qualified individual.

- 3.2 The FSC Policy Director shall provide support and advice to the Coordinator, and liaise with the FSC Board of Directors in regard to development or revision of normative documents.

#### **Steering Committee**

- 3.3 A Steering Committee shall be established to provide oversight for each development and revision process. The Steering Committee shall consist of the FSC Managing Director, the FSC Policy Director and the Coordinator, and shall be responsible for:
- a) Reviewing and overseeing the implementation of the Terms of Reference of the Working Group;
  - b) Reviewing, approving and overseeing the implementation of the work plan (including the budget) of the Working Group;
  - c) Monitoring the process to be followed to develop or revise a normative document;
  - d) Providing advice or support in response to requests by the Coordinator;
  - e) Reviewing the membership of the Working Group and the Consultative Forum to ensure that they comply with the requirements specified in this procedure;
  - f) Approval of the Terms of Reference and membership of Technical Working Groups.

- 3.4 The Steering Committee may decide to invite additional people as advisers to the Steering Committee, but these people shall not have a formal vote.

NOTE: Advisers may include liaison representatives of the Board of Directors and/ or designated Committees.

#### **Working Group**

- 3.5 The Coordinator shall initiate the establishment of a Working Group for each development and revision process to:
- a) Seek advice on all aspects of the development or revision of FSC normative documents from the FSC Global Network, FSC Board of Directors, FSC accredited Certification Bodies, Consultative Forum members, FSC certificate holders, other FSC stakeholders and/or relevant technical experts;
  - b) Review and consider comments received in the public consultation round;
  - c) Provide detailed input to the development or revision of the normative document in accordance with its Terms of Reference;
  - d) Formally recommend that the final draft be submitted for its approval.
- 3.6 The Working Group shall be administered and managed by the Coordinator.
- 3.7 A chamber or sub-chamber balanced Working Group shall be established if requested by a General Assembly Motion or for the development and revision of social and environmental standards where determined by the FSC Board of Directors. All members of chamber and sub-chamber balanced Working

Groups shall be FSC members and the number of members shall be a multiple of the six FSC sub-chambers (e.g., 6, 12 or 18).

NOTE: Members of the FSC Board of Directors, FSC staff and staff from FSC National or Regional Offices or ASI and FSC accredited Certification Bodies shall not be eligible for membership on chamber and sub-chamber balanced Working Groups, but may participate as Technical Experts on request of the Working Group or the Steering Committee.

- 3.8 All other Working Groups shall be established as Technical Working Groups. Application for Technical Working Group membership is open to all stakeholders. The conditions for membership and number of members shall be defined by the Steering Committee, taking into account the complexity of the task and the available resources.

NOTE: The FSC Board of Directors mandates the FSC Policy Director to apply a resource-efficient process wherever possible and feasible (Board decision taken at BM62).

- 3.9 Members of FSC Working Groups shall be selected according to the following criteria:

- a) Expert knowledge and/or experience of the issue under consideration;
- b) Up-to-date knowledge and experience of FSC's systems and procedures;
- c) Understanding of the potential impact of a normative document on affected stakeholders;
- d) Understanding of and support for FSC's mission and vision;
- e) Ability to review and comment on documents submitted in the working language(s) agreed for the Working Group (see Clause 3.11);
- f) Capacity to represent broadly supported chamber perspectives for chamber and sub-chamber balanced Working Groups;
- g) Gender balance, where possible.

- 3.10 The FSC Board of Directors shall decide on the members of chamber and sub-chamber balanced Working Groups and their Terms of Reference.

- 3.11 The working language of Working Groups shall be English, unless the Steering Committee explicitly identifies a different or additional working language.

- 3.12 All members of the Working Group shall receive a copy of this Procedure, and the Working Group's final Terms of Reference and work plan prior to commencement of its work.

- 3.13 The Working Group may request the advice of Technical Experts who may then participate in Working Group discussions as resource persons upon approval of the Steering Committee. Technical Experts shall have voice in the Working Group discussions, but no formal vote in its decision making processes.

