



Forest Stewardship Council®



**Technical Working Group**  
***Revision of FSC-PRO-01-001***  
***The Development and Revision of***  
***FSC Normative Documents***

Terms of Reference and Operating Rules

V 1-0



## WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

**Type of Working Group:** Technical Working Group

**# of Working Group members:** 4

**Coordinator:** tbd

**Working language** English

## PROJECT SUMMARY

**Project Title:** Revision of FSC-PRO-01-001

**Contact:** FSC International Center gGmbH  
- Performance and Standards Unit -  
Adenauerallee 134  
53113 Bonn, Germany



[psu@fsc.org](mailto:psu@fsc.org)

## PROJECT INFORMATION

### 1. Background of the Project

At its 82nd meeting in November 2019, the FSC Board of Directors (BoD) approved the revision of FSCs' main standard-setting procedure FSC-PRO-01-001 *The Development and Revision of FSC Normative Documents*.

The procedure specifies how documents of the FSC Normative Framework are developed, reviewed and revised. Currently, FSC has 69 international normative documents that are subject to the scope of this procedure.

Since completion of the last full revision of this procedure in 2013 and a minor revision in 2015, a number of issues have been identified that are connected to the way FSC sets normative documents and makes them accessible:

#### **Problem statement**

The process to develop and revise normative documents is ineffective and inefficient and does not allow FSC to adapt fast enough to address challenges and to innovate.

The FSC policies and standards lack clarity, focus on desired outcomes and simplicity. They are seen as complicated to understand and too challenging & costly to implement on the ground.

These issues were further described in the review report that underwent public consultation between 18 July to 5 September 2019.

In accordance with FSC's strategic direction, the revision process aims at simplifying and accelerating the development, review and revision of normative documents, as well as making them more effective, user-friendly, risk-based and outcome oriented.

The procedure FSC-PRO-01-001 is considered as the main vehicle to streamline the FSC Normative Framework since changes to this document will have an impact on the way that all of FSC's international normative documents will be developed and revised in future.

### 2. Organizational set up of the project

FSC will establish a **Technical Working Group** (TWG) to deliver on the tasks and responsibilities outlined in these Terms of Reference (TOR).

The following bodies are involved in the project, established in line with FSC-PRO-01-001 V3-1:

A **Project Coordinator**, appointed by the Director Policy Operations, to:

- set up, manage and administer the Technical Working Group;
- set up, administer and manage the Consultative Forum;
- administer the process, keep track of the work plan and timelines, and inform the rest of the participating bodies of the work plan milestones and upcoming deadlines;
- draft the different versions of the draft normative and guidance documents, striving to achieve consensus between conflicting aspects;
- prepare and launch the public consultations;
- compile the feedback from the public consultations and prepare summaries for the TWG;
- provide the TWG with all necessary materials and information;

- ensure that the TWG operates responsibly and in accordance with its Terms of Reference and applicable procedures;
- report to the Policy Steering Group;
- coordinate with other FSC staff and Programs related to the project to seek expertise as necessary;
- manage the communications, both within the project and with external stakeholders.

The **Policy Steering Group** (composed of the FSC Director General, the Policy Directors, and selected members of the FSC Global Leadership Forum) which provides oversight on all phases of the process until the final decision by the FSC Board of Directors.

A **Consultative Forum**, which is a registered group of interested/affected members, Certificate Holders, Certification Bodies and other stakeholders interested in providing ongoing, direct and meaningful input into the process. The consultative forum is not a decision-making body and has no formal responsibilities. At the discretion of the TWG, the forum can be consulted with specific questions to provide input to the process.

A **Project Supervisor** is appointed by the Director Policy Operations to supervise the process and to support the working group in reaching its goals.

A **Facilitator** may be appointed by PSU to support the TWG in running successful conference calls and in-person meetings.

In addition, the FSC BoD may appoint liaison persons from the BoD and/or the PSC to this process if it deems appropriate. The role of the **Board Liaison Person** and the **Policy and Standards Committee Liaison Person** is to keep the FSC Board of Directors (BoD) and the Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) respectively closely informed about the process and to give advice to the Technical Working Group on timely alignment to relevant processes within the FSC Normative Framework.

