

## FSC INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

Structure, content and local adaptation of Generic Forest Stewardship Standards

FSC-STD-20-002 (V3-0) EN



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**STRUCTURE, CONTENT AND LOCAL ADAPTATION OF GENERIC FOREST  
STEWARDSHIP STANDARDS**

FSC-STD-20-002 (V3-0) EN

FINAL VERSION

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 where the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations

## Foreword

The FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship provide an internationally recognised standard for responsible forest management. However, any international standard for forest management needs to be adapted at the national or sub-national level in order to reflect the diverse legal, social and geographical conditions of forests in different parts of the world. The FSC Principles and Criteria therefore require the addition of indicators that are adapted to national or sub-national conditions in order to be implemented at the forest management unit (FMU) level. The FSC Principles and Criteria together with a set of such indicators accredited by FSC constitute an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard.

The objectives of this standard are to improve consistency and transparency in certification decisions between different certification bodies and in different parts of the world, and thereby to enhance the credibility of the FSC certification scheme as a whole.

This standard defines a hierarchical framework which ensures that all FSC Forest Stewardship Standards can be audited in a consistent manner, providing replicable results. This standard also specifies the requirements for certification bodies to adapt their generic standards to local conditions in countries where there is not yet an FSC approved regional, national or sub-national Forest Stewardship Standard.

The FSC certification system is designed to be accessible in all countries of the world and to avoid discrimination against forest managers in countries that have not yet developed an FSC-accredited Forest Stewardship Standard.

In areas in which there is not yet an FSC-accredited Forest Stewardship Standard certification bodies may therefore carry out certification according to their own 'generic' standards, adapted to account for the local conditions in the country or region in which they are to be used with input from local stakeholders.

The process of local adaptation of the certification body's generic standard is not designed to be a substitute for the process for developing an FSC regional, national or sub-national Forest Stewardship Standard. Nevertheless it allows examples of forest certification in a country. Such examples can be useful tools for explaining and demonstrating the potential benefits as well as the limits of forest certification. Finally, the discussion and consultation surrounding the development and implementation of a locally adapted standard can act as a catalyst for the longer and more complex process of developing an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard based on national debate and support.

Consistency with *FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship* is ensured through conformity with this standard.

The objective local adaptation of certification body generic forest stewardship standards is to ensure that the certification body has identified any forest stewardship issues which are considered difficult or controversial in the region concerned and has determined, in consultation with local stakeholders and prior to the audit itself, how such issues should be evaluated for the purpose of certification.

## Note on use of this standard

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

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## A Scope

This standard shall apply to certification body generic certification standards used as the basis for FSC certification.

This International Standard shall be used as a normative document for FSC accreditation.

## B Standard effective date

This standard becomes effective on **01 January 2010**.

**New applicant certification bodies** that apply for accreditation after the effective date of this standard shall be audited against the requirements of this standard.

**Existing applicant certification bodies** in the process of accreditation at the effective date shall switch to the requirements of this standard before accreditation is granted.

**FSC accredited certification bodies** shall be in compliance with the requirements of this standard by 01 January 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-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship*

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

*FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF Eligibility Criteria*

*FSC-STD-20-001 The application of ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996 (E) by FSC accredited certification bodies*

*FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluations*

*FSC-GUI-60-100 Guidance on interpretation of the FSC Principles and Criteria taking account of the scale and intensity of forest management.*

*FSC-GUI-20-002 FSC Forest Stewardship Standards: structure, content and suggested indicators.*

### **FSC normative documents replaced by this version of the standard:**

*FSC-STD-20-003 V2-1 Local Adaptation of Certification Body Generic Forest Stewardship Standards*

## D Terms and definitions

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

### **FSC Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship (P&C)**

The 10 Principles and associated Criteria specified in the FSC document 'FSC Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship' (FSC-STD-01-001).

### **Forest Stewardship Standard (referred to as 'standard' in this document)**

The normative document which specifies the requirements with which a forest management enterprise must conform in order to obtain FSC certification. Such a standard must include the exact language of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship, together with

the additional indicators necessary to permit implementation at the level of the forest management unit.

**Principle**

An essential rule or element; in FSC's case, of forest stewardship.

**Criterion (pl. criteria)**

A means of judging whether or not a Principle (of Forest Management) has been fulfilled.

**Indicator**

A quantitative or qualitative variable which can be measured or described, and which provides a means of judging whether a forest management unit complies with the requirements of an FSC Criterion. Indicators and the associated thresholds thereby define the requirements for responsible forest management at the level of the forest management unit and are the primary basis of forest evaluation.

