

FSC POLICY

Development and Transition of the FSC Network

FSC-POL-60-001 V1-1 EN



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Note on use of this Policy

All aspects of this Policy are considered to be normative, including the scope, policy effective date, references, terms and definitions, notes, tables and annexes, unless otherwise stated (e.g. examples).

The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organization established to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC's vision is that the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.

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A Scope

This International Policy shall be used as a normative document for the Development and Transition of the FSC Network.

B Policy effective date

This Policy becomes effective on **01 July 2011**.

C References

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For references without a version number, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

FSC-PRO-60-001 Procedure for the FSC Network.

FSC-STD-01-002 FSC glossary of terms.

FSC-STD-60-006 Process for developing National Forest Stewardship Standards.

D Terms and definitions

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

FSC Network Partners

The collective of all FSC Partners on a National level (formally called: National Initiatives) with a cooperation agreement with FSC. This includes FSC National Offices, FSC National Representatives and FSC National Focal Points.

FSC National Office (new term for what was formally called FSC Working Group): a legally independent FSC partner organization promoting responsible management of the world's forests on behalf of FSC at the national level on the basis of a formal contract (cooperation agreement). NOs have a multi-stakeholder governance structure, similar to that of FSC.

FSC National Representative (new term for what was formally called FSC Contact Person): an individual working on behalf of FSC in his/her country to serve as a national point for information and to promote responsible management of the forests under a formal contract (cooperation and service agreement).

FSC National Focal Point: an individual with a specified and agreed task for his/her country accomplished on a voluntary basis and under a formal contract (agreement). The NFP does not represent FSC.

FSC Regional Office: a branch of FSC International, located in the region (continent or sub-continent) to better understand and service the regional needs of the FSC system. Regional Offices shall develop strategic business plans and annual activity plans, in collaboration with the FSC Network in the region. Regional Offices also develop plans for those areas where FSC is not represented, set priorities in development within the region and represent FSC.

Standard Development Group (SDG): a working group that is established to develop and/or revise a National or Regional Standard in line with FSC Standard 60-006. The SDG *cannot represent FSC*, and for all SDG's the primary entry point at FSC IC will be FSC's Policy and Standards Unit (PSU).

FSC Policy: a documented guiding principle formally adopted by the FSC Board of Directors.

FSC Standard: a document that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for products or related processes and production methods [adapted from ISEAL].

FSC Procedure: a document describing the processes used to meet the requirements of the institution's policies and standards. Management should develop written procedures for an institution's critical operations. Procedures establish accountability and responsibility, provide specific controls for risk management policy guidance, define expectations for work processes and products, and serve as training tools.

Agreement / Contract: A document describing a negotiated agreement between FSC and a Network Partner including roles, responsibilities, rights and obligations of both parties for a defined period of time.

1. A sequential system for engagement within the FSC Group

Since FSC was established in 1993, many individuals and organisations have been interested to liaise with FSC in its development. This has resulted in a network of National Partners around the world, one of FSC's strong assets. This network has grown organically rather than planned and it is time in FSC's organisational development to review the growth, and develop a strategic approach towards it. This is necessary because the Network is extremely important to FSC. More than 140 people work pursuing FSC's interests out in the network and experience has shown that the staff of well-motivated National Partners can contribute significantly to FSC's global aims. For example, FSC relies on these staffs to produce nationally or regionally agreed forest management standards, which are contributing to position FSC as the benchmark in forest certification. National Partners also have a crucial role in lobbying their own governments on behalf of FSC, maintaining good relationships with local social and environmental NGOs and/or for introducing companies to the FSC system at every level of the supply chain. It is recognised that there is a deep level of interdependence between FSC and its Network and more and more we are structuring ourselves to work and be perceived as one system.

It is now agreed that this interdependence should be formalised, and this is reflected in the following policy decisions of the membership and the Board:

- The FSC General Assembly of 2008 has agreed in motion 59 to develop contractual relationships with all National Partners, to come to regional approaches and strategies and to have a Network Representation as an observer to all Board meetings.
- The FSC Board has identified in the 55th Board meeting in Japan (November 2010) 7 strategic priorities to be taken into account in all work: reviewing the FSC Organizational Model, enhance Service delivery, Supply chain development, Stakeholder engagement, Government engagement, enhancement of resources, enhancement of Human Resources.

