



JOINT REVIEW REPORT OF FSC PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA, INTERNATIONAL GENERIC INDICATORS AND OTHER FOREST MANAGEMENT NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS

Joint Review Report of FSC Principles and Criteria,
International Generic Indicators, and other Forest
Management normative documents



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Title:	Joint Review Report of FSC Principles and Criteria, International Generic Indicators and other Forest Management normative documents
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SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Reviewed documents

Document name:	1. <u><FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship></u> 2. <u><FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators></u> 3. <u><FSC-POL-10-004 V1-0 Scope of Application of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship></u> 4. <u><FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0 FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification></u> 5. <u><FSC-DIR-20-007 Vn/a FSC Directive on Forest Management Evaluations></u>
Objective of document:	1. FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3: The FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship are the essential rules or elements of environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management. The Criteria provide the means of assessing whether or not a Principle has been fulfilled. They are the foundation for FSC Forest Management Certification. 2. FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1: The international generic indicators are a set of indicators that address the normative elements of each criterion in the FSC Principles and Criteria version 5-3 (<<u>FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship</u>>). They are the common starting point for the development and transfer of all Regional and National Forest Stewardship Standards in the FSC system, including Interim Forest Stewardship Standards. 3. FSC-POL-10-004 V1-0: This document clarifies the scope of application of <<u>FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship</u>>, that includes natural forests, plantations and other (i.e. non-forest) vegetation types. 4. FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0: This document was developed to provide a mechanism to “excise” or remove a defined area or areas from the scope of FSC forest management certification. 5. FSC-DIR-20-007 Vn/a: The objective of this document is to standardize understanding and implementation of the requirements by certification bodies and certificate holders.
Last approval date of document:	1. February 2012 (full revision) and March 2023 (partial revision) 2. June 2015 (initial version) and April 2023 (partial revision) 3. 17 June 2005 4. 01 March 2004 5. N/A 11 November 2024 (last update)
Review triggered by:	☒ Regular review as scheduled ☒ Board decision ☒ New or changed FSC policies or legislation ☒ Change Requests ☐ Other (please specify):

Reviewer:	Name: Forest Management Programme
	Email: forestmanagement@fsc.org
Public consultation:	The main topics identified in this Review Report will be consulted in the conceptual phase public consultation in October 2025.
Final Review Report:	Published on June 3, 2025

Recommendation

☒ Major revision	FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3; FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1; FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0; FSC-DIR-20-007 Vn/a
☒ Withdrawal	FSC-POL-10-004 V1-0

¹ According to -<[FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 Development and Revision of FSC® Requirements](#)>.

INTRODUCTION

This report has been developed according to Clause 4.5 of <FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 Development And Revision of FSC Requirements> to review the continued relevance and effectiveness of:

1. <FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship>
2. <FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators>
3. <FSC-POL-10-004 V1-0 Scope of Application of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship>
4. <FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0 FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification> and
5. <FSC-DIR-20-007 Vn/a FSC Directive on Forest Management Evaluations>

The development of a Review Report is a mandatory step before a normative document can be taken to a revision process. In addition, it responds to the Board requirement for an assessment of feasibility and impact for all review and revision processes, mandated at their 71st Meeting.

The report identifies areas requiring revisions or potential withdrawals and provides actionable recommendations for streamlined and effective implementation.

A parallel revision process of Requirements for the Development and Maintenance of FSC Country Requirements FSS and FSC Risk Assessments is ongoing. This process, along with the joint revision of the FSC Principles and Criteria, International Generic Indicators and other Forest Management normative documents, will be aligned.

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A. REFERENCES

The following referenced documents are relevant for understanding this document. For references without a version number, the latest version of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies:

FSC-POL-01-007	Policy to Address Conversion
FSC-POL-10-004 V1-0	Scope of Application of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0	FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification
FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3	FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
FSC-STD-01-002	Glossary of Terms
FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1	International Generic Indicators
FSC-STD-20-007 V4-0	Forest Management Evaluations Standard
FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0	Development and Revision of FSC Requirements
FSC-DIR-20-007	FSC Directive on Forest Management Evaluations

B. ABBREVIATION

CB	Certification Body
CoC	Chain of Custody
EUDR	European Union Deforestation Regulation
FM	Forest Management
FMC	Forest Management Community
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FSS	Forest Stewardship Standard
HCV	High Conservation Value
IGI	International Generic Indicators
ILO	International Labour Organization
MU	Management Unit
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products

NP	Network Partner
P&C	Principles and Criteria
P&P	Policy and Performance Unit
SIR	Scale, Intensity, and Risk
SLIMF	Small and Low Intensity Managed Forest

1. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION

1.1 Major revision

The Secretariat recommends a major revision, as outlined in <FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 Development and Revision of FSC Requirements> of the following documents:

- <FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship>;
- <FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators>.

At their 87th Board meeting in March 2021, the FSC Board of Directors decided to jointly review and, if needed, revise both the <FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship> (P&C) and the <FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators> (IGI) in 2024. This decision was based on several considerations:

- The <FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 Development and Revision of FSC Requirements> mandates that FSC review and revise its normative documents, as necessary, every five years. In line with this requirement, the P&C and IGI, follow different review schedules. However, revisions may also occur outside these cycles if approved by the FSC members or the Board.
- The review of the IGI has been postponed to 2024 to align it with the upcoming review of the P&C.
- The most recent partial revision of the P&C was completed in 2019. Following this, during its 81st meeting, the Board decided not to pursue further revision at that time and scheduled the next review for 2024. Major revisions of the P&C and the IGI were proposed. This approach aims to enhance stability, reliability, and efficiency, enabling more effective resource allocation for standards developers.

Additionally, the Secretariat has decided to add the following documents to this revision process due to their relevance and connection to the content topics addressed:

- <FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0 FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification>
- <FSC-DIR-20-007 Vn/a FSC Directive on Forest Management Evaluations>

The <FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0 FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification> was approved in 2004 and has remained unchanged since then. The Secretariat suggests it may either be fully revised or integrated as an addendum to the next version of the P&C (Annex 3). The <FSC-DIR-20-007 Vn/a FSC Directive on Forest Management Evaluations> was updated in November 2024. The Secretariat recommends withdrawing certain advice notes (presented in Annex 1) and revising others (presented in Annex 2). Image 1 summarizes the normative documents included in this major revision.

Interpretations related to the documents under revision in <Forest Management Interpretations>, as well as national-level interpretations in <Interpretations of the normative framework for Forest Stewardship Standards> will also be considered during this revision process.

For this major revision, one or more sub-chamber balanced working groups will be established. These groups will be formed through a public call for applications and may be supported by subject matter experts as needed. The Terms of Reference, number of working groups and members, as well as working group composition, will be approved by the FSC Board of Directors.

Once this major revision is concluded, an alignment process, as described in <FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 Development and Revision of FSC Requirements> will be conducted for <FSC-STD-20-007 Specific Requirements for Certification Bodies – Forest Management> to update its requirements based on the approved changes of this major revision.



Image 1. Documents under this major revision

1.2 Withdrawal process

As for the <FSC-POL-10-004 V1-0 Scope of Application of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship>, the Policy is still relevant for P&C (V4-0). The Secretariat recommends the withdrawal of the policy once all Forests Stewardship Standards have been transferred to the latest version of the P&C (V5-3).

The P&C (V5-3) incorporates the contents of the <FSC-POL-10-004 V1-0 Scope of Application of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship>. This policy has been effectively utilized as an element in drafting of the section 'Scope' of the P&C (V5-3). Countries that have fully completed the transition to the P&C (V5-3) are no longer required to adhere to FSC-POL-10-004. For countries still operating under the P&C (V4-0), the transition date to the P&C (V5-3) has been established as December 2025. Therefore, upon the completion of this transition, the Secretariat recommends the automatic withdrawal of FSC-POL-10-004, as it is redundant and ineffective for the P&C (V5-3) and the respective IGI (V2-1).

