

OVERVIEW OF FOREST MANAGEMENT CONSULTATIONS

14th October 2025

Questions and Answers from Webinar

Principles, Criteria and Indicators Revision

1. When referring to requirements - are these indicators or criteria?

At this stage, it is proposed to be at Criteria and Indicator level mainly (from IGI).

2. Do you expect that in the end, rather than to have the actual 10 Principles and more than 70 criteria, we can have just 3 or 4 Principles and some criteria (much less than 70)?

It will likely depend on the framework applied. Based on the hypothetical mock we presented, the number of Principles might decrease (due to thematic re-grouping). At the criteria and indicator level, changes would depend on streamlining and outcome orientation. The general aim is to reduce complexity without affecting the level of rigor.

3. Will there be PCI workshops in the northern hemisphere also?

Yes. Next year we will have workshops in every region during member regional meetings. We look forward to seeing you there!

Development and Revision of FSC Country Requirements

4. Given the proposed changes - the move to P&CV6; the risk-based approach; and the outcome orientation - it seems that a major process for FSS revision would be more appropriate than regular or accelerated. Could further detail be provided on examples where this would not be the case?

- Process type selection depends on national context rather than the conceptual scope of changes. While P&CV6, risk-based approaches, and outcome orientation represent significant developments, Regular and Accelerated processes will remain appropriate in specific circumstances.
- Regular processes are suitable when chamber-balanced working groups cannot be effectively formed due to stakeholder capacity constraints, or when technical expertise is more critical than broad representation for implementing the required changes. Some countries may find that existing FSS already incorporate elements of risk-based thinking or outcome approaches, requiring primarily technical updates rather than fundamental reconceptualization.
- Accelerated processes are explicitly designed for FSS transfers, including administrative revisions needed to align with the new PCI structure. They're also appropriate for urgent revisions to maintain certification integrity while more comprehensive processes are planned. The risk-based approach may actually simplify transfers by designating certain indicators as negligible risk, reducing evaluation scope.

- Network Partners (where they exist) lead all process types and can select the most appropriate approach based on their understanding of national stakeholder ecosystems and technical requirements. All process types include mandatory training, early FSC support, and prescribed timelines, ensuring successful implementation regardless of the chosen pathway. The key is matching process complexity to national needs and capacity, not defaulting to major processes for all conceptual changes.
- Depending on context, any of the three types of processes can be used. We have now a stronger basis for the start of an FSS with the IGI, and it is up to the responsible body to decide the process that suits best the needs. Also, regular and accelerated processes will be run by a technical working group, with clear requirements including consultation – for example, involvement of indigenous peoples' representatives.

5. ASI can develop recommendations to FSC that highlight problems with Forest Management (FM) standards or risk assessments at the national level, but they currently don't have a formal status within the system. Will they have a formal status in FSC-PRO-60-006 and FSC-PRO-60-006A (to make sure that issues are addressed in revision processes)? This is very important for the credibility of the FSC system.

Thanks for your comment. FSC has been working with ASI to gather insights into the implementation and evaluation of FM standards, and we will continue to do so. Through the inclusion of risk-based approaches in FSS development and revision, relevant information coming from ASI will also be considered as one of the sources of information when assessing the potential risk of non-conformity with FSS indicators.

5a: Follow up question: Ok, thanks for the answer. But the answer is no? I cannot find anything about this in the draft of FSC-PRO-60-006 and FSC-PRO-60-006A

Correct, we do not specify in the draft FSC-PRO-60-006 a formal role for ASI. However, as mentioned in our previous answer, we are working together with ASI to gather insights relevant for FSS development.

6. Shouldn't the transfer of an FSS from P&C5 to P&C6 be a major process, with a chamber balanced standard development group (rather than an accelerated process)?

In the majority of cases, transfer processes most probably will be run through a major or regular type of process. Nonetheless, accelerated process may be used to transfer FSS, especially in cases where we do not have representation in the country, we are close to the deadline for transferring the FSS, and we need an option to accomplish the transfer in less time.

7. At what point in a major process will the working group be established? This should be included in the time a development/revision process is estimated to take. Including FSC's approval, establishing a working group can easily take half a year. 60 days for Board approval of process, another 60 days for Board approval of candidates, and then there's submission to, and approval by, FSC's Policy & Performance Unit, which can easily take 100 days, much longer if P&P doesn't approve one or more candidates.