### **Consultative Forum**

- 3.14 A Consultative Forum should be set up by the Coordinator as determined by the Steering Committee in order to engage a broader cross section of FSC stakeholders.
- 3.15 Membership of a Consultative Forum shall be open to any stakeholder on request. The number of members shall not be limited.
- 3.16 The Coordinator shall:
  - a) Invite FSC stakeholders to participate in the Consultative Forum via FSC newsletters, FSC Email Forums and the FSC website ([ic.fsc.org](http://ic.fsc.org));
  - b) Seek nominations of individuals and organizations to participate in the Consultative Forum from members of the FSC Global Network, FSC Board of Directors, FSC accredited Certification Bodies and other partner and constituent bodies;
  - c) Keep a list of all Consultative Forum members, identifying the stakeholder group to which they belong.

## **4 Drafting of normative documents**

- 4.1 The Coordinator shall prepare Working Group Terms of Reference and a work plan (including a budget) for each development or revision process.
- 4.2 The Terms of Reference shall include at least the following:
  - a) The aims and objectives of the normative document the Working Group is mandated to develop or revise;
  - b) The working language;
  - c) Any additional specific requirements to complete the work;
  - d) The proposed schedule for completing the process,
  - e) A copy of this procedure.
- 4.3 The work plan shall include at least the following:
  - a) Activities and timelines for setting up the Working Group;
  - b) Activities and timelines for setting up the Consultative Forum, where required;
  - c) Activities and timelines for developing or revising the normative document, in line with this procedure;
  - d) Activities to communicate the new or revised document;
  - e) The budget.
- 4.4 The Steering Committee approves the work plan and the Terms of Reference of Technical Working Groups.
- 4.5 The Board decides on the Terms of Reference of chamber and sub-chamber balanced Working Groups.
- 4.6 The Coordinator shall be responsible for drafting normative documents in line with the requirements specified in Annex 2 of this Procedure.

## **5 Public consultation**

- 5.1 Drafts for public consultation shall include a summary of the key points and a formal comments form, and be published and circulated to:
- a) The FSC Global Network;
  - b) The FSC Board of Directors;
  - c) All FSC accredited Certification Bodies;
  - d) The Working Group;
  - e) The Consultative Forum;
  - f) Other identified stakeholders.
- 5.2 Drafts for social and environmental normative documents shall be publicly consulted in English and Spanish. Drafts for technical normative documents shall be consulted in English, unless otherwise decided by the Steering Committee.
- 5.3 The Coordinator shall be responsible for culturally appropriate outreach to representatives of all stakeholder categories identified as being impacted by the implementation of the document, in particular to any marginalized groups that may be affected by the document (also see Annex 5).
- 5.4 The Coordinator shall plan for two (2) rounds of public consultation for developing and revising normative documents.
- 5.5 A public consultation round shall consist of a period of at least sixty (60) days. In exceptional circumstances, including, but not limited to, urgent issues of health and safety, legislation and market conditions, the period can be reduced to no less than thirty (30) days by decision of the Steering Committee. The reasons for any such reduction shall be included in the public summary of the consultation process.
- 5.6 If after the first round of public consultation there are substantive, unresolved issues, a second round shall be required.
- 5.7 The final number of rounds of public consultation shall be at the discretion of the Steering Committee, taking account of the number and substance of comments received. Additional rounds may be required when substantive, unresolved issues persist after the previous round.
- 5.8 In order to be valid, comments shall be submitted:
- a) In English or Spanish, or any additional language as agreed by the Steering Committee;
  - b) To the address provided in the consultation announcement;
  - c) By the close of the comment period;
  - d) With the required information about the commenter.
- 5.9 Comments not meeting these criteria shall be considered as informal comments. Whenever possible, FSC will encourage that informal comments be made formal. Response to informal comments will be based on FSC staff capacity.
- 5.10 All valid comments shall be acknowledged on receipt and collated by the Coordinator.

- 5.11 All submitted comments (valid or informal) should be attributed, and will be considered as being publicly available, unless the contributor explicitly requests confidentiality. Anonymous comments shall not be formally recognized.
- 5.12 The Coordinator shall prepare a synopsis of the valid comments which shall include:
- a) An analysis of the range of stakeholder groups who have submitted comments;
  - b) A summary of the issues raised (in relation to requirements);
  - c) A general response to the comments and an indication as to how the issues raised were addressed.
- 5.13 The synopsis shall be circulated to all members of the Working Group and to all parties that submitted comments. The synopsis shall be published on the FSC website together with the subsequent public draft of the normative document.

