



Terms of Reference

TWG FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDICATORS FOR ENHANCED HCV 2 MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING IN IFL

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PROCESS SUMMARY

Process Title: TWG for the Development of indicators for enhanced HCV 2 management and monitoring in IFL

Process Type: Hybrid

Scope: Development

Type of Working Group: Technical working group

of Working Group members: Six (6), and one (1) expert

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CONTENTS

1. Background and introduction	4
1.1. Key objectives	5
1.2. Intended outcomes, outputs and timeline	6
1.3. Process type and process steps	8
2. Establishing the working group	10
2.1. Organizational set up of the process	10
2.2. Selection criteria for working group members	11
2.3. Approval of the selected working group members and allocation of stipends	11
2.4. Role of observers	12
2.5. Workplan and time commitment	12
2.6. Expenses and remunerations	12
2.7. Confidentiality and conflict of interest	13
2.8. Language	13
3. Operating rules	14
3.1. Expectations of appointed working group members	14
3.2. The term of working group members	14
3.3. Accountability of the working group	14
3.4. Deliberations and decision-making	14
Annex 1: Work Plan and Estimated timelines	15

1. Background and introduction

These terms of reference guide the development of requirements for enhanced monitoring and management of Intact Forest Landscapes and High Conservation Value 2 as well as the work of the corresponding technical working group (TWG) assigned to the process. This process supports the implementation of the recently approved Motion 45/2025 (M45) and builds on the results of the Motion 23/2020 (M23) pilot projects.

At its 104th meeting in December 2025, the FSC Board of Directors (BoD) mandated the constitution of a Technical Working Group **to develop generic indicators for enhanced HCV 2 monitoring and management in IFLs as a first step towards implementation of M45** (BM 104.14). This set of indicators will be implemented firstly via an Advice Note which should be effective as of 1 July 2026 (Phase 1).

The overall process will be conducted in two subsequent phases to first allow the integration of generic requirements for enhanced IFL management and monitoring into the IGI (and allows for the subsequent implementation into Forest Stewardship Standards) (Phase 1), and to secondly develop requirements and monitoring frameworks more specific to the key IFL regions to foster a standardized and streamlined implementation of enhanced management and monitoring across ecoregions Phase 2).

Ultimately, resulting requirements introduced via Advice Note(s) will be incorporated into the International Generic Indicators (IGI) as part of the PCI (Principles, Criteria and International Generic Indicators) revision and then into FSS based on the resulting FSC Principles and Criteria V6.

In June 2026, the resulting indicators (in Advice Note) of Phase 1 will be transferred into the PCI revision process. To facilitate the transfer of these generic indicators, it is proposed that one member of the TWG will serve as a liaison to the PCI Working Group. Additionally, the IFL Consultative Forum will also be transferred to the PCI Consultative Forums.

Note: Since the priority of this process is the development of generic indicators (Phase 1), the candidates selected to take part in the TWG are not expected to commit to participate in both phases, although they are encouraged to do so to ensure a stable and effective process.

Motion 45

Motion 45/2025 “Moving beyond fixed thresholds to outcome-based conservation for Intact Forest Landscapes” changes FSC’s current approach to Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs). M45 calls for maintaining the ecological integrity and socio-cultural values of IFLs. It places an emphasis on the connection with Indigenous and Traditional Peoples, who have a key role in the implementation of the new approach. With M45, FSC-certified forest management (current and prospective future Management Units) of IFLs is moving beyond the binary notion of “intactness” to focus on the notion of “integrity” of forest ecosystems. This shift assumes that forest ecosystems are subject to local and temporary disturbances, that such ecosystems can recover from limited reduction in intactness, and that FSC-certified forest management in IFLs can maintain forest integrity and socio-cultural values.

At BM104, the Board of Directors decided that the following core principles shall be considered for the overall implementation of M45:

1. Upholding fundamental human rights, including Indigenous Peoples’ rights, ensuring no harm and avoiding restrictions on their livelihoods.
2. Preventing unintended obstacles to forest management growth and High Conservation Values (HCV) protection, where minimal-impact logging can contribute to conserving forests and maintaining ecosystem functions.

3. Creating incentives to conserve areas not suited for production forests.

1.1. Key objectives

Phase 1. Generic indicators

The objective of phase 1 is to:

1. Develop clear, generic indicators for IFLs following M45: Create a set of indicators for enhanced HCV 2 management and monitoring in IFLs, to be issued through an Advice Note.