## WORKING GROUP INFORMATION

### 3. Objectives

Core objectives of the revision process are to:

- re-design the process for the development, review and revision of normative documents to accelerate processes and to improve time and resource efficiency (cost-benefits) for FSC;
- improve the content quality of normative documents, their relevance, understandability and simplicity;
- embed the following adapted *Streamlining Principles*<sup>1</sup> in the revised procedure to facilitate the application of these principles in future normative documents:
  - focus on outcomes to ensure that the normative framework delivers intended impacts;
  - embrace risk management as a guiding principle;
  - harness new technologies in the design and implementation;
  - enable and improve impact assessment and monitoring & evaluation of outcomes;

---

<sup>1</sup> The full list of Streamlining Principles is included in Annex 2.

- design normative documents for intended users;
- maintain system integrity, transparency and credibility;
- incorporate recommendations of the governance review process;
- ensure conformance with ISEAL<sup>2</sup> requirements.

#### 4. Tasks and responsibilities of the Technical Working Group

Tasks of the TWG include:

##### 1. Re-design of processes

- design process based on an assessment of relevance, quality considerations, risk, speed and effective use of resources and in conformance with ISEAL requirements for the following areas:
  - development of new normative documents/ requirements;<sup>3</sup>
  - review of normative documents/ requirements;
  - revision of normative documents/ requirements;
  - withdrawal of normative documents/ requirements;
  - alignment of normative documents/ requirements with approved changes;
  - minor amendments of normative documents/ requirements incorporating small changes;
  - development of Advice Notes;
- clarify roles, responsibilities and decision-making structures of entities involved in developing, reviewing, revising, withdrawing and approving resulting normative documents/ requirements;
- review and revise the concept of (chamber-balanced) Working Groups;
- consider differentiating processes according to the type of document/ type of requirements (e.g. policy, standard, procedure) and/or level of complexity of requirements;
- consider combining processes to deliver targeted and consistent solutions on given topics across the normative framework to facilitate the use of digitised normative documents/ requirements (e.g. of a topic: HCV, conversion, system integrity, etc.);
- consider developing/ revising documents/ requirements in a modular way to eliminate redundancies and dependencies between documents/ requirements;
- consider how changes to a document/ requirement affect other documents/ requirements, with the aim to ensure consistency;

---

<sup>2</sup> FSC is member of ISEAL Alliance, a global membership association for credible sustainability standards. ISEAL defines standard setting requirements, to which FSC is adhering to.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is made to 'documents' as a collection of requirements, as well as to 'requirements', since FSC is in the process of digitizing its standards, which facilitates new ways of approaching standard setting.

## **2. Develop guidance**

- consider developing guidance / best practice for the ‘exploration phase’ before the start of a process to develop a new normative document/ requirement;
- develop guidance for assessing risks and viability of changes to normative requirements, considering FSCs internal ‘change for better protocol’ and existing templates;
- developing best practice guidance on process steps following publication of the new or revised normative requirements;

## **3. Incorporating results of other processes and referencing**

- incorporate and/ or refer to results of the following processes:
  - ‘Streamlining Principles’ to guide Working Groups;
  - Input provided by the White Paper on the revision of FSC-PRO-01-001<sup>4</sup>
  - best practice guidelines for stakeholder engagement;
  - tools and approaches to manage the participation of Working Group members;
  - recommendations of the governance review process;
  - examples/ guidance on drafting outcome-oriented normative documents;
  - interpretations of FSC-PRO-01-001;
  - reference the need for Working Groups to consider and define monitoring needs for each process;
  - guidance on monitoring of outcomes/ impacts of approved normative requirements (as available);
  - guidance on drafting simplified normative requirements;
  - guidance on drafting risk-based normative requirements;

## **4. Other specific tasks**

- re-design the procedure in a user-friendly way;
- develop a more flexible and straight-forward approach for transitioning between old and new normative documents/ requirements;
- develop provisions for conducting pilot tests and capturing their outcomes prior to the approval of normative documents/ requirements;
- other tasks to address smaller specific issues and change requests in the revised FSC-PRO-01-001.

