



Guidance

LANDSCAPE APPROACH TO INTACT FOREST LANDSCAPES

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This draft guidance was developed in collaboration with a research consortium led by Professor Claude Garcia of Bern University of Applied Studies (commissioned by FSC Secretariat) and FSC staff.

A pre-final version was consulted with FSC Standard Development Groups in IFL countries, the Focus Forests Advisory Group, and final editing was done by consultant Andre de Freitas. To develop the approach in this guidance, we also learned from elements of other landscape approaches, such as the one of The Forest Dialogue. A [full overview of other landscape approaches considered](#) is available.

This document includes tools for helping in the development of specific activities and offers a list of useful resources for additional help in implementing the FSC landscape approach to IFLs.

This draft guidance has been the starting point for the development of the draft procedure and Terms of Reference for the pilots. It will be revisited based on the results of the pilots to develop a final guidance and final procedure for the implementation of Landscape considerations in Intact Forest Landscapes.

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INTRODUCTION

For many years, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has been actively working to safeguard Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs) within certified forest management units (MU). *Motion 65/2014 High Conservation Value 2 (HCV2) – Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) protection* set the initial thresholds for the protection of IFLs within MUs. However, concerns and calls for a review arose with *Motion 34/2017 Regional assessments of the short and long term impacts -positive and negative -of the management and protection measures associated with the implementation of the motion 65/2014 and the International Generic Indicators (IGI)*, leading to impact assessments in regions like Russia, the Congo Basin, Brazil, and Canada. These assessments highlighted member concerns regarding the protection thresholds for IFLs.

FSC is actively addressing concerns about IFL protection by introducing a landscape approach, which is intended to look at the IFLs in their entirety, both inside and outside the MU boundaries. This was approved through the passing of *Motion 23/2022 Use landscape-wide approaches adapted to local conditions and strengthen Standard Development Groups (SDGs)*, which states:

FSC's current approach shall be reviewed and revised to:

- *support the intent of the FSC Principles & Criteria, especially Principle 9, and motions duly adopted by previous FSC General Assemblies (GAs) (i.e. Motion 65/2014, Motion 34/2017; Motion 71/2017); and address effective protection of the vast majority of HCV2s/IFLs at the level of the landscape; and*
- *be able to change current requirements at international level for placement and extent of IFL core areas and conservation measures (including thresholds for strict IFL conservation related to FSC certified Forest Management Units (FMUs)), and to hereby achieve best possible contribution to conservation of HCV2/IFL across the entire landscape within the specific environmental, social and socio-economic conditions in the landscape; and*
- *include in the identification, conservation and maintenance of HCV2s / IFLs (including core areas) within the landscape, best available information; the results of regional assessments (Motion34/2017); expert knowledge and peer review (e.g. HCV Network; Tropenbos; WWF; FORLAND; STARLING; WRI; Global Forest Watch); on-the-ground (below-the-canopy) analyses of ecological, social and socio-economic values and conditions including different degrees of intactness in terms of natural disturbances, forest types, human interventions, fragmentation and/or biodiversity values; and*
- *include risk analyses in the identification, prioritization and balancing of conservation and management measures for HCV2/IFLs protection at landscape level; by assessing risks & benefits as well as threats & opportunities related to biodiversity, forest carbon stocks, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, the FSC brand, certified operations, and other HCV2/IFL related values; and*
- *strengthen, clarify the role of, and rely on SDGs in adapting FSC's international approach and operationalizing requirements for HCV2/IFL conservation at landscape level within specific environmental, social and socio-economic conditions at local, national and/or regional level; and*
- *utilize consultation with Indigenous and Traditional Peoples who may rely upon or be affected by IFL conservation, and uphold their rights, including their right to Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and following FPIC procedures wherever applicable; and*
- *be consensus based and equitably engage with all relevant stakeholders at national/regional level, especially local communities, and stakeholders who may rely upon or be affected by IFL conservation as well as governmental agencies where appropriate (e.g. as forest owner, as landscape planning authority, etc.).*

The supporting principle for this approach is that the greater the protection of IFLs in the landscape, the more flexibility there can be for IFL protection within the MU. This allows for the implementation of landscape considerations for faster adaptation of IFL related requirements and certification within specific landscapes, while also developing a broader, long-term solution.

As a certification system, the goal of this process is to consider the wider landscape in certification decisions for MUs within that landscape. This includes the definition of protection levels for IFLs in MUs as well as any requirements for management activities for the portion of the IFL that can be managed. Another innovation in the landscape approach is the introduction of the concept of a "**Sphere of Influence**", which can be used to develop indicators related to actions by The Organization with regards to IFLs outside the MU.

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OBJECTIVE

This document offers further guidance and support for Standard Development Groups (SDGs) participating in the pilots and implementing <FSC-PRO-60-004 Development of indicators for the protection of Intact Forest Landscapes considering the landscape level>. This is expected to contribute to the protection and management of IFLs in certified MUs within a specific landscape, as well as improving their protection outside certified areas.

This guidance provides recommendations so that the landscape approach is transparent, scientifically based, inclusive and collaborative, with appropriate stakeholder participation – while respecting any requirements for Free, Prior and Informed Consent where legal and/or customary rights exist.

This guidance is divided into the following sections:

1. Landscape identification and analysis
2. Development of IFL related indicators
3. Stakeholder identification and engagement
4. Stakeholder feedback on landscape approach proposals to IFLs
5. Monitoring and learning

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SCOPE

This guidance provides additional support for Standard Development Groups participating in the pilots and implementing <FSC-PRO-60-004 Development of indicators for the protection of Intact Forest Landscapes considering the landscape level>.

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TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs): a territory within today's global extent of forest cover which contains forest and non-forest ecosystems minimally influenced by human economic activity, with an area of at least 500 km² (50,000 ha) and a minimal width of 10 km (measured as the diameter of a circle that is entirely inscribed within the boundaries of the territory). (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1).

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:

Being the last remaining large unfragmented forested areas in the world, IFLs are valued for their environmental, social, and intrinsic worth. Ninety percent of the world's remaining IFLs are concentrated in only 11 countries. Just three of these - Canada, Russia and Brazil - contain approximately 65% of the world's entire remaining IFL area.

Indigenous Cultural Landscapes (ICLs): Indigenous cultural landscapes are living landscapes to which Indigenous Peoples attribute environmental, social, cultural and economic value because of their enduring relationship with the land, water, fauna, flora and spirits and their present and future importance to their cultural identity. An Indigenous Cultural Landscape is characterized by features that have been maintained through long-term interactions based on land-care knowledge, and adaptive livelihood practices. They are landscapes over which Indigenous Peoples exercise responsibility for stewardship. (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1).

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:

Recognizing that many IFLs occur within forests to which Indigenous Peoples hold legal or customary rights, this guidance also describes Indigenous Cultural Landscapes and the values and rights that the Indigenous Peoples have to different parts of IFLs.

Landscape: A geographical mosaic composed of interacting ecosystems resulting from the influence of geological, topographical, soil, climatic, biotic and human interactions in a given area (Source: Based on World Conservation Union (IUCN). Glossary definitions as provided on IUCN website). (Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1).

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:

A landscape is a dynamic and multifaceted concept that encompasses both natural and human-influenced elements within a specific geographical area. It refers to the visible and tangible characteristics of an environment, including physical features, landforms, ecosystems, vegetation, water bodies, and human-made structures, settlements, and the interactions amongst all these elements. A landscape, however, incorporates more than just physical characteristics; it also has social, cultural and historical components.

The concept of landscape goes beyond the sum of its parts and reflects the interactions between natural processes and human activities. It's a complex interplay between ecological, social, and cultural elements that shape the visual, functional, and emotional experiences of a geographical area. Landscapes hold significance for various stakeholders, including local communities, Indigenous Peoples, scientists, artists, policymakers, and conservationists.

This means that there is not always an unquestionable way of defining a landscape: it depends often on the people discussing the landscape. There is no good or bad, there is an agreement between stakeholders, applied to landscapes and natural-resource management systems defining the scope of what they will discuss¹.

The process of defining a landscape is in a sense a process of isolation, setting the landscape apart from other landscapes in its surroundings or overlapping with it. The isolation is partly artificial, but it is the only possible way in which the process can proceed². Hence, defining a landscape cannot be separated from the point of view of the people identifying the landscapes³.