Such generic indicators should keep alignment with M45 and consider:

- a. The replacement of fixed IFL protection thresholds,
- b. The concept of intactness as dynamic,
- c. Forest management activities designed to maintain and/or restore the ecological integrity and socio-cultural values within Management Units,
- d. The inclusion of Indigenous and/or Traditional Peoples connected to IFLs in the assessment of IFLs and/or Indigenous Cultural Landscapes (ICLs),
- e. Monitoring activities designed to monitor ecosystem integrity in IFLs, and considering the use of under-the-canopy ecological indicators,
- f. Monitoring activities aiming for consistency across ecoregions, to standardize and streamline implementation across Management Units, and that rely on scalable, cost-effective, and scientifically informed methods,
- g. Provisions for outcome-based adaptive management: periodical review of IFL management approaches (requirements) based on monitoring ecological and social results (specially integrating inputs from IPs and/or Traditional Peoples).

Phase 2. Region-specific indicators and monitoring needs

The objectives of phase 2 are to:

1. Develop a set of indicators for enhanced HCV 2 management and monitoring in IFLs that are specific to key IFL regions (Canada, Latin America, Congo Basin) to be issued through an updated version of the Advice Note published as per phase 1.

These indicators should remain consistent with the generic indicators developed in phase 1 and the above-listed considerations to keep the alignment with M45.

2. Define a set of monitoring needs and best practises associated with the above region-specific indicators to:
 - a. Enhance consistency and scientific robustness of monitoring activities across Management Units within the region,
 - b. Guide the implementation of satellite-based earth observation monitoring activities by FSC and/or external partners outside of the certification process to fast-track and upscale the generation of data and insights about the change in ecological integrity in IFL.

These monitoring needs will be issued in a guidance document to complement the normative indicators (requirements) to be issued in the Advice Note.

1.2. Intended outcomes, outputs and timeline

Outputs and intended outcomes

Table 1 – Outputs and intended outcomes

	Output	Intended outcomes
Phase 1	Advice Note on generic indicators for enhanced HCV 2 management and monitoring in IFL (ADV-STD-60-004_XX V1-0)	1.1 Implementation of indicators enables the maintenance and/or restoration and monitoring of the ecological integrity of IFL areas
		1.2. Implementation of indicators enables the maintenance or restoration of socio-cultural values of IFL areas
		1.3 Requirements enable the protection of rights and values of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Peoples connected to IFLs.
		1.4 Implementation of indicators reinforces FSC’s role in promoting the protection and responsible management of IFLs globally.
Phase 2	Advice Note on region-specific indicators for enhanced HCV 2 management and monitoring in IFL (ADV-STD-60-004_XX V2-0)	2.1 Implementation of indicators enables tailored and relevant management and monitoring activities and foster consistency across ecoregions and Management Units.
	Guidance on monitoring needs and best practises associated with the region-specific indicators.	2.2 Guide and foster the implementation of consistent and scientifically robust field monitoring activities across Management Units.
	Note 1: this Guidance will complement the Advice Note with non-normative content. Note 2: this Guidance does not represent the main output of the TWG. Instead, its aims to capture and value relevant inputs and expertise from the TWG to complement the (normative) indicators for monitoring purposes.	2.3 Guide and foster the implementation of tailored and relevant earth observation-based monitoring activities generating additional data and insights about forest integrity in IFL (i.e. beyond the certification requirements).

Timeline for the technical working group

Table 2- Main steps, deliverables and timeline for phase 1

Date	
5 February (tentative)	Participation in Initial call (kick-off meeting)
17 February	Participation in second call
27 February (tentative)	Participation third call
5 March	1 st draft of enhanced management and monitoring HCV 2/IFL requirements
10 March	2nd draft of enhanced management and monitoring HCV 2/IFL requirements Participation in 4 th call
16 March (tentative)	Launch Public Consultation of Advice Note (30 days)
14 April	Participation in 5 th call (preliminary results of the Public Consultation, tbc)
27 April	Analysis Report of Feedback received during Public Consultation
28 April (tentative)	Participation in 6 th call
7 May (tentative)	Participation in 7 th call
8 May	Final draft of enhanced management and monitoring HCV 2/IFL requirement as in Advice Note 1 TWG member starts as liaison/expert in the PCI WG (May/June, tbc)
3 June	Decision (approval/rejection) on the Advice Note by the PSC (M 68)
7 June (tbc)	Placeholder for 8 th TWG call to respond to eventual PSC final comments (if needed)
1 July	Publication of the Advice Note (V1-0)
2 July	Participation in phase 1 closing call (tbc)

