

FSC-DER-2024-002 Evaluation of Contractors against the FSC Core Labour Requirements

Normative reference	FSC-ADVICE-40-004-23 Sections 2-5; and FSC-ADVICE-20-011-16 Sections 2-5
Scope	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Generic (applicable by all certification bodies accredited for evaluation of Chain of Custody (CoC) certified organizations) <input type="checkbox"/> Specific (applicable only upon individual request and PSU confirmation)
Approval	13 February 2024
Effective date	14 February 2024
Period of validity	Until new versions of FSC-ADVICE-40-004-23 and FSC-ADVICE-20-011-16 are effective.
References	FSC-ADVICE-40-004-23 Sections 2-5; and FSC-ADVICE-20-011-16 Sections 2-5
Rationale	<p>FSC introduced <u><FSC-ADVICE-40-004-23 V1-0 Evaluation of contractors against the FSC core labour requirements></u> & <u><FSC-ADVICE-20-011-16 V1-0 Evaluation of contractors against the FSC core labour requirements></u>, two advice notes which include the same content, to provide clear instructions on how the FSC core labour requirements in <u><FSC-STD-40-004 V3-1 Chain of Custody Certification></u> must be applied to contractors operating under outsourcing agreements.</p> <p>However, since the advice notes' effective dates, various stakeholder concerns on the practical implications have been raised, requesting further clarity on the content of the advice notes, and the associated timelines for implementation. These concerns have primarily focused on the risk classification of contractors and evaluation requirements.</p> <p>Regarding the timeline, various concerns were raised on when the requirements must be applied from to ensure certificate holders are audited to the new requirements by the 'transition end date' of 31 December 2024, which was introduced from 1 September 2023. This means certification bodies (CBs) are required to update processes for the risk classification for contractors and apply the requirements for on-site evaluations of contractors classified as 'high risk', ensuring all certificate holders and their contractors be audited to the advice notes by 31 December 2024, with any who are not audited by this time potentially facing non-conformity, as per section 11 of <u><FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 The Development and Revision of FSC Requirements></u>.</p> <p>With this timeline considered challenging by many and the requirements considered to be 'disproportionate', referring to the</p>

indices introduced in clause 2.2e) of the advice notes, FSC has agreed to revise the advice notes in an expedite manner. The revision sets out to address these concerns, whilst retaining the advice notes' original objective: to provide clear instructions on how the FSC core labour requirements have to be applied to contractors operating under outsourcing agreements.

While the advice notes are revised, it is deemed necessary to provide a derogation for part of the advice notes, so that the sections relevant to the CBs are waived, and this derogation is provided until the effective date of the revised advice notes.

PSU Conclusion

PSU grants this derogation to waive the requirements for certification bodies in sections 2 to 5 in both FSC-ADVICE-40-004-23 and FSC-ADVICE-20-011-16.

NOTE: As section 1 remains effective for certificate holders, certification bodies are required to evaluate contractors using the information provided in the self-assessment, following the general provisions in clause 11.3 of <FSC-STD-20-011 V4-2 Chain of Custody Evaluations>.