In 2010, FSC developed contractual relationships with 29 FSC National Offices. These contracts have been the starting point for the strategic development as described in this document. Revenue sharing was part of the contractual agreement. FSC also established a Network Unit at the International Centre, with the objective to support and strategically develop the FSC Network. In doing so, network issues are ensured to be part of core discussions within the international level of the FSC certification system. This has already resulted in 2011 in the establishment of 3 Regional Offices (Asia, Africa and the Former Soviet states¹), and the appointment of a Chief Advocacy officer, leading the lobby and advocacy work, all being part of the Network Unit.

Although the National Offices are legally and administratively independent of FSC, it is in the interests of all parties to work towards achieving mutually agreed targets, within the broad strategic objectives set out by FSC. Such work will usually be covered by contracts or other agreements, the nature of which will be governed by the capacity of each Network Partner to take on differing levels of responsibility and services to FSC. At this stage, this strategic plan does not predict the full range of services for which contracts can be agreed, but it is accepted that the network will be able to assist FSC to achieve its aims in an increasing number of areas over time.

¹ From here on referred to as CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States)

This document is providing the outline of a strategic development of the Network as a whole, in line with the approved GA motion and the Board priorities and has been developed in consultation with the FSC Network. The strategic development will be guided by a step-by-step approach, through an inclusive learning-by-doing process, in close collaboration between the FSC and the FSC Network.

From now on, new titles will be used within all FSC communication for the Network. Network or Network Partners is the collective and general term indicating all the different bodies on a national level collaborating with FSC or being contracted by FSC: National Offices, National Representatives and National Focal Points.

2. Transition

FSC moves from a rather young, pioneer organisation into a more mature organisation. This requires enhancement of professionalism at all levels in the organisation. FSC International Centre restructured its units, to better meet the needs of the system in this stage of development.

The FSC Network developed in an organic way, in the beginning by enthusiastic individuals joining FSC to be a FSC Contact Person, and more recently by fully equipped FSC National Offices. FSC has not always been able in the past to fully capacitate its Network.

FSC will from now on pro-actively develop FSC representations where they are strategically best placed to develop FSC certification worldwide and bring FSC labelled products on the market. In doing so, FSC is committed to capacitate FSC representations worldwide, in providing:

- coherent training programs,
- financial resources,
- a sequential approach in building a formal FSC representation,
- partnering with FSC national representations into close and complementary relationships.

As a consequence, FSC will on the short term have lesser Network Partners, but they will be capacitated to do the work. In 2011, and to complement the transition of the FSC Network, FSC will also present to the Network for consultation:

- a robust and effective process for setting global system strategy and directing the allocation of financial resources;
- a draft strategy for the FSC Network to expand and move toward a model of financial self-sufficiency ;
- mechanisms by which FSC can ensure a high degree of performance, professionalism, and accountability among the Network Partners, the Regional Offices, and the International Center.

This strategic development installs 3 different levels of engagement in the Network:

- **FSC National Office:** a legally independent FSC partner organization promoting responsible management of the world's forests on behalf of FSC at the national level on the basis of a formal contract (cooperation agreement). NOs have a multi-stakeholder governance structure, similar to that of FSC.
- **FSC National Representative:** an individual working on behalf of FSC in his/her country to serve as a national point for information and to promote responsible management of the forests under a formal contract (cooperation and service agreement).

- **FSC National Focal Point:** an individual with a specified and agreed task for his/her country accomplished on a voluntary basis and under a formal contract (agreement). The NFP does not represent FSC.

Normally, the entry point to become a new Network Partner will be a National Focal Point. Not all National Focal Points may develop into a National Representative, or a National Office. This would depend on the strategic criteria for FSCs development as a global organisation. Initial criteria for identifying this are described under paragraph 6.2 in this document, and they will be further developed in the *FSC-PRO-60-001 Procedure for the FSC Network*.

A Standard Development Group (SDG) liaises with the Policy and Standards Unit, and the process to engage with FSC is described in FSC-STD-60-006. They relate to PSU and are not directly considered as (a category of) Network Partners.

The biggest changes in this Policy are with the former Contact Persons, which will now be either National Representatives or National Focal Points. National Offices will remain to be in place until the review of the contracts, as stated in the contracts, has been agreed. All former Working Groups that have not yet signed a contract with FSC will be evaluated against this new Policy.