Table 3- Main steps, deliverables and timeline for phase 2

Date	
2 June (indicative)	Participation in Initial call
18 June (indicative)	Participation in 2 nd call
25 June (indicative)	First draft of regional indicators and approaches
28 July (indicative)	Second draft of regional indicators and approaches Participation in 3 rd call
14 September (indicative)	Draft of Advice Note based on 2nd draft for Public Consultation
28 September (indicative)	Launch Public Consultation on Advice Note (30 days)
12 November (indicative)	Participation in 4 th call
October/November (indicative)	Analysis Report of Feedback received during Public Consultation
November (indicative)	Participation in 5 th call
November (indicative)	Final draft of enhanced regional management and monitoring indicators as in Advice Note
December	Decision on Advice Note by PSC
December	Placeholder for 6 th call to respond to eventual PSC final comments (if needed)
1 January	Publication of the Advice note (V2)

1.3. Process type and process steps

Table 4 below provides an overview of the process types used in the process, together with the decision-making bodies and implementation dates.

The development of generic indicators for enhanced HCV 2/IFL management and monitoring is classified as a **hybrid process (between a regular and an accelerated process)**.

Table 4 – Process types

PHASE	KEY STEP / ASPECT	HYBRID
Review / New requirements	New Requirements Report or	Not applicable
	Review Report	Not applicable
Conceptual	Consultation	Not applicable
	Process ToR	Process Lead(s)
	Deciding on the ToR	Director General
Working Group	Working group composition	Technical Working Group
	Deciding on working group composition	Director General
Drafting	Drafting	Process lead
	Consultation	Public
Testing	Testing	N/A
Final decision	Final decision	Policy and Standards Committee
Implementation	Publication date	Same as effective date*
	Effective date	1 st July / 1 st Jan
	Transition end date	tbd case by case

*Deviation: In this process, it has been proposed that the publication date and effective date are the same.

2. Establishing the working group

The working group consists of individuals with relevant knowledge or professional experience in the field of question who provide input to the process during the drafting phase.

2.1. Organizational set up of the process

The table below depicts the roles and responsibilities of the different bodies of the working group.

Table 5 - Roles and responsibilities of the relevant working group bodies

Working group body	Roles and responsibilities
The Process Lead shall:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) establish and execute the working group work plan; b) draft the requirements; c) design the structure and scope of the meetings; d) organize and lead working group meetings; e) provide the working group with relevant materials; f) represent FSC International, e.g., by providing inputs to the working group discussions, ensuring alignment with other ongoing processes within FSC g) monitor adherence of the working group to the terms of reference; and h) report on working group performance and quality of deliverables to FSC management and the FSC Board of Directors.
The Working Group shall:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provide input on the contents of the requirements; NOTE: the process lead is responsible for drafting the requirements b) proactively seek advice on requirements from their constituency; c) review results of consultations; d) adhere to the process terms of reference, including timelines and the collaboration rules; and e) recommend, object to or abstain from the draft which is submitted for consultation or for its approval.
Technical Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provide support to the process lead to ensure working group content specific deliberations and deliverables correspond to the scope of the terms of reference (ToR); b) ensure consistency with the FSC drafting procedure and within the FSC normative framework, for both, existing documents and ongoing processes; c) make technical recommendations and provide references for the working group; and d) support the process lead in the targeted outreach to specific user groups, as necessary.
Policy Steering Group (PSG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provide input to approvals related to the implementation of the FSC-PRO-01-001 and as per delegation by the Director General (DG);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) providing direction on strategic questions that may impact certification uptake or cause major reactions by stakeholders, certification bodies (CBs) or certificate holders (CHs); c) monitoring and supervising the connectivity of policy work with other work areas in order to ensure alignment and integrity of processes; and d) oversight of Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS) development.
Process Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) supervise the process and support the working group in reaching its goals.
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) support the working group in running successful conference calls and in-person meetings.
Liaison person/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) keep the FSC Board of Directors (BoD) and the Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) closely informed about the process; and b) give advice to the working group on timely alignment to relevant processes within the FSC Normative Framework.
Expert(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provide input on the contents of the specific requirements; b) review results of consultations; c) provide advice to the WG on specific issues, such as monitoring; d) adhere to the process terms of reference, including timelines and the collaboration rules;

2.2. Selection criteria for working group members

a) Technical skills:

- practical experience in management and monitoring of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs) and/or High Conservation Values (HCVs)
- academic background in forest management, forest ecology, forest monitoring or related fields; knowledge of forest management certification,
- Expertise in Indigenous Peoples's rights and values (including Indigenous Cultural Landscapes)

b) Soft skills:

- working together in teams
- clarity of expression
- ability to review and provide feedback in the TWG's working language (English)
- culturally appropriate behaviour

2.3. Approval of the selected working group members and allocation of stipends

The Director General decides on the members of the working group and on the allocation of stipends, unless specified otherwise.

