



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) ON V2 OF THE FSC ECOSYSTEM SERVICES PROCEDURE

FSC-PRO-30-006 V2

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Title: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on V2 of the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure

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FAQ 1: How do Certificate Holders need to transition from V1-2 to V2 of the Ecosystem Services (ES) Procedure?

See also INT-PRO-30-006-08 (find the document [here](#))

Background

The transition period of V2 of the ES Procedure is between 1 July 2025 and 31 December 2026.

The scope section of ES Procedure V2-1 (p.7) states:

“Verified or validated ES impacts granted under <FSC-PRO-30-006 V1-2 Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market Tools> (V1-2) remain valid:

a) for five years after the evaluation date; OR

b) until the next FM main evaluation if such evaluation falls within the transition period of this revised version (V2-1)”

Answer

During the transition period, both version V1-2 and version 2 of the ES Procedure can be used during ES evaluations. From 1 January 2027, V2 needs to be used for all ES evaluations.

The certificate holder needs to start using V2 of the ES Procedure either five years after the ES evaluation date using V1-2 of the ES Procedure or until the next FSC FM main evaluation. In other words, the OR between a) and b) gives the certificate holder a choice when to transition to V2 of the ES Procedure.

For the avoidance of doubt, the certificate holder has the possibility to transition to V2 sooner than after five years following the ES evaluation using V1-2 of the ES Procedure.

Benefits of using V2 include enhanced visibility and expanded opportunities for sponsorship through the use of the FSC Ecosystem Services Registry. Moreover, V2 broadens the range of claim types available for communication, strengthens alignment with leading sustainability reporting standards, and introduces stronger safeguards reflecting the latest best practices in ecosystem services markets. Furthermore, for forest management groups, it is easier to add new group members to already verified or validated ES impacts.

A number of scenarios follow with guidance on how the certificate holder needs to proceed.

Scenarios

SCENARIO	HOW TO PROCEED
1 FSC FM certificate issued September 2021, expiry date September 2026. ES impact verified in September 2021 using V1-2 of the ES Procedure, expiry date September 2026.	As the FM re-certification and ES re-verification audit falls within the transition period, the certificate holder can choose whether to use V1-2 or V2 of the ES Procedure.
2 FSC FM certificate issued September 2021, expiry date September 2026. ES impact verified in May 2023 using V1-2 of the ES procedure, expiry date May 2028.	As the FM re-assessment and ES impact re-verification audit are not coupled, but operate at separate cycles, the FSC FM re-assessment will need to be done before September 2026. The ES impact would remain valid until May 2028 when re-verification would need to be conducted using V2 of the ES Procedure. However, the certificate holder is encouraged to transition to V2 of the ES Procedure during the FM re-assessment.
3 New FSC FM with ES verification in the scope: initial assessment scheduled for October 2025.	As the FM certification and ES evaluation audit falls within the transition period, the applicant certificate holder can choose whether to use V1-2 or V2 of the ES Procedure.
4 FSC FM certificate issued June 2024, expiry date June 2029. ES impact verified in June 2024, expiry date June 2029.	As the FM re-certification and ES impact re-verification audit will take place after the transition period (June 2029), V2 of the ES Procedure needs to be used.
5 FSC FM certificate issued September 2023, expiry date September 2028. ES impact verified in May 2025, expiry date May 2030.	The ES impact will remain valid until May 2030 (independently on the FM validity date) and will need to be re-verified using V2 of the ES Procedure