IMPORTANT!

The objective of the landscape approach to IFLs is NOT to develop a land use plan for this wider landscape. Landscapes extending beyond the boundaries of a certified MU are, in principle, out of its sphere of control. FSC's voluntary certification system looks at forest MUs. The innovation proposed is to implement the concept of a sphere of influence, through which The Organization will take actions to support the protection of IFLs within the landscape where it is located. These actions are expected to be consistent with the scale of the MU and the existing opportunities to influence IFL related matters in the landscape, such as land-use planning processes or consultations for the establishment of protected areas. On the long term, The Organization's participation in such processes will be an important action to improve the protection of IFLs in the landscape.

The following definitions for "Sphere of control" and "Sphere of influence" are not official FSC definitions. However, they are included in this guidance for the purpose of clarity.

Sphere of Control: The Sphere of Control pertains to the area or aspects for which The Organization is legally responsible, where it can legally intervene. This does not mean that the control is absolute, as government regulation and pre-existing rights can limit what The Organization can effectively do. In most cases, the Sphere of Control is the area of the MU.

Sphere of Influence: The Sphere of Influence usually refers to areas outside the MU⁴, where decisions and actions of The Organization interact with those of other stakeholders to shape the landscape. The Sphere of Influence also refers to decisions and actions by stakeholders that influence what happens in the landscape. The influence can be over ecological processes (migration corridors, gene flows, watershed alteration), social processes (delivery of critical civil services, land tenure clarification) or economic processes (job creation, benefit sharing schemes, infrastructure development). Each of these processes will play at different scales so the boundaries of the Sphere of Influence are diverse and cannot be clearly defined.

It is expected that actions taken by The Organization both within its Sphere of Control and its Sphere of Influence contribute to improve the protection of Intact Forest Landscapes beyond the certified MU.

¹ Garcia *et al.* 2020.

² Tansley, 1935.

³ Gignoux *et al.* 2011

⁴ In some countries it is possible to have overlapping concessions within a same area, awarded to different organizations (e.g. timber and mining). In these situations, the Sphere of Influence will also include the MU.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:

For example, the FSC Forest Stewardship Standard of Canada (FSC-STD-CAN-01-2018) defines **Sphere of Influence** as: Professional associations with colleagues or businesses, agencies and Indigenous Peoples with whom individuals or businesses or agencies interact. When required by Indicators to work within one's Sphere of Influence, The Organizations and forest managers shall interact with their colleagues, other professionals, Indigenous Peoples, businesses and agencies, including government Ministries, Departments and other agencies, to achieve the Indicators' objectives.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARDI	Actors, Resources, Dynamics, and Interactions
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FSS	Forest Stewardship Standard
HCV	High Conservation Value
ICL	Indigenous Cultural Landscape
IFL	Intact Forest Landscape
IGI	International Generic Indicators
MU	Management Unit
SDG	Standard Development Group

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1. LANDSCAPE IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

1.1 Defining the Landscape Boundaries

The SDG⁵ can take different approaches in defining a landscape, including watershed, regional, jurisdictional, or country level, among others. In principle, the larger the area, the more challenging it will be to have sufficiently similar conditions in the landscape for it to work effectively for the development of IFL related indicators. Defining the boundaries of the landscape is a decision the SDG will have to make and, while there may be limitations in the feasibility of certain approaches, there is no single right solution⁶.

Defining the landscape boundaries involves considering factors such as ecological connectivity, the distribution of IFLs, the presence of Indigenous Peoples, the existing MUs, the existence of protected areas, and the overall ecological and social significance of the landscape. It provides the flexibility for SDGs to evaluate what approach best suits the ecological, social, economic and political contexts. This ensures that the chosen approach aligns with the specific landscape context and conservation objectives, leading to tailored strategies for IFL protection and responsible land use inside each MU.

Key elements for defining the landscape boundaries:

- Ecosystem boundaries are the locations exhibiting gradients of change in environmental conditions and a related shift in the composition of plant and/or animal communities.
- Naturally occurring ecosystem boundaries can represent unique habitats to which many species are specifically adapted.
- Anthropogenically created ecosystem boundaries often support high species diversity, but the combination of species present at edges is very different to the one found deep inside the adjacent ecosystems.
- Neighbouring ecosystems experience flows of organisms, materials, and energy across the shared boundary⁷.
- Socioeconomic and cultural aspects should also be considered, as they can impact how the existence of IFLs in that landscape is maintained or altered over time.
- Jurisdictional boundaries such as countries, provinces, states, or municipalities, especially if governance issues are defined and/or implemented at those levels.

Given that the objective of the landscape approach is to support FSC certification of MUs in areas where there are IFLs, SDGs should give significant weight to the existence of certified MUs which contain IFLs and to IFL areas with potential for FSC certification, when defining the landscape boundaries.

Important considerations for SDGs to take into account when defining the landscape boundaries:

Information collection: SDGs should gather spatial data, maps, and scientific insights to support the definition of landscape boundaries. This includes identifying IFL locations, assessing connectivity, and understanding land use dynamics, both over space and time. In order to identify IFLs in the landscape, SDGs should use Global Forest Watch maps or an alternative IFL inventory using the same methodology, such as Global Forest Canada, with 01 January 2017 as a baseline⁸.

⁵ The SDG can choose to implement the activities in the landscape approach or delegate/subcontract them to another party, while retaining oversight and responsibility for the process

⁶ See Annex 1 for a list of tools to support the definition of the landscape

⁷ Banks-Leite and Ewers, 2009.

⁸ Adapted from [FSC-DIR-20-007](#)

Benefits and challenges: SDGs can explore and analyze the benefits and challenges of each approach for defining landscape boundaries. It is possible to weigh factors like conservation effectiveness, social acceptance, economic viability, potential risks and political feasibility.

Prioritization: not all landscapes will have the same relevance from the point of view of IFL protection, both within and outside MUs. Before advancing in this process, SDGs should define which areas, at a high level, are priority for the definition of landscapes, considering the presence of IFLs, other HCVs, existing and potential MUs, stakeholders involved, protected areas, other types of land use, among others.

How can the boundaries of a landscape be defined?

When defining the boundaries for the landscape, the SDG should keep in mind that it will assess the existence and the long-term outlook for IFLs at this larger scale, which will then be used to develop indicators for IFL protection within MUs. As such, the definition of the landscape boundaries should be done taking into account the characteristics and attributes of the IFL in question, as well as cultural, social, economic and governance aspects. The objective is to have an area that has uniform characteristics, which will enable a more effective discussion on the future of the IFLs in that landscape. For practical reasons, it is expected that the landscape boundaries will often coincide with administrative or jurisdictional boundaries.

To optimize its efforts, the SDG may choose to focus on specific IFL areas that hold particular significance, such as a distinct biome, a region undergoing change or one that has significant areas planned for concessions. The indicators for IFL protection that will be developed as part of this process will apply only to MUs within the defined landscape boundaries.

Because the landscape approach is intended to support the development of indicators for the management and protection of IFLs in a FSC Forest Stewardship Standard, a national or subnational approach will likely be best for defining the landscape boundaries.

Can a landscape cut across several countries with different rules and legal systems?

It is possible, though probably not the best solution. Countries with different rules and legal systems will likely have too many differences for a single landscape process to work effectively for the development of indicators in a FSS.

Can a single landscape be used for a large and diverse country such as Brazil?

Yes, but likely not the best approach. In such a large and diverse area, there will probably be significant variation in forest types, the protection of IFLs and the outlook for their future. It might be easier to adopt a lower level jurisdictional or biome specific approach, though there is no objective rule that dictates how granular the landscape should be. The SDG must exercise its best judgement, and initial decisions can be corrected through feedback from the stakeholders in the Landscape Dialogue.

It may be helpful to understand past decisions by governments in deciding where Concessions / MUs have been allocated. It is possible some areas were already set aside for protection purposes and this can help inform further protection needs.

1.2 Landscape Description

The SDG should develop a comprehensive description of the landscape⁹, including essential social, political, economic and biological elements. Accurate landscape descriptions provide the foundation for informed decision-making, planning, identification of potential conflicts and enable ongoing monitoring and

⁹ See Annex 2 for tools to support the landscape description.

evaluation. By identifying actors, resources, dynamics, and interactions, the SDG can make more effective choices regarding land use, resource management, conservation, and development.