NOTE: The allocation of stipends is subject to the FSC Procedure for Administrative Stipends (FSC-PRO-10-005).

2.4. Role of observers

Observers can be invited by the process lead to attend working group sessions but may only contribute to the discussions when agreed by the majority of working group members and cannot make decisions.

2.5. Workplan and time commitment

Workplan

Working group members are expected to donate sufficient time to thoroughly fulfil their duties as outlined in the work plan presented in Annex 1 below. The timetable and the detailed work plan shall be updated as necessary.

Communication

The working group will conduct most of its work via e-mail or similar means of electronic communication (e.g., MS Teams, teams meeting etc.), and through one-on-one calls with the process lead when required. Face-to-face meetings are not anticipated but can be planned, if needed.

Meetings

The process lead will strive to select meeting dates that allow for full participation of all working group members.

TWG meetings (in Phase 1) are planned with tentative days as follows:

- Initial call, 5 February
- Second call, 17 February
- Third call, 27 February
- Fourth call, 10 March
- Fifth call, 14 April
- Sixth call, 28 April
- Seventh call, 7 May
- Eighth call, 7 June (tbc after PSC meeting in June, if needed)
- Closing call (phase 1), 2 July (tbc)

Other meetings might be planned, if needed and agreed with TWG members.

2.6. Expenses and remunerations

Rumeneration

FSC is an international not-for-profit membership organization with limited funding. Participation in the working group takes place on a voluntary non-paid basis. Recognizing the significance of this work, TWG members are eligible to receive a stipend in line with FSC procedures. A stipend can be granted by FSC on a case-by-case basis and on request for those participants that do not have alternative income or sponsoring means for their time input.

The stipend amount for WG members is based on the latest version of the procedure Administrative Stipends FSC-PRO-10-005. The board approved a 20% increase for the stipend amount in the last board meeting in December 2025, equivalent to a total of 6,720 USD per year (otherwise prorated).

Traveling and accomodation

If required, FSC will cover reasonable travel and accommodation expenses related to the work plan upon submission of the respective invoices and receipts, and if expenses are agreed upon in advance.

2.7. Confidentiality and conflict of interest

Confidentiality

Working group members shall sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement with FSC at the beginning of their work. Per default, non-attributable content of discussions and papers prepared by or presented to the working group is not considered confidential, unless otherwise specified by FSC.

Conflict of Interest

Working group members are expected to declare any conflicts of interest, where they arise. This will cause the person(s) to be excused from the discussion and to abstain from participating in decision-making.

2.8. Language

The working language of the working group shall be English.

3. Operating rules

3.1. Expectations of appointed working group members

Appointed working group members are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations of this ToR and working group members shall sign a cooperation agreement with FSC upon appointment. Working Group members (including expert(s)) should put the interests of FSC and values of Intact Forest Landscapes before personal or chamber interests. Conflicts of Interest must be declared.

Term starting period: 2 February 2026

3.2. The term of working group members

The term of working group members ends with the submission of the final draft of the deliverables presented in the final draft set of requirements to the Policy and Standards Committee.

Term Completion period:

Phase 1: 2 July 2026.

Phase 2: 18 December 2026.

3.3. Accountability of the working group

The working group is accountable to FSC International. Working group members may be asked to leave the group by the Director General if they are not fulfilling their duties properly.

3.4. Deliberations and decision-making

Formal decision-making responsibility of the working group is to recommend when drafts are ready for consultation and to recommend that the final draft requirements are ready for submission to the decision-making body.

All working group members must participate in each point of decision-making. If any of the member(s) is not present for a decision, then a provisional decision may be made, subject to participation by the absent member(s). Quorum is required for any provisional decisions, and full member participation is preferred.

For the working group to meet and deliberate, the quorum must be minimum 4 out of 6 members.