The withdrawal process will be conducted in accordance to Clause 13 of <FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 Development and Revision of FSC Requirements>, with the final decision being taken by the FSC Director General.

2. KEY OBSERVATIONS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2.1 Related motions and FSC Global Strategy alignment

The following motions have been identified for consideration in this revision process. Motions approved at the upcoming FSC General Assembly 2025 that are relevant to this joint revision will be incorporated based on the feasibility analysis conducted for each proposed motion.

2.1.1 Motions approved at FSC General Assemblies

- a) 23/2020 *Use landscape-wide approaches adapted to local conditions and strengthen Standard Development Groups (SDGs) to improve protections of Intact Forest Landscapes*
- b) 20/2020 *Climate Emergency Motion*
- c) 40a/2021 *Review the applicability of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in Principle 4*
- d) 50/2021 *Policy Motion on the right of access to workers*
- e) 51/2021 *Policy Motion on the right of workers to elect their own Occupational Health and safety representative(s)*

2.1.2 FSC Global Strategy 2021-2026

FSC Global Strategy 2021-2026 is focused on co-creating and implementing effective forest solutions. Strategic Goal 1 focuses on streamlining policies and standards to enhance clarity, ensure consistent implementation and reduce complexity. This involves integrating risk-based considerations while maintaining credibility and prioritizing outcomes driven by high performance. The intended outcomes of Strategic Goal 1.2 include the development of FSC policies and standards that are streamlined and outcome-orientated, uphold high integrity and credibility, balance global consistency with local adaptability, and are risk-based, clear, relevant, reliable, and efficient, offering concrete solutions.

Aligned with this, Strategic Goal 1.4 highlights FSC's expanded role in combating climate change and biodiversity loss. Additionally, the strategy calls for solutions to complex forest-related challenges, requiring the revision of the P&C to address diverse ecosystems such as complex forests, savannas, and non-forest ecosystems such as agroforestry.

In alignment with the 2050 vision laid out in FSC Global Strategy 2021-2026 the upcoming revision should consider the following:

- (1) Ensure that the best available knowledge is integrated into the next version of the P&C, addressing critical issues such as fire resilience and climate adaptation to promote forest thriving. This is essential to align with FSC's 2050 vision that "Resilient forests sustain life on Earth";
- (2) Introduce an outcome-oriented approach in the next version of the P&C to capture and track measurable results, positioning FSC as a key data point for monitoring progress. This approach should be consistent with the IGI by introducing measurable indicators.

2.2 Changes to normative framework and regulations

The following sections outline the most significant normative developments, legislation, and international regulations, related to the documents listed below:

- <FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship>;
- <FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators>; and/ or
- <FSC-DIR-20-007 Vn/a FSC Directive on Forest Management Evaluations>.

2.2.1 Labour and Worker's rights:

- Alignment with Updated ILO Core Conventions

In 2022, significant amendments were made to the ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The key change was adding 'a safe and healthy working environment' as the fifth principle. As a result, the related conventions - the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No.155), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)- are now considered "fundamental" conventions.

Moreover, the "core conventions" have been extended from eight to ten. These changes should be considered in the revision of the P&C and IGI, specifically for Criteria 2.1 and 2.3.

- Alignment with Updated ILO Code of Practice "Safety and Health in forestry work"

In addition to changes to the ILO fundamental conventions, the ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Forestry Work, currently referenced in the Criteria 2.3 of the P&C, has been updated, and an initial publication made available in June 2024, with its official publication expected in early 2025, after its submission to the Governing Body of the ILO at the 352nd Session. The changes are both to structure and content, including revised definitions and more technical guidelines.

For the P&C revision, these changes impact Criteria 2.3, with specific impact on the terms and definitions referenced, such as potential changes to 'occupational disease', 'occupational injuries' and 'occupational accident', as well as potential additions of new terms, to ensure alignment with the revised Code.

- Inclusion of FSC Members' Motions (Motion 50/2021 and Motion 51/2021)

Passed member policy motions Motion 50/2021 and Motion 51/2021, as described in section 2.2.1 of this report, must be included in this revision process for the P&C and IGI. As these motions cover both forest management (FM) and chain of custody (CoC), learnings will be taken from the CoC revision and adapted to effectively implement these for FM. For Motion 51/2021 specifically, changes will closely link with the revised ILO Code of Practice, to align on the topic of worker representation for occupational health and safety.

- Outdated documents

<FSC-POL-30-401 FSC Certification and the ILO Conventions> should be considered in the P&C revision and withdrawn once the transfer of Forests Stewardship Standards to the latest version of the P&C (V5-3) is completed.

2.2.2 Gender and diversity

ILO Convention 190 was recently ratified, providing an opportunity to integrate relevant elements in the upcoming revision of the P&C and IGI under the themes of gender and diversity. This could include defining concepts related to gender and diversity, as well as revising IGI 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.5 and 2.2.8, particularly to minimize or eliminate terms such as 'men' and 'women', which have been replaced with more inclusive terms like 'worker' in parts of the ILO Code of Conduct.

The integration of ILO Convention 190's focus on gender and diversity aligns with several indicators under <FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators>, particularly within the following principles and criteria:

Principle 1: Compliance with Laws	- C1.3 Health and Safety - C 1.5 Legal employment
Principle 2: Workers' Rights and Employment Conditions	- C 2.1 (alignment with CoC - Core Labor Requirements) - C 2.2 Gender equality

Additionally, Annex B of the IGI V2-1 (Training Requirements for Workers) should be updated to explicitly reference the 10 Core Conventions of the ILO to ensure alignment with the latest enforceable standards.

The revisions of the P&C and IGI must consider the FSC Action plan on Diversity and Gender 2024-2028. This plan includes key expected outcomes, such as strengthening gender components. For example, by including and improving gender-based indicators.

2.2.3 Climate Change

The revision process aims to enhance the relevance of FSC FM Certification for addressing climate change, focusing on forest resilience. The following documents have been identified as key benchmarks:

- 1) FAO's "The key role of forest and landscape restoration in climate action";
- 2) The ISCC standard; and
- 3) Just Transition.

Additionally, a new topic under consideration is climate change and its impact on working conditions. The upcoming revision could consider linking this issue to the concept of ensuring fair labour practices and supporting workers through climate-driven transformations.

2.2.4 Ecosystem services: FSC-PRO-30-006 V1-2 Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market Tools

The <FSC-PRO-30-006 V2-0 Ecosystem Services Procedure> has been revised and adopted an outcome-oriented format, enabling the reporting of key data from the certified forest. There is a need to align both documents to simplify implementation and adopt outcome oriented approach.

2.2.5 International regulations and guidelines

- European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)

The EUDR (REGULATION EU 2023/1115 known as the European Union Deforestation Regulation) is a pivotal EU initiative to limit deforestation and degradation caused by forestry and agricultural activities all over the world. Recognizing the significance of aligning forest management practices with this regulatory landscape, FSC has developed the Regulatory Module and introduced system-wide changes that comprised additions or changes to existing requirements that are applicable to all certificate holders. Certificate holders who decide to get certified against this add-on module will have a tool and additional independent assurance to support their efforts in demonstrating compliance with EUDR requirements.

The Module comprises a set of voluntary standards that work alongside the existing FSC certification requirements for forest management, chain of custody, and controlled wood. In terms of forest management, the Module outlines specific requirements that forest management certificate holders opting for this module must follow in addition to the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard. The main elements covered by these requirements are the establishment of a due diligence system that includes information collection, risk assessments, and risk mitigation measures, and the issuance of due diligence statements.

The system-wide changes were primarily driven by the need to align with the FSC Policy to Address Conversion. Eight new interpretations, and two Advice Notes <ADVICE-20-007-02 V3-0 Certification of primary forests> and <ADVICE 20-007-24 Deforestation-free products from FSC certified management units> were developed in response to this.

The introduced requirements, advice notes, and interpretations could be revised and transferred into the new version of the P&C to streamline the FSC normative framework and ensure consistency with the EUDR and the related FSC normative framework.

