



Forest Stewardship Council®



Technical Working Group to revise the Forest Management Evaluations Standard (FSC-STD- 20-007) and associated addenda

Terms of Reference and Operating Rules

V 1-0



WORKING GROUP SUMMARY	
Type of Working Group:	Technical Working Group
Number of Working group members	4
Project Supervisor:	Maria Pilar Melero Bravo
Project Manager and TWG coordinator:	Diana Franco Gil
Technical coordinator	tbd
Working language	English

PROJECT SUMMARY					
Project Title:	Revision of the FSC Forest Management Evaluations Standard (FSC-STD-20-007) and associated addenda				
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PROJECT INFORMATION

1 Introduction

At its 83rd meeting in March 2020 the FSC Board of Directors (BoD) approved the revision of FSC's main standard regulating the auditing of responsible forest management and its two associated addenda:

- [FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 EN Forest management evaluations](#)
- [FSC-STD-20-007a V1-0 EN Forest certification reports](#); and
- [FSC-STD-20-007b V1-0 EN Forest certification public summary reports](#).

The objective of FSC-STD-20-007 is to clarify the principles to be followed by certification bodies when sampling Management Units (MU) and sites and integrating the observations to come to a reliable certification decision. Certification bodies must comply with the requirements of this standard for all forest management evaluations, including pre-, main and re-evaluations of single forest management units, forest management groups, and single legal entities managing multiple forest management units. It is also used as a normative document for FSC accreditation.

2 Background of the project

In 2019 the Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) completed a review of FSC-STD-20-007 and its annexes. The review report was circulated first internally within the Secretariat with all relevant projects and programs and thereafter the report was sent to public consultation between 15 October to 15 November 2019. Based on the public consultation, the Secretariat recommended the Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) and BoD to approve a revision of *FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluations* and its annexes.

This revision is part of the streamlining efforts of the FSC Normative Framework (i.e., Strategy 1 of the Global Strategic Plan 2015-2020), aiming at making it more efficient, effective, outcome-oriented and risk based.

The Global Strategic Plan also requires that the social, environmental and economic impacts of FSC are monitored, evaluated, reported on, widely communicated, and used to inform decision making (i.e. Strategy 3 of the Global Strategic Plan 2015-2020). For that purpose, the contents of forest management audit reports must be re-assessed and digitized, to ensure standardization and relevance of data gathered during certification process.

Additionally, the revision process is considered necessary, because some fundamental changes have been introduced to the FSC normative framework since the approval of current version of the FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluations in 2009. New, revised or in development documents include:

- FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship
- FSC-STD-20-001 General requirements for FSC accredited certification bodies
- FSC-STD-20-006 Stakeholder consultation for forest evaluations
- FSC-STD-30-005 FSC Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups
- FSC-STD-60-004 International Generic Indicators
- FSC-PRO-30-006 Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact demonstration and market tools

- FSC-PRO-60-008 Incorporating a risk-based approach in the development and revision process of National Forest Stewardship Standards
- FSC-PRO-XX-XX FSC Continuous Improvement Procedure
- FSC-POL-30-001 FSC Pesticides Policy
- FSC-GUI-60-002 Guideline for Standard Developers for addressing risk of unacceptable activities regarding scale and intensity
- FSC-GUI-60-005 Promoting Gender Equality in National Forest Stewardship Standards
- FSC-GUI-60-009 Guidance for Standard Development Groups: Developing National High Conservation Value Frameworks
- FSC-GUI-30-009 High Conservation Value Guidance for Forest Managers
- FSC -GUI-30-010 Intact Forest Landscape Guidance for Forest Managers
- FSC-GUI-30-003 FSC Guidelines for the implementation of the right to free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)

3 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 (ToRs).

In addition to the TWG, the following bodies are involved in the project, established in line with [*FSC-PRO-01-001 Development and revision of FSC normative documents*](#):

*A **Project and TWG Coordinator**, who is a PSU staff member appointed by the Director Policy Operations, to:

- set up, manage and administer the Technical Working Group, including organizing meetings, agendas and keeping minutes.
- ensure that the TWG operates responsibly and in accordance with its Terms of Reference and applicable procedures;
- 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;
- prepare and launch the public consultations;
- provide the TWG with all necessary materials and information;
- 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

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

- provide technical input, background for discussion and guides TWG content discussions.
- makes technical recommendations and provides references for TWG.
- ensures TWG's deliberations and deliverables comply with the scope of content of ToR,

***Note:** Depending on availability of resources Project and Technical Coordinator's responsibilities might be delegated to the same PSU staff member.