The Policy and Standard Unit and the Network Unit will jointly develop, on the basis of this paper:

- Eligibility criteria in a Procedure for evaluation of applicants, decision making, evaluation, etc (NU);
- Contracts for NRs and NFPs (NU and legal department).

All of these will go out for consultation with (appropriate parts of) the Network, before being installed.

3. Objectives of the Policy

This Policy should deliver a well developed, well placed, accountable, efficient and effective FSC Network. To achieve this, the same criteria are also eligible for FSC. The following results are what we seek:

- Formal relationships established between FSC and its range of (other) Network Partners, guided by formal agreements (and in addition to the current contractual agreements between FSC and FSC National Offices²);
- Enabling of the Network to deliver quality services on the FSC certification scheme (through amongst others training and support), while capacity challenges are recognised and addressed, throughout the Network and FSC ;
- Accountability for performance and services for both FSC and the Network;
- Priorities within the network are addressed by both FSC and Network Partners, with an emphasis of development of National Partners in emerging markets and attached supply chains.

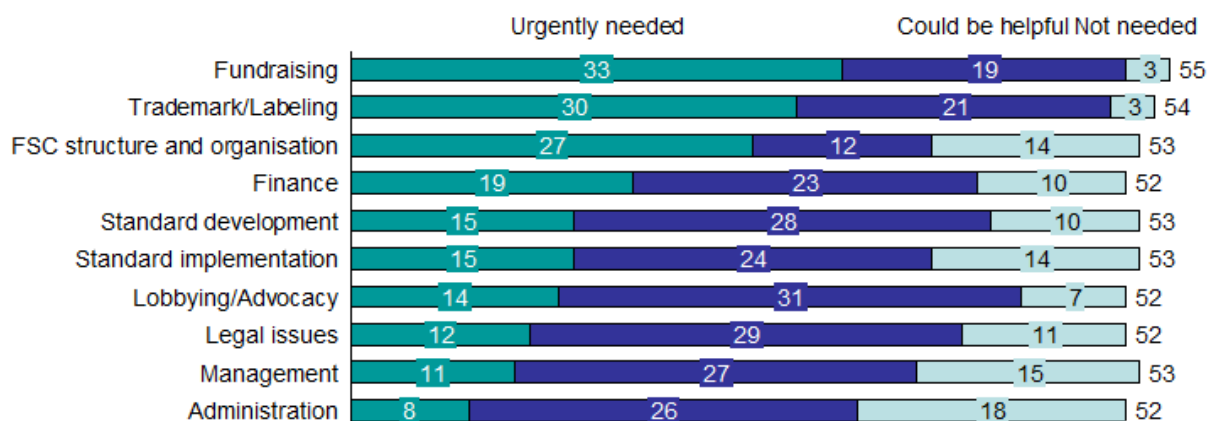
² The current National Offices Contracts will be reviewed in 2012, as agreed earlier, and as written in the contracts.

4. Current status of the FSC Network

As one of its first assignments, the FSC Network Unit conducted a survey amongst the Network, to get a flavour of where the network currently is in its development. This included 7 applicant Network Partners, not yet endorsed. Out of 65 sent questionnaires, 58 have been filed. At the moment the survey was done, FSC's Network included by 23 Contact Persons (39,7%), 29 National Offices (50%) and 6 Working Groups (10,3%).

Some highlights of this survey are:

- 140 people work for the Network Partners. This makes almost 200 people working for the FSC system at the global level;
- In 2009, the FSC Network spent a total amount of 5,177,500 USD, according to the self-assessments. Europe & North America gets most of their revenues from membership, and government subsidies. Africa gets most of their revenues from FSC IC and NGOs. Former Soviet Union gets most of their revenues from the private sector and NGOs. Latin America & Caribbean gets most of their revenues from membership fees and international funding agencies, whereas Asia Pacific gets most of their revenues from NGOs;
- FSC materials exist in 22 languages, although certainly not all relevant documents are available in many of these;
- The Network has assessed the following training needs:



Note that all information in this chapter is based on self-assessment of individual Network Partners.

