

PCI CONSULTATION

20 November 2025

Questions and Answers from the webinar

1. What is the main reason to expand the urban forest scope?

As part of the review phase and conceptual phase including the green paper on scope and applicability, we understand that stakeholders expect to extend scope of certification of urban forests from existing classes (e.g., Peri-urban forests and woodlands and large urban parks >0.5 ha) to the additional classes (e.g., small urban parks <0.5 ha and gardens and street trees and trees in public squares). Basically, we want to understand your feedback if the scope of certification should remain limited to existing two classes that exist currently or be extended to include other classes as mentioned.

2. Will conformance be measured against indicators or outcomes?

Conformance will be measured against indicators as usual. Outcome orientation aims to improve standards and facilitate learning. The idea is not to assess conformance with outcomes.

3. How are you going to maintain economic viability while strengthening the environmental and social requirements?

Maintaining economic viability is one of the objectives in the draft ToR for the PCI Working Group. PCI revision will reinforce and uphold the core social, environmental, and economic values of FSC by introducing targeted changes without compromising the economic viability. PCI revision does not intend to increase the burden. It is about striking the balance, and we invite you to take a look at the draft ToR and please share your suggestions.

4. Are you considering the suggestions to revise the definition of “local communities”?

Yes, the Review Report identified the need to clarify the definition so that Indigenous and Traditional Communities may also be considered “local communities” if they are located within, or are influenced by, the management unit. In this respect, it is important to harmonize the FSC lexicon with other global frameworks to ensure consistency and clarity, particularly from a geographic perspective, where the term *local community* is broadly understood to include any community - whether indigenous, traditional, or other types. A possible alternative could be replacing *local communities* in the FSC Framework with “local communities subject to externalities” which would allow to maintain *local communities* as the primary target group, while still classifying them under categories such as IP (Indigenous Peoples), TP (Traditional Peoples), and other community types.

5. Why are we presenting only a few criteria? Are we restricting the number of criteria?

This is related to the 60 series, where we define the intended outcomes. The main idea is that we have a limited number of intended outcomes linked to the criteria selected for the mandatory requirements. This makes it easier to move toward outcome orientation. If we included too many intended outcomes, it would become too heavy and too radical of a shift. The idea was originally around selecting three to five intended outcomes.

6. Will IGIs also become outcome-oriented? Or will they remain more “pass/fail” indicators?

The Secretariat is proposing that P&C be drafted in a more outcome-oriented way. The intended outcomes sit at the criteria level.

IGI will continue to be formulated as today, they will look at the activities contributing to the intended outcomes, because that formulation works well for auditing and adaptability. So IGI stay activity-focused, while criteria become outcome-focused.

7. What is meant by a 'threshold approach' in relation to scope?

It is related to the FAO Guidelines on Urban and Peri-Urban Forestry (Forestry Paper No. 178) classify urban forests into five categories:

1. Peri-urban forests and woodlands
2. Large urban parks and forests (>0.5 ha)

8. It appears the IFL threshold question does not include recent derogations and the passing of Motion 45. Please clarify that question on the consultation

The IFL protection approach uses a threshold approach, meaning a percentage of IFL areas must remain free from any forest management. That is the basis of the current system and the question we put in the consultation: whether the threshold approach should continue in the new P&C.

But Motion 45 from the General Assembly clearly states that instead of using a threshold approach, an outcome-based approach should be applied. So that's the distinction and the connection we are asking stakeholders to comment on.

9. There seems to be confusion between outcome orientation in P&C and the selection of outcomes at country level. Are these two separate proposals? How do they relate?

They are two connected processes running in parallel. P&C revision is about making P&C outcome-oriented globally. The country-level work (under FSC-PRO-60-006) is about selecting three to five key intended outcomes that are most relevant for the local context. This should not increase burden; it is meant to be a learning process.

10. The two different sections of this webinar focused on outcome orientation is creating confusion for me. Are there two proposals? One to make ALL P&C written in an outcome oriented way, and a second to have the additional focus and monitoring on a small number of Criteria (for each FSS)? Please clarify!

Writing the answer in additional to the verbal answer for the sake of clarity: Outcome orientation has two sets of proposals. One proposal for the PCI. One proposal for the development of Forest Stewardship Standards. The latter can be found in the on-going public consultation of FSC-PRO-60-006.

11. What research or information sources were used to develop these proposals? Are auditor reports and complaints being considered?

We have many review reports and reference documents: scientific papers, FAO and IUCN documents, standards from other schemes (ISO, Rainforest Alliance, etc.). ASI prepared a report on non-conformities, which we used. We also have information from national FSS processes and M&E data about which indicators are problematic. We constantly review documents and add more as we go.

12. Can you expand on the methodology and types of experts involved in the consultative forums and working groups?

We have a large repository: normative documents, advice notes, interpretations, scientific reviews, benchmarking exercises (e.g., the Green Paper), etc. For the consultative forums, we have five groups: Indigenous Peoples, smallholders, IFL stakeholders, non-timber forest products, and forest managers — so we can obtain targeted feedback. We also have experts on climate & biodiversity, certification bodies, and Indigenous Peoples to support the working group. The most recent document added to the Secretariat's repository as source or reference material is "*Making Forest Concessions in the Tropics Work to Achieve the 2035 Vision*," FAO Forestry Paper.

13. How will concepts and definitions be handled?

The Secretariat is considering revising definitions so that they are aligned across the whole normative framework and FAO Forest definitions. Some concepts (like principle and criteria) already have very clear definitions, but we need clarity on how they connect with outcome orientation. This will be addressed in the P&C revision.

14. In the modular approach, were Indigenous Peoples considered as a "user group"?

The modular approach is a proposal, and we are receiving comments on Indigenous Peoples as certificate holders. Their role is being taken seriously in the revision, and how they fit into modularity is within our scope and considerations. The conceptual consultation explicitly identifies user types as part of the modularity framework. *User types* include the organizations or certificate holders applying the standard for example, large companies, Small or Low-Intensity Managed Forests (SLIMF), community-managed forests, government-managed areas, and Indigenous Peoples.

15. Shouldn't we first clarify what the purpose of each principle is before changing the wording?

Yes, that is why we are moving toward outcome orientation. We want clarity on what outcomes we aim for before redrafting criteria. Input from the consultation is essential to guide this.

16. When the new P&C and IGIs are launched, how will certificate holders be supported? Will there be a crosswalk?

This will need to be considered. The aim is to have training and support materials. P&C are expected to be approved at the end of 2028, with a six-month transition period. The Secretariat will provide support. The intention is not to launch a standard without support. We will hand-hold certificate holders and SDGs through the change.

17. Can you clarify the Theory of Change approach mentioned?

The Theory of Change helps us define what results (outcomes) we want to achieve and then identify what activities contribute to those outcomes. It is a tool to organise thinking and ensure that criteria, indicators, and outcomes connect logically.

18. For the restructuring of PCI, did you consider P6 as standalone standard?

No, the Secretariat has not examined it from this perspective, which is why we strongly encourage receiving such feedback through the conceptual consultation platform.