The description should include elements such as:

- Presence of IFLs in the landscape, with maps and tables containing their location in protected areas, MUs and other areas. This should include an analysis of the extent IFLs have changed over the years, with temporal and spatial information on past loss of IFLs, and expected future trends, taking into account aspects such as their protection levels and resiliency, connectivity, border to area ratios, and others that could impact their intactness.
- Presence of protected areas, whether already established or in the process of recognition.
- Presence of Indigenous Cultural Landscapes.
- Regional or sub-regional biogeography, as to whether the place is a part of an identifiable or severely constrained biogeographic region.
- Location and condition of areas with natural vegetation, and a description of the size, type, and quality of the ecosystems.
- Identification of populations of globally significant species and the presence of migration pathways within the landscape.
- Occurrence of rare, threatened or endangered species and species that require large contiguous habitats.
- Existing or planned forest concessions, certified and non-certified MUs, as possible.
- Prominent landforms, watersheds, rivers, geological and soil characteristics.
- Distribution of human settlements, infrastructure, and agricultural zones.
- Social context, including ethnicity, socio-economic and land use activities.
- Regulatory spatial and land-use planning.
- Quality of forest governance.
- Presence of concessions for the extraction of natural resources other than forests, including maps of active concessions and possible future concessions to exploit these resources in the future (areas planned for exploration and exploitation).
- Historical overview of land use patterns and developmental trends, including future plans, development projects, and existing or proposed commercial exploitation and production licenses¹⁰.

Key data sources for assessing biodiversity in an area.

- IUCN Red List or National Red Data Book: Information on threatened species and their conservation status.
- Conservation Priority Schemes: Websites like <http://www.biodiversitya-z.org/> offer valuable schemes to understand potential biodiversity values in the area. The choice of scheme depends on data scale and quality.
- Protected Areas, World Heritage Sites, and Key Biodiversity Areas: These schemes offer data relevant for assessing High Conservation Value (HCV) areas, particularly for rarity and threat analysis.
- Landcover Classifications and Remote Sensing: Useful tools for designing protected area networks and making decisions related to land uses.
- Detailed Ecosystem Descriptions: Highly detailed descriptions, including species information, are valuable for assessing biodiversity.
- Important Bird Areas (IBAs): These have been mapped for numerous countries and territories, providing a framework for avian biodiversity assessment.

¹⁰ Brown, E. *et al.*, 2013.

- **Expert Consultation:** When data is lacking, consulting experts or using proxy data from similar habitats can be valuable for assessing biodiversity values.

It's important to note that the absence of an official classification does not necessarily mean the absence of HCVs, and proxy data or expert input can fill gaps in biodiversity assessments.

The SDG should identify whether there are already existing land-use planning processes in the landscape, that may be led by a government who has final decision making on these matters. If such a process already exists, the SDG should explore how it can partner or collaborate with the government in order to improve the effectiveness of the landscape approach to IFLs and FSC certification.

The collective expertise of the SDGs is the cornerstone, ensuring that the data collected remains aligned with their insights and is consistent with the scale and complexity of the defined landscape. Overburdening the analysis might not yield proportionate insights but will rather increase the cost and redundancy of the preparatory work.

1.3 Developing a scenario for the future of IFLs in the landscape

In order to develop indicators for the protection and management of IFLs in a landscape, it is important not only to understand their current situation, but also to assess how they may be impacted by the developments in the landscape over the long term. Based on the description prepared for the landscape, the SDG should assess the potential vulnerabilities, risks¹¹ and opportunities for the long-term integrity of the IFLs. This assessment may include issues such as:

- Threats from factors such as logging, fires and silvicultural practices
- Governmental policies that seek to maximize revenues from forest concessions
- Infrastructure projects which will facilitate access to IFL areas
- Threats from the expansion of agricultural and ranching activities
- Risk of land grabbing
- Vulnerability of water bodies to obstruction or contamination from waste and chemicals
- Mining activities, legal or otherwise, which can impact forests and water bodies, today and, in the future (exploration and exploitation)
- Hunting of animals essential for seed dispersal and propagation of trees
- Presence of threatened species dependent on primary and/or undisturbed forest
- Presence of animals needing large territories for hunting or breeding, if affected by forest management activities
- Governmental land-use planning processes
- Potential for increased connectivity between IFLs
- Opportunities for establishing protected areas.

The above issues are intended as examples only and SDGs should evaluate what other risks to IFLs and opportunities to improve their protection may be present in the landscape¹². The SDG should also assess and prioritize the influences from the wider environment on the landscape and analyze existing trends and expected future ones. The SDG should use this information to develop a scenario¹³ for the

¹¹ Brown, E. *et al.*, 2013.

¹² A useful source for planning the risk assessment is [FSC-GUI-60-010 Development of a Forest Stewardship Standard Risk Assessment](#)

¹³ See Annex 3 for examples of how to develop these scenarios.

future of IFLs in the landscape, choosing a timeframe that is consistent with the ecological, social, political and economic realities of this area.

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2. DEVELOPMENT OF IFL RELATED INDICATORS

Based on the analysis of the current and expected future situation of IFLs in the landscape, the SDG should develop indicators for the protection thresholds (%) for IFLs within certified MUs (called 'core area'), as well as for additional requirements for interventions in non-core IFL areas and for actions that should be taken by The Organization within its Sphere of Influence to improve the protection of IFLs at the landscape level. The SDG should be mindful of the connection between these three types of indicators and evaluate them based on their implementation as whole set.

With regards to the IFL protection thresholds, the SDG should consider the existing FSC requirements and supporting documentation on the subject, as the starting point for its discussions:

- FSC-STD-60-004 International Generic Indicators¹⁴, Annex H
The International Generic Indicators (IGI) are the starting point for developing FSSs. SDG shall consider the Instructions for standard developers, and all the IGI, with the option to adopt, adapt, drop or add indicators as appropriate and relevant nationally. Annex H contains specific provisions related to the development of IFL related indicators in FSS.
- FSC-GUI-60-004 IFL Guidance for Standard Developers to Develop a National Threshold for the Core Area of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) within the Management Unit ¹⁵
The guidance is written for standard developers and aims to support in the implementation of relevant IGIs by providing additional guidance in situations where a standard developer wishes to deviate from the default protection threshold of 80% and lower the protection threshold up to +50% of the IFLs to be protected within the MU.
- ADVICE-20-007-18 Protection of Intact Forest Landscapes, contained in FSC-DIR-20-007 FSC Directive on Forest Management Evaluations¹⁶
This Advice Note applies to all FM and FM/CoC certificate holders and certification bodies operating in countries where Intact Forest Landscapes exist according to Global Forest Watch maps, and where there is no approved and effective Forest Stewardship Standard based on FSC-STD60-004 V2-0, or the certificate holders have not yet transitioned to it. Based on this advice, Organizations in some countries can lower IFL protection thresholds to 50% under specific conditions.

The guiding principle for this should be that the larger the area occupied by IFLs in the landscape and the more secure their long-term protection, the more flexibility there could be in terms of the requirements for their protection within certified MUs. However, the larger the deviation being proposed by adopting a landscape approach, the stronger the justification and support needed from stakeholders.

In addition to indicators on specific IFL protection thresholds for MUs in the landscape, the SDG should consider that interventions in IFLs outside of core areas warrant a higher standard of care than the management activities conducted in non-IFL areas and, consequently, should also develop indicators for these, such as, for example:

- reduced harvesting volumes when compared to non-IFL areas
- increased monitoring requirements
- construction limited to temporary structures
- stricter weather conditions required for harvesting
- restoration of degraded areas after harvesting

The SDG should also develop indicators related to actions that should be taken by Organizations to demonstrate their commitment to the protection of IFLs within their Sphere of Influence. The Sphere of

¹⁴ <https://connect.fsc.org/document-centre/documents/resource/262>

¹⁵ <https://connect.fsc.org/document-centre/documents/resource/443>

¹⁶ <https://connect.fsc.org/document-centre/documents/resource/394>

Influence It is important to consider that any such indicators will likely be effort based. As the continued existence of IFLs in the landscape is what will allow for the continued flexibility in the protection thresholds of IFLs in certified MUs, it is expected that Organizations will undertake their best efforts to support their protection at this higher level. These actions could include, for example:

- sharing material resources or intelligence with government agencies in charge of monitoring protected areas.
- advocating against infrastructure projects that would provide access to previously inaccessible IFL areas.
- supporting community projects that strengthen IFL protection in the landscape.
- supporting projects that improve the connectivity of IFLs in the landscape.

