

How can academics help strengthen the monitoring of environmental, social, and economic outcomes of FSC certification?



Context

FSC is an international non-profit organization dedicated to promoting responsible forest management globally. FSC Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS), grounded in the globally applicable FSC Principles and Criteria, are designed to ensure that forest management practices are environmentally responsible, socially equitable, and economically sustainable across diverse national and forestry contexts.

As most FSS are practice-based, FSC is transitioning toward an outcome-oriented approach. Under this approach, a prioritized set of intended outcomes will guide both the development and implementation of the standards. FSC is developing capacity building materials to support this shift that aim to inform the design of outcome monitoring requirements, thereby enabling standardized and robust monitoring of outcomes within the scope of the FSS.

Table 1: Prioritized intended outcomes for capacity building in 2026

	FSC criteria	Intended outcomes
Environmental	6.4.	• High degree of connectivity between the habitats of rare and threatened species. • The biological diversity of rare and threatened species is maintained over time.
	6.5.	• High degree of ecological similarity between native ecosystems in the management units and reference conditions. • The biological diversity of native ecosystems in the management units resembles ecological reference conditions.
	6.7	• Water bodies have good water quality.
Social	2.3.	• Workers have safe working conditions.
	3.2.	• Indigenous legal and customary rights are upheld through Free, Prior and Informed Consent.
Economic	5.1.	• The local economy is strengthened and diversified due to forest management activities and products.
	5.2.	• Timber production is permanently sustained.

How can research contribute to this process?

As part of the development of **outcome-oriented FSS**, we are seeking academics and experts who can support:

1. The development of topical guidance documents that assist FSC stakeholders in designing and implementing outcome monitoring requirements, for example, through active participation in relevant working groups.
2. The design of outcome-oriented FSS, particularly formulating outcome monitoring requirements, for example, through engagement with Regional or National Standard Development Groups.
3. The implementation of outcome monitoring requirements, for example, by participating in outcome monitoring activities such as data collection and analysis.

Call to action

If you are an academic or expert with extensive experience in monitoring one or more of the prioritized intended outcomes, please complete the following Expression of Interest form.