We agree that registration has been taking too long – this is an acknowledged issue. To address this, we are already getting involved with our FSC Network Partners to make a global prioritization of development and revision processes, based on clear criteria and gathering of opinions from Network Partners (NPs). This means NPs around the world will already be aware of the process and will have enough time to prepare for registration. We expect this will significantly decrease timelines.

The process allocation will happen during the registration phase, for all types of processes, approved by the FSC Policy and Performance Director. The responsible body needs to include a list of candidates selected as working group members and process lead in the registration request submitted to FSC.

8. Does FSC propose to finance the new streamlined process for working groups? Many working group members cannot afford the time for a fast process.

Working Group members will now be able to apply for stipends. This will be evaluated case-by-case by FSC in coordination with the body responsible (e.g. the Network Partner).

9. My question is about involving network partners. I am sure that the network partner must be very clearly informed and instructed about this. And they must build the link between international developments and national members. Are they invited to attend this webinar and other webinars related to the 60-series and the PCI review; and/or how do you make sure that they inform the members in their country?

- Network Partners (NPs) are the mandated lead bodies for all types of development and revision processes of FSC country requirements, including both the regular and accelerated pathways relevant to national standards. Their responsibilities specifically include serving as the primary link between international FSC developments and the national membership base. This ensures clear and direct two-way communication of requirements, process updates, and opportunities for participation or feedback at the national level.
- Webinars like the one held today, as well as other events related to the 60-series and PCI review, are public and open to all stakeholders, including NPs.
- Invitations and event information are systematically shared across the FSC network to maximize coverage and participation, with supporting material and future event schedules available on dedicated platforms such as the PCI Hub (pci.fsc.org) and also via direct communications to NPs.
- NPs are formally required to keep their respective national members informed about key international and process developments, including consultations and revision timelines. This is accomplished through both their routine national communication channels and structured feedback mechanisms provided by FSC.
- In practice, NPs actively disseminate relevant information, promote participation in consultations, and ensure all national stakeholders can contribute to the revision of standards.
- FSC also publishes summaries of questions and answers and makes all presentation material available after webinars, ensuring transparency and follow-up for all who could not attend live. This multi-layered approach guarantees that national memberships are consistently updated and engaged in the global standards of revision processes.

10. It seems entirely impossible for a working group to transfer an FSS from V5 to V6, including incorporating a risk-based approach and outcome orientation, in 18 months, or 30 months with a one-year extension. Are we setting them up for failure?

- The new 60-series process architecture is designed to make timelines achievable. We absolutely do not want to set standards development groups (SDGs) or Network Partners (NPs) up for failure.
- Historic durations averaged about 75 months for complex processes and 23 months for less complex ones. The revised framework replaces variability with prescribed steps and

durations - 12 months for regular and 18 months for major processes - supported by early FSC involvement, mandatory training for process leads and working groups, and a defined pathway for stalled processes.

- Crucially, two design features reduce burden while maintaining integrity: a risk-based approach that allows indicators with negligible risk to be excluded from evaluation, and outcome orientation that focuses monitoring on a small set of key intended outcomes with locally appropriate, cost-effective methods. Together, these concentrate effort where it matters most and streamline development and assurance.
- Network Partners will lead national processes (including accelerated transfers where appropriate), with FSC support and calibration throughout. The current consultation and desk testing are being used to validate and refine feasibility before the procedures become effective in January 2027, and PCI V6 is targeted for publication in January 2029, so there will be time to test, get feedback, and ensure that the timelines are indeed realistic and possible. Extensions will remain available when justified. These measures collectively aim to deliver credible, timely country requirements without overburdening SDGs or NPs.

11. Well-planned Forest Stewardship Standard revision processes at the national level are currently on hold by FSC International. What does max 18 months in the revision in (slide 16) mean? Are countries that will be allowed to revise their standards only will have max 1,5 years to finish?

The timelines presented refer to the estimated timeline for revision processes planned to happen between 2026 and 2029, aiming for maximum 18 months to ensure those processes finish before the new PCI version is published (1 January 2029). Otherwise, if those processes go beyond December 2028, they would need to align with the PCI, which would mean delaying further and could lead to several changes. We want to avoid that.

On the other hand, looking at the future, draft FSC-PRO-60-006 now prescribes timelines for the development and/or revision of FSC country requirements, depending on the process type: 30 months for major process between approval of registration request until publication, and 24 months for regular processes.

12. What mechanisms exist for accountability of all involved so that these revision timelines are maintained? What "teeth" exist to ensure this will happen?