- Primary Forest

In May 2020, the European Commission published the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. This defined the objective of defining, mapping, monitoring and strictly protecting the EU's remaining primary and old-growth forest. Four countries (Finland, Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria) are working by adapting "Commission guidelines for defining, mapping, monitoring and strictly protecting EUDR and old-growth forest". This is a relevant topic for the P&C revision, since many elements of this strategy are useful not only for the EU area but globally. The guidelines provide a broader framework rather than a single definition, allowing member countries to apply criteria and indicators within their national contexts. It also aimed to achieve harmonization by offering common definitions, criteria, and indicators (e.g., Romania's reference to virgin and quasi-virgin forests).

- Other EU regulations

The adoption of the EU Closer-to-Nature Forest (CNF) Management Guidelines under the European Green Deal and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 represents a significant shift in expectations for implementing closer-to-nature forest practices across Europe. As a leading forest certification system with a strong presence in Europe, FSC's proactive alignment with the CNF Guidelines is essential to uphold its commitment to environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable forest management. A gap analysis is planned between FSC's IGI, selected representative FSS, and the CNF Guidelines to identify areas of divergence. This will inform decisions on where and how FSC's normative framework should be adapted or voluntary indicators introduced to effectively align with the CNF approach.

The results of these internal analyses should be considered during this joint revision process to explore whether these gaps identified related to P&C and IGI should be addressed.

The EU is shifting its priorities toward strengthening global competitiveness while easing the administrative burden of sustainability regulations. Changes include proposed amendments to Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, EU Taxonomy, and Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. FSC International continues to monitor the regulatory developments for possible considerations in terms of FSC certification standards.

- International sustainability disclosure standards

Globally, there are two possible trends in sustainability regulations. First, there is regulatory uncertainty and a need for data for corporate reporting. Second, there is global convergence towards the International Sustainability Standards Board's International Financial Reporting Standards S1 (General Requirements for Disclosure of Sustainability-related Financial Information), and S2 (Climate-related Disclosures). More than 35 jurisdictions, representing more than 40% of global market capitalization, are adopting or otherwise using these standards. This development could be considered in the P&C and IGI revision to enable the use of FSC certification for this well-established framework.

2.2.6 Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs)

The P&C and IGI revision should align with the results of the implementation of "*Motion 23/2020: Use landscape-wide approaches adapted to local conditions and strengthen Standard Development Groups (SDGs) to improve protection of Intact Forest Landscapes*". FSS indicators incorporating a landscape approach are planned to be the result of the piloting phase of this project. Additionally, <ADVICE-20-007-18 V3-0 Protection of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs)> should be revised accordingly.

2.2.7 Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)

“Motion 40a/2021: Review the applicability of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in Principle 4” proposed amendments to Criteria 4.2, and 4.8, the addition of a new Criterion 4.X and consistent use of the concept “Traditional Peoples”. These changes have been incorporated into the latest version of the P&C, with Criterion 4.3 added as 4.X. While the latest version of the IGI reflects these criteria, Criterion 4.X. was included without indicators. Therefore, the IGI revision will focus on developing indicators for Criterion 4.X, as outlined in the motion.

2.3 Scientific knowledge

An internal review of scientific studies related to FSC certification, and its sustainability outcomes was conducted by FSC International. While academic research often does not have the explicit objective of identifying gaps in FSC standards or ways to improve them, these studies often directly or indirectly highlight areas for the improvement of FSC certification. Observations and recommendations from these studies can be interpreted as gaps in FSC standards or issues to consider.

Key topics have been compiled that are either directly related to existing P&C and IGI or are new topics for consideration beyond what is currently covered in both documents. Additionally, comments from researchers identified during public discourse, engagement, and discussions have been included. The list of topics presented in this document is not exhaustive and will be updated through the revision process.

The topics in the next table are presented for consideration and discussion during the upcoming revision process.

Table 1 presents findings from scientific studies on the topics outlined above and highlights gaps, where applicable, within the P&C and IGI. This detailed analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the scientific perspectives on these critical areas and their implications for FSC certification, ensuring that all relevant aspects are considered to support more effective forest management practices. The topics in the next table are presented for consideration and discussion during the upcoming revision process.

Key topic	Subtopic	Description
Biodiversity	Agroforestry and urban forests	There is a call to include in, and standardize, the scope of the P&C to cover agroforestry and urban forests. Studies highlight the importance of urban forests in climate moderation and the role of agroforestry practices in enhancing biodiversity and economic resilience. <i>Ref Tschardt et al 2015. Konijnendijk et al. 2022</i>
Biodiversity	Indicators and common biodiversity evaluation metric	Studies suggest the need for a common metrics and standardized procedures to monitor and evaluate biodiversity and harvesting. This would serve as a starting point for calculating harvest measures in Principle 6, 8 and 9 along with their related Criteria and Indicators. <i>Ref Blumroeder et al. 2018, 2019, 2020; Matias et al. 2023 and Gardner 2010.</i>
Biodiversity and climate change	Assisted migration and climate change	The risk of invasion by assisted migration may not be fully aligned with the current P&C, depending on how natural forests and endemic species are defined. These adaptation options would also require a reconsideration of the role of plantation forestry in helping forests adapt to future climate conditions, as well as a discussion of current ideas about the natural composition of forests. Landscape-scale planning objectives should

Key topic	Subtopic	Description
		integrate new environmental values such as carbon management to address climate adaptation. <i>Ref Klenk et al. 2015; Gömöry et al. 2020; and Pelai et al. 2021</i>
Biodiversity and climate change	Invasive species	According to the P&C V5-3, the limited use of invasive species is permitted provided that their impacts can be controlled, and appropriate mitigation measures are in place (as outlined in Criteria 10.2 and 10.3). However, some scientific studies report that exotic (i.e. Alien) species can have negative consequences on Indigenous communities as well as on floral and faunal biodiversity. For example, <i>Pinus contorta</i> has been shown to negatively impact the Sami reindeer herding community in Sweden by reducing grazing grounds. Similar issues have been documented in Southern Africa where Pinus invasions in grassland affect local ecosystems, and negatively impact local communities, Indigenous Peoples and biodiversity. <i>Ref Horstkotte et al. 2023</i>
Biodiversity and economy	Sustained (Single species) timber yield	Scientific studies suggest that the P&C V5-3, particularly Criteria 5.1, 5.2, and 8.1 may not provide sufficient clarity on the calculation and assessment of harvesting rates needed to sustain the yield of the target tree species over decades during audits. <i>Ref Romero and Putz 2018</i> Studies suggest that in order to achieve sustained yield in tropical selectively logged forests, forest management companies would need to conduct more detailed inventories, harvest less timber and less frequently than allowed by law, or adopt practises that can increase volume. If FSC-certified concessions are to achieve the goal of sustained timber yield, the P&C would have to include requirements for management measures that are more stringent than those of the government laws. In addition, the results of the inventories should be made available to FSC, and research experts should assess whether harvesting is sustainable and suggest improvements where necessary. <i>Ref Ellis et al. 2021 and Sist et al 2021</i>
Biodiversity and social aspects	Strict protection versus set asides	Some of the scientific evidence and recommendations identified in this context are specific to Principle 6, 9 and 10 and are described as follows: 1. Researchers recommend that 31% of the area is set aside for conservation assessment and 42% for threshold analyses. These figures are higher than the minimum 10% of the Conservation Area Network required in the current IGI. 2. There is a lack of explicit requirements in the P&C to maintain structural and functional connectivity of forests for species at multiple scales. While some requirements related to connectivity are present such as in High Conservation Value 2, there may be opportunities to strengthen them,