## **5. General**

The members of the TWG will work together throughout the process, discussing issues and interacting with each other as a group in and outside of meetings as necessary and/or required by the coordinator.

---

<sup>4</sup> A white paper on the revision of FSC-PRO-01-001 will be drafted in Q1 of 2021 to further explain the background to the revision process and to gather information about how other ISEAL schemes approach streamlining of standard setting processes.

General key responsibilities are to:

- analyse, discuss, and recommend draft requirements for a revised procedure
- review draft documents and advise on finalising as necessary;
- recommend when the draft is ready for public consultation;
- participating in stakeholder outreach and information-sharing forums, as needed;
- seek comprehensive advice on the development and outcome from the FSC Global Network, FSC Board of Directors, FSC accredited CBs, FSC certificate holders, other FSC stakeholders and/or relevant Technical Experts;
- consider feedback gathered during public consultation;
- recommend when the final draft is ready to be sent for decision making by the FSC Board of Directors.

## **5. Appointment of Technical Working Group members**

A call for applicants to the TWG will be launched, asking applicants to describe their skills and experience according to the criteria listed below. Members of the Technical Working Group will be appointed by the Policy Steering Group.

### **1. Technical Skills**

- Knowledge and experience in FSC's standard setting processes (e.g. through involvement in previous processes to develop and revise FSC normative documents); and/ or
- Knowledge and experience in standard setting processes of other sustainability schemes, in particular, other ISEAL members;
- Experience in developing or applying standardized procedures;
- Familiarity with 'Streamlining Principles' and expertise in applying them (e.g. applying risk-based approaches, see Annex 2);
- Understanding the potential impact of the revised procedure;
- Familiarity with ISEAL requirements is an asset;
- Understanding of and support for FSC's mission and vision;
- Spoken and written English language skills.

### **2. Soft Skills**

- Ability to work together in a diverse group of people from different background and perspectives;
- Clarity in expression (verbally/written);
- Ability to play a constructive role in resolving conflicts;
- Demonstrate resilience;
- Ability to work systematically and plan accordingly.

### **3. Contribution**

- Quantity and quality of deliverables;
- Solution-oriented mindset;
- Out of the box thinking, to bring ideas from outside of the FSC and the certification world, and ensure that FSC is well positioned for future challenges and opportunities;

### **4. Engagement**

- Participate actively in online calls and in-person meetings;
- Overall conduct and adhering to confidentiality specifications.

## **6. Structure and Accountabilities**

The TWG consists of **4 persons**.

Appointed TWG members are expected to adhere to the specifications of this TOR and are expected to donate sufficient time to thoroughly fulfill their duties as outlined in the work plan (Annex 3).

Appointed TWG members shall sign a service and confidentiality agreement with FSC upon appointment.

The TWG is accountable to FSC International. TWG members may be asked to leave the group by the Policy Steering Group if they are not fulfilling their duties properly.

The term of TWG members ends with the submission of the final draft of the deliverables to the Board of Directors, after the Policy Steering Group's review and recommendation for approval.

## **7. Work plan and time commitment**

The TWG will be established after the approval of this TOR. The expected start date is January 2021, with a targeted completion by April 2022.

An estimated timetable is provided in Annex 3. The timetable and the detailed work plan will be updated as necessary.

The TWG will conduct most of its work via e-mail or similar means of electronic communication, and through one-on-one calls with the Coordinator when required.

Under the current circumstances, only two face-to-face meetings are envisaged (if possible): a meeting after the first public consultation to review the comments and to revise the draft (August 2021) and another one following the second public consultation (December 2021). A series of virtual meeting calls is envisaged for 18-20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 to replace an in-person meeting.

A contribution of the TWG to an exchange with the membership about the streamlining of the procedure is foreseen at the General Assembly in 2021.

At least during the first months of the process regular bi-weekly MS Teams meeting calls with each 2-3 hour are planned. In case no physical meetings will be possible throughout 2021 this schedule will need to be maintained.

## **8. Expenses and Remuneration**

FSC is an international not-for-profit membership organization with limited funding. Participation in the TWG takes place on a voluntary non-paid basis.

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.

If required, a stipend can be granted by FSC on a case-by-case basis.