## **6 Pilot testing**

- 6.1 Draft standards may be pilot tested in accordance with *FSC-POL-01-001 Policy for pilot tests of draft FSC standards*.

## **7 Preparation for decision making**

- 7.1 The Steering Committee shall present the draft normative document to the FSC Board of Directors, when it:
- a) Has undergone sufficient consultation and testing to have analyzed the likely impacts of implementation; *and*
  - b) Meets the Terms of Reference of the Working Group; *and*
  - c) Merits the approval by the FSC Board of Directors, *and*
  - d) Has been recommended for approval by the Working Group.
- NOTE: The decision-making procedure is specified in the Working Group Terms of Reference.
- 7.2 The Working Group and the Coordinator shall prepare a report for the FSC Board of Directors, containing the following information:
- a) Summary of the development process, taking into account any deviations from the original work plan or from procedures;
  - b) Summary of the main aim and objectives of the document;
  - c) Evaluation of the likely impacts of the normative document (e.g. administrative and other transaction costs in relation to Certificate Holders, Certification Bodies, FSC National and Regional Offices and FSC);
  - d) Explanation of the main issues and concerns raised during the process, and explain how these have been addressed;
  - e) Record of any outstanding concerns by members of the Working Group (e.g. lack of consensus on a specific issue);



- f) Annexes:
  - i) A list of the names and affiliations of the members of the Working Group and the Consultative Forum;
  - ii) The names and affiliations of all stakeholders that have submitted comments in the consultation process (including whether the stakeholder is an FSC member, and, if so, of which chamber and sub-chamber);
  - iii) Copies of all valid comments received.
- 7.3 The Steering Committee shall submit the draft normative document together with the report to the FSC Board of Directors for decision making.
- 8 Decision making**
- 8.1 The FSC Board of Directors shall either:
  - a) Approve the document; *or*
  - b) Reject and request further work on the document prior to re-submission.
- 8.2 If the FSC Board of Directors requests further work:
  - a) It shall state the reasons for the decision, and may suggest what steps it considers necessary in order to address its concerns within thirty (30) days of its decision.
  - b) The Steering Committee shall consider the reasons for rejection and decide what further actions should be taken before the document is re-submitted to the FSC Board of Directors for decision.
- 8.3 If a newly developed or revised normative document receives the approval of the FSC Board of Directors, it shall be published on the FSC website and this shall be publicly announced to:
  - a) The FSC Global Network;
  - b) The FSC Board of Directors;
  - c) All FSC accredited Certification Bodies;
  - d) The Working Group;
  - e) The Consultative Forum;
  - f) All FSC Certificate Holders;
  - g) Other identified stakeholders.
- 8.4 Decisions on the content of the normative document and a summary of deliberations in arriving at the decision shall be captured in the minutes of the FSC Board of Directors and published on the FSC website.
- 8.5 Approved normative documents shall be published a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to the effective date.



## 9 Review of normative documents

NOTE: Review and revision of normative documents are two distinct processes (please see 'Terms and Definitions' in Section E).

- 9.1 Each normative document shall have an assigned Document Owner (usually a Policy Manager) who is responsible for responding to enquiries and for collecting change requests, comments and proposals for revision related to the normative document during its period of validity.
- 9.2 Change Requests can be submitted at any time during a document's period of validity. Change Requests shall be submitted in writing to the Document Owner and shall include a statement of the rationale for the proposed change. Change Requests shall be compiled and made publicly accessible by the Document Owner. Change Requests shall be considered during the review process for a document or may lead to a proposal by the FSC Policy Director for an extraordinary revision (see Clause 10.4.b).
- 9.3 Each normative document shall be reviewed by the assigned Document Owner at regular intervals for its continued relevance and effectiveness in meeting the stated objective, as instructed by the FSC Policy Director according to the cycle illustrated in Figure 1 (below).
- 9.4 The scheduled review date shall be published on the FSC website and shall be identifiable within the normative document by reference to the period of validity.
- 9.5 The review of the document's continued relevance and effectiveness in meeting the stated objective shall consider the following information:
  - a) New or changed legislation or best practices;
  - b) Emerging technologies or scientific knowledge;
  - c) The results of FSC's Monitoring and Evaluation activities, e.g. implementation problems, competitive advantage or threats;
  - d) Evaluation of Change Requests;
  - e) Existing interpretations and Advice Notes to be incorporated.
- 9.6 The Document Owner shall write a review report recommending whether the normative document requires revision or not, or whether it should be withdrawn based on an analysis of the items listed in Clause 9.5 (above).
- 9.7 The review of a normative document shall be announced, and stakeholder comments on the draft review report invited through the FSC website ([ic.fsc.org](http://ic.fsc.org)) and by email to:
  - a) The FSC Global Network;
  - b) The FSC Board of Directors;
  - c) All FSC accredited Certification Bodies;
  - d) Other identified stakeholders.
- 9.8 The period to submit comments on the draft review report shall be at least thirty (30) days from its publication.