Key topic	Subtopic	Description
		particularly in the context of preserving ecosystem functions and promoting species resilience at larger scales. 3.The proportion of land set aside (5%) can only maintain forest species with small habitat requirement. 4.High Conservation Values and the financial burden of conservation is also noted. 5.There is a call to move towards proactive conservation approaches that enable evolution, dispersal and compositional turnover within communities and habitats, allowing species and ecosystems to adapt and be resilient. 6. There are no explicit requirements in the P&C and IGI to maintain the set-aside areas, or the conservation network area, with a fixed location. That means, that it is currently possible to move the areas designated as set aside between different audits. This reduces the potential of FSC requirements for set aside areas to be effective in protecting biodiversity, particularly those areas identified as High Conservation Value. <i>Ref Elbakidze et al. 2016, Riggio et al. 2020; Moore and Schindler 2022</i>
Climate change and social aspects	Fire management	Active “fire control management” and “prescribed burning” is not explicitly addressed in the P&C and IGI. Criteria 10.9 is country specific and hence it is vague in the current P&C. However, certain countries, such as Sweden and Germany have incorporated specific requirements in their FSS, including provision for prescribed burning, and forest road infrastructure to facilitate access for fire brigades. Moreover, the increasing frequency and duration of forest fires due to climate change further amplifies the need for effective fire control measures. From the forester’s and workers’ perspective there is a gap in knowledge of fire control from the P&C and the data about burned FSC certified areas. These challenges highlight the importance of addressing fire management practices in both P&C and IGI to ensure resilience and adaptability in forest management. <i>Ref Miteva et al. 2015; Noojipady et al. 2017; and North et al. 2015.</i>
Climate change and social aspects	Soil management	The need to evaluate current management practices for natural forests and plantations has been highlighted, with a focus on reducing soil compaction and maintaining soil organic matter, nutrient capital, soil moisture holding capacity and preventing erosion losses. In plantations, the occurrence of topsoil loss leads to carbon loss. Reduced soil disturbance through reduced impact logging (RIL) practices has been shown to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. <i>Ref Rodrigues et al. 2021; and Binkley et al. 2019</i>
Climate change and economy	Promotion of (harvesting of) lesser	As certain timber species become scarce, lesser known species are often used as substitutes to relieve pressure on highly targeted ones. This topic could be addressed during the revision of the IGI, to ensure a comprehensive approach is integrated into the development of FSS.

Key topic	Subtopic	Description
	known species	Ref Martin 2015 and Ellis 2019
Social aspects	Access to forest resources by Indigenous Peoples	A reported gap in this context is the extent of access to forest resources by Indigenous Peoples. P&C V5-3 (specifically in Criteria 1.4, 3.5 and 6.6) does not clearly define the level of access permitted for Indigenous Peoples and local communities to forests and plantations for their use. Ref Teitelbaum et al. 2019 ; and Nikolakis et al. 2020

Table 1: Broad revision topics identified based on scientific knowledge and its descriptions

2.4 Additional sources to inform revision

This section summarizes key topics related to the P&C and IGI revision gathered from the following sources:

- Change requests and feedback from interviews, brainstorming sessions, emails and other channels for P&C (presented in Annex 4, and for IGI, in Annex 5).
- Additional sources to inform the revision, including brainstorming sessions with FSC stakeholders from 2023 and 2024, and the list of interviewed FSC International staff (presented in Annex 6).

The revision topics identified in this report are intended to serve as a starting point for the revision process and can be expanded upon by other topics that might be identified and prioritized through the conceptual phase.

The following are key considerations and example questions to be addressed during the revision process:

2.4.3 Alignment with Global Strategy objectives

- How can the new version of P&C and IGI be more outcome oriented, risk-based, streamlined and user-focused?
- How can the P&C and IGI bring more clarity without losing the context and core of the principle, criterion, and indicators?
- How can the P&C and IGI be made more consistent in both documents and how can redundancies between the principle, criteria, and indicators be removed?
- How will the new version of P&C and IGI address topics outlined in FSC's Global Strategy such as climate change and biodiversity, gender, and diversity?

2.4.1 Content revision of the P&C and IGI

- Do the P&C and IGI continue to align with FSC's mission to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable forest management, as well as with FSC's Global Strategy?
- How can global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and human rights be addressed in the P&C and IGI while ensuring that FSC certification continues to make a meaningful contribution?
- Are the P&C and IGI practical and adaptable across all scopes of applicability, ensuring that they remain globally applicable while allowing for country/regional relevance?
- Are the indicators technically applicable measurable, and verifiable, allowing for consistent and transparent assessments during audits?
- Should emerging topics such as circularity or fire management be incorporated into the P&C and IGI, and if so, how?

2.4.2 Scope applicability and usability of the P&C

- Should the current linear approach of applying the P&C and IGI to all users be maintained, or should FSC consider adopting a tailored approach based on the type of user, such as smallholders, communities, or Indigenous Peoples, as well as forest areas or ecosystems managed for conservation, ecosystem services, or low intensity management?
- Are each of the principles, criteria and indicators clearly understood by all stakeholders and users, including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and industry?

3. NEXT STEPS

3.1 Budget and resources estimates

The estimated budget for the revision request includes allocations for staff, experts and working group.

The core project team consists of the following roles and responsibilities:

Role & Responsibility within the project	Unit & Team	Requested full time employee %
Project Sponsor	P&P	25 %
Project Manager (1)	P&P	100%
Project Manager (2)	P&P	60%
Technical expert (1)	P&P	100%
Technical expert (2)	P&P	100%
Monitoring and Evaluation expert	P&P	50%
Community and Family Forests expert	P&P	10%
Communication support	P&P	25%
Project Assistant	P&P	75%

Table 2 Core project team composition

In addition to the core team, the project will be supported by an extended team of experts from FSC International, covering specific thematic areas such as:

- Worker's rights,
- Gender and diversity
- Climate change and biodiversity
- Global strategy
- Indigenous Peoples
- Forest Stewardship Standards

Following the conceptual phase, the Secretariat will draft the Terms of Reference for the working group. One or more sub-chamber balanced working groups will be established through a public call for applications. These groups may also be supported by subject matter experts, as needed.

The Terms of Reference, number of working groups and members, as well as working group composition and stipends will require approval by the FSC Board of Directors.

3.2 Testing revised requirements

The Secretariat recommends testing the revised version of the P&C and IGI to understand if the implementation of new or revised sets of principles, criteria and/or indicators are clear, feasible to implement and are likely to achieve the intended outcomes. <[FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 Development and Revision of FSC requirements](#)> considers the following types of testing, depending on the specific needs of the process:

- Desk tests can be used for any type of process. It is suggested for major processes that do not deal with technical requirements that can be tested on site.
- Field tests are suggested for regular and major processes dealing with requirements that are technical in nature and can be field tested in the field.
- Pilot tests are suggested for regular processes which deal with requirements that are technical in nature and can be pilot tested on the ground.

The Secretariat will determine the most appropriate test or combination of tests to evaluate the new set of requirements at a later stage in the process.

3.3 Intended outcomes

FSC is responsible for defining, reviewing and revising intended outcomes in collaboration with experts, as needed, and for developing the methodology to measure them. During the upcoming public consultation, which is part of the conceptual phase, stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback on intended outcomes. Intended outcomes in this context are related to the P&C, and therefore, they are defined as the desired intended outcomes to be delivered by responsible forest stewardship. IGI are the quantitative or qualitative parameters which can be assessed in relation to a criterion, and its respective intended outcome. Increase clarity and objectivity of IGI to assess outcomes are current topics in the discussion as part of the conceptual phase.

4. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND FEEDBACK

4.1 Stakeholder mapping

Image 2 below illustrates the stakeholder mapping relevant for this revision process.



Image 2 Stakeholder mapping

Table 3 provides an impact analysis of the revision process, identifying key stakeholders, the potential effects on them, and corresponding mitigation measures. A more detailed impact analysis will be developed following the public consultation during the conceptual phase.

