REVISION OF FSC-STD-20-001, FSC-PRO-20-003 AND FSC-PRO-20-004

FSC

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PROCESS SUMMARY

Process Title:	Revision of FSC-STD-20-001, FSC-PRO-20-003 and FSC-PRO-20-004
Scope:	Revision
Type of working group	Technical Working Group
# of working group members:	4
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CONTENTS

1. Process Information

1.1 Background and introduction

1.1.1 Introduction to the process

PSU has conducted a review of the general requirements for FSC accredited certification bodies and two related procedures and produced a Review Report recommending a revision of the three documents. The Review Report was consulted with stakeholders through the FSC Consultation Platform between 11 July 2022 to 14 August 2022. Stakeholder feedback was shared with the Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) and FSC Board of Directors (BoD).

At its 93rd meeting in August 2022, the FSC BoD approved the joint revision of the following three normative documents:

FSC-STD-20-001 General requirements for FSC accredited certification bodies

FSC-PRO-20-003 Transfer of FSC Certificates and License Agreements

FSC-PRO-20-004 General Requirements for FSC Training Programme

The standard FSC-STD-20-001 *General requirements for FSC accredited certification bodies* is the main normative document regulating the implementation of the FSC accredited certification programs by certification bodies. FSC-STD-20-001 ensures that FSC accredited certification programs are managed in a competent, consistent, impartial, transparent, rigorous, reliable and credible manner. The last full revision of the standard was completed in 2015 to ensure conformity with ISEAL requirements and compatibility with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065:2013-01 (ISO 17065).

The procedure FSC-PRO-20-003 *Transfer of FSC Certificates and License Agreements* provides a consistent set of process requirements to facilitate the voluntary transfer of certificate holders (CHs) from one certification body to another. The procedure FSC-PRO-20-004 *General Requirements for FSC Training Programme* ensures consistent initial and ongoing qualification of auditors through implementation of the FSC Training Programme. It is the first full revision of both procedures. Due to interlinkages, a joint revision is planned, including the consideration of how the documents can be streamlined and possibly included in the procedures as addenda to FSC-STD-20-001.

1.1.2 Why is the revision needed now?

FSC-STD-20-001 requires amendments to ensure alignment of the requirements with EU legislation. EC regulation 765/2008 mandates EU member states to establish a single national accreditation body per country in the EU. To comply with this regulation, FSC's accreditation and assurance body Assurance Services International (ASI) has introduced a Two-Tier Assurance Program (TTAP). Tier One consists of accreditation of the FSC certification body by the national accreditation body (where necessary) in agreement with ASI as per ISO 17065. Tier Two includes complementary and mandatory ASI assurance services such as FSC-specific assurance assessments. Therefore, FSC accreditation requirements for certification bodies need to comply with the EC regulation and full alignment with ASI TTAP.

In addition, FSC is a scheme that offers product certification and therefore falls under the scope of ISO 17065. The current version of FSC-STD-20-001 presents some of the ISO 17065 requirements in the wording of the standard, but also two other ISO standards DIN EN ISO/IEC 17021:2011-07 (ISO 17021) and DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012-11 (ISO 17024) were used as reference. In addition to ISO references, the current standard also contains the set of FSC-specific requirements. The revision process is needed to ensure full conformity of FSC-STD-20-001 and the related procedures with ISO 17065.

1.2   Objectives and expected outcomes

1.2.1   Objectives of the process

The objectives of the joint revision process are to ensure:

1. Continued relevance and validity of the standard and related procedures to maintain a functioning certification system.
2. Integrity of the system is enhanced and maintained.
3. Streamlined requirements to ensure that the final standard and related procedures are well aligned within the normative framework, not contradicting or duplicating other accreditation standards such as FSC-STD-20-007 *Forest Management Evaluations* and FSC-STD-20-011 *Chain of Custody Evaluations.*
4. Provision for application and use of technology tools provided by FSC.

1.2.2   Expected outcomes of the process

Table 1 Expected outcomes of the process

Title	Description of the outcome
Conformity with ISO and ISEAL[1] requirements	Revised standard and related procedures are in conformity with ISO 17065 and ISEAL Code of Good Practices for Assuring Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards V2-0.
Relevance of FSC accreditation requirements for all CBs	FSC accreditation requirements are aligned with relevant mandatory EC regulations and with the ASI TTAP[2].
Relevant actions from Motion 61/2017	The following relevant actions/topics from the Motion 61/2017 are explored for their implementation: • risk-based approaches to certification and accreditation; • timelines for non-conformities (NCs) received by CHs; • approach and content of the auditor registry; • unannounced audits, public peer review (of FM audit reports) and strengthening social auditing skills for auditors.
Strengthened system integrity	Integrity of FSC accreditation system including certificate transfer and initial and ongoing auditor training is enhanced.