NOTE: Where draft review reports are translated, the period to submit comments shall be at least thirty (30) days from the publication of the translated version.

- 9.9 The Document Owner shall take into account all comments and inputs received and revise the draft review report as necessary.
- 9.10 The Document Owner shall submit a final review report to the FSC Policy Director, presenting the results of the review process.
- 9.11 On the basis of the review report, the FSC Policy Director shall either decide:
  - a) That no revision is required; *or*
  - b) To prepare a proposal for the FSC Board of Directors recommending that a revision process should be initiated; *or*
  - c) To prepare a proposal for the FSC Board of Directors recommending that the document should be withdrawn.
- 9.12 If no revision is required, a new full five (5) year review and revision cycle will start.

## **10 Decision to revise normative documents**

- 10.1 The proposal for a revision of a normative document shall be developed by the FSC Policy Director. The proposal shall present the need for revision and the steps proposed to implement the process in line with this procedure.
- 10.2 The proposal for revision shall be submitted to the FSC Board of Directors for decision making at their next scheduled meeting.
- 10.3 The FSC Board of Directors shall either:
  - a) Approve the proposal; *or*
  - b) Request further work on the proposal prior to re-submission.
- 10.4 Documents in the FSC Normative Framework shall not be revised outside of the defined review and revision schedule, except when the FSC Board of Directors approves an extraordinary revision as a result of:
  - a) A duly approved motion of the FSC General Assembly;
  - b) A proposal from the FSC Policy Director calling for revision as a result of substantial evidence for a need for change.

NOTE: substantial evidence for a need for change may include, but is not limited to: new or changed legislation, formal complaints, serious implementation problems, threats to FSC's credibility, seriousness of Change Requests, foreseen competitive advantage or threat, emerging technologies.

- 10.5 Administrative revisions shall be made at the discretion of the FSC Policy Director. Prior to such correction of typographical and administrative mistakes the FSC Policy Director shall circulate the proposed correction to the FSC Senior Management Team, FSC National and Regional Offices, FSC-accredited Certification Bodies, and other identified experts for a period of thirty (30) days to verify that the proposed correction does not constitute content changes or new requirements.

- 10.6 In the case of corrections, the updated document shall be given a new version number, e.g. V1-1, V1-2, etc., together with the date of the update, and be announced and published on the FSC website.

NOTE: Administrative revisions do not affect the regular review and revision cycle.

## **11 Revision of normative documents**

- 11.1 In the case of an approved revision process it shall be implemented according to the requirements specified in this Procedure for the development of normative documents (Section 3 to Section 8).

## **12 Phase-in of revised normative documents**

- 12.1 Approved normative documents shall be published a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to the effective date. Revised normative documents should be published annually on October 1<sup>st</sup> with an effective date on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Significant departures from this schedule must be justified and approved by the FSC Board of Directors.
- 12.2 The phase-in period of revised normative documents shall be twelve (12) months following the effective date, unless otherwise decided by the FSC Board of Directors.
- 12.3 By the end of the transition period all Certificate Holders and applicants for certification shall have been evaluated against the revised normative document. When using the revised version for the first time, Certification Bodies shall address major and minor nonconformities as usual, but extended timelines for their correction may be granted for new or significantly changed requirements.

