



FSC LABOUR SOLUTIONS FORUM

Terms of Reference



Title:	FSC Labour Solutions Forum	
Dates:	Finalization date:	22 July 2024
Responsible program:	Chain of Custody and Controlled Wood	
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Objective of document:	To provide information on the FSC Labour Solutions forum, with detail on the objectives, meeting setup, and the process to become a forum member.	
Confidential?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Intended audience	<input type="checkbox"/> Internal (FSC)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External
Personal data included?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

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1. Summary

FSC International plans to create a forum on labour solutions, which will act as a regular platform for different stakeholders to discuss topics and best practices related to workers' rights and labour in connection with the FSC system. Unlike a formal technical working group (TWG) that is formed as part of the revision of normative requirements, this stakeholder group will be informal, with the intention that all stakeholders are offered to share their ideas and views for fruitful discussion that can then be used to help inform other processes, e.g., the revision of Chain of Custody Standard (FSC-STD-40-004). To become a group member, FSC International will communicate a 'call for applications' and interested stakeholders can apply to take part. Decision on the group members to be included will be taken by FSC International, including on the variety in stakeholders, and considering FSC membership chambers, where applicable.

Through facilitation by FSC International, forum members will have the opportunity to meet on a regular basis using virtual meeting software (Microsoft Teams), with the timing and regularity agreed between forum members. Additionally, the agenda items will be initially suggested by FSC International, however members will also have opportunity to shape the agenda, once the group is established.

2. Key Objectives

The objectives of this forum are to contribute to an effective integration and implementation of core labour requirements throughout the FSC normative framework by providing a space for forum members to:

1. Discuss topics relevant to workers' rights;
2. Exchange ideas, best practices, and relevant experiences;
3. Inform the Technical Working Group (TWG) in charge of the revision of Chain of Custody requirements; and
4. Co-create non-normative guidance for stakeholders on selected topics.

3. Meetings

3.1 Online Format

Any meetings of this forum will be provided online using Microsoft Teams, with potential for in-person meetings to be arranged in future. The meetings will be semi-structured, with an agenda covering the proposed topics for discussion. For agenda topics, participants will be polled to understand what they would like to discuss, with initial input from FSC on key topics at the beginning.

3.2 Management and Facilitation

FSC will manage the meetings of this forum, including diary coordination, invitations, and minutes. FSC will also act as a facilitator in each meeting. This will ensure all stakeholders involved can take part in discussion and the chosen agenda points are followed.

4. Forum Participants

4.1 FSC chamber representation

With a view on labour-related rules mostly impacting both the workforce of FSC certificate holders as well as those FSC certificate holders themselves, it is important that at least members from the social and economic chamber are represented in the group, ideally from both the Global North and South. Although it is not a requirement to have a balanced representation from these (sub)chambers, the selection of applicants will consider this concept, especially the inclusion of members from the social chambers.

4.2 Stakeholder representation

It is understood that there are a variety of stakeholders that are and will be interested in the topic of workers' rights. For this group, it is expected that organizations (certificate holders/applicants) and accredited certification bodies (including auditors) will play a key role. Likewise, external organizations linked to the upholding of workers' rights, e.g., trade unions and worker organizations, are also expected to take a prominent interest in joining this forum.

4.3 Interested non-forum members

For those who express an interest in the forum (via application form) but are not chosen as participants, there will be an opportunity to provide input and stay updated on the group discussion via email notification. The option to receive communications and be updated will be provided on the sign-up form, to ensure relevant data protection rules are complied with.

The information shared with interested individuals will be agreed by the forum members and compiled by the FSC representative.

4.4 Expectations for participation

The expectation for the forum members is to actively participate in discussions on the topics put forward by both FSC and the forum members. As part of active participation, at minimum, attendance in the agreed meetings is expected.

4.5 Number of participants

The number of participants will be around twenty, to ensure the group is large enough for variety of stakeholders, but still at a size that is feasible to have effective discussions in an online setting.

5. Meeting Agenda

5.1 Agenda

The agenda for discussion topics is expected to be an iterative process, with suggestions initially from FSC International, and then those made by the group members. Initial discussion will have a chain of custody focus, to coincide with the revision of the chain of custody revision.

Some proposed topics for initial discussion include, but are not limited to:

- Implementation of FSC General Assembly Motions (e.g., 50/2021 and 51/2021)
- Alignment of FSC requirements with updates to ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
- Gaps in knowledge and opportunities for capacity building on workers' rights issues in the FSC supply chain.
- Improvements to the core labour requirement self-assessment template
- Enhanced worker data capture
- Advancing core labour requirements

For the initial meeting, the agenda will be provided by FSC, including discussion on meeting format going forward and member expectations. The draft agenda will be provided before the first meeting.

6. Communications

6.1 Language

The main language of communication will be English. In the application process, applicants will be asked to provide the language(s) they are comfortable communicating in, both written and spoken. Dependent on the group members, there may be translation services provided to assist in engagement for non-English speakers.

6.2 Meeting coordination

Meetings will be coordinated by email, with the potential addition of a Microsoft Teams channel for repeated meeting invitations and the opportunity to store reference materials. Details of this will be provided to group members at the initial meeting.

6.3 Invitation: Call for Applications

A call for applications of interest will be communicated on FSC channels, providing sufficient time for applicants to register their interest. The application form will be in Microsoft Forms, and the link to this will be provided in the communications.

6.4 Channels

Communications about this group including communicating the set-up and application form, will be provided on OneFSC, the FSC Intranet, Certification Body (CB) Forum weekly email, Interested Stakeholders (in the CoC Revision process) email and on the FSC website. Additionally, direct communications via email will be sent to stakeholders that have previously engaged in this topic, especially those with ties to the FSC Social Chamber. FSC Network Partners will also be informed to communicate with their networks to facilitate uptake.

Subsequent communication on the final members of this forum and summary of discussion will be provided on the channels above, at intervals agreed to by the forum members.



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