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[1] FSC is a member of ISEAL Alliance, a global membership association for credible sustainability standards. ISEAL defines standard setting requirements, to which FSC is adhering to.

[2] TTAP: Two-Tier Assurance Program: Tier One consists of accreditation of FSC certification bodies by the national accreditation body (where necessary) in agreement with ASI as per ISO 17065. Tier Two includes complementary and mandatory ASI assurance services such as FSC-specific assurance assessments.

Alignment with FSC Certification Database and technology tools provided by FSC	Revised standard and related procedures are aligned with FSC Certification Database and technology tools/applications provided by FSC wherever needed and possible.
Clarified and improved effectiveness of processes and requirements	Requirements and processes e.g. concerning the certificate transfer and agreement between CBs and handling extraordinary situations like pandemics/ conflicts are clarified and improved.

2. Organizational set up of the process

2.1 Process type

Table 2 Process type for each document under joint revision

Process type	Normative document
Regular	FSC-STD-20-001 General requirements for FSC accredited certification bodies
Accelerated	FSC-PRO-20-003 Transfer of FSC Certificates and License Agreements
Accelerated	FSC-PRO-20-004 General Requirements for FSC Training Programme

NOTE: Process type as per of Clause 1.1 of draft FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 – subject to change

FSC will establish an expert-based Technical Working Group (TWG) for the regular process revising FSC-STD-20-001. Whereas the accelerated processes for the remaining two documents will be led by the Process Lead.

2.2 Relevant working bodies

The following table comprises the roles and responsibilities of the working bodies involved in this joint revision.

Table 3 Roles and responsibilities of the relevant working bodies involved in the joint revision

Working Body	Roles and responsibilities
Process Lead	- Set up, manage and administer the TWG; - administer the process, keep track of the work plan and timelines, and inform the rest of the participating bodies of the work plan milestones and upcoming deadlines; - conduct research, review existing requirements and make proposals for amendments and propose new requirements; - draft the requirements; - prepare and launch the public consultations; - compile the feedback from the public consultations and prepare summaries for the TWG; - ensure that the TWG operates responsibly and in accordance with the Terms of Reference and applicable procedures; - coordinate with other FSC staff and programs related to the project to seek expertise as necessary; - manage the communications, both within the project and with external stakeholders; - represent FSC International, e.g., by providing inputs to the working group discussions, ensuring alignment with other ongoing processes within FSC;

	• report on TWG performance and quality of deliverables to FSC management and the Board of Directors; and • report to the Policy Steering Group.
Technical Working Group (TWG)	The members of the TWG will work together throughout the process, discussing issues and interacting with each other as a group in and outside of meetings as necessary and/or as required by the Process Lead. General key responsibilities of the TWG members are to: • Provide inputs on the contents of the requirements; • participate in stakeholder outreach and information-sharing forums, as needed; • seek comprehensive advice on the development and outcome from the FSC Global Network, FSC Board of Directors, FSC accredited CBs, FSC certificate holders, other FSC stakeholders and/or relevant technical experts; • consider feedback gathered during consultation; and • recommend when the final draft is ready to be be submitted for consultation or for its approval or express the reasons for why consensus was not granted. NOTE: The TWG focus is to work on the revision of FSC-STD-20-001 (as per the regular process type). For the revision of the two procedures, the TWG is expected to provide input/feedback on the draft versions developed by the Process Lead (the procedures are revised according to the accelerated process type).
Policy Steering Group (PSG)	• Provide oversight on all phases of the process until the final decision taken by the designated decision-making body; • review, approve and oversee the implementation of the Terms of Reference including budget and work plan; • monitor the process to be followed to develop or revise the normative requirements; • provide advice or support in response to requests by the Process Lead; • approve the composition of the TWG; and • may decide to invite additional people as advisers, but these people shall not have a formal vote.
Process Supervisor	• Supervise the process and support the TWG and Process Lead in reaching their goals; • review, approve and oversee the implementation of the work plan (including the budget) of the process.
Liaison person/s[if needed]	• Keep the BoD and the PSC closely informed about the process; and • give advice to the TWG on timely alignment to relevant processes within the FSC normative framework.