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3. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

3.1 The Importance of engaging stakeholders

Identifying and engaging stakeholders to participate in the discussion about the future of IFLs in a landscape is an essential action for the definition of indicators for the protection and management of these forests in certified MUs. Stakeholders are expected to give their input on the landscape boundaries defined, discuss the current status and long-term outlook for IFLs within that landscape and provide feedback on the indicators developed by the SDG for IFLs within MUs as well as the indicators for what is expected from The Organization with regards to IFLs within their Sphere of Influence (i.e. in the landscape, but outside the MU).

This part of the guidance is meant to support SDGs in identifying the stakeholders that should be part of this discussion and on how to engage them in a manner that will provide clear and valuable insights, in an environment that enables sharing, collaboration, dissenting, and moving forward on a discussion that could be uncomfortable at times.

3.2 Considering Indigenous Peoples and the right to FPIC

The inclusion and respect of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) rights is an essential element of the FSC system. Where there are Indigenous Cultural Landscapes (ICLs), or simply a community of IPs with legal and/or customary rights, there are special obligations for a process such as this. When applying a landscape approach, special attention must be given to IPs who may rely upon or be affected by actions impacting IFLs or ICLs. In these situations, SDGs should consider contracting expert support to ensure adequate engagement of Indigenous Peoples in this process¹⁷.

Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a specific right of Indigenous Peoples, recognized in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which aligns with their universal right to self-determination. FPIC allows Indigenous Peoples to provide or withhold/withdraw consent, at any point, regarding projects impacting their territories. FPIC allows Indigenous Peoples to engage in negotiations to shape the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects.¹⁸ An FPIC process is not a one-off decision, but an iterative and continuing process that reflects the multiple phases and decisions required in forest management planning¹⁹.

The SDG should identify Indigenous Peoples according to the criteria established in the FSC Guidelines for the Implementation of the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent:

- The key criterion is self-identification as Indigenous Peoples at the individual level and acceptance by the community as their member.
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies.
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources.
- Distinct social, economic, or political systems.
- Distinct language, culture, and beliefs.
- Form non-dominant groups of society.
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

¹⁷ Here are a few examples of organizations and groups that could help the SDG to find expert support on IPs: FSC Indigenous Foundation, the FSC Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee, Forest Peoples Program and Rights and Resources.

¹⁸ FAO, 2023. [Free, Prior and Informed Consent | Indigenous Peoples | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(fao.org\)](#)

¹⁹ [FSC Guidelines for the Implementation of the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent](#)

Identifying IPs should be done through respectful engagement with area communities and possibly even governments and NGOs who may have valuable information on the traditional territories of IPs.

An FPIC process is necessary for cases where the activities in MUs impact Indigenous Peoples territories.²⁰ When IPs are present in the landscape but there is no impact from management activities on their territories, the convening of IPs to the discussion should have a similar focus as to other stakeholders. It is possible that the complexity of the governance and the lessons learned from previous FPIC processes conducted in the country can help in the design of the landscape approach to IFLs.

3.3 Identifying stakeholders and selecting participants for the Landscape Engagement Approach

Different methods can be used for the consultation and engagement process with stakeholders, to ensure their effective input in the landscape engagement approach. The one explored in more detail in this guidance is a multi-stakeholder meeting, hereafter referred to as Landscape Dialogue, in which participants ideally meet face to face to discuss how the landscape will develop over the long-term and provide feedback on the SDG's proposals for protection thresholds and management of IFLs in certified MUs.

If the SDG concludes that a different form of stakeholder engagement would be better suited to the conditions of the landscape in question or to the stakeholders involved, it should develop alternative consultation and engagement processes in coordination with FSC International and in accordance to the provisions outlined in motion 23/2022 for building consensus and equitably engaging with all relevant stakeholders. Below are some examples of other engagement methods²¹:

- online meetings: meeting in which participants engage remotely, preferably using a videoconferencing technology platform.
- one to one interviews (face-to-face or web-based): used to obtain answers from respondents and simultaneously observe their behaviour, preferably through a structured questionnaire, to minimize interviewer bias.
- focus groups: small groups of people (6-12) who share interests of characteristics interact with a facilitator who uses the group and its interaction to obtain information and feedback on a specific problem or goal.
- online co-creation processes: participants contribute to each other's proposals through an online platform where documents and input can be shared tours or field visits: going on a tour within the activity area and engaging in active listening allows for better understanding of the lived experience of the stakeholder. The facilitator goes with stakeholders to the place of interest (e.g. forest operation site) to collect feedback and comments. Participants should be people strongly involved in the initiative but not necessarily experts on the topic.

The SDG should also consider that these different engagement techniques are not mutually exclusive and that, depending on the context of the landscape in question, a combination of methods may be the best option, for example identifying agreements through online co-creation forums and using a field visit/tour to resolve differences in perspectives. Independent of the engagement method chosen, the SDG should ensure that the process is²²:

²⁰ Keep in mind that when a FPIC agreement is necessary, it has to be achieved overtime. The new IGI 3.2.5 states: Where the FPIC process has not yet resulted in an FPIC agreement, the Organization and the affected Indigenous Peoples' are engaged in a mutually agreed FPIC process that is advancing, in good faith* and with which the community is satisfied" [FSC Guidelines for the Implementation of the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent](#).

²¹ See [FSC-GUI-30-011 Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement for recommendations on engagement methods](#)

²² Adapted from the principles defined by UNGP for non-judicial grievance mechanisms

- Legitimate
- Accessible
- Inclusive
- Predictable
- Equitable, including in terms of access to information
- Transparent
- Compatible with rights
- A source of continuous learning
- Based on dialogue

Inviting a stakeholder to the Landscape Dialogue means entrusting them with influence over the indicators for protection and management of IFLs in certified MUs within the landscape. SDGs should establish a small chamber balanced planning team, composed of its members who are knowledgeable about the landscape under discussion and who would lead the identification of stakeholders for the discussion on IFLs in this landscape. The planning team would then propose to the SDG which stakeholders should be invited to participate in the Landscape Dialogue.

It is important to understand if there are other existing processes that have many similarities to the goals of IFL protection on similar geographies. This is entirely likely in some Regions where governments are in control of land use decisions. In these cases, SDG's should work within their Sphere of Influence to coordinate with these processes and add in the FSC goals as much as possible.

Here are some recommendations to identify and select the stakeholders that should be part of the Landscape Dialogue:

1. Start with questions²³ to identify a list of stakeholders in the selected landscape, including:
 - Who or which organization is involved (at any scale) with forests and other natural resources in the landscape?
 - Who has direct decision-making power on issues that impact IFLs?
 - Who must face the consequences of decisions that impact IFLs?
 - Which groups influence the decisions made that impact IFLs?
 - Who or which organization needs to be involved to work on this issue?
 - Who is in charge of land-use planning and how is this done?
 - Who else should the SDG talk to?
2. Consider the different types of potential stakeholders, for example:
 - Indigenous Peoples present in the landscape, or using any ecosystem service or product from the landscape.
 - Local communities present in the landscape, or using any ecosystem service or product from the landscape.
 - Governments.
 - Trade unions and forest related workers representatives.
 - Certificate holders, land concessionaries, companies owning/leasing and managing forests in the landscape for commercial purposes.
 - Environmental, forest conservation or social organizations.
 - Academic institutions or researchers.

²³ Useful questions adapted from The Landscape Dialogue and the Guide to Implementing Forest Landscape Restoration. The Forests Dialogue 2020. Addressing Natural Resource Conflicts through Dialogue: A Guide to The Forests Dialogue's Process and Model. TFD, New Haven, CT and the FSC guide for Stakeholders Engagement.