Stakeholder	Potential impacts and mitigation measures
FSC members	The revision process will lead to the update of key documents to be more streamlined, user-focused, and user-friendly, enhancing the credibility of FSC and its members. A chamber-balanced working group, comprising FSC members, will be established to lead the revision and represent the members, requiring their commitment to the process. To mitigate potential negative effects—such as lack of member engagement, insufficient representation of diverse perspectives, or misunderstandings about the proposed changes—an engagement plan has been developed. This includes a series of webinars focused on the key conceptual topics to be addressed during the revision, designed to inform, consult, and involve members at each stage of the process.
Certificate Holders	FM certificate holders will have to implement the new set of requirements outlined in the new versions of P&C and IGI after their transfer to the FSS, along with other normative documents that are also being revised during this process.

While the revision aims to create a more tailored and user-friendly FM standard, it may also bring potential negative effects. These include the perception of increased complexity, the burden of adapting to significant changes, and the need for additional human and financial resources to achieve and maintain conformity. There may also be transitional challenges, and a learning curve associated with understanding and applying the new requirements.

Certification Bodies The revision process aims to streamline key normative documents, thereby simplifying their implementation by Certification Bodies (CB). However, CBs will need to invest time in adapting their systems to the updated versions of these documents. Resources will also need to be allocated to address the changes and meet new requirements. FSC annual CB meetings will serve as a key platform for discussion and engagement with CB representatives.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities The updated P&C and IGI will clarify requirements related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, who are expected to participate actively during the revision process. The revision aims to strengthen the recognition and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples within responsible forest stewardship.

To mitigate the risk of limited participation in the revision process by Indigenous Peoples, inclusive and culturally appropriate engagement strategies will be adopted. Moreover, engagement through the Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee will be prioritized to ensure meaningful representation and input throughout the process.

Network Partners and Forest Management Community This group of stakeholders - which includes Network Partners (NP) and Forest Management Community (FMC) - will need to invest time and resources throughout the revision process. Their involvement will range from providing inputs during the revision phase to supporting the dissemination and communication of the revised requirements. Contributions from these stakeholders are essential, as they offer on-the-ground insights into the implementation of FSS. Once the revision is completed, NPs will also need to plan and allocate resources to finalize the transfer process of their FSS.

Standard developers Once the revision is completed, Standard developers will need to transfer their FSS to the new version of the IGI. This process will require a significant time investment and sustained commitment, potentially straining existing capacities and timelines. To mitigate these effects, clear guidance and technical support to facilitate a smooth transition and ensure consistency will be provided to support the implementation across all FSS.

FSC International FSC International staff will need to align respective documents and areas of work with the revised versions of the documents. This process may require the allocation of additional resources to support internal adjustments and ensure coherence across the system. To mitigate potential negative effects, such as delays in implementation, internal coordination and planning will be strengthened.

Table 3: Impact analysis of the revision

4.2 Consultation methodology

Engagement activities during the conceptual phase will be designed to enable FSC members and other stakeholders to contribute to the development of key concepts and formulation of key intended outcomes

of requirements at the start of the process and before working groups are established. These activities will include dedicated webinars, engagement channels, and targeted events, with the main engagement planned to take place during FSC's General Assembly in 2025.

4.2.1 Global webinars on key topics

Three public webinars on key topics are scheduled. These webinars will set the stage for the upcoming consultation. The topics include:

- Social aspects
- Climate change and biodiversity
- Outcome orientation

Stakeholders will have access to copies of the presentation and summaries of the feedback received, and a record of questions and answers.

4.2.2 FSC Member engagement

Discussion forum and survey

A dedicated discussion channel is available in the FSC Members Portal, allowing members to begin exchanges on key topics in preparation for the public consultation and FSC's General Assembly in 2025. A member survey featuring key questions was circulated in December 2024.

Capturing global voices

In leading up to the public consultation in the conceptual phase we will have dedicated events to promote the participation of underrepresented stakeholders. As environmental and social chamber members often contribute less to public consultations in the consultation platform these events are designed to prepare them for the consultation. This is to ensure we reflect a balanced input in the upcoming consultation and those members have a clear overview and understanding of the key topics. This includes Cameroon, Brazil and webinars for Canada and Latin America.

Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee (PIPC)

FSC is organizing ongoing engagement with the Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee (PIPC) to ensure representation from Indigenous Peoples. This is through in person meetings, webinars, and a dedicated expert developed report.

4.2.3 Website Hub

A website to review the key topics, revision and related topics to be published at pci.fsc.org. This will keep stakeholders informed and build material and comprehension on conceptual materials such as reports and other background material.

4.2.4 FSC Consultation Platform

Stakeholders will be invited to provide comments and feedback on conceptual materials via the FSC Consultation Platform, which will start in October 2025.

To ensure that all relevant stakeholders participate in the consultation the following communication channels will be applied:

- Email announcement on the CB Forum and Accreditation mailing lists;
- Email announcement on the Network mailing list, One FSC team channel, and/or a news item on Branching Out newsletter;
- News item on the FSC website;
- News item on the FSC members' portal;

- Internal website (The Secretariat will develop a website for the revision process where stakeholders will have access to documents, check the updates and scheduled meetings, webinars and other engagement channels).

To facilitate the consultation, the following type of questions will be included in the online consultation to guide participants:

- Guided questions
- Level of agreement or disagreement questions about key topics identified in conceptual phase (e.g. Do you agree with the proposed changes to in Section X, Clause X? Please suggest alternatives the Secretariat hasn't thought of; Please elaborate your response).
- Ranking questions (e.g. What is your overall impression of the proposed changes?)
- Webinars for different stakeholders

Feedback from non-online consultations may also be collected from participants when other methods are more culturally appropriate.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – List of the Advice Notes suggested to be withdrawn

To be withdrawn	Reasons
ADVICE-20-007-03 Certification of concessions	The content of this Advice Note has now been covered in P&C V5-3.
ADVICE-20-007-12 Financial evaluation	The content of this Advice Note has been covered in <u><FSC-STD-20-007 V4-0 Forest Management Evaluations></u> . The Advice Note must be withdrawn once the transition period ends on December 31, 2025.
ADVICE-20-007-15 Certification of Management Units (MUs) with areas converted from natural forest to plantations between 01 November 1994 and 01 April 2013	The content of this Advice Note has been covered in <u><FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 Policy to Address Conversion></u> .
ADVICE-20-007-17 Applicable National and Local Laws and Regulations	The content of this Advice Note has been covered in the IGI V2-1 under Annex A (Minimum list of applicable laws, regulations and nationally-ratified international treaties, conventions and agreements).
ADVICE-20-007-19 Forest Management Auditing Time	The Advice Note was suspended in January 2020 and the content has now been covered in <u><FSC-STD-20-007 V4-1 Forest Management Evaluations></u> . The Advice Note must be withdrawn once the transition period ends on December 31, 2025.
ADVICE-20-007-20 Implementation of FM digital reporting	The content of this Advice Note is now included in <u><FSC-STD-20-007 V4-0 Forest Management Evaluations></u> , which requires certification bodies to complete evaluation reports using FSC's reporting template. The Advice Note must be withdrawn once the transition period ends on December 31, 2025
ADVICE-20-007-21 Precautionary approach towards conflicting legislation and differing interpretations of laws and regulations	The content of this Advice Note has been covered in <u><FSC-STD-20-007 V4-0 Forest Management Evaluations></u> . The Advice Note must be withdrawn once the transition period ends on December 31, 2025

Note 1: The advice notes in Annex 1 are only relevant for P&C V4-0 and will be withdrawn once transfer has been completed and there are no Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS) based on V4-0.