2.3 Selection and participation criteria for the Technical Working Group members

2.3.1 Technical Skills

- Knowledge and/or experience in implementation of FSC accreditation requirements;
- Knowledge and experience in implementation of ISO 17065 and related ISO requirements for accreditation, certification and certificate transfer;
- Knowledge of accreditation-related EU regulations and related national accreditation body requirements;
- Knowledge and/or experience in implementation of accreditation requirements of ISEAL members;
- Experience as an auditor for FSC and/or for other sustainability schemes and experience of conducting social audits;
- Understanding of and support for FSC's mission and vision;
- Up-to-date knowledge of and experience with FSC's systems and procedures;
- Knowledge and experience in standard setting processes of other sustainability schemes, in particular, other ISEAL members;
- Ability to hold a conversation, review and comment on documents submitted in English.

2.3.2 Soft Skills

- Working together in teams;
- Clarity in expression (verbal/written);
- Resolving conflicts;
- Demonstrating resilience;
- Ability to plan work and work systematically.

2.3.3 Contribution

- Proven record of good time management / timely contributions;
- Looking for solutions;
- Delivering a number of quality deliverables.

2.3.4 Engagement

- Proven record of active and constructive participation;
- Representing a broad set of views;
- Demonstrating judgment on conduct and confidentiality;
- Respecting timelines and rules of engagement set for the process.

NOTE: Gender balance and balance of geographical regions, where possible, is desired for the composition of the Technical Working Group.

3. Process-specific Tasks for regular and accelerated processes

Process-specific tasks for each process under this joint revision (both regular and accelerated) are presented below:

3.1 FSC-STD-20-001 General requirements for FSC accredited certification bodies

3.1.1 Tasks

Conformity with ISO and ISEAL requirements

- Review and propose amendments in FSC specific requirements including terms and definitions in the standard to conform with ISO 17065 requirements.
- Identify and remove requirements duplicating ISO 17065 from the standard.
- Identify and remove requirements based on ISO 17021 and ISO 17024 from the standard.
- Review and if necessary revise the standard to conform with ISEAL Code of Good Practices for Assuring Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards V2-0.

Relevance of FSC accreditation requirements for all CBs

- Coordinate with ASI to ensure non-discriminatory accreditation requirements for all CBs (within and outside EU) and to ensure alignment with ASI TTAP.
- Explore the accreditation of certification bodies that are already accredited by both ASI for FSC certification and by a national accreditation body (established as per EC regulation 765/2008) for either FSC or for other forest certification schemes to identify the requirements in the standard where alignment is needed.
- Review the results of the DAkkS[3] accreditation process and amend FSC requirements for certification body accreditation and auditor qualifications as necessary.
- Research and explore relevant EU regulations and identify possible alignment wherever needed.
- Review and update accreditation-related requirements including distinction by geographical scope, combinations of accreditation scope and holding more than one accreditation.

Relevant actions from Motion 61/2017

- Review and consider revising the standard to strengthen risk-based approaches to accreditation requirements.
- Review the effectiveness of timelines to close non-conformities (NCs) received by CHs and suggest amendments if needed (only if this does not contradict ISO 17065).
- Review the approach and content of the auditor registry and suggest improvements.
- Check the need for introducing unannounced audits, public peer reviews of FM audit reports and make suggestions for amendments in the standard if needed.
- Propose solutions to clarify and/or to strengthen social auditing skills for auditors and participation in audit teams.
- Research and explore solutions to incorporate relevant approved motions from FSC's 2022 General Assembly (if any).

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[3] Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle (the national accreditation body of the Federal Republic of Germany)

Strengthen system integrity

- Coordinate with System Integrity at FSC to review and incorporate new tools such as an integrity risk assessment in the certification application and platform solutions to maintain the certification history of an applicant and reasons of termination/transfer.
- Coordinate with System Integrity at FSC to identify the need for critical requirements (e.g. a specific nonconformity of certificate holder triggering immediate suspension).
- Explore and identify the need to acquire additional information from a certificate holder.

Alignment with FSC Certification Database and technology tools provided by FSC

- Review certification registration requirements and align FSC certification type and codes with the FSC certification database.
- Review data entry related requirements and introduce a mechanism to ensure that the entered information is correct and up-to-date.