- Private or public companies owning/leasing and commercially managing natural resources other than forests in the landscape
3. Discuss and decide how many stakeholders should be involved. Ideally, the number of participants should be a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 40 people, to keep discussions manageable. Particular attention should be given to achieving gender balance for the participants.
 4. Aim to identify a chamber-like group of stakeholders, where environmental, economic, and social interests are represented, as well as Indigenous Peoples representatives and local communities, where applicable. The SDG should also pay attention to the gender balance within the group.
 5. Identify key stakeholders. Prepare a list classifying each stakeholder according to their power and exposure to forest related issues in the chosen landscape:
 - Beneficiaries: stakeholders that make decisions or participate in or influence decision-making regarding forests in the landscape - usually, their benefits, including profitability and political future, depends on what happens in the landscape. Beneficiaries are not only defined by their power to make and enforce decisions but also by their power to influence them.
 - Subjects: stakeholders in the landscape whose well-being is impacted by the forest related decisions made by others. This category also includes stakeholders that represent affected parties in the landscape, including those that do not have a voice (e.g. nature and biodiversity), such as conservation groups.
 - Context setters: stakeholders that have decision making power that can impact what happens in the landscape, but who are little affected or not at all by how the landscape changes over time.
 - Bystander: stakeholders with low decision-making power and who are little/not impacted by the decisions about forests in the landscape.

Keep in mind that stakeholders can be located within or outside the landscape, and that some may influence decisions at larger scales (e.g. governmental authorities, national or regional non-profit organizations, industry associations).

6. Select Participants. Out of the list of all stakeholders, use the 4 categories to guide the selection, aiming for a balance of stakeholder perspectives. Verify that all significant stakeholders in the landscape are represented. Ignoring any stakeholder needs could jeopardize the process, depending on their role in the landscape. Beneficiaries and context-setters have the power to shape the landscape dynamics. They are probably both the origin of the problems and the solution. In the case of Beneficiaries, their level of benefits also depends on what happens in the landscape. Care should be exercised for selecting context setters, as they may have little to lose and might derail the process. Subjects, by definition, have limited power in the landscape. However, it is paramount that their interests are represented at the table, lest the positions taken cause them harm. Bystanders can have a lower priority in the selection process. Direct participation isn't necessary for all stakeholders, but the diversity of interests and perspectives must be represented for the outcomes of the process to be meaningful. Particular attention should be given to gender balance in the selection of the participants.
7. Identify missing stakeholders. There are potential consequences of missing stakeholders. One way of minimizing this risk is asking the selected stakeholders who else should be part of the IFL discussions in the chosen landscape.

To motivate and support the engagement of stakeholders participating in the process, the SDG should consider the following:

- What needs to be on or off the table for people to participate?
- A well-structured, collective invitation might be enough, but sometimes a personalized invitation can be more effective in getting stakeholders to participate.
- Including a precise, clear agenda.

- Using appropriate language (technical jargon just if necessary).
- Communicating if and how the costs and expenses of participants will be covered.
- Communicating how confidentiality and respect will be ensured (e.g. by abiding to The Chatham House rule).
- Managing expectations of stakeholders, including their role and what will happen with their recommendations.
- Providing clarity about measures for transparent, accountable information exchange and timely follow-up.

Issues to consider when Indigenous Peoples and communities are among the stakeholders identified in the landscape:

- Don't assume the time of leaders or members of indigenous communities or local communities is free. Think about adequate ways to compensate them for their time²⁴.
- Take special care in considering what are the expected outcomes of implementing the FSC Landscape approach for these groups.
- Facilitate participation of indigenous members, for example by making translation services available and considering translation/ interpretation time and costs in the planning stages.
- Ensure their participation is culturally appropriate.

To further understand the relationship of the stakeholders with forests in the landscape, SDGs may choose to use more sophisticated approaches, such as the ARDI²⁵ method (Actors, Resources, Dynamics and Interactions), engaging specialized support as necessary.

²⁴ [IPLCs-in-Landscape-Initiatives.pdf \(jaresourcehub.org\)](#)

²⁵ Etienne *et al.*, 2011.

4. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ON LANDSCAPE APPROACH PROPOSALS TO IFLS

4.1 Purpose and expected outputs

Once the landscape boundaries have been defined, IFL related draft indicators have been developed by the SDG and stakeholders have been selected, the SDG will organize a consultation process with these stakeholders to get feedback on:

- the boundaries of the proposed landscape
- the current status of IFLs in this landscape and the expected scenario for their future
- the SDG's proposals for protection thresholds and management rules for IFLs in certified MUs
- the SDG's proposals for actions that The Organization should take within their Sphere of Influence to improve the protection of IFLs in the wider landscape.

As mentioned in section 3.3, the approach for stakeholder engagement explored in this guidance is the convening of a face-to-face multi-stakeholder meeting, called Landscape Dialogue. Other approaches are also possible and may be even more adequate to the landscape in question. The SDG should evaluate if there are better suited stakeholder engagement approaches and, if necessary, propose a different one to FSC International.

4.2 Facilitation

Building agreement, finding common ground and supporting a dialogue with different perspectives requires expert facilitation and a strong focus on building trust among the participants. The facilitator will help the group to have productive discussions, which culminate in recommendations or agreements. To ensure the effectiveness of the dialogue, the facilitator should be a trained professional that presents no conflict of interests on the matter at hand.

The SDG should decide on the type and scope of facilitation needed to develop the Landscape Dialogue (and an early preparation of Terms of Reference for the facilitator is suggested). The facilitator can be an individual or a team, preferably with proven experience in facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues.

4.3 Stakeholder Engagement prior to the Landscape Dialogue

The SDG should first develop and decide the rules for the Landscape Dialogue, including how agreements will be made and if the discussions are confidential. For example, the SDG could decide to have comments or positions not linked to any specific stakeholder, as per The Chatham House Rule²⁶. These types of approaches can help create trust between participants, though it is important that all stakeholders fully understand the details involved. The SDG should also consider if there are communities with legal or customary rights that would require an FPIC process.

A key step in the preparation for the Landscape Dialogue is understanding the diversity of views of the selected stakeholders with regards to IFLs in the landscape. The principle behind this is that the more conflicting the perspectives of stakeholders on IFLs are, the more sophisticated the engagement techniques and the consensus building approaches should be. Particular attention should be given to ensure that the final decision maker with authority over the landscape is involved in the process (e.g. government) or is at least informed about the process and can choose how to be involved.

The SDG should reach out individually to the selected stakeholders to explain the concepts involved, the goal of the Landscape Dialogue, understand their interest and availability to participate, their experience

²⁶ <https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chatham-house-rule>

with land-use planning exercises and if there are any restrictions or conditions that would need to be met for them to be present (e.g. support for travel). It may be necessary to have more than one conversation before a stakeholder agrees to participate in the Landscape Dialogue. These are opportunities to explain how the meeting will work (e.g. confidentiality, decision making) and get an initial understanding about their views on IFLs in the landscape and in certified MUs.

The SDG should document the feedback provided and use this information in the landscape process. It is important that stakeholders understand that they will be making recommendations to the SDG on how Organizations should act with regards to IFLs, both within MUs and on increasing their protection at the landscape level. If a stakeholder is not interested in participating, the SDG should go back to the full list of stakeholders and select another one from that same interest group. This process should help ensure that stakeholders are well informed and prepared to participate, while also mitigating the risk of not having key stakeholder perspectives represented at the meeting.

Based on the initial feedback on IFLs from the selected stakeholders, the SDG should discuss and decide with the facilitator which is the best process to be used for the discussions. If there is already a high degree of alignment between stakeholders, the process for the discussions can likely be a simpler one. If there are significantly diverging views between them, a more sophisticated process may be necessary.

This pre-meeting engagement is a crucial step to support good participation, tailor the process to the needs of the landscape under discussion and achieve a successful outcome.