Annex 2 – List of the Advice Notes to be included in the revision

To be revised	Reasons
ADVICE-20-007-01 Scope of forest certification	This Advice Note references < <u>FSC-POL-10-004 V1-0 Scope of Application of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship</u> > and the P&C V4-0. Most of its content has been covered in the latest version of the P&C (V5-3). During the upcoming P&C revision, this Advice Note must be reviewed and subsequently withdrawn upon the completion of the transition to the new version of the P&C.
ADVICE-20-007-02 V3-0 Certification of primary forest	This Advice Note has been revised in June 2024 as a result of the alignment of the FSC normative framework and EUDR. It includes three advices or clarifications related to “certification of primary forest”, artificial regeneration and a forest that would meet with the definition of planted forest. The content of this Advice Note will be incorporated into the revision of the P&C and IGI and should be withdrawn once the transition to the new versions of these standards has been completed.
ADVICE-20-007-04 Mining and Quarrying	The Advice Note must be revised and aligned with the < <u>FSC-POL-20-003 The Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification</u> > and potentially withdrawn.
ADVICE-20-007-05 Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP)	The revision of the Advice Note must consider the following elements: a) Remove redundancies and duplication with other FSC normative Framework requirements including the advice notes on shiitake and bamboo. b) Improve and broaden the advice contents in the policy to develop a more generic policy on the potential scope of application of the P&C.
ADVICE-20-007-06 FSC certification of bamboo	The revision of this Advice Note must consider evaluating the need to retain a specific focus on bamboo as a standalone plant to be addressed in Forest Management certification or potentially merge it with the advice note on NTFP, and ultimately withdraw it. The Chinese FSS standard has developed an approach to bamboo certification that could be considered in the revision.
ADVICE-20-007-07 Cultivated Shiitake mushrooms	The revision of this Advice Note must consider two aspects: a) Consider merging with the <<u>ADVICE-20-007-05 Non-Timber Forest Products</u>>, and b) Consider removing Trademark and Chain of Custody requirements from the advice and housing them separately.

To be revised	Reasons
ADVICE-20-007-08 Single species sustained yield	The Advice Note refers to P&C V4-0 and the revision should focus on verifying whether its content is already addressed in the new version of the P&C (V5-3). If that is the case, the Advice Note could be withdrawn. Single species sustained yield has special importance in the tropical natural forests where the species diversity is exceptionally high. This is addressed in the Annex 1 of <u><FSC-GUI-30-010 V1-0 EN Intact Forest Landscapes Guidance for Forest Managers></u>.
ADVICE-20-007-09 Clearance of encroaching forest	The Advice Note refers to P&C V4-0 and includes relevant references to the P&C. It includes a section on "clearing," which should be assessed in relation to <u><FSC-POL-01-007 Policy to Address Conversion></u> and <u><FSC-POL-20-003 FSC Policy on the excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification></u>. The revision process must verify whether the content of the Advice Note is already addressed in the current version of the P&C (V5-3) or other FSC normative document. If the content is covered elsewhere, the Advice Note should be withdrawn. However, if the Advice Note is to be retained, the revision should ensure alignment with <u><ADVICE-20-007 24 Deforestation-Free Products></u> and incorporate any necessary updates to reflect current FSC requirements and best practices.
ADVICE-20-007-10 Conversion of plantation to non-forest land	The Advice Note must be revised considering the following aspects: a) If the content is covered in <u>< FSC-STD-01-007 Policy to Address Conversion></u> and potentially withdrawn, and b) <u>Ensure alignment with the <ADVICE-20-007-24 Deforestation-free products from FSC certified management units></u>.
ADVICE-20-007-11 Products of land clearance	The revision of this Advice Note must consider the following aspects: a) Ensure alignment with the following FSC normative documents: - <u><FSC-STD-01-007 Policy to Address Conversion></u> - <u>ADVICE-20-007-24 Deforestation-free products.</u> - Trademark requirements. b) Ensure alignment with the revision of <u><FSC-POL-20-003 FSC Policy on the excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification></u>.
ADVICE-20-007-13 Certification of windbreaks	The Advice Note must be revised considering the FSC internal procedure related to "eligibility of production systems" developed by the Secretariat and other alternative approaches proposed by external sources.
ADVICE-20-007-14 Certification of forest remnants	The Advice Note must be revised in alignment with the FSC internal procedure on "eligibility of production systems" developed by the

To be revised	Reasons
	Secretariat and other alternative approaches proposed from external sources. This revision process must also include the development and incorporation of a definition for the term “forest remnant”, ensuring its integration into the relevant normative framework.
ADVICE-20-007-16 Wind turbine establishment within FSC certified areas	The content of this Advice Note must be revised to ensure alignment with the following FSC normative documents: a) <<u>FSC-POL-01-007: Policy to Address Conversion</u>> b) <<u>ADVICE-20-007-23 Maximum Hectare Threshold for ‘Very Limited Portion’</u>> c) Revision of <<u>FSC-POL-20-003 V1-0 FSC Policy on the Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification</u>> If the content of the Advice Note is fully addressed within the above, it should be withdrawn.
ADVICE-20-007-18 Protection of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs)	This Advice Note expires in a country once a Forest Stewardship Standard based on the IGI V2-0 becomes effective in the country and the transition period towards that Forest Stewardship Standard is completed. This Advice Note should be withdrawn upon the completion of the transition period.
ADVICE-20-007-22 Advice Note on requirements for certificate holders introduced by the Policy to Address Conversion and M37/2021	This Advice Note can be withdrawn once the FSS has transitioned to the latest version of the P&C (V5-3).
ADVICE-20-007-23 Maximum hectare threshold for ‘very limited portion’	This Advice note could be included in the revised P&C or future versions of <<u>FSC-POL-01-007 Policy to Address Conversion</u>>; it could then potentially be withdrawn.
ADVICE-20-007-24 Deforestation-free products from FSC certified management units	This Advice Note includes some scenarios and cases of conversion, in which the certificate holders (CH) are not allowed to sell products as FSC certified. These changes, as well as the new Interpretation developed related to the EUDR alignment process, should be considered during the revision of the P&C and IGI.
ADVICE-20-007-25 Extension of transition period for Version 4-0 of FSC-STD-20-007	This Advice Note applies to <<u>FSC-STD-20-007 V4-0 Forest Management Evaluations</u>>, extending its transition date. This should remain valid until the transition date expires on 31 December 2025.

Note 2: Advice notes in Annex 2 specific to P&C V4-0 or older versions of normative documents will also be withdrawn once the transition is complete and no Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS) based on P&C V4-0 remain in use.

Annex 3 – Proposed actions to be considered during the revision of FSC Policy on Excision

Proposed action	Summary of proposed actions or suggestions
1. Consider excision cases in Australia, Gabon, Cameroon, Poland	Clarify cases regarding excision and mining concessions, and nurseries. Communities cannot influence the size or impact of excised areas in cases of legal mining.
2. Consider revision suggestions from FSC UK	The title of the policy focusses on excision, it covers two different scenarios, only one of which involves excising areas from the scope of certification. Re-arrange structure and streamline document.
3. Review consistency of requirements	Consider defining “excise”, and/or “excision” in FSC’s Glossary of Terms. Revise the language and improve the sequence of the requirements. Provide further clarification on the occasions when it is acceptable to exclude or ‘excise’ specific areas. Align and update categories of “non-controversial” with recent developments and current normative framework in <u><FSC-POL-01-001 Policy for Association></u>. Ensure alignment with contents in evaluation and public summary report in <u><FSC-STD-20-007 V4-0 Forest Management Evaluations></u>. Provide further clarification on the occasions when it is acceptable to exclude or ‘excise’ specific areas.
4. Update Terms	Remove all references to document as paper. There is a need to update the following FSC terms: - National Initiative to Network Partner. - Forest Management Unit (FMU) to management unit (MU)

Annex 4 - Detailed change requests for P&C

Change requests received for <FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship>

Change requests are formal submissions received by the Secretariat pertaining to enhancements of specific normative documents. The Secretariat logs these requests in a database and addresses them in the subsequent revision.