Clarified and improved effectiveness of processes

- Review and revise the requirements for addressing extraordinary situations (such as pandemics and war), considering the temporary derogations FSC issued in the past years, but without working on general remote auditing solutions.
- Review impartiality requirements to consider whether further specifications are necessary, e.g., concerning the composition and terms of the committee for safeguarding impartiality.
- Clarify requirements regarding the obligations of CBs and CHs to ASI and FSC in situations such as conducting an additional assessment to maintain oversight and conducting fraud and false claim investigations.
- Review and revise requirements for contracts between CHs and CBs in the light of the digital trademark license agreement (TLA) signature.
- Review and incorporate FSC's procedure for participation of external observers in FSC and/or ASI audits/assessments (FSC-PRO-01-017) into the standard.
- Explore the provisions for awarding certification based on the testing of the requirements under development.
- Inclusion of all relevant interpretations and derogations.
- Other aspects that are identified by FSC throughout the revision (as needed)

3.2 FSC-PRO-20-003 Transfer of FSC Certificates and License Agreements

3.2.1 Tasks

Conformity with ISO and ISEAL requirements

- Review and revise the procedure requirements FSC-PRO-20-003 to conform with relevant ISO requirements for transfer of certificates while upholding the integrity of the system.

Relevance of FSC accreditation requirements for all CBs

- Alignment of requirements with ASI TTAP and obligations of preceding and succeeding CBs for ASI findings under CH compliance assessment.

Alignment with FSC Certification Database and technology tools provided by FSC

- Review the certificate transfer process requirements for agreeing on the transfer date.
- Review and introduce data ownership requirements and obligations of CBs.

Clarified and improved effectiveness of processes

- Clarify the scope of voluntary transfers for all types of certificates and clarify data transfer rules.
- Review and include all relevant interpretations and derogations.

3.3 FSC-PRO-20-004 General Requirements for FSC Training Programme

3.3.1 Tasks

Relevance of FSC accreditation requirements for all CBs

- Research and identify applicable DAkkS requirements regarding auditor's initial and ongoing qualifications/trainings.
- Explore and align FSC requirements with auditors experience in the field wherever needed and possible.

Clarified and improved effectiveness of processes

- Analyse the effectiveness of the current procedure and consider amendments to improve consistency of trainings.
- Review and clarify requirements about remote vs. in-person trainings.
- Review and consider minimum chain of custody auditor qualifications for forest management auditors

4. OPERATING RULES

4.1 Timeline and accountabilities

4.1.1 Term of TWG

Starting time/period

Appointed TWG members are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations of this ToR and TWG members shall sign a cooperation agreement with FSC upon appointment.

Term starting time/period: June 2023

Completion time/period

The term of TWG members ends with:

- The submission of the final draft of the standard FSC-STD-20-001 to the Policy and Standards Committee, after the Policy Steering Group's review and recommendation for approval; and
- the submission of feedback to the final draft of procedures FSC-PRO-20-003 and FSC-PRO-20-004.

Term Completion time/period: March 2025

4.1.2 Structure of TWG and its reporting line

The TWG is accountable to FSC International. TWG members may be asked to leave the group by the Policy Steering Group if they are not fulfilling their duties properly.

4.2 Workplan and time commitment

4.2.1 Workplan

TWG members are expected to donate sufficient time to thoroughly fulfil their duties as outlined in the tentative work plan presented in Annex 1. The timetable and the detailed work plan will be updated as necessary.

4.2.2 Communication

The TWG will conduct most of its work via e-mail or similar means of electronic communication (e.g. Microsoft Teams and Zoom conference calls), and through one-on-one calls with the Process Lead when required. Similarly, face-to-face meetings will be planned if needed and wherever possible.

4.2.3 Meetings

The Process Lead will strive to select meeting dates and venues that allow for the full participation of all TWG members. The following are the in person or virtual meetings envisaged to reach the outcome of this process:

- Process kick-off virtual meeting: June 2022;
- Content discussion virtual meetings: Monthly meeting of 1-2hrs (frequency of the meeting might be increased during the first two months to set direction and to agree on milestones;
- TWG in person meeting to discuss the Draft 1 of documents under revision: October 2023;
- TWG in person meeting to discuss the consultation results and the Process Lead's proposals for amendments: TBD.

4.3   Expenses and remunerations

FSC is an international not-for-profit membership organization with limited funding. Participation in the TWG takes place on a voluntary non-paid basis. If required, a stipend can be granted by FSC on a case-by-case basis.

If required, FSC will cover reasonable travel and accommodation expenses related to the work plan upon submission of the respective invoices and receipts, and if expenses are agreed upon in advance.

4.4   Confidentiality and conflict of interest

TWG members as well as any experts shall sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement with FSC at the beginning of their work. Per default, non-attributable content of discussions and papers prepared by or presented to the TWG is not considered confidential, unless otherwise specified by FSC.