4.4 Dialogue preparation

The preparation for the Landscape Dialogue should include:

1. Sending a save-the-date invitation to the selected stakeholders, being mindful of the number and type of stakeholders needed for the meeting. Make sure that the goals of the meeting are clearly stated in the invitations.
2. Choosing a meeting format and duration that best fits the needs of the landscape, considering its complexity and the diversity of stakeholder views.
3. Preparing an agenda for the meeting, which should contain the objective, expected outcomes, schedule, and other details, with sufficient time in advance to the actual meeting. This should include financial considerations, such as if the participant stakeholders will need to travel to a different location or if a field trip will be included.
4. Choosing a meeting location that's easily accessible and neutral to all participants. If this is not possible, engage specific stakeholders, as necessary, to explain the situation and mitigate any potential issues.
5. Refining a plan of activities with a complete budget, including any support needed for travel or compensation for the time dedicated to the meeting.
6. Sending a final invitation, including the proposed agenda, highlighting the purpose of the meeting, expected outcomes and general rules regarding confidentiality, among others.
7. Preparing the feedback form that will be sent to the participants at the end of the meeting. The goal is to learn from this dialogue in order to improve future ones.

4.5 Landscape Dialogue

The discussion and consensus building approach to be used in the meeting should be defined by the SDG together with the facilitator, based on an analysis of the participants and the particularities of each landscape.

As an example of a typical process, discussions can be divided into three stages:

1. the opening stage, where ideas are generated through proposals, lists, or brainstorming;

2. the narrowing stage, where the focus sharpens through the consolidation of similar ideas and prioritization based on group voting; and,
3. the closing stage, where agreement is achieved by eliminating low-ranking ideas, finding compromises, or considering multiple solutions to ensure a consensus is reached among participants²⁷.

Regardless of the methodology chosen for the Landscape Dialogue, there are some important elements that should be covered in the discussions:

1. The concepts of FSC certification and IFLs, including: what IFLs are, why it is important to protect them, what are the current rules for FSC certification of MUs with an IFL, among others. In order to provide feedback on the indicators developed by the SDG, stakeholders participating in the dialogue will need to have a good understanding of the IFL concept and the current FSC rules on the subject.
2. Landscape description. This should have a strong focus on the presentation of IFLs in the landscape, including what they are and their location and, information on how well they are protected currently (e.g. an IFL within a National Park in a country with strong forest governance, would be considered well protected). Since the level of familiarity between the participants will be different, this could be an opportunity to foster collective learning, having participants explaining to each other the concept. The use of maps and other visual resources is strongly recommended.
3. Based on the above description, participants should discuss and provide feedback on the scenario developed by the SDG for how the landscape is expected to change over time with regards to IFLs. Participants should discuss the risks and opportunities related to IFLs that were the basis for the scenario and provide feedback on how it could be improved.
4. Based on the discussion of the long-term scenario for IFLs in this landscape, the participants should provide feedback on the proposals from the SDG on thresholds for IFL protection within certified MUs, rules for their management and actions to be taken by The Organization within their Sphere of Influence to support the protection of IFLs in the wider landscape. The guiding question for this feedback is: *What are the proposals that achieve the best possible contribution to conservation of IFLs across the entire landscape within the specific environmental, social and socio-economic conditions in the landscape?* Participants can also provide input on what could be the safeguards or outcomes necessary for considering changing these. The ideal outcome of these discussions is an agreement or consensus between the stakeholders regarding the indicators developed by the SDG.

The guiding principle for this should be that the larger the area occupied by IFLs in the landscape and the better the expectation for their long-term protection, the more flexibility there could be in terms of the IFL related requirements in certified MUs. It should be clear to the participants that their feedback, though not binding, will carry significant weight when considered by the SDG, who is the body in charge of developing Forest Stewardship Standards and submitting them for the approval of FSC International.

The SDG should also encourage stakeholders participating in the meeting to discuss and commit to actions that they can take to support the improved protection of IFLs at the landscape level, considering their own Spheres of Control and Influence²⁸.

²⁷ Interaction Institute for Social Change (IISC). Facilitative Leadership®: Tapping the power of participation. Training Curriculum. Boston, MA: IISC; 2012.

²⁸ The concepts of Sphere of Control and Sphere of Influence for stakeholders should be understood in a similar way to the one for The Organizations.

The ideal outcome for the Landscape Dialogue is agreement or consensus²⁹ among the stakeholders regarding the SDG's proposals on how Organizations should act regarding IFLs within their MU and Sphere of Influence. If agreement on all proposals is not possible, it may be necessary to document the agreed ones and then evaluate if a discussion at a later date could help in finding solutions to the pending issues. In addition to this, participants should also leave the discussions with a better sense of what each one of them can do or what collaboratively can be done to improve the protection of IFLs in the landscape. The goal of the process is to achieve quality outcomes, not rushed decisions. Therefore, it's essential to take the necessary time to ensure that all perspectives are heard, and the best possible solutions are considered.

Facilitating the Landscape Dialogue

For the facilitation of the Landscape Dialogue, the SDG should consider the following:

1. Begin the workshop by eliciting the expectations of participants. Communicate the objective the meeting. Ensure all participants have understood what is expected from them, how decisions will be made, what are the rules on issues such as confidentiality and what they can expect to get from the process. It is essential to build trust
2. Maintain active engagement and follow the order of questions during the process. Use plain language to minimize confusion and ensure everyone gets an opportunity to express their perspectives.
3. Support staff should take notes and pictures and record interventions, documenting agreements in a comprehensive manner and share and check these with the participants, both for the next steps of the process and to ensure transparency with the stakeholders.
4. Foster a transparent, inclusive atmosphere. Avoid premature tangents and unnecessary debates. One efficient method is the 'Round Robin' approach, where all participants contribute one idea at a time, repeating as many rounds as needed. This encourages practical knowledge sharing and mitigates power imbalances.
5. Leave space for parked questions that, while relevant, would derail the flow of discussion. This is done with a public board where the questions are pinned, to be answered at a later stage.
6. Each question should be addressed using a two-step approach: 'Populating' and 'Trimming'.
 - **'Populating'**: Encourage participants to share their thoughts freely. This typically results in a large list of actors, resources, and interactions. Continue this until all participants have contributed all the elements they can think of.
 - **'Trimming'**: After the populating step, move to trimming. One effective method we've found involves placing all suggestions on a wall and asking each participant to individually select the top five most important ones. This ranking can highlight the most significant elements recognized in the landscape.
7. Document the process: The support staff should note down all discussion points and decisions taken throughout the process and share and check these with the participants to ensure transparency with the stakeholders. Participants can also be encouraged to do so and share their notes with the organizers. This will help track the group dynamics, understand individual perspectives, and follow the path taken to reach consensus.
8. There is no predetermined endpoint, and this process may require several iterations and should allow for active participation from all the stakeholders. There should be an atmosphere of respect, openness, and inclusivity throughout the discussions. The process should continue as long as stakeholders maintain their enthusiasm, interest, and availability. It's the facilitator's role to guide participants in recognizing when a satisfactory solution has been reached and it's appropriate to conclude.

²⁹ Consensus is understood as the lack of sustained opposition.

9. Give time for the final evaluation of the dialogue exercise. A minimum of two hours should be devoted for this. Collect from the participants their elements of surprise and their take home message.
10. Close the dialogue exercise and the meeting presenting a comprehensive list of all the agreements and the outcomes of the meeting, thanking all participants for their presence and communicating (verbally) when they would expect to have a summary report with the results of the dialogue and the next steps.

After the Landscape Dialogue (1-3 weeks)

1. Share the results of the meeting evaluation.
2. Send a report with all the agreements and other important information (issues that were highly debated) and an overview of the next steps.
3. Prepare a full report for internal discussion to develop the next phase of the landscape approach.

4.6 Finalizing an outcome report of the Landscape Dialogue

The SDG or the facilitator(s) should prepare and finalize a report on the outcomes of the Landscape Dialogue that includes:

- The list of participants in the meeting, supporting staff and facilitator(s).
- The landscape description, baseline, scenarios and accompanying maps and analysis (i.e. risks) done or used for the meeting, as well as other elements considered.
- Agreed recommendations on the SDG's proposals for protection and management options for IFLs in MUs in the landscape.
- Agreed recommendations on the SDG's proposals for actions by Organizations within their Sphere of Influence, to support the protection of IFLs in the landscape.
- Agreed actions that the stakeholders can take individually or in collaboration to support the improved protection of IFLs at the landscape level, considering their own Spheres of Control and Influence.
- The notes on disagreements or points of contention.
- The agenda and methodology applied in the meeting.