5. Proposal for strategic development

5.1 General principle

The Network will be re-organised towards a sequential approach. This means that there is an entry level, with basic responsibilities offered, to which tasks and responsibilities can be added on the basis of training and contractual agreements. The more tasks and responsibilities, the higher the level of engagement is. Existing and functioning Network Partners (NP) will be placed into the appropriate level, after consultation and by taking into account self-evaluation and other forms of evaluation, if required.

5.2 Formal engagement

In all levels, the Network Partner will be provided with training on the appropriate level. After the training, the Network Partner will be provided with a contract, indicating responsibilities of FSC International and the Network Partner. To a minimum, the Network Partner will be provided by FSC with training on subjects such as: the structure of FSC from the GA, through the BoD and the secretariat, all the way to the Network; the division of responsibilities between the Network and IC and CBs; Network endorsement requirements; certification; key account management; trademark matters once the various standards have settled down; and also how and what to enter onto databases.

The Network Partner will have a clear framework of responsibilities, within which it must operate. If on the basis of reporting a Network Partner is identified to fall out amongst itself and make no progress within a particular country, FSC shall be engaged in developing a development plan. Network Partners will only be registered in FSC communication (such as the FSC website, etc.) as such, if they have a valid contract.

5.3 Criteria to diversify levels of engagement

The criteria for the sequence in the approach of development of Network Partners are:

- The ability to deliver FSC's global objectives;
- The legal status of the Network Partner organisation;
- Number of staff in formal engagement with the FSC NP;
- Organisational criteria (such as ability to fundraise, manage and develop an organisation);
- Positioning in the working field of forests and markets, and relevance to FSC's mission and goals;
- Proven skills and efficiency in communication, engagement of corporate sector and official bodies, proven capacity in advocacy, development of forest and chain of custody standard interpretations;
- Accountability and transparency.

5.4 FSC Representation versus specific roles

FSC diversifies between Network Partners, having a contract with FSC to represent FSC in their area, and others that have specific roles. The latter have no representative role in their countries for FSC, and are engaged in a specific area, which they accepted to undertake from their expertise in the field. The table below describes the different relations:

	FSC National Representative	FSC National Office	FSC National Office with Sub-Regional responsibilities	FSC National Focal Point	FSC National Standard Development Group ³
Represents FSC	X	X	X		
Does not represent FSC				X	X

The paragraphs below explain the positions of each category.

³ Note that a standard development group is here added to provide the full overview.

5.5 Level 1: FSC National Focal Point.

A FSC National Focal Point is an individual with a specified and agreed task for his/her country accomplished on a voluntary basis and under a formal contract (agreement). A period of transition is foreseen. FSC will recognise for 1 year (until mid 2012), those (current) Contact Persons who cannot immediately be contracted in the first tranche as full representatives and agree with each of them a specific set of tasks. These will be evaluated mid 2012 between FSC and the 'FSC National Focal Point', and the result of that evaluation will be the starting point for further engagement and development. FSC National Focus Points may, as a result of that evaluation, continue or finalise their work. Not all National Focal Points may develop into a National Representative, or a National Office. This would depend on the strategic criteria for FSCs development as a global organisation. A modest financial contribution, relevant to the agreed tasks such as an expense reimbursement, will be agreed on an individual basis.

5.6 Level 2: FSC National Representative

A FSC National Representative (NR) is typically an individual, working for FSC on an individual basis. National Representatives have a contract with FSC International. FSC assigns specific and mutually agreed responsibilities and results to a National Representative, and financially supports a NR to fulfil these. He/she will have (a choice of) the following kind of responsibilities:

- General representation of FSC in the country towards stakeholders and government;
- Guiding questions on the FSC system, or on FSC's performance to the Regional Office, and/or FSC International;
- Enhance FSC membership and FSC certification in the country;

On a more advanced level, and after training and agreement with FSC, the following tasks and responsibilities can be added to the contract:

- Prepare the grounds for the development of a FSC National Office;
- Manage relationships with a Standard Development Group of Experts, setting a National Standard

National Representatives may communicate existing interpretations of FSC policies and standards. NRs are not engaged in development of international FSC standards, personal interpretations of FSC standards and policies and other private interpretations in the FSC system.

5.7 Level 3: FSC National Office

A FSC National Office (NO) is typically a group of people, working towards the same objectives as FSC on an organisational basis.