A **Policy Steering Group**, steering committee with a fixed composition of FSC senior management team members, 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 self-selecting 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 and the PSC may appoint liaison persons 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.

An Organogram is provided in Annex 2.

WORKING GROUP INFORMATION

4 Objective

The objective of the TWG is to review and reconsider the fundamental approach of FSC towards forest management evaluations, including evaluation methods, intensity, frequency, duration, data gathering, reporting, current structure of evaluation standards, etc.

In this context, the TWG shall be guided by the following principles:

- Ensure the resulting approach to forest management evaluations is more objective, transparent, efficient, effective, outcome-oriented and risk-based.
- Ensure consistency of the normative framework by reviewing and incorporating (if needed) newly developed and approved approaches in relation to forest management evaluations.
- Incorporate options for new technologies in forest management evaluations.
- Increase consistency of evaluations by different auditors.

5 Tasks and Responsibilities of the Technical Working Group

The members of the TWG will work together throughout the process, discussing issues and interacting with each other as a group through online calls, email communication, and meetings as necessary and/or required by the TWG Coordinator.

The TWG is expected to advise and provide content-related input in the revision of FSC-STD-20-007 and its associated addenda.

In relation to the tasks and responsibilities listed below, members of the TWG shall:

- 1. Review and reconsider the current evaluation methods adjusting to the current scale of FSC certified area and to the needs for applying assessment methods.**
- 2. Incorporate a risk-based approach in forest management evaluations**
 - Review, consider and adapt (if needed) the results of the TWG Risk-based approaches for forest management certification and other PSU processes in the revised FSC-STD-20-007.
- 3. Enable monitoring, evaluation and learning for FSC**
 - Review and improve the existing reporting requirements considering the needs of FSC in terms of data analytics, and evaluation and learning, while considering aspects of transparency for stakeholders. In particular:
 - Define the purpose of the audit reporting considering the need for gathering impact and integrity data for the system versus data relevant to certification process only (including confidentiality and public availability of information);
 - Ensure adequacy of data collected;
 - Consider incorporating mandatory reporting requirements of digital boundaries for management units and voluntary reporting requirements of digital boundaries for smallholders.
 - Incorporate technology already available in the FSC system. For example, the ongoing implementation of GIS maps and tools, FSC database of normative requirements, online reporting tools.

4. Align and collaborate with other initiatives

- Review, consider and adapt (if needed) new developments in *FSC-STD-30-005 Standard for group entities in forest management groups* and in *FSC Continuous Improvement Procedure* (in development). In addition, the TWG shall consider the recommendations provided in the final report to the BoD from the working group in charge of revising FSC-STD-30-005.
- Collaborate with the risk-based approaches for forest management certification TWG to ensure alignment and adoption (as needed) of developed concepts and amended requirements.
- Align and adopt (as needed) with the implementation of FM online reporting system, GIS Portal and FSC database of normative requirements.
- Collaborate with other PSU processes as feasible.

5. Streamline the normative framework

- Review and revise the current structure and content of forest management evaluations ensuring the resulting structure brings clarity, efficiency and easiness to implement. (i.e. rearrange structure according to scope of forest management system, or evaluation type, etc.)
- The TWG shall address the need to:
 - Incorporate to the main standard relevant advice notes compiled in [FSC-DIR-20-007 Directive on FSC Forest Management Evaluations](#).
 - Incorporate to the main standard pertaining [FSC interpretations of the normative framework \(forest management\)](#) for FSC-STD-20-007 and associated addenda. The TWG may consider PSU's internal assessment.
 - Remove elements of FSC-STD-20-007 that are redundant with requirements of [FSC-STD-20-001 General requirements for FSC accredited certification bodies](#).
 - Reconsider the usefulness of splitting reporting requirements in different addenda.