This report should be shared with the participants of the Landscape Dialogue and others whom SDG considers appropriate.

4.7 Incorporating the feedback from the Landscape Dialogue

The recommendations of the Landscape Dialogue should be taken into account by the SDG for the development of the final version of the IFL related indicators that will be submitted to FSC International for approval. The SDG should carefully evaluate each recommendation agreed by the stakeholders at the Landscape Dialogue and document if and how it was incorporated into an indicator. If an agreed recommendation is not adopted by the SDG, it should clearly document the justification for not doing so. The SDG should also evaluate if a broader, more conventional consultation process is needed on the indicators developed based on the input from the Landscape Dialogue and, if necessary, implement such a process.

The SDG should produce a comprehensive report on how the recommendations were considered in the development of the final version of the indicators submitted for the approval of FSC International and share it with the participants of the Landscape Dialogue.

5. MONITORING AND LEARNING

5.1 Objective

The objective of this section of the guidance is to support the SDGs in ensuring that the implementation of the landscape approach is well documented, allowing for learning within the SDG and between different countries, the monitoring of results and for improvements in how FSC certification contributes to the protection of the social, environmental and economic values of IFLs. Appropriate documentation should allow SDG members to go back to the original discussions and elements of the landscape approach chosen, even if there is a change of members in the SDG over time.

5.2 Documentation

The basis for the Monitoring and Learning work is a comprehensive documentation of the technical materials supporting the landscape approach. The table below provides a template, based on this guidance, with the main elements of what should be documented by the SDG to support the approval of the final IFL-related indicators and support its evaluation. We recommend following this template during the implementation process, to enable the comparison of experiences between different countries, the evaluation of the landscape approach process and potential lessons learned.

Phase	Element of work	Action/comment by SDG	Reference to documentation ³⁰
1.1 Defining the Landscape Boundaries	Maps showing the boundaries of the landscape, the existence of IFLs and their protection status, and the existing and potential for Mus. In the case of confidentiality concerns regarding the sharing of such documents (e.g. for Indigenous Cultural Landscapes), the SDG should request an exception to FSC International, including a clear justification of the reasons involved. This is not applicable to information pertaining to MUs.		<link to doc in folder>
	Maps or documents with other relevant information used for the definition of the landscape boundaries, including different land uses and rights for other commodities.		
	Document summarizing the rationale used by the SDG for the definition of the landscape boundaries.		
	Landscape description produced.		

³⁰ The SDG should create an online folder through which documents can be shared with FSC International

Phase	Element of work	Action/comment by Reference to SDG documentation ³⁰
1.2 Landscape Description	Maps, satellite images, scientific articles, technical papers and other documents containing relevant information for the description of the landscape (See section 1.2 for a list of examples).	
	Documents that contain information on the history of IFLs in the landscape and the trends that can affect their future.	
1.3 Future scenario for IFLs	Risk analysis produced regarding the future of IFLs in the landscape.	
	Document with opportunities identified for improving the protection of IFLs in the landscape.	
	Document containing the scenario produced for the future of IFLs.	
2. IFL Indicators	Draft indicators produced on thresholds, management activities within IFLs and actions within The Organization's Sphere of Influence.	
3.2 IPs and the right to FPIC	Maps, government documents and other materials that show the presence of IPs in the landscape and an analysis of how they could be affected by actions impacting IFLs.	
3.3 Stakeholder identification	List of stakeholders in the landscape, classified by their interest, power and exposure in relation to IFLs.	
	List of key stakeholders selected for the conference, representative of the diversity of perspectives and gender balanced. This document should also contain information on the results of the pre-meeting engagement with each one of them.	
4. Landscape Dialogue	Dialogue materials, such as: agenda, FSC and IFL explanatory materials, facilitators, list of participating stakeholders, rules on confidentiality, etc.	

Phase	Element of work	Action/comment by Reference to documentation ³⁰ SDG
	Particular attention should be given to the confidentiality rules agreed for the meeting.	
	Outcomes from the discussions on risks, opportunities and future scenarios, including recommendations or agreements reached by the stakeholders.	
	Recommendations and agreements reached by the stakeholders with regards to the SDG's proposals on: - IFL protection thresholds within MUs - management activities within IFLs - actions to be taken by The Organization to improve the protection of IFLs within its Sphere of Influence.	
	Actions that participants have identified for themselves to improve the protection of IFLs in the landscape.	
	Issues on which there was no agreement and points of contention.	
	Summary of the participants evaluation of the Landscape Dialogue.	
4.7 Incorporating the feedback from the Landscape Dialogue	Report on how the recommendations, agreements and comments from the participants of the Landscape Dialogue were considered in the development of the final version of the indicators to be submitted to FSC International.	
Baseline for assessing the landscape approach	Document containing: - key data on the current status of IFLs in the landscape (area, protection levels, etc.). - forecast for the change in IFLs ³¹ over the long term with the implementation of a landscape	

³¹ This should include information on specific HCVs that are associated with IFLs in the landscape (e.g. caribou habitat)

Phase	Element of work	Action/comment by SDG	Reference to documentation ³⁰
	<p>approach to IFLs in FSC certification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - forecast for the change in IFLs over the long term in the absence of a landscape approach to IFLs in FSC certification - what are the specific risks that the landscape approach to IFLs in FSC certification will mitigate (e.g. illegal logging, deforestation etc.) <p>Plan outlining how the SDG will monitor the implementation of the approach and assess if it is achieving its objectives.</p>		

Table 1: Documentation overview for IFL landscape approach

DRAFT

ANNEX 1: TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDSCAPE

For the selection of the landscape and the definition of its boundaries, several risk assessment tools and procedures can be employed to ensure that the higher priority landscapes are chosen. Here are some examples:

- 1. Spatial Analysis and Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** GIS tools enable the analysis of spatial data from various sources, to identify landscapes overlapping different criteria. Examples: Participatory Mapping, and participatory GIS and Landscape perception³².
- 2. Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA):** MCDA is a method for systematically evaluating and comparing different landscape characteristics. It allows decision-makers to assign weights to criteria and rank landscapes accordingly³³.
- 3. Remote Sensing:** Remote sensing technologies, including satellite imagery and aerial surveys, provide valuable data for assessing landscapes' (e.g. WWF Forest Foresight).
- 4. Habitat Suitability Models:** These models use ecological data to assess the suitability of a landscape for specific species or ecosystems, helping identify critical habitats.
- 5. Social Impact Assessment:** This process assesses the potential social impacts of landscape choices, including their effects on local communities, cultural heritage, and livelihoods³⁴.
- 6. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** EIA is a systematic process for identifying and assessing the environmental effects of landscape choices, including potential risks to ecosystems and habitats.
- 7. Scenario Planning:** Scenario planning involves creating and analyzing different scenarios to understand the potential outcomes and risks associated with landscape choices under various conditions.
- 8. Socio-Ecological Vulnerability Assessment:** Assesses the vulnerability of landscapes to external pressures, such as climate change or land use change, taking into account both ecological and social factors.
- 9. Legal documentation:** Legal aspects of land use planning and allocation on landscapes to various land use forms according to the law.

Often, a combination of these tools and approaches is used to comprehensively evaluate and select the most suitable landscapes for conservation or other purposes.

Useful resources

Tools like the Forest Landscape Integrity Index (<https://globalforestwatch.org/topics/flint/>) and Forest Atlas ([Forest Atlases | World Resources Institute \(wri.org\)](#)) can assist in landscape mapping and initial boundary delineation.

For purposes of identifying ICLs, review [Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature in protected Area Management and Governance | CSVPA](#) and/or [Sacred Natural Sites | CSVPA](#) Sacred Natural sites: Guidelines for protected area managers.

³² Buendía *et al.* 2021. "Mapping Landscape Perception: An Assessment with Public Participation Geographic Information Systems and Spatial Analysis Techniques". See also "Good practices in participatory mapping." [Participatory Mapping layout \(ifad.org\)](#)

³³ Talukder, B. (2017). Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA)

³⁴ Dianne Buchan (2012) New directions in social impact assessment: conceptual and methodological advances, *Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal*, 30:2, 137-138, DOI: 10.1080/14615517.2012.669330

WWF Forest Foresight. An example of a risk assessment tool, this is WWF's early warning system to predict and stop illegal deforestation using big data and local input.