NOTE: The transition period is the timeline (usually 1 year) in which there is a parallel phase-in of the new version and phase-out of the old version of a normative document.

- 12.4 At the end of the transition period the previous version of a normative document shall be withdrawn.
- 12.5 Certification granted on the basis of the previous version of a normative document will be considered invalid by FSC after six (6) months upon the end of the transition period (i.e. eighteen (18) months after the effective date) without any further notification.

### Info Box: The review and revision cycle of FSC normative documents

A normative document is usually reviewed in Year 3 or 4 after publication. If revision is necessary then the revised document will generally be published at least three months before the end of the year of review (PUBLICATION date). This document will then become EFFECTIVE for the year that follows the revision. The period between the PUBLICATION date and the EFFECTIVE date is for the parties to adjust their systems, inform their clients and train their staff. The following TRANSITION PERIOD is the year in which there is a parallel phase-in of the new version and phase-out of the old version, but both versions of the document are valid for an overlapping period of 1 year. At the end of the TRANSITION PERIOD all Certificate Holders should have transitioned to the revised normative document and the previous version will be withdrawn. All certificates issued against the previous version will automatically expire and considered invalid eighteen (18) months after the effective date. Not later than four (4) years after the revised version became effective, the Policy and Standards Unit will routinely review the document to evaluate if there is a need for revision. If a revision is needed, the whole cycle will be repeated. Under normal circumstances, each version of a normative document is always valid for a period of five (5) years.

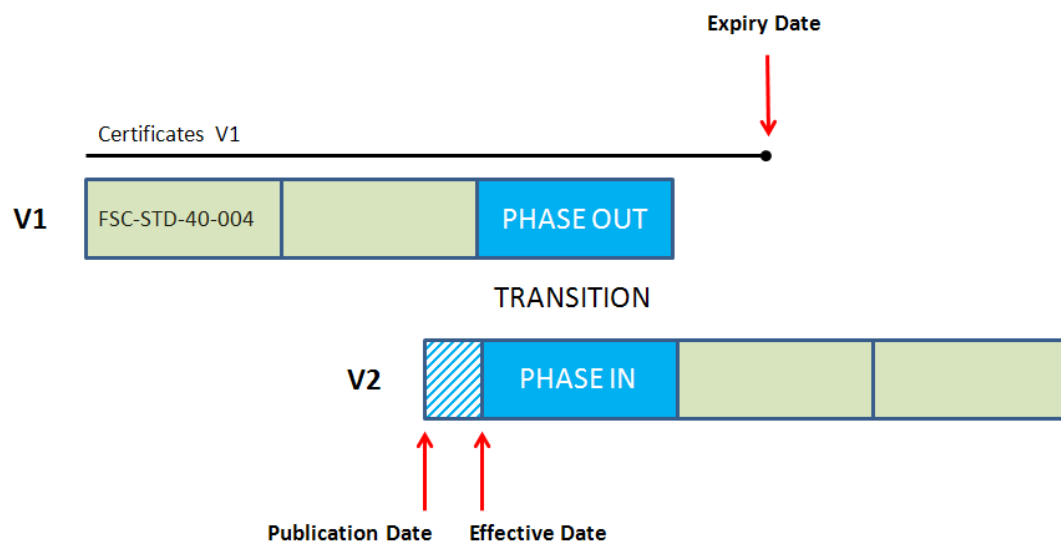


Fig. 1: Transition between 2 versions of a normative document  
(Example: FSC-STD-40-004)

## 13 Withdrawal of normative documents

- 13.1 Depending on the outcome of the review process (see Clause 9.10) a proposal for withdrawal of a normative document shall be developed by the FSC Policy Director. The proposal shall include rationale for withdrawal and the steps proposed to implement the process in line with this procedure.
- 13.2 The proposal for withdrawal shall be circulated by the FSC Policy Director to the FSC Global Network, FSC Board of Directors, FSC accredited Certification Bodies and other identified stakeholders for review and comments.

- 13.3 The period to submit comments on the proposal for withdrawal shall be at least thirty (30) days from its publication.

NOTE: Where proposals are translated, the period to submit comments shall be at least thirty (30) days from the publication of the translated version.