**Means of verification**

A potential source of information or evidence that allows an auditor to evaluate conformity with an indicator.

**Verbal forms for the expression of provisions**

[Adapted from *ISO/IEC Directives Part 2: Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards*]

“*shall*”: indicates requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform to the standard.

“*should*”: indicates that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required. A certification body can meet these requirements in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated and justified.

“*may*”: indicates a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.

“*can*” is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or causal.

## **PART 1: STRUCTURE AND CONTENT**

### **1 FSC Hierarchical Framework**

- 1.1 The certification body generic standard shall be structured as a hierarchy of Principles, Criteria and associated indicators.

### **2 Content**

- 2.1 The certification body generic standard shall include the exact wording of each FSC Principle and each FSC Criterion, in the same order as they occur in *FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship*.
- 2.2 The certification body generic standard shall clearly identify the certification body and shall include a reference to the requirement for local adaptation prior to its use (see Part 2: *Local adaptation of certification body Generic Forest Stewardship Standards*)
- 2.3 The certification body generic standard shall comply with the latest versions of all approved FSC policies, standards, directives, guidelines and advice notes that apply to the interpretation of the FSC Principles and Criteria, as published on the official FSC website, and subject to relevant guidance from FSC in relation to standards effective dates.

### **3 Indicators**

- 3.1 The certification body generic standard shall specify indicator(s) for every criterion in accordance to the requirements of this standard.
- 3.2 When an FSC Criterion includes several requirements, associated indicators shall be developed for each requirement.
- 3.3 Each indicator shall specify outcomes or levels (i.e. thresholds) of performance that are measurable during an evaluation.

NOTE: An indicator may specify as a requirement that a particular procedure has been defined and documented, but such a requirement shall then be accompanied by the further requirement for evidence of implementation and an indication of the expected outcome in the forest management unit.

NOTE: An indicator may be specified in terms of an aspect to be measured together with a number of different thresholds that are applicable in different geographical, tenure or social situations within the geographical scope of the standard (e.g. different thresholds may be defined depending on the size of the forest management unit, or on the intensity of management being carried out within the unit).

- 3.4 Indicators shall not be defined in terms of design or descriptive characteristics, and shall not favour a particular technology or patented item.
- 3.5 Indicators shall only include elements that contribute to the achievement of the objective of the applicable FSC Criterion.
- 3.6 The meaning of the indicators and the level of performance required to comply with the indicators should be clear to the reader.
- 3.7 Each indicator shall refer to a single aspect of performance to be evaluated.

- 3.8 Indicators should be free from subjective elements. The use of such phrases as “ordinarily”, “substantial”, “proactive”, “appropriate to”, “minimize”, “wherever possible”, “thorough” or “best available” should be avoided.
- 3.9 Indicators should be easy to measure at a reasonable cost.
- 3.10 The certification body generic standard shall be written using a clear and consistent vocabulary.
- 3.11 The certification body generic standard should include examples of means of verification for every indicator.

NOTE: Means of verification are not normative. They do not define thresholds for conformity, but indicate potential sources of information or evidence that an auditor may find useful in evaluating conformity, such as records, documents, field observations or interviews.

- 3.12 Indicators shall apply to all forests covered by the scope of the standard, including small or lower intensity managed forests, unless otherwise specified.

#### **4 Numbering**

- 4.1 The numbering of Principles and Criteria within the standard shall be the same as in *FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship*.
- 4.2 Indicators shall be numbered with the initial numbers of the relevant FSC Criterion, followed by numbering for each indicator within the criterion. Indicators may be sub-divided when this is considered useful, with the sub-divisions listed, etc. (see Box 1).

#### **Box 1**

##### **Criterion 5.3**

**Indicator 5.3.1:**

**Indicator 5.3.2:**

**Indicator 5.3.3**

**5.3.3.1:**

**5.3.3.2:**

**5.3.3.3:**

#### **5 Revision**

- 5.1 The certification body shall revise their generic standard at least annually to bring it into conformity with any new or revised FSC policies, standards, directives, guidance or advice notes subsequently approved by FSC.



## **PART 2: Local adaptation of Certification Body Generic Forest Stewardship Standards**

### **6 Adaptation Process**

6.1 The certification body shall seek broad stakeholder comments on the adaptation of its generic standard to the area in which it is planned to be used. Stakeholder consultation shall be conducted in accordance to Section 7 below.