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- 6** FSC FM group certificate issued September 2021, expiry date September 2026.
- ES impact verified for a first group member in September 2021, expiry date September 2026.
- For a second group member in May 2025, expiry date May 2030.
- The two members have different verified ES impacts (activities or theory of change).
- As the FM re-certification and ES impact re-verification evaluation of the first group member falls within the transition period, the certificate holder can choose whether to use V1-2 or V2 of the ES Procedure.
- The second group member's verified ES impact remains valid until May 2030, for re-verification V2 of the ES Procedure shall be used as it is after transition period.
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- 7** FSC FM group certificate issued September 2023, expiry date September 2028.
- ES impact verified for a first group member in September 2023, expiry date September 2028.
- For a second group member in May 2027, expiry date May 2032.
- The two members have the same verified ES impacts (activities or theory of change).
- The second group member needs to use V2 to get the ES impact verified, as it is after the transition period.
- The first group member has used V1-2 of the ES Procedure and can decide if they want to upgrade to V2 and join the second group member's verified ES impact in May 2027 or wait until September 2028 to transition to V2.
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- 8** FSC FM group certificate issued September 2023, expiry date September 2028.
- ES impact verified for a first group member in September 2023, expiry date September 2028.
- For a second group member in May 2026, expiry date May 2031.
- The second group member can decide to use V1-2 or V2 to get the ES impact verified, as it is within the transition period.
- The first group member has used V1-2 of the ES Procedure and, if the second member chooses to use V2, can decide if they want to upgrade to V2 and join the second group member's verified ES impact in May 2027 or wait until September 2028 to transition to V2.
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FAQ 2: What is the validity of a verified (or validated) ES impact when a group member joins an already verified (or validated) ES impact?

Background

V2 of the ES Procedure allows Group Managers to add new members to existing verified (or validated) ES impacts, as long as the growth of the number of members does not exceed 100%.

Clause 1.18 of ES Procedure V2-1 (p.16-17) states:

“1.18 Before expanding the application of this procedure to any members that are new to using the procedure for already validated and/or verified ES impacts, the group entity shall:

a) ensure, through internal evaluation, that new members are in conformity with all applicable requirements of this procedure; and

NOTE: This means that new members have measured the relevant outcome indicators using the same methodology and have demonstrated that the proposed ES impact(s) has been achieved.

b) update all applicable sections in the ESR.

NOTE 1: This clause builds on Clause 7.1 of <FSC-STD-30-005 Forest Management Groups>.

NOTE 2: The certification body is asked in FSC-STD-20-007, Annex 8, Clause 1.6 to evaluate FM groups when the growth of new members to an already verified or validated ES impact exceeds 100%.

NOTE 3: The group entity cannot verify or validate any ES impacts. It is the certification body who verifies or validates ES impacts using sampling requirements as per FSC-STD-20-007 Section 7.”

Clause 1.6 of Annex 8 of FSC-STD-20-007 states:

“1.6 The certification body shall carry out an additional evaluation to assess the inclusion of new group members to an ESR with already validated or verified ES impacts, in case the number of new group members being added to the ESR exceeds a 100% increase.

NOTE 1: See FSC-PRO-30-006 V2-0, Clause 1.18.

NOTE 2: For growth lower than 100%, the certification body is able to approve new group members to an ESR without an additional evaluation.”

Answer

When new group members are added to already verified (or validated) ES impacts by the group manager without an ES evaluation by a certification body, the initial approval and expiry dates apply.

Two scenarios follow with guidance on how the certificate holder needs to proceed.

Scenarios

SCENARIO	HOW TO PROCEED
1 ES impact verified for one group member in November 2024, expiry date of November 2029. Another group member got a different ES impact verified in May 2025, expiry date May 2030.	The first group member shall re-verify their ES impact by November 2029, and the second group member shall re-verify their ES impact by May 2030 because their impact is different, thus was verified as part of a separate ES evaluation (see Clause 1.18 NOTE 2) using V2 of the ES Procedure.
2 ES impact verified for four group members in November 2024, expiry date November 2029. A fifth group member was added to the verified ES impact in May 2025, following requirement 1.18 of FSC-PRO-30-006.	All five group members shall re-verify their ES impact by November 2029 as per Clause 1.18 of V2 of the ES Procedure, the new group member added in May 2025 did not undergo a separate assessment and therefore follows the validity period of the group members that initially got the ES impact verified.



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