- 13.4 The FSC Policy Director shall take into account all comments and inputs received and revise the proposal for withdrawal as necessary.
- 13.5 The final proposal for withdrawal (together with a synopsis of all comments and inputs received) shall be submitted to the FSC Board of Directors for decision making at their next scheduled meeting.
- 13.6 The FSC Board of Directors shall either:
- a) Approve the proposal; *or*
  - b) Request further work on the proposal prior to re-submission; *or*
  - c) Reject the proposal.
- 13.7 In the case of an approved withdrawal, the normative document shall be invalidated and removed from the FSC website and the public document catalogue.
- 13.8 The withdrawal of a normative document shall be announced on the FSC website ([www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org)) and by email to:
- a) The FSC Global Network;
  - b) The FSC Board of Directors;
  - c) All FSC-accredited Certification Bodies;
  - d) Other identified stakeholders.

## **14 Normative document work program**

- 14.1 FSC shall publish its work program on the development, review and revision of normative documents on its website and should provide copies on request.
- 14.2 The normative document work program shall contain:
- a) A contact point within the FSC Policy and Standards Unit for questions related to Policies and Standards with name and address;
  - b) A list of normative documents with a brief description of their scope, objectives and rationale;
  - c) For each normative document listed in the work program, a brief description of the revision status and review schedule and the Document Owner.
- 14.3 The work program shall be updated at least every six (6) months.

## **15 Availability of approved normative documents**

- 15.1 All approved newly developed and revised normative documents shall be made available free of charge.
- 15.2 Upon request, FSC will endeavor to provide translations of draft and final versions of normative documents, as resources are available.

## **16 Deviation from this procedure**

- 16.1 When compliance with this procedure is not possible for reasons beyond the control of FSC, or when an alternative process would be in the best interest of FSC, the FSC Board of Directors may decide to deviate from this procedure.
- 16.2 The Steering Committee shall prepare the written application for deviation, explaining the nature of the deviation, and the reason or justification for it and shall submit the application to the FSC Board of Directors.
- 16.3 The FSC Board of Directors shall decide on the application and specify any necessary corrective action to be taken in relation to the deviation.
- 16.4 The rationale for the decision to deviate from this procedure shall be documented and made available to the public as part of the records of decision-making.
- 16.5 The research and consultation that did not take place due to the deviation from this procedure, shall be completed, albeit retroactively to understand the effects of the normative document, unless otherwise decided by the FSC Board of Directors.

## **17 Record keeping**

- 17.1 All formal records related to the development and revision of normative documents shall be filed for the whole period of validity of the specific normative document, or for a minimum period of ten (10) years, whichever is longer.
- 17.2 The set of records shall include:
  - a) The proposal to develop or revise a normative document;
  - b) The formal decision by the FSC Board of Directors authorizing the development or revision;
  - c) Names and affiliations of members of the Steering Committee, Working Group and Consultative Forum, and of other stakeholders that were consulted on the document during the development or revision process;
  - d) Copies of technical drafts;
  - e) Copies of public drafts circulated for comment;
  - f) Copies of all comments received on public drafts;
  - g) The synopsis of stakeholder comments;
  - h) The decision on deviations from the specified procedures;
  - i) The final approval of the FSC Board of Directors.
- 17.3 The records shall be made available to interested parties upon request.
- 17.4 Upon request, FSC shall publish a list of records available for review on the FSC website.

## **18 Formal interpretation of normative documents**

18.1 The FSC Policy and Standards Unit is the only body authorized to issue formal and binding interpretation to the requirements included in documents of the FSC Normative Framework.

18.2 Interpretations shall not contain additions, deletions or changes to requirements of normative documents.

NOTE: An addition, deletion or change to a requirement of a normative document is classified as a Change Request and will be compiled for inclusion in the next review process (see also Clause 9.2).

18.3 The FSC Policy and Standards Unit should issue formal and binding interpretation in line with the FSC Enquiry Procedure to their key clients.

18.4 All interpretations will be recorded and published on the FSC website to ensure consistent implementation across the FSC system.