Change requests	Summary of requests
Enhancing structure	The Secretariat could propose a new, more user-friendly structure for the P&C and IGI. Future revisions of these documents could focus on improving user-friendliness by exploring a digital format for improved accessibility. Additional considerations include integrating Principle 8 throughout the standard and merging Principles 6 with 9 and Principles 7 with 10.
Preamble	The preamble, which outlines the “scope” and “responsible for compliance”, could be reviewed and improved, if necessary, to ensure it adequately addresses all potential users, such as smallholders, communities, and Indigenous Peoples. The revision should consider their respective governance systems, structures, and management objectives.
Revising the grammar and typos	The grammar and typos should be reviewed and corrected to ensure consistency and clarity (e.g. “SHALL” format in the IGI V2-0 should go to the P&C level).
Scale, Intensity, and Risk, and (SIR)	The applicability of the Scale, Intensity and Risk (SIR) concept could be reconsidered, as today only one country applies SIR as it was originally intended in the IGI V2-1. In most countries, SIR is applied to SLIMF (Small to Low-intensity Managed Forests). In the upcoming revision of the P&C the applicability of the SIR concept could be evaluated with a special focus on its use within FSC’s SLIMF framework.
Streamline chain of custody	There is a regulatory gap in the P&C regarding the lack of basic CoC rules for forest managers. Currently, there are no explicit requirements for tracking, recording, and documenting material flow within forest enterprises. This lack of clear guidelines can lead to inconsistencies and challenges in maintaining the integrity and traceability of forest products throughout the supply chain.

Change requests	Summary of requests
	The revision of the P&C addressing this gap is essential to enhance transparency and accountability in forest management practices.
Clarify unclear scope regarding agroforestry areas	The P&C are globally applicable to all types and scales of forests, including natural forests, plantations, and other vegetation types (i.e., non-forest). However, the concept of "non-forest" has not been properly defined in terms of FSC certification eligibility under the IGI specifically regarding what types of non-forest can or cannot be FSC certified (e.g., agroforestry, urban forests, others). The revision of the P&C presents an opportunity to evaluate the applicability of agroforestry and other non-forest vegetation, providing a clear definition of their scope and scale to ensure consistency in certification eligibility.
Lack of specification on the publicly available information requirements (Criteria 7.5 and 8.4)	The information required to be publicly available under Criteria 7.5 and 8.4 could be reviewed and revised to ensure transparency and support researchers who conduct their studies on the basis of the public reports available on the FSC platform.
Addition of definition	The terms and definitions could be revised and updated considering, but not limited, to the following cases: - Definition of "Tree" - Define "Forest" under the certification scope to be in line with Global Strategy - Human rights (definition are not covered) - Some definitions and terminology adopted in <FSC Regulatory Module FSC-STD-01-004> can be transferred into the new version of P&C to ensure alignment and consistency within FSC. - Include the concept Genetically Engineered Organism (GEO) and the difference between GMO and GEO
Enhancing clarity	During the review of different National Forest Stewardship Standards conducted by P&P, several criteria and indicators required clarification and correction, indicating potential gaps in clarity or understanding by Standard Developers. The upcoming revision presents an opportunity to enhance these criteria and indicators to ensure clarity and ease of understanding. The following are some cases identified by P&P:

Change requests	Summary of requests
	- Criterion 2.3, 2.4, 6.5 and 6.6.x: the indicators associated to these criteria have received the greatest number of conditions from the decision-making body (elements that Standard Developers must clarify in a FSS to gain full approval of all Criteria). - Criterion 4.2: this criterion addresses a gap in the P&C. To be able to recognize and uphold the legal and customary rights of local communities according to criterion 4.2, The Organization must at first identify the local communities that hold such rights. The Policy and Standards Committee, technical arm of FSC, acknowledges that this refers to identified rights of local communities that might be affected by stewardship activities within the management unit. (Conditions to SDG Uruguay) - Criterion 5.3: this criterion and subsequent indicators require significant improvement to reduce misinterpretation and challenges in implementation on the ground. - Criterion 10.7: wording of C10.7 related to <u><FSC-POL-30-001 FSC Pesticides Policy></u> needs revision to ensure alignment between FSC policies.
Natural disaster (Criterion 5.2)	Criterion 5.2 could be revised to address a potential gap related to large-scale timber loss due to natural disasters. The IGI provide instructions without explicit requirements. Establishing clear guidelines would enhance consistency.
Removing of Redundancy	In the upcoming revision the redundancy must be avoided, including but not limited to: a) Between criteria and indicators (e.g. IGI 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.6.4 and 4.6.4). b) Between documents (e.g. <u><FSC-POL-01-004 V3-0 Policy for Association></u> and <u><FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship></u> and <u><FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators></u>
Emerging topic	The P&C currently cover the most relevant environmental, social and economic topics. However, the following topics could be considered within the review for inclusion in a future version of the P&C: - Waste management and circularity. - Energy consumption in FM activities. - Renewable energy.

Change requests

Summary of requests

Climate change

To be aligned with the FSC Global Strategy (goal 1.4), the Motion 20/2021 “climate emergency” and several scientific studies related to the climate change adaptation and mitigation, the upcoming revision could address climate change considering, but not limited to, the following elements:

- Introduction of non-native species. The P&C might consider flexibility in such cases.
- Including climate adaptation (environmental and social evaluation).
- Fire management control.
- Soil management.
- Diversification of tree species.
- Artificial regeneration with improved Forest Reproductive Material (FRM).
- Enriched natural regeneration with FRM.
- Promoting the mixture of species.
- Avoiding the clear-cutting practice.
- Adaptation of forest management to climate change:
 - o Diagnosis and selection of silvicultural systems (5.21, 5.22, 5.23, 10.5.1, 7.12)
 - o Mixed species and pure stand experiments (10.2.6, 10.2.7 and 10.2.8)
 - o Definition of the indigenous character of a species
 - o Invasiveness of species e.g black locust (10.3, 10.3.2, 10.3.1 and 10.2.8)
 - o Balance between forest regeneration and clearcutting (6.6)

Currently, two countries (the United States and France) have incorporated climate change into their latest FSS. These standards could provide valuable input for the revision of the P&C.

Ref Landmann et al 2023 (a); Landmann et al 2023 (b); Révision du référentiel de gestion forestière FSC® France métropolitaine 2021

High Conservation Values (HVC)

The following two issues have been proposed for inclusion in the upcoming revision of the P&C to strengthen the HCV identification process and enhance transparency by making the locations of identified HCV areas publicly available.

Change requests

Summary of requests

- 1) Independent expert for HCV identification: Currently the Criterion 9.1 of the P&C request the Organization identify the HCV in the Management Unit (MU) through the best information available and stakeholder engagement.
However, since the Organization itself conducts the identification, there may be a perceived conflict of interest, particularly when certification is sought for timber or other productive activities that could be restricted by HCV designations. To address this, the proposal suggests incorporating an independent expert to oversee HCV identification within the MU.
- 2) HCV areas publicly available: Currently, there is no mandatory requirement to publicly disclose the locations of the HVC areas.
Some FSS, such as Canada's, have voluntarily included indicators requiring public access to HCV assessments (e.g., *Indicator 9.1.8: "The HCV assessment report and review are made publicly available, including in electronic format."*). The proposal recommends incorporating a similar requirement at the P&C or IGI level to improve transparency regarding HCV areas in certified management units.

Conservation solutions

Conservation solutions is one of the goals the FSC Global Strategy. In this context FSC is implementing the Action 55 which, among other initiatives, foresees a green paper on "conservation solutions" in 2025. The results could be used as inputs for the upcoming revision.

Challenging indicators/ topics

Certain challenging indicators—due to difficulties in implementation and/or ambiguity in purpose—have been identified by P&P. These could be addressed in the upcoming revision to enhance clarity and applicability for certificate holders and certification bodies (CBs) during audits.

Examples of identified criterion:

- a) Criterion 6.5: the criterion poses challenges on its implementation for smallholders and plantations. This criterion presents difficulties, in meeting 10 % conservation area (CAN) threshold. The 10 % benchmark is based on population ecology research, *The Shrinking World: Ecological Consequences of Habitat Loss*. (Hanski, 2005) *International Ecology Institute, Germany*. However, international expectations have evolved, with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and IUCN World Conservation Congress advocating for 30% protection. These changing expectations must be reconsidered during the revision.