TWG members are expected to declare any conflicts of interest, where they arise. This will cause the person(s) to be excused from the discussion and to abstain from participating in decision-making.

4.5   Language

The working language of the TWG is English. All drafts for public consultation, as well as other documents, as requested and as possible, will be translated into Spanish.

4.6   Deliberations and decision making

Formal decision-making responsibility of the TWG is to inform the PSG when drafts are ready for consultation and when final drafts are ready to be sent for decision making by the designated decision-making body.

NOTE: TWG will only inform PSG and designated decision-making body about the FSC-STD-20-001.

All TWG members must participate in each point of decision-making. If any of the member(s) is not present for a decision, then a provisional decision may be made, subject to participation by the absent member(s). Quorum is required for any provisional decisions, and full member participation is preferred. For the TWG to meet and deliberate, the quorum must be minimum 3 out 4 members. The TWG shall strive and make every effort possible to take decisions by consensus (see Annex 2 Terms and Definitions). If consensus cannot be achieved, outstanding concerns should be documented and presented to the FSC Board of Directors in the final report that accompanies the document presented for decision.

The Process Lead, Policy Steering Group members and any other supportive personnel shall not participate in any decision-making relevant to the tasks and responsibilities of the TWG as outlined in section 3.

If the TWG is not able to agree on a final draft within two (2) months after the final round of consultation, the Policy Steering Group (as delegated by the Director General) shall take a decision on how to move forward with the process.

Annex 1: Work Plan and Estimated timelines

For regular process: FSC-STD-20-001

Tasks and Activities	Lead	2023												2024												2025					
		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Conducting research on the proposed topics in ToR	PL	■	■	■																											
Focused consultation (30 days) on the research and proposed topics	PL				■																										
Compiling consultation results	PL					■																									
Process Kick-off meeting with TWG	PL						■																								
Monthly TWG meeting (to discuss the proposals and to prepare the Draft 1)	TWG							■	■	■																					
TWG in person meeting to discuss the Draft 1 and to discuss the testing criteria	TWG										■																				
Finalizing Draft 1	PL											■																			
Conducting Field Test	PL												■	■	■																
Preparing Field Test Report	PL															■															
Draft to include results of the testing	PL																■														
Monthly TWG meeting to discuss the testing results and sign of the Draft 2 for public consultation	TWG																	■	■												
Preparation for public consultation	PL																			■											
Public consultation on Draft 2 (60 days) and conducting webinars	PL																				■	■									
Compiling and presenting consultation results	PL																						■								

Table 1

Tasks and Activities	Lead	2023												2024												2025					
		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
TWG in person meeting to discuss the consultation results and the Process Lead proposals for amendments	TWG																							■(red)							
Monthly TWG meeting (to discuss the proposals for amendments in Final Draft)	TWG																								■(green)						
Preparing Final Draft	PL																									■					
Monthly TWG meeting (to conclude and sign of the final Draft)	TWG																										■(green)				
PSC approval	PSC																											■(orange)	■(orange)		
Preparatory work for publication and translation	PL																													■	
Publication	PL																														■

For accelerated processes: FSC-PRO-20-003 and FSC-PRO-20-004

Tasks and Activities	Lead	2023												2024												2025					
		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Conducting research on the proposed topics in ToR	PL	■	■	■	■	■																									
Draft requirements in line with the approved scope of revision (ToR for joint revision).	PL						■	■	■	■																					
Presenting Draft 1 to TWG at first in person meeting of joint revision	PL										■																				
TWG to provide feedback	TWG											■(green)	■(green)																		
Including feedback from TWG to the Draft1	PL													■																	
Conducting Desk Test	PL														■	■															
Preparing Desk Test Report	PL																■														

Tasks and Activities	Lead	2023												2024												2025					
		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
Draft 2 to include results of the testing	PL																	■													
Preparation for public consultation	PL																		■	■											
Public consultation on Draft 2 (60 days) and conducting webinars	PL																				■	■									
Preparing consultation report	PL																						■								
Including consultation results to prepare Final Draft	PL																							■							
Preparing Final Draft	PL																								■	■					
Prepare and submit decision making package for advice to PSG.	PL																										■	■			
Director General Approval	DG																												▣		
Preparatory work for publication and translation	PL																													■	
Publication	PL																														■

ANNEX 2 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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

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).

The Policy Steering Group composed of the FSC Director General, the Policy Directors, and selected members of the FSC Global Leadership Forum.

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