We have different mechanisms. For example, we work under clear commitments between FSC and the process lead, which are formalized through service agreements that specify deliverables, roles, and deadlines. The process is also supported by working group members and experts who follow the same workplan and schedule. When there are issues with communication or consensus, FSC may decide to look for a new process lead to keep things moving. We also note that the payment of stipends will provide a new incentive for efficient delivery and punctuality.

13. CNRA and NRA applications are usually for CW/FM and 40-005. How do you envision this to apply to FM standard that is supposed to have full traceability and no "controversial categories"? What risk topics are we planning to discuss with regards to a Forest Stewardship Standard?

Full traceability will continue to be a priority. 40-005 is still in full force. If a certification body is in doubt about the correct implementation of 40-005 (or any other FSC policy or standard) the certification body may request clarification from the FSC Performance and Standards Unit.

The exact risk topics discussed will vary depending on the country and circumstances. We will use reliable public information to do risk assessments, and we plan to be conservative in assessing risk.

14. What will be the consequences of delays by FSC International?

In the past, some delays have been the responsibility of FSC. However, going forward, FSC has a strong interest in moving the process forward. So, we will be investing more resources into the country requirement process. P&P will work closely with the FSC's Global Network Unit and FSC NPs to make a global prioritization of development and revision processes, based on clear criteria and gathering the opinions from NPs. It will be in our interest – professionally, reputationally, and financially – to complete the process within the designated times.

15. In light of all the preparatory work that has been done in some countries I think it's fair to allow it to take longer time than 1,5 years. Otherwise, you create a lot of frustration and FSC Network Partners (NPs) might lose members, and some chambers don't have so many members left. It is 36 months between January 2026 and December 2028.

18 months is only from approval of registration to submission of draft. It does not include advance work with NPs to prepare. FSC and NPs, together, will be able to prepare for what is coming. NPs globally will already be aware of the process that will be registered. Therefore, they should have enough time to prepare for registration, including organizing working groups. This is expected to decrease timelines during registration phase. Also, as noted above, we will be investing more resources in this process, and will be implementing incentives including stipends.

Given this, we think 2.5 years (total) is reasonable. That said, we will be testing, reviewing and revising before finalizing and publishing. If we find that these figures are not realistic, we will amend them.

Outcome Orientation

16. How will FSC ensure that the outcome orientation requirements are not too onerous on the FM certificate holders, particularly as it will be FSC and other stakeholders that will benefit most from the data?

- First, this depends largely on the choice of the outcome and respective monitoring requirements. FSCI doesn't define this. This is up to local stakeholders to define, consistent what is more appropriate to the local reality and circumstances. The NP will have the freedom to choose what best fits. It could be some intended outcomes that are simple to monitor, or they may be more costly or onerous. The NP has discretion here.
- Second, FSC International is preparing a Guidance to help in the implementation of outcome orientation. This will include engaging with partners to define what is cost-effective and also, we want to invest in Earth Observations (EO) to centralize monitoring in FSCI, so this is something to reduce the burden on CHs.
- Outcome orientation is intended to benefit the entire FSC system. We want to produce insights that are relevant and useful to certificate holders and stakeholders. The goal is to create usable knowledge – for instance, about what requirements are costly to implement (or not), and what requirements are clearly producing good outcomes (or not) -- and how we can balance this when developing the normative framework.

- 17. While FSC has undertaken various assessments to meet the intended outcomes, I would like to recommend including an additional assessment focused on land tenure insecurity in the future. This aspect, which appears to be missing, is particularly important for upholding Indigenous Peoples' rights.**

This is noted, thank you. The starting point is to look at the requirements, as the intended outcomes we developed are based on the requirements we have today. But if this is something that we are really missing, we can explore during the revision.

- 18. Is the intention to replace all performance/practice-based requirement wordings with intended outcome requirement wordings, or rather to complement them? If replacement, I wonder how do you plan to bridge situations where outcomes have not been achieved but continuous and improvement efforts can be observed?**

No, the intention is not to replace all the practice-based requirements by outcome-oriented requirements. There is a lot of value in practice-based requirements, and we are not moving away from them.

Instead, the idea is to have a few outcome-oriented requirements. We anticipate three to five intended outcomes, to be selected by Standard Developers, that appear to be most relevant and important for the country. Also, it is important to note that achievement of the outcome will not be evaluated for conformance or non-conformance. The idea is to use the knowledge generated to foster improvement of forest management activities and standards.

- 19. Only one monitoring indicator/metric is proposed to be required for each of the 3-5 key intended outcomes?**

No, not necessarily. This depends on the data and monitoring needs for each intended outcome. There could be more than one monitoring indicator defined.