6.2 The certification body shall translate its generic standard, including the FSC Principles and Criteria as well as the certification body's generic indicators and means of verification (if applicable) into an official language of the country in which the forest management unit to be evaluated is located, or into a language that is more commonly spoken in the environs of the forest management unit to be evaluated, and shall make the translated generic standard publicly available on the certification body's website at the start of the formal consultation period.

NOTE: The certification body may carry out an initial adaptation of its generic standard prior to translation, or may use a previous, locally adapted generic standard from the same region as the starting point for consultation.

6.3 The certification body shall allow stakeholders a formal consultation period of at least sixty (60) days for the submission of comments at the first-time consultation of their generic forest stewardship standard in a certain country. For repeated consultations in the same country (for different clients), this formal consultation period shall at least be thirty (30) days. Each consultation period shall be followed by a period of at least ten (10) working days for the certification body to evaluate and incorporate the comments into the generic standard before publishing the resulting locally adapted generic standard on the website.

NOTE: the consultation period is defined to ensure conformity of the certification body's process with consultation requirements as specified in the *ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards*.

6.4 The certification body shall complete the process of local adaptation of its generic standard, and publish the resulting locally adapted generic forest stewardship standard on its website in an official language of the country in which it is to be used, at least one (1) month prior to the start of the main evaluation site visits if it was the first adaptation process of the certification body's generic standard in a certain country, or otherwise prior to the main evaluation site visits.

6.5 In the case of operations meeting the requirements for a mandatory pre-evaluation as specified in *FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0* Clause 3.1.1, the locally adapted generic standard shall be finalised and published at least one (1) month prior to the start of the main evaluation site visits.

6.6 The certification body shall review its generic forest stewardship standard to:

- a) identify any aspects of its standard that may be in conflict with legal requirements in the area in which the standard is to be used, and if such a conflict is identified evaluate it for the purposes of certification in discussion with the involved or affected parties;

NOTE: Conflicts only occur where a legal obligation prevents the implementation of some aspect of the generic standard. It is not considered a

conflict if the requirements of the generic standard exceed the minimum requirements for legal compliance.

- b) identify any aspects of its generic standard which specify performance thresholds lower than the minimum legal requirement in the country concerned. If any such differences are identified the relevant thresholds shall be modified to ensure that they meet or exceed the minimum legal requirements;
  - c) add specific indicators (with appropriate means of verification if required) and/or cross-references to the identified documentation to evaluate conformity with key requirements of the national and local forest laws, administrative requirements and multilateral environmental agreements related to the FSC Principles and Criteria.
- 6.7 The certification body shall modify or add to the indicators and/or means of verification of its generic standard in order to:
- a) take account of the national context with regards to forest management;
  - b) take account of national environmental, social and economic perspectives;
  - c) ensure that the standard is applicable and practical in the country concerned;
  - d) ensure that the standard is applicable and practical to the size and intensity of management of the Forest Management Unit concerned;
  - e) address specific issues that are of general concern to any stakeholder group in the country concerned if applicable in the context of the standard.
- 6.8 The certification body is not required to seek or develop a consensus with stakeholders regarding its modification of its generic standard (also see Clause 7.4). The certification body shall make meaningful accommodation of stakeholder concerns. The certification body should be guided in this by:
- a) its knowledge of the indicators and means of verification that have been included in other, FSC-accredited, regional, national or sub-national standards, with regard to the issues raised;
  - b) advice provided in writing by the FSC-endorsed working group in the country concerned as to the likelihood that a proposed modification would have the support of the majority of the members of each chamber of an FSC working group active in that country;
  - c) advice provided in writing by an FSC Regional Office covering the country concerned, as to the likelihood that a proposed modification would have the support for the majority of FSC members of each chamber in the region.
  - d) Guidance provided in *FSC-GUI-60-100 'Guidance on interpretation of the FSC Principles and Criteria taking account of the scale and intensity of forest management'*;
  - e) Consideration of any FSC-approved advice on the implementation of the FSC Principles and Criteria and other applicable FSC normative documents, and of any FSC approved 'recommended' or 'best practice' indicators.

- 6.9 The certification body should be able to demonstrate that the requirements of its locally adapted generic standard are broadly in line with the requirements of other FSC-accredited national standards applicable to similar forest types in the eco-region, and with any guidance received from an FSC National Initiative in the country concerned.
- 6.10 The certification body shall prepare a short report listing the main issues related to the standard where stakeholders have sustained disagreement with the adapted generic standard or where significant differences of opinion about appropriate indicators were expressed by stakeholders, and explaining the basis on which the certification body made its decision in relation to these indicators. The report shall be attached as an annex to the published standard.