6. Further tasks include looking at least at the following specific aspects:

- Reconsider general approach to sampling of sites.
- Clarify auditing requirements for challenging production systems, in terms of scope of forest certification (i.e. Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), ecosystem services, etc.).
- Improve evaluations and reporting of NTFPs, High Conservation Values (HCVs), and ecosystem services impacts. The TWG may consider including supporting tools for mapping purposes.
- Consider including reporting requirements on excised areas from the scope of certification in *FSC-POL-20-003 Policy on the excision of areas from the scope of certification*.
- Clarify pre-evaluations requirements in risky areas. The TWG may consider PSU's revision recommendations' on the topic.
- Clarify how to conduct verification of sustainable yield levels (AAC).
- Clarify requirements regarding conflicts between certification requirements and laws and regulations.
- Consider PSU Review Results document summarizing the main topics from the stakeholder consultation and feedback conducted in 15 October to 15 November 2019.

7. General

- Consider feedback gathered during public consultation.
- Participate in stakeholder outreach and information-sharing forums, as needed.
- Seek comprehensive advice on the development and outcome from the FSC Global Network, including Standard Development Groups, FSC Board of Directors, FSC accredited CBs, FSC certificate holders, other FSC stakeholders and/or relevant Technical Experts.
- Recommend when the final drafts are ready to be sent for decision making by the FSC Board of Directors.

6 Selection of Technical Working Group members

A call for expressions of interest (supported by Curricula Vitae) will be launched for identifying the candidates of the Technical Working Group. Members of the Technical Working Group will be selected by the Policy Steering Group according to the following criteria:

1. Technical Skills

- Ability to provide specific technical input on the FSC FM assurance system and its implementation at CH level (including group and smallholders level);
- Experience as an FSC forest management auditor and/or experience as an auditor for other sustainability standards (i.e. Sustainable Agriculture Standard, Marine Stewardship Council, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, Sustainable Biomass Program, Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials, etc.);
- Experience with incorporating risk-based approaches and technologies in certification schemes;
- Expertise in auditing Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and forests with presence of High Conservation Value (HCVs) attributes. Also, expertise in verifying impacts and approving FSC ecosystem services claims;
- Up-to-date knowledge and experience of FSC's systems and procedures;
- Understanding of the potential impact of a normative document on affected stakeholders;
- Experience in assessing Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC);
- Ability to review and comment on documents submitted in the working language(s) agreed for the TWG.

2. Soft Skills

- Ability to work together in a group;
- Clarity in expression (verbally/written);
- Ability to work systematically and plan accordingly.

3. Contribution

- Track record on successful working groups is an asset;
- Solution-oriented mindset.

4. Engagement

- Participate actively in online calls and in person meetings, and provide valuable input;
- Commit to build a trusting work environment.

7 Structure and Accountabilities

The TWG will consists of 4 members.

Appointed TWG members are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations of this TOR and are expected to donate sufficient time to thoroughly fulfill their duties as outlined in the work plan (Annex 2).

The TWG is accountable to FSC. 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.

8 Expected outputs

A revised *FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluations* that addresses the latest changes in the normative framework and makes it easier for certification bodies and auditors to evaluate the requirements during forest management evaluations, including pre-, main and re-evaluations of single forest management units, forest management groups, and single legal entities managing multiple forest management units.

9 Workplan and time commitment

The TWG will be established after the approval of this ToR. The expected start-date for the Technical Working Group is December 2020, with a targeted completion date for all outputs by September 2022 for their approval in December 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 (e.g. MS Teams, Go-to meeting, Zoom conference calls), and through one-on-one calls with the coordinator(s) when required. At least four in person or intensive virtual meetings are envisaged for completing the outputs of this TWG. Considering the ongoing COVID pandemic, if in person meetings cannot be held due to travel restrictions, they will be replaced by virtual meetings.

10 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 covers reasonable travel and accommodation expenses related to the work plan upon submissions 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.

11 Confidentiality and conflict of interest

TWG 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 TWG is not considered confidential, unless otherwise specified. 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.

12 Language

The working language of the TWG is English.

All drafts for public consultation, as well as other documents, as requested and as possible, shall be translated into Spanish.

OPERATING RULES

1 Deliberation and Decision Making

For the TWG to meet and deliberate, there must be quorum, defined as a minimum of 3 out of 4 TWG members. The Project Coordinator will strive to select meeting dates and venues that allow for full participation of all TWG members.

All TWG 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 endorsement 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).

The Coordinator(s), FSC Staff, Policy Steering Group members and any other supportive personnel shall not participate in any decision-making. If the TWG is not able to agree on critical discussion points, or a final draft within six (6) 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 consider 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.