Tools for measuring, modelling, and valuing ecosystem services: guidance for Key Biodiversity Areas, natural World Heritage Sites, and protected areas. IUCN Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines can be useful for valuing ecosystem services. IUCN Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 28. Gland: IUCN. Available at <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-028-En.pdf>

For identifying key areas, the Guidelines for using A global standard for the identification of Key Biodiversity Areas : version 1.2 Guidelines for using A global standard for the identification of Key Biodiversity Areas : version 1.2 | IUCN Library System can be interesting to look at.

There are many pre-existing socio-economic data sources available that can be used as a basis for understanding a landscape's socio-economic context. For example, the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) is a household survey program that partners with national statistical offices to design and implement multi-topic household surveys (<http://surveys.worldbank.org/lsms>).

DRAFT

ANNEX 2: APPROACHES TO SUPPORT THE DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDSCAPE

The SDGs should build a common description of the landscape using their collective expertise and the best available data gathered during the overview preparation.

Some methods and approaches for describing landscapes include the ARDI Method but others include for example:

- Social-Ecological Systems Framework (SESF)^{35,36}:

The SESF is an interdisciplinary approach that emphasizes the interactions between social and ecological components within a landscape. It aims to understand how human activities and environmental dynamics influence each other in a specific context.

Researchers and practitioners use the SESF to assess the resilience and sustainability of social-ecological systems. It involves identifying key actors (e.g., stakeholders), the resources they rely on, the dynamics of change (e.g., environmental, economic, social), and the interactions between these elements.

- Multi-Stakeholder Collaborative Mapping (MSCM)^{37, 38}:

Description: MSCM is a participatory approach that involves multiple stakeholders in the mapping and assessment of landscapes. It aims to incorporate local knowledge, perspectives, and interests into the planning and management of natural resources.

Application: In MSCM, stakeholders such as local communities, Indigenous Peoples, government agencies, NGOs, forest operators and other relevant economic operators, and researchers work together to create maps that represent their shared understanding of the landscape. This collaborative mapping process can help identify important features, resources, and potential conflicts in the landscape.

Once a landscape is described, it becomes possible to establish baseline data. This data can be used for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the landscape's condition and the effectiveness of management strategies over time.

³⁵ Nagel and Partelow, 2022. A methodological guide for applying the social-ecological system (SES) framework.

³⁶ Gain, et al., 2020. Sustainability of complex social-ecological systems.

³⁷ FAO, 2022. Multi-Stakeholder Processes.

³⁸ MacDonald, 2019. Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for Sustainability.

ANNEX 3: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF IFL SCENARIOS

The SDG can select the method they are more comfortable with for developing landscape scenarios. Here are two examples to develop these scenarios: first, one when there is a high level of agreement already between the participants, and a second one, more sophisticated, recommended for when there are more divergent points of view. It is possible also to start with the simpler one (Storytelling) and, if necessary, migrate to the second one. (Strategy Games).

Tool 1 for Scenario Development: Storytelling

When participants share the same understanding, scenario development can be done through classical forms of storytelling. Participants should be divided in small teams (5-6 persons) and invited to develop narratives of change in the landscape for the coming decades.

Invite participants to develop 3 narratives: an expected one, a feared one and a desired one. Share the narratives between the groups and have the participants work together on these stories and track tipping points; game changing decisions, loopholes, and surprises. Invite the group to openly challenge assumptions and potential impacts of the scenarios.

Have them develop alternative narratives with different sets of indicators and rules for IFL management. Feed these narratives with the tipping points and other salient elements identified in the first round. Invite participants to consider ecological, social and economic dimensions of the narratives. Assign some participants with the task to develop adversarial narratives that will highlight gaps or blind spots in the dominant narratives.

Collect these narratives, they will serve to define indicators for IFL management and to explain the reasons for the choices. The participants will have defined trends, baselines, levers of action, safeguards conditions and pitfalls. Use this in the following steps to define and justify the decisions of the SDG.

Participants will refine the potential options that can offer a solution for IFLs from the perspective of forest management at MU level. The group will identify potential rules that will work for the landscape discussed.

Tool 2 for Scenario Development: Strategy Games³⁹

This tool was used for the first time with FSC on IFL management in Central Africa in 2018 to support the High Conservation Value Regional Working Group in the definition of regional indicators for the management of Intact Forest Landscapes. It was used a second time to organize the first landscape dialogue in Gabon in 2022. At FSC staff meetings in 2019, 2022 and 2023, the tool was demonstrated and used in a workshop. The method can be adjusted by SDGs according to their local conditions.

The precondition of this method is to have a representation of the landscape (based on the ARDI method) turned into a strategy game that participants use to develop the scenarios of landscape change.

Such a strategy game already exists for Central Africa and FSC staff can be trained in its use (Fig. 8). To adapt the game to other contexts, the SDG can call upon the Focus Forest consortium or develop a prototype directly from the landscape description. Unless the SDG has the skills necessary for this

³⁹ This approach for scenario development is based on Companion Modelling (Etienne *et. al.*, 2011).

exercise, **support from trained FSC staff, the Focus Forest research consortium or dedicated consultancies⁴⁰ might be required.**

Session 1: Learning to play.

One of the facilitators with familiarity with the game will act as game master and help the participants learn the rules and play the game. The participants are distributed in teams, each taking the role of forest operators in the landscape. Other stakeholders are represented by the support staff. After a first session devoted to learn the rules, participants will have the task of ensuring the survival and development of their company, adapting their strategies to changing environmental; social and economic constraints. To support efficiently the decision process, the game must reflect the processes and drivers at play in the landscape. Participants will have the opportunity to challenge the underlying model and to propose and discuss changes to better fit their experience of the landscape.

Session 2: Developing scenarios.

Once the learning and validation session is over, participants will be able to define and test rules for IFL management launching a second game phase. One game session will result in one scenario of landscape change developed by all participants. This scenario and its outcome will be analysed jointly by the support staff and the participants, with a particular emphasis on the fate of the IFLs represented in the game. An After-Action report can be produced after this session. The After-Action Report will ensure all participants broaden the scope of their understanding beyond the outcomes of their sphere of control to the entire landscape.

Landscape characteristic/value	<i>(i.e. Connectivity, Carbon Stock, Social Values, Biodiversity values)</i>
Baseline (current status)	<i>Ideally include some indicators, based on best available information.</i>

Protection level at the MU	Option 1: 80%	Option 2: less than 80%	Option 3: less than option 2
Potential impacts/ risks			
Additional measures at MU level in non-core IFL areas			
Potential actions for the Sphere of Influence of The Organization			

Table 2: Example Table X. Impacts, Risks, Potential measures for different IFL protection levels at the MU.

⁴⁰ If there is interest with SDGs, FSC International will develop a training for (regional) FSC staff to facilitate these ARDI processes, and engage Prof. Claude Garcia to commit this training.



Figure 1 The strategy game of landscape change in Central Africa (MineSet). All the components of the system included in the landscape representation (Figure 5) are represented in a physical form. The hexagonal cells host roads, trucks, guards and populations. Players place the tokens based on their strategies and capacities. They negotiate agreements and alliances with other players or stakeholders represented by the research team. IFLs are represented by sets of at least 5 adjacent dark green cells without roads. Photo: C. Garcia 2016.

Session 3: Drafting new rules

The After-Action Report of the previous session will initiate a collective discussion about the means to ensure protection of the IFLs and other core values of the landscape. At this stage it is unlikely participants will play again. The game and the components can still be used to help represent specific situations and dispel misunderstandings. Ensure all possible cases are discussed. Use Table 2 as guidance. Participants will refine the potential options that can offer a solution for IFLs and other core values from the perspective of forest management at MU level. The group will identify potential rules that will work for the landscape discussed.

Session 4: Closing

The participants will identify potential impacts, risks, and safeguards for the desired landscape scenario. Proposed rules will be refined. At the end of this session, there will be a space for feedback and final remarks.

SDGs or the facilitator can use the table below to support and record the main points in the discussion about different thresholds of protection of IFLs within management units, their impacts, etc.

Potential impacts	Risks	Safeguards	Proposed rules

Table 3: Example Table X. Desired scenario with protection level at the MU = XX %

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