Change requests

Summary of requests

- b) Criterion 6.8: the purpose of this criterion poses confusion related to the restoration and/or maintenance of the landscape (some standard developers argued that the completion of the process of restoration of landscapes would require decades). Clarifying the intent of this Criterion would improve its practical application.

Indigenous People

An element proposed for consideration in the upcoming revision of the <FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship> is the recognition of Indigenous People (IP) living in self-isolation (e.g. in cases when self-isolation is identified, requirements as FPIC may not be applicable).

Ref Monitoring report from FPIC (Gabon, Chile, Sweden, Canada)

Protection of biodiversity

To align with the FSC Global Strategy (Goal 1.4), the upcoming revision of <FSC-STD-01-001 V5-3 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship> may evaluate and enhance requirements that promote biodiversity conservation considering, but not limited to, the following elements:

- CAN (6.5)
- Living habitat-trees
- Buffer zones for watercourses and wetlands (6.7.2, 6.7.4 and 10.5.2)
- Principle 9 (HCV Framework)
- IFL (following the 23/2020 motion implementation)
- Primary Forest (EU strategy)

Annex 5 - Detailed change requests for IGI

Change requests received for <FSC-STD-60-004 V2-1 International Generic Indicators>

Actions	Summary
Reflect elements from the IGI not present in Criteria	The revision may focus on aligning P&C and IGI to enhance consistency and reduce confusion for the Standard Developers. The following key aspects could be considered: - Incorporating CAN concept: Defining CAN “<i>Those portions of the management unit* for which conservation is the primary and, in some circumstances, exclusive objective...</i>” and clarifying its implementation. - Improving standard flow and clarity. - Ensure clearer definitions and applicability of NTFPs. - Address degradation issues and refine language around IFLs, including indicator language. - Defining new certification eligible areas: Clearly define new areas eligible for certification, such as urban forests and other vegetation types within IGI. While the P&C already include a broad scope, it currently requires case-by-case analysis. - Enhancing flexibility for national terminology: Allow the use of national terminology along FSC-defined terms to improve applicability across different regions.
Consistency / inconsistencies	- Ensuring consistency across Criteria: some are more detailed than others, creating an imbalance that needs to be addressed for uniformity - Correcting inconsistencies in language versions: the English version contains discrepancies, such as two different scenarios of <i>very limited portion</i> – one related to forest conversion and another to core areas of IFLs. - Remove duplication such as <i>intellectual property</i> which is listed twice.
Update Glossary	The upcoming revision of the IGI could update a comprehensive glossary of terms to enhance clarity and consistency in the interpretation of standards. This glossary should address existing gaps, for example: - Missing definitions: Exposure (in 10.7.14) and mitigated (in 6.3.3) are asterisked but lack definitions in the current glossary.

Actions	Summary
Increase clarity and consistency	During the NFSS review conducted by P&P, several indicators required clarification and correction, indicating potential gaps in clarity or understanding by the SDG. The upcoming revision presents an opportunity to enhance these criteria and indicators to ensure clarity and ease of understanding. The following are some cases identified by P&P: - IGI 10.7.5: There is a need for clear language on the IGI to avoid misinterpretations. - IGI 6.6.X: The indicators related to hunting (6.6.x) are structured in a manner that lacks clear differentiation, making it difficult to perceive each indicator as a separate entity. The first 6.6.x indicator introduces a list that includes the subsequent indicators, rather than presenting them as distinct items. Additional issues are listed below: 6.6.X: Complete the sentence after “The Organization..”. - IGI 6.7.2: Clarify the language and explain why would protection measures fail to protect something.
Align with the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) Guideline	The revision of the IGI should align on the latest version of <u><FSC-GUI-30-003 FSC Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)></u>.
Align term “Affected right holders”	The revision of the IGI should align on terms such as “affected right holders” a concept also present in the <u><FSC-PRO-01-007 V1-0 FSC Remedy Framework></u>. The term affected right holders refer 'only' to those right holders with FPIC rights creating challenges regarding how to refer to the wider range of affected right holders with rights.

Actions	Summary
Align with Motion on Intact Forest Landscape (23/2020)	Implementation of the motion 23/2020 “<i>Use landscape-wide approaches adapted to local conditions and strengthen Standard Development Groups (SDGs) to improve protection of Intact Forest Landscapes</i> “ is ongoing and currently in the pilot phase. As an outcome of the implementation of Motion 23, changes will be reflected in the national and international normative framework, such as <u><FSC-GUI-60-004 Guidance for Standard Developers to Develop a National Threshold for the Core Area of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) within the Management Unit></u> and the IGI). Ref: <u>Revision of requirements for Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) conservation FSC Connect</u>
Align with the Ecosystem Services Procedure	The upcoming revision of IGI should align with the <u><FSC-PRO-30-006 V2-0 Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market tools></u>. Additionally, the revision may consider removing Indicator 5.1.3 related to claims, as this should be addressed in <u><FSC-STD-50-001 Requirements for use of the FSC trademarks by certificate holders></u>.

Annex 6 – Additional sources to inform revision

In 2023, The Secretariat conducted several brainstorming sessions with various FSC stakeholders to better understand the main expectations, key topics, risk and challenges and engagement activities for this revision process. Some sessions were held in person, while others were conducted virtually using interactive tools such as Miro Board. Answers were combined under each topic and discussed among the attendees.

This report summarizes the brainstorming sessions with:

- Network Partners at the Global Staff Meeting in May 2023;
- FSC International staff in July 2023;
- FSC Board of Directors at their 96th meeting in August 2023;
- Certification bodies at the CB meeting in September 2023;
- FSC Policy and Standards Committee at their 56th meeting in October 2023;
- Representatives of Standard Developers (Forest Management Community) in December 2023.

In April 2024, the Secretariat presented the main outcomes from year 2023 at the Global Staff meeting.

In addition, the Forest Management team has enlisted key individuals within the Secretariat (as per Table 5) to conduct warm-up sessions, aiding in the identification of general topics related to the P&C and IGI. This collaboration seeks to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of the revision process for both sets of standards.

Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes during which the key person provided inputs and feedback based on their related work and area of expertise. The questions discussed were as follows:

- How does the P&C and IGI connect with your area of work? From the perspective of your area of work, what are the current main points to take into consideration during the revision process, if any?
- Are there any aspects under discussion in your area of work that could potentially trigger changes within the P&C and IGI?
- How do you see the engagement opportunity and collaboration through this process?
- Based on your expertise, do you foresee any barrier and risks created by the P&C and IGI?

These questions were designed to solicit comprehensive insights and perspectives to inform the revision process effectively.

Name	Position/Role	Related topics or Unit
Ana Maria Baban	Acting Commercial Director	Marketing and Commercial Unit (MCU)
Anakarina Perez	Head of Strategy	Engagement
Bin Yan	Program Manager	Value Chain Development - MCU
Christina Endemann	Policy Officer	Assurance Quality - P&P
Emily White	Policy Manager	CoC & CW - P&P
Franck Trolliet	Program Manager	M&E - P&P
Gemma Boetekees	Former Director Stakeholders solutions	Stakeholder Solutions

Name	Position/Role	Related topics or Unit
Guillaume Dahringer	Technical Director	FSC France
Ilia Osepashvili	Country Requirements Manager	Country Programme - P&P
Jorge Matallana	Climate and Ecosystem Services Manager	MCU
Marion Karmann	Senior Research Relations Manager	Engagement
Olea Morris	Country Requirements Manager	Country Programme - P&P
Ondrej Tarabus	Senior Advisor Ecosystem Services	MCU
Pasi Miettinen	Senior Reviewer & Analyst	P&P
Paul Opanga	FSC Manager Labour Issues	GNU
Pina Gervassi	Former Senior Adviser – Climate Change	Engagement
Saija Hotti	Head of Policy Alignment	P&P
Sinta Dewi	Senior Manager Diversity and Gender	Engagement
Trevor Armel	Director of Marketing	MCU
Udit Khare	Head of Policy Solutions	P&P
Vera Santos	Head of Policy Innovations	P&P

Table 4. List of FSC Staff interviewed



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