## **7 Stakeholder consultations**

- 7.1 The certification body shall use consultation methods which are appropriate to the consulted stakeholder group(s).
- 7.2 The certification body shall contact at least the following stakeholders in the country concerned, at least six (6) weeks prior to the evaluation of any forest management unit taking place:
- a) Any FSC National Initiative in the country;
  - b) Any registered national committee or working group that is developing national forestry standards;
  - c) The state forest service;
  - d) National NGOs that are involved or have an interest in respect of social or environmental aspects of forest management, either at the national level, or at the sub-national level in the environs of the forest to be evaluated;
  - e) Representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities that are involved or have an interest in forest management either at the national level, or at the sub-national level in the environs of the forest to be evaluated;
  - f) Representatives of forest workers;
  - g) Representatives of forest harvesting industry / forest owners associations;
  - h) Forest research and education institutions;
  - i) Forest industries and associations.
- 7.3 The certification body shall identify and contact any FSC-accredited National Initiative or FSC registered Standards Development Group (see *FSC-STD-60-006*) that is working on the development of a forest stewardship standard, and shall review and take into account any publicly available draft version of the standard(s) under development.

NOTE: In terms of process in developing a locally adapted standard, the certification body may incorporate elements from the draft standard into their generic standard or

vice versa, what matters is that the final result of the adaptation process is in conformity with the requirements specified in Part 1 of this standard.

NOTE: The certification body may contact FSC on the status of draft standards under development.

- 7.4 The certification body may seek the agreement of an FSC-accredited National Initiative or registered Standards Development Group within the territory covered by the scope of the adapted standard and engage the group in conducting the consultation on the Generic Standard where applicable. Approval by the group is a means to demonstrate that there is no sustained objection to the indicators as adapted.

## **8 Records**

- 8.1 The certification body shall keep the following records:
- a) lists of individuals/organisations invited to comment on the generic standard;
  - b) copies of all correspondence and/or comments received with respect to potential modifications of the generic standard;
  - c) copies of all national standards, draft standards or other sources of information taken into account in order to modify the generic standard.

## **9 The adapted Standard**

### **Scope and reference**

- 9.1 The locally adapted standard shall specify the area to which it may be applied.

NOTE: The area may be defined in terms of a country or part of a country, and may be limited to a specific forest type at the discretion of the certification body.

- 9.2 The locally adapted standard shall include a version number and the date of finalisation.
- 9.3 The locally adapted standard shall comply with all applicable approved FSC international policies, standards, directives, guidelines and advice notes.

### **Legal compliance**

- 9.4 The certification body shall identify and include as annexes to the standard:
- a) a list of national and local forest laws and administrative requirements which apply in the country or region in which the standard is to be used;
  - b) a list of multilateral environmental agreements and ILO Conventions that the country has ratified, relevant to the standard;
  - c) a list of, or reference to official lists of, endangered species in the country or region in which the standard is to be used.

### **Review and revision**

- 9.5 The certification body shall not be required to make further changes to the locally adapted standard used for an evaluation during the period of validity of the certificate

except as necessary to bring it into conformity with any new or revised FSC policies, standards, directives, guidance or advice notes subsequently approved by FSC.

- 9.6 The certification body shall continue to maintain records of all comments submitted with respect to the locally adapted standard, and may, at its discretion, modify the standard in order to bring it closer into line with the requirements of other FSC-accredited national standards, or in line with additional guidance received from an FSC National Initiative in the country concerned.

**Re-structuring for use in the forest**

- 9.7 FSC-accredited forest stewardship standards may be re-structured by the certification body in order to facilitate implementation in the forest.
- 9.8 Restructuring shall have no effect on the requirements for conformity or decision making, and in the event of a complaint or appeal the complete standard shall be considered definitive.
- 9.9 The standard may include guidance notes to help auditors, forest managers or others in using the standard. Such guidance notes or applicability notes may be included as annexes to the standard, or be published as separate documents. In all cases the standard shall state that guidance or applicability notes shall not be normative.

**10 Replacement by an FSC-approved regional, national or sub-national Forest Stewardship Standard**

- 10.1 When a regional, national or sub-national Forest Stewardship Standard is approved by the FSC such a standard shall replace any locally adapted generic standard previously used by the certification body in the area to which it applies according to the standard effective date specified in the approved standard.