

Consultation on Revision of Advice Notes:

Evaluation of contractors against the FSC core labour requirements

Background

FSC introduced [<FSC-ADVICE-40-004-23 V1-0 Evaluation of contractors against the FSC core labour requirements>](#) & [<FSC-ADVICE-20-011-16 V1-0 Evaluation of contractors against the FSC core labour requirements>](#), two advice notes which include the same content, to provide clear instructions on how the FSC core labour requirements in [<FSC-STD-40-004 V3-1 Chain of Custody Certification>](#) must be applied to contractors operating under outsourcing agreements. In previous communications, these have been referred to as 'Advice Note 23'.

Since their 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 heavily focused on the risk classification of outsourcers and evaluation requirements, referring to the indices introduced in clause 2.2e).

To address these concerns, while maintaining the original objective of providing clear instructions on how the FSC core labour requirements have to be applied to contractors operating under outsourcing agreements, the advice notes will be revised. To address the immediate concerns, a [derogation](#) has been published to waive certain requirements for certification bodies.

Advice Notes

The revision of the advice notes intends to ensure clarity, and address the risk assessment classification concerns, providing more flexibility to certification bodies (CB). Additionally, to aid clarification, only content relevant to requirements of the related standards in the Directives ([FSC-DIR-40-004](#) and [FSC-DIR-20-011](#)) will remain. This means aspects relevant to certificate holders and applicants will be kept in [DIR-40-004](#), whereas aspects relevant for CBs will be kept only in [DIR-20-011](#). This means there will be a slight change to the clause numbers, in particular for FSC-ADVICE-20-011-16.

The draft provides revisions of the content of the original versions, including the sections of: scope, background, normative references, relevant terms and definitions, advice, and a new 'Examples' section in FSC-ADVICE-20-011-16 only.

Process

This revision follows an accelerated revision process as described in <[FSC-PRO-01-001 The Development and Revision of FSC Requirements](#)>.

Consultation

The consultation will be opened on the [FSC consultation platform](#) for 15 days, from 01 March 2024 until 15 March 2024. To ensure the revised versions can be published and effective in a timely manner, the Director General has approved the reduced consultation time in this instance. To ensure to maximise potential responses, the consultation will be opened to the 'public', however the process followed in <[FSC-PRO-01-001 The Development and Revision of FSC Requirements](#)> is 'accelerated'.

It will be provided in English only, but comments may be provided in any FSC official language. On approval, the new finalized versions will be translated into the FSC languages of French and Spanish.

Contact

If you have any comments or questions, please contact the Chain of Custody team: chainofcustody@fsc.org.