## **19 Complaints and appeals**

19.1 All formal decisions taken by the FSC Board in the course of the development or revision process may be appealed.

19.2 Complaints and appeals shall be addressed in line with the FSC Dispute Resolution System.

## Annex 1: Notes on development of this Procedure

**Version 1-0** approved at the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the FSC Board of Directors, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2004, has been designed to comply with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards, and thereby to demonstrate compliance with the applicable requirements of *ISO/IEC Guide 59 Code of good practice for standardization*, and the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement Annex 3 *Code of good practice for the preparation, adoption and application of standards*. Excerpts from the *TBT Second Triennial Review Annex 4, Principles for the Development of International Standards, Guides and Recommendations with Relation to Articles 2, 5 and Annex 3 of the Agreement* have also been drawn upon where appropriate.

**Version 1-1** approved by FSC Executive Director, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2005 with minor changes; new Clause 16.2.

**Version 1-2** was approved by the FSC Board of Directors at their 41<sup>st</sup> meeting in March 2006 with minor changes.

**Version 2-0** was drafted during November and December 2006 (circulated as Version 1-3), taking into account stakeholder comments. It also includes changes necessary to address minor inconsistencies related to the *ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards*. It was approved at the 44<sup>th</sup> meeting of the FSC Board of Directors, with the name *FSC-PRO-01-001 The Development and Approval of Social and Environmental Standards*.

**Version 3-0** was developed to incorporate the recommendations from the FSC Working Group on Motion 35<sup>2</sup> (GA 2008) and Motion 36<sup>3</sup> (GA 2011) and to align the procedure with Version 5 of the *ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards (2010)*.

**Version 3-1** was developed to incorporate the decision from the FSC Board of Directors made at their 68th Meeting on 25 March 2015 to deviate from this procedure in cases of small changes to technical normative documents (see new Annex 4) or in cases of alignments of normative documents. In addition, small corrections and editorial updates were done.

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<sup>2</sup> Motion Title: "To implement a formal procedure for FSC standard setting that will allow for realistic implementation of standards."

<sup>3</sup> Motion Title: "Annual Policy Manual for the FSC System, for use by accredited certifiers, National Initiatives, ASI auditors, both candidate and certified operations, and stakeholders."



## Annex 2: Drafting and formatting of normative documents

### 1 Drafting a Normative Document

- 1.1 The Coordinator shall be responsible for drafting normative documents.
- 1.2 Draft normative documents shall be based on the respective template, which specifies the title, draft number, date, status, time-limit for comments, expected date for approval, FSC registration code, Coordinator's contact details, etc.
- 1.3 The first and subsequent drafts may be specified as being for public consultation, or for technical consultation. Drafts should be numbered as "(Draft #-#)" where the first number is the number of the applicable draft for public consultation, and the second number is the applicable revision number of the drafts for technical consultation.

For example, Draft 1-0 would be the first draft released for public consultation. Draft 1-1 would be a revision of this draft, for technical consultation only. Draft 2-0 would be the next draft for public consultation. If initial drafts are circulated for technical consultation only, they would be numbered Draft 0-0, 0-1, etc.

- 1.4 Each consecutive draft for public consultation shall include the changes (additions, deletions) made since the previous public draft and/or a summary of the key points of change between drafts.

### 2 Language

- 2.1 All normative documents for public consultation shall be made available in English.
- 2.2 The meaning of English words should follow those given in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary or the Concise Oxford Dictionary, unless the intended meaning is specified in the normative document or provided in *FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms*.
- 2.3 In order to avoid language that may create ambiguities in their interpretation, the following words shall be used in accordance with the specific meanings given below (based on *ISO/IEC Directives Part 2: Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards*):
  - a) “*shall*” indicates requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform to the standard; “*shall not*” indicates a prohibition;
  - b) “*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;
  - c) “*may*” indicates a course of action permissible within the limits of the document; “*need not*” indicates that a specified course of action is not a requirement;
  - d) “*can*” is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or causal.

- 2.4 Normative documents should not use ambiguous terms such as the following: “ordinarily”, “substantial”, “proactive”, “appropriate to”, “minimize”, “wherever possible”, “thorough” or “best available”.
- 2.5 The reference version of all normative documents shall be the English version. All versions in other languages need approval by FSC and shall include a disclaimer, explaining that in case of doubt the English language version shall take precedence.