FSC NOs have a multi-stakeholder governance structure, similar to that of FSC. FSC NOs are legally registered organisations. NOs and FSC have agreed to a collaboration contract, that identifies tasks and responsibilities of both parties. The contract includes an agreement of revenue sharing between FSC and the NO, and a work plan, report and evaluation organised per year. A National Office normally has the following responsibilities (individual differences may occur):

- Manage a financial sound, and professional FSC organisation, aligned in the Network and with FSC International;
- Align in organisational structure and in corporate strategies with FSC International
- Enhance FSC certification, and a consistent application of the FSC system in the country, in line with FSC's strategies;

- Develop a coordinated and professional approach to fundraising, where relevant in alliance with FSC International;
- Protect the intellectual property rights and licensing rights of FSC;
- Develop a annual work plan and agree to activities on a yearly base with FSC
- Be accountable for and transparent on the development and activities of the NO to FSC;
- Provide a consistent and correct interpretation to the use of the FSC systems in the country;
- Represent FSC in the country towards stakeholders and government;
- Enhance FSC membership and FSC certification in the country;
- Manage a corporate sector engagement plan (key accounts);
- Manage a communications plan in line with FSC's communication strategy;
- Manage a TSP program in line with FSC's strategy;
- Manage relationships with a Standard Development Group of Experts, setting a National Standard.

NOs may communicate existing interpretations of FSC policies and standards. NOs are normally not directly engaged in the development of international FSC standards. However; the comments of NOs on draft standards to PSU are highly appreciated and used to improve standards. An exception is the development of national standards and their interpretation, which is a direct engagement of the NO. Personal interpretations of international standards and policies, and other private interpretations in the FSC system are not in the field of work of a NO.

5.8 FSC National Offices versus Standard Development Group

Please note that it remains to be possible for FSC NOs to engage a (separate) Standard Development Group (SDG) of experts to develop and/or revise a National Standard in line with FSC Standard 60-006. A SDG can also operate in the absence of a National Office. This SDG cannot represent FSC, whether it is reporting to a National Office, or whether it is a stand-alone facility in a country without a FSC National Office in place. All SDG's will align with FSC's Policy and Standards Unit (PSU) at the International Centre and will not be coordinated by the FSC Network Unit. A SDG has a time-limited task, while a NO is a permanent FSC representation.

5.9 FSC National offices with sub regional responsibilities

A National Office can be asked by FSC to perform tasks in a sub region, wider than the country it is working in. It will be established on a needs basis, and discussed and agreed with the National Offices that will make use of the sub regional services, prior to the establishment of the agreement. The field of work will be agreed to on an individual basis with a NO, and will be accompanied by training and a specific contract.

National Offices with sub regional tasks will not be established before July 2012, as a second phase to the implementation of the Network Policy. Their roles and tasks will be further developed in the eligibility criteria in the Procedure for endorsement of Network Partners.

5.10 Support to Network Partners by Regional Offices

FSC will establish Regional Offices in 6 regions: Asia, Africa, CIS countries, Latin America, Europe and North America. These Regional Offices are branches of FSC International, placed in the region to better understand and service the regional needs of the FSC system. Regional Offices will develop strategic business plans and attached yearly activity plans, in

collaboration with the FSC Network in the region. Regional Offices also develop plans for those areas where FSC is not represented, set priorities in development within the region and represent FSC. Regional Offices develop specific projects, targeted to FSC development in the region and in good collaboration with the FSC Network. Regional Offices support training programs for Network Partners where appropriate and assist the Network in its work. FSC National Focal Points will refer questions from the stakeholders and governments in their area to Regional Offices (while FSC NOs (and to a lesser extent NRs) will likely answer these questions themselves).

Regional Offices team members are part of the FSC Network Unit. A Regional Director establishes the Regional Office and staffs it as appropriate and in line with the agreed strategic business plan.

5.11 Support from Network Unit at FSC International

The Network Unit at FSC International is responsible for coordination and strategic development of the Network. The Unit will remain to be a small unit; the support to the FSC Network is outsourced towards the Regional Offices. The Chief Advocacy Officer is part of the Network Unit.

The FSC Network Unit has 3 objectives:

- The strategic development and coordination of the FSC Network;
- Stakeholders engagement (in collaboration with National Offices and National Representatives);
- Government engagement (in collaboration with National Offices and National Representatives).