The working group shall strive and make every effort possible to take decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, outstanding concerns should be documented and presented to the Director General in the process evaluation form that accompanies the document presented for decision.

The process lead, FSC Staff, and any other supportive personnel shall not participate in any decision-making relevant to the tasks and responsibilities of the working group as outlined in section 2.

If the working group is not able to agree on a final draft within 1 week after presenting the revised draft requirements following the final round of consultation, the Director General shall take a decision on how to move forward with the process.

The working group members acknowledge that the working group terms of reference are governed by FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 – The Development and Revision of FSC Requirements -, in relation to the revision/development of the process in question. The procedure is a normative document which defines the process to develop, review, revise and withdraw international FSC requirements. As a result, the working group member shall be bound by all procedural rules as specified in FSC-PRO-01-001 in conjunction with the terms of reference and the working group agreement.

ANNEX 1: WORK PLAN AND ESTIMATED TIMELINES

Table 6. Timeline for phase 1

Nr.	Step	Activity	Responsible	2026											
				Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul	
				2-13 .02	16- 27.02	2-13.03	16- 27.03	30.03- 10.04	13- 24.04	27.04- 08.05	11- 22.05	25.05- 12.06	15- 26.06	29.06- 10.07	13- 25.07
1	Working group	TWG Initial call (~5 Feb)	Process lead/TWG	X											
2	Drafting	2nd TWG call (~17 Feb)	Process lead/TWG		X										
		First draft of enhanced HCV 2/IFL requirements/ 3rd TWG call (~27 Feb)	TWG		X										
		Review 1st draft (internal review by ~ 6 March)	Process lead(s)			X									
		Second draft of indicators (4th TWG call ~10 March),	TWG			X									
		Draft of Advice Note based on 2nd draft (and other materials, if needed) for Public Consultation	Process lead			X	X								

3	Public Consultation	Launch of Public Consultation 30 days (~16 March- 15 April)	Process lead					X	X					
		Preliminary results of public consultation 5 th TWG call (~14 April)								X				
		Analysis of Public Consultation feedback 6 th TWG call ~28 April	TWG/Process lead					X	X	X				
		Final Draft (7 th TWG meeting ~ 7 May) 1 TWG member starts as liaison/expert in the PCI WG (May/June, tbc)	TWG							X				
4	Approval	Submission to PSC for final decision (~12 May)	Process lead								X			
		PSC approval at M66 (1-3 Jun)	PSC									X		
		Translations of Final version approved Placeholder 8 th call ~7 Jun	Process lead									X	X	
5	Publication	Publication and Effective date for Advice Note (1 Jul)	Process lead											X
		Phase 1 closing call ~2nd July	TWG											X

Table 7. Timeline for phase 2. PL – Process Lead and TWG – Technical Working Group

Nr.	Step	Activity	Responsible	2026													
				Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug	
				2-13/2	16-27/2	2-13/3	16-27/3	30/3-10/4	13/4-1/5	4-14/5	18-29/5	1-12/6	15-26/6	29/6-17/7	20-31/7	3-14/8	17-28/8
1	Preparation	Initial scoping and drafting (literature review, targeted and punctual engagement with regional experts)	PL	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
2	Working group	TWG phase 2 initial call	PL									X					
3	Drafting	First draft of regional indicators / 2nd TWG call	TWG									X	X				
		Review 1st draft (internal review)	PL											X	X		
		Second draft of regional indicators / 3rd TWG call	PL													X	X

Table 7. Timeline for phase 2 (Continued). PL – Process Lead and TWG – Technical Working Group (Sept 2026-Jan 2027)

Nr.	Step	Activity	Responsible	2026								2027	
				Sept		Oct		Nov		Dec	Jan		
				31/8-11/9	14-25/9	28/9-16/10	19-30/10	2-13/11	16-27/11	30/11-18/12	4-14/1	18-28/1	
		Draft of Advice Note based on 2nd draft for Public Consultation	TWG	X	X								
4	Public Consultation	Launch of Public Consultation 30 days	TWG			X	X						
		Analysis of Public Consultation feedback/ 4th TWG call	PL				X	X					
		Final Draft (5th TWG meeting)	TWG						X	X			
5	Approval	Submission to PSC for final decision	PL							X			

		Translations of Final version Placeholder extra call	PL TWG							X	X	
6	Publication	Publication and Effective date for Advice Note (1 Jan 2027)	PL									X



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