## **9. Confidentiality and conflict of interest**

TWG members as well as any experts 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 TWG is not considered confidential, unless otherwise specified by FSC.

TWG 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.

## **10. Language**

The working language is English.

All drafts for public consultation, as well as other documents, as requested and as possible, will be translated into Spanish. Documents may also be translated into other languages if requested by the TWG, depending on resource availability.

## **OPERATING RULES**

### **11. Deliberations and Decision Making**

The Project Coordinator will strive to select meeting dates and venues that allow for full participation of all TWG members.

Formal decision-making responsibility of the TWG is to recommend to the PSG when drafts are ready for public consultation and when final drafts are ready to be sent for decision making by the FSC Board of Directors. All TWG members must participate in these decisions. 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.

The TWG shall strive and make every effort possible to take decisions by consensus (see Annex 1: Glossary).

If consensus cannot be achieved, outstanding concerns should be documented and presented to the FSC Board of Directors in the final report that accompanies the document presented for decision.

The Coordinator, FSC Staff, Policy Steering Group members and any other supportive personnel shall not participate in any decision-making relevant to the tasks and responsibilities of the TWG as outlined in section 4.

If the TWG is not able to agree on a final draft within two (2) months after the final round of public consultation, the Policy Steering Group shall take a decision on how to move forward with the process.

## Annex 1: Glossary

For the purpose of this document, the terms and definitions given in *FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms*, and the following apply:

**Consensus:** general agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests.

NOTE: Consensus should be the result of a process seeking to take into account the views of interested parties, particularly those directly affected, and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. It need not imply unanimity (adapted from ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004).

**Technical WG:** a group of experts appointed by FSC with professional experience in the field of question, to advise and provide content related input to the development or revision of an FSC normative document.

## Annex 2: Streamlining Principles

The streamlining principles describe our objectives for making the Normative Framework more efficient and effective. They were developed based on the direction provided in the FSC Global Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and in alignment with FSC's enterprise risk policy, which acknowledges, embraces and uses risk assessments to enhance the organization's Strategic Plan.

### The following principles are formulated:

1. We focus on outcomes and actions that maintain **system integrity**, transparency, and credibility.

*Example: This is an overarching principle that applies to all streamlining activities.*

2. We design our Normative Framework for its **intended users**. Forest managers, industries and companies, CBs and FSC staff are all users of our Normative Framework and deserve to receive products and services that fit well into their processes, that facilitate the implementation of FSC requirements and increase FSC value.

*Example: De- spaghettiing the Normative Framework: e.g. merge procedures/ standards for setting national standards (60-series)*

3. We address the **root problems and risks** which prevent us from achieving our mission.

*Example: Assurance Risk Management Plan and Risk Register*

4. We focus on the **outcomes** we want to achieve, and orient effort to things that matter most.

*Example: Develop guidance on how to formulate outcome-oriented requirements in revised FSC-PRO-01-001 Development and Revision of FSC Normative Documents*

5. We embrace **risk management** as a guiding principle to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in our Normative Framework and as directed in FSC's enterprise risk policy:

- In the development and revision of normative documents we assess, weigh and balance risks and benefits and adapt risk-based approaches to its users;
- Risk based approaches allow us to focus on the relevant items within the Normative Framework as a whole and within the context of its normative documents (policies, procedures and standards).
- Risk-based approaches (definitions and concepts) are aligned over time where this is feasible and where variations of approaches (customized solutions) for users are not needed.
- Risk is considered both a threat and opportunity and included in decision-making, e.g. reflected in FSC's procedure to develop and revise normative documents.

*Example: RBA approaches for verification of CoC core labour requirements (ILO) – CB requirements*

6. We **integrate work streams** within the organization to learn from different perspectives (communication, marketing, etc.) and to maximize efficiencies and effectiveness.