In the context of the strategic development, the Network Unit is responsible for:

- Development and implementation of the FSC Network policies and procedures;
- Design of a training program to support strategic development of the Network;
- Endorsement and contracting of Network Partners;
- Development of targets for Network Partners and handling of the yearly reports and attached revenues;
- Development of an evaluation system for Network Partners and FSC International;
- Organisation of worldwide representation of Network Partners in the FSC system (such as the Network Representative in the FSC Board of Directors);
- Communication facilitation within the Network;
- Advocacy and lobby coordination;
- Management of complaints from or about the Network ;
- Support to the collaboration between the FSC Network and FSC International ;
- Coordination of the Regional Offices;
- Support to identification of emerging markets and areas of special needs and allocate resources;
- Development and implementation of a robust and effective process for setting global system strategy and directing the allocation of financial resources;
- Development and implementation of a draft strategy for the FSC Network to expand and move toward a model of financial self-sufficiency ;
- Development and implementation of mechanisms by which FSC can ensure a high degree of performance, professionalism, and accountability among the Network Partners, the Regional Offices, and the International Center.

The Network Unit should be included in all communications between Network Partners and the International Centre on these subjects. Network Partners are expected to exercise their best judgment on when to include the Network Unit in communications on other matters.

5.12 Support from other units at FSC International

Other Units at FSC International⁴ will support the FSC Network in specific strategies and related activities. Examples are the Communication Strategy, the Key Account Management protocol. The units will develop and perform specific training within their work fields for the Network, based on a needs assessment. Strategies in their work fields will be developed through consultancy and collaboration with the network.

All policy and standard development and interpretation within the FSC system is centralised within the FSC Policy and Standards Unit.

6. Process

6.1 Next steps in the process of development of the Network system

In 2011, the Network Unit plans to make available:

- Eligibility criteria for Network Partners (a Procedure), in collaboration with PSU;
- Evaluation criteria for Network Partners;
- Performance monitoring systems;
- Contracts for NRs and NFPs;
- Draft strategy for financial self-sufficiency;
- Preparation for Regional Offices in Latin America, North America and Europe.

6.2 Contracting FSC National Representatives

The proposed arrangement in this policy will replace all earlier arrangements and contracts with Contact Persons. If we move into the direction of contracted FSC National Representatives, FSC needs to be able to organise this in a stepwise approach. NR's will therefore be established in tranches.

The first tranche (2011) will prioritise the establishment of contracted National Representatives (NR's) in Africa and Asia, since FSC is under-established in those two regions. In the first tranche, FSC will seek to establish 4 contracted NR's in Africa, 1 in CIS and 3 NR's in Asia.

Initial criteria for selecting priority countries to install National Representations are:

1. Strategic need for development of a FSC representation in the country; and
2. Opportunity to have quick results when installing a formal FSC representation with respect to certification of forest, forest area and competition, political or business opportunities; and
3. Risk of absence of FSC representation in the country; and
4. Financial capacity of FSC in 2011.

6.3 Installation of FSC National Representatives in 2011 and overview of Network partners

Regional Directors have prioritised the area in their regions for the first tranche. This has led to the decision by the FSC Network Director that National Representatives will be installed or endorsed in Cameroon, China, Congo, DRC, Gabon, India, Indonesia, South Africa and Ukraine, as first priority countries, where possible.

⁴ Other units in the International Centre are: Marketing and Communication Unit, Business Development Unit, Policy and Standards Unit. The Operational departments under the Chief Operations Officer (finances, Human Resources, IT) will also be included in this.

Note that all contracts for Contract Persons will be no longer valid from 1 June 2011. If Standard Working Groups have not yet signed a contract as a National Office, they will be asked to apply for this when the new Procedures for applications have been agreed with the Network Partners, and are published (expected date: April 2012).

A formal application procedure will be part of the establishment process of contracted and financially supported National Representatives.

A formal applications procedure for Network Partners to enter the system or to enhance within the system with clear and detailed criteria will be discussed and installed before the April of 2012.

6.4 Contracts

Contracts for FSC National Representatives and National Focal Points will be available for the FSC Network from end of May 2011 on.

6.5 Evaluation

The strategic transition and the sequential system will be evaluated in 2014.