### **3 Structure and content**

- 3.1 The objectives of a normative document shall be clearly and explicitly specified in the normative document.
- 3.2 The structure of a normative document shall form a logical framework where the requirements clearly contribute to the achievement of the document’s objectives.
- 3.3 Documents in the FSC Normative Framework that are designed as the basis for corresponding regional, trans-national, national or sub-national adaptation (e.g., FSC Principles and Criteria) shall account for local economic, social, environmental and regulatory conditions where the normative document is applied.
- 3.4 Standards and procedures shall be expressed in terms of process, management and performance criteria, and shall not favor a particular technology or patented item.
- 3.5 Standards and procedures shall attribute or cite all original intellectual sources of content.
- 3.6 The meaning of the specified requirements and the level of performance required to comply must be clear.
- 3.7 Normative documents shall include clear supplementary information as necessary to identify any categories of users to whom special provisions are applicable, e.g. 'small-scale', 'low intensity' or 'community' forest management units.
- 3.8 Normative documents may include guidance notes or examples to clarify implementation. Such guidance notes may be integrated into the main document (but clearly indicated as such by structure or type font), or included as annexes, or be published as separate documents.
- 3.9 Normative documents may include references to supplementary documents developed by third parties that provide additional guidance on implementation. Such references shall specify whether compliance with any additional requirements is normative.
- 3.10 Standards and procedures shall include objective and verifiable requirements (e.g. criteria, indicators) and, where appropriate, benchmarks and means of verification. Standards and procedures should be applicable to enterprises of all scales, and account for local variations.
- 3.11 Normative documents shall include contact details for submitting comments and enquiries.

### **Annex 3: Special considerations for inclusion of stakeholders from FSC Southern Countries**

This procedure specifically provides a framework for ensuring meaningful opportunities and fair participation of all stakeholders from all parts of the world.

Certain stakeholders such as those from countries considered southern, according to FSC's definition, may have obstacles such as geographical location or lack of infrastructure that prevent participation. For this reason, specific considerations have been made.

These include:

- Seeking funding to hold Working Group meetings in southern countries, where appropriate;
- Seeking opportunities to meet with southern stakeholders in association with other meetings;
- Carrying out pilot testing/field testing in at least some southern countries;
- Aiming to include southern, and in particular regional representation in Working Groups;
- Working with FSC Network Partners in southern countries to hold telephone conferences with southern stakeholders;
- Seeking funding to facilitate consultation by southern FSC Network Partners.

### **Annex 4: Approved deviation for small changes and alignments**

Approved at the 68<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the FSC Board of Directors, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015, in line with Section 16 of this Procedure and the overall strategic direction of "simplification".

#### **1 Scope**

- 1.1 Upon approval of the FSC Director General, this deviation may be applied for small changes to technical normative documents and for aligning normative documents with approved changes in associated normative documents.

NOTE 1: "*Small changes*" are defined as the revision or addition of one or two requirements.

NOTE 2: "*Technical normative documents*" are defined as documents of the Normative Framework that do not include social or environmental requirements and do not require chamber-balanced Working Groups.

#### **2 Deviation**

- 2.1 The decision to conduct a revision shall be taken by the FSC Director General instead of the FSC Board of Directors (in deviation of Clauses 10.2, 10.3, and 10.4).

- 2.2 The proposal to conduct the revision shall be send to the SMT, the PSC and the FSC Board of Directors for a period of ten (10) working days (in deviation of Clauses 9.7 and 9.8).

NOTE: The FSC Board of Directors reserves the right to require a full review and revision process according to this Procedure as a result of this consultation.

- 2.3 The FSC Director General shall appoint an internal Technical Working Group of one or more staff members to revise the normative document. The appointment of a Coordinator, a Steering Committee and a Consultative Forum is not required (in deviation of Section 3 and 4).
- 2.4 The revised draft containing small changes shall be consulted with directly affected stakeholders once for a period of thirty (30) days (in deviation of Section 5). In the case of alignments, the revised draft does not require further consultation.
- 2.5 The decision on the final draft shall be taken by the FSC Director General instead of the FSC Board of Directors (in deviation of Section 8). A revision report according to Clause 7.2 is not required; a decision request form suffices.

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