*Example: Collaboration around new product development, e.g. Ecosystem Services and New Approaches*

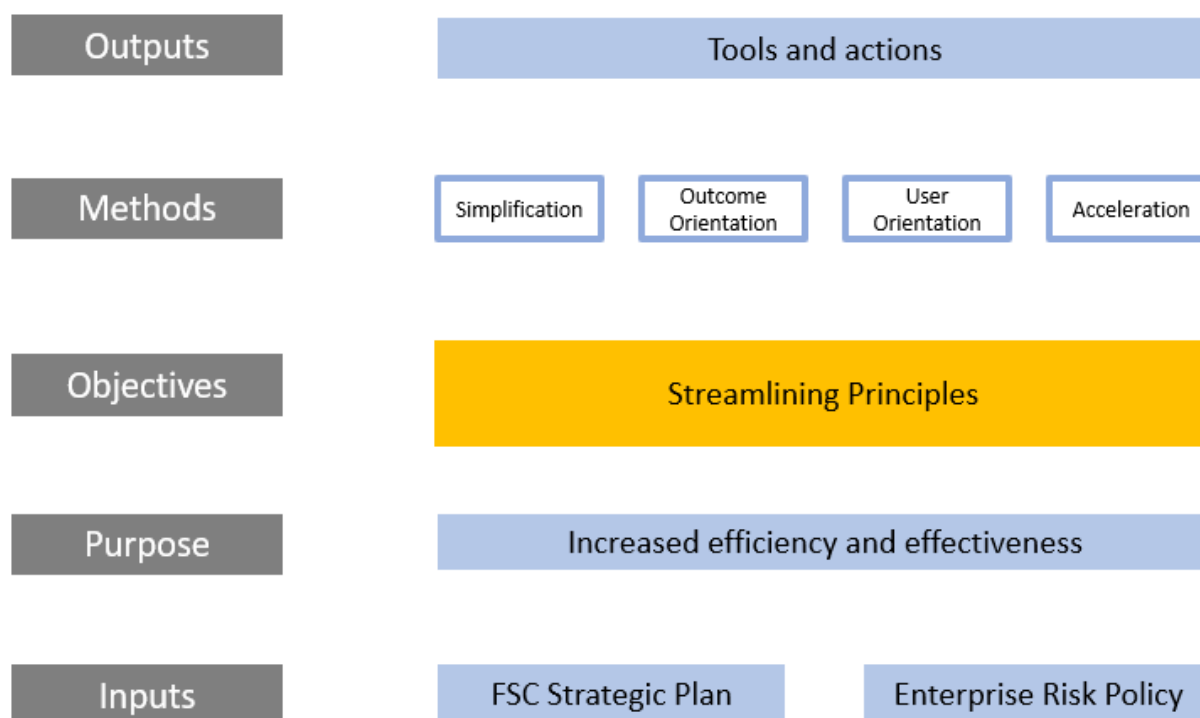
7. We make the best use of **new technologies** in the design of our Normative Framework (user interface) as well as in the support we provide for its implementation (digital tools) and in our monitoring systems.

*Examples: Develop IT platform for standards; online FM reporting system*

8. We **monitor our impact** and learn from our successes and failures to ensure **continuous improvement** of our Normative Framework.

*Example: Impact assessments at the level of individual documents guided by revised FSC-PRO-01-001*

Graphic 1 (below) illustrates how the streamlining principles are connected within the FSC system and describe the key methods used to streamline the Normative Framework: simplification, outcome orientation, user orientation and acceleration. The use of these key methods will result in a set of tools (e.g. risk-based approaches) and activities that will deliver a streamlined Normative Framework.



Graphic 1 Streamlining the Normative Framework

### Annex 3: Estimated Timelines

Activity	2020			2021												2022			
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Approval of ToR by PSG																			
Call for applicants																			
Appointment of TWG members																			
Kick-off meeting calls				18-20															
Bi-weekly TWG calls (to develop draft 1)																			
1. public consultation on Draft 1 (60 days)																			
Bi-weekly TWG calls (to develop draft 2)																			
1. TWG in-person meeting*																			
2. public consultation on Draft 2 (60 days) & GA side event																			
2. TWG in-person meeting*																			
Bi-weekly TWG calls (to develop draft 2)																			
PSC recommendation																			
BoD approval																			

Activity	2020			2021										2022					
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Publication																			

\*if the in-person meetings cannot be held due to safety reasons because of COVID-19 a series of calls will be scheduled instead

	Pre- and post TWG process
	Consultation Draft1
	PSC recommendation
	BoD approval
	Technical working group call/meeting