



**FORESTS  
FOR ALL  
FOREVER**<sup>TM</sup>

# Code of conduct

February 2019





# Introduction

This code comes from our core values, which state what is important for us and how that needs to reflect on the way we work together.

We are a truly international operator with strong, diverse, and sometimes unaligned views, with national presences with varying local realities at the very core of our system. This is an interesting and exciting environment, yet it also means that navigating and coordinating between these worlds can be challenging at times. However, we are all about challenges; challenging others and ourselves always to do a bit better, not being satisfied with just minimum compliance. This is also true for the way we need to work together.

## When and to whom does this code apply?

The code applies to FSC® international members, FSC external staff and consultants working on behalf of FSC.

This code is intended as a guidance for behaviour and actions in all FSC work settings. This includes FSC events, such as the FSC General Assembly; FSC working or project groups, such as those revising standards and procedures; and any other activities related to working with FSC.

In some cases, local practices - for example at an event in a specific region - may be in conflict with this code. However, as people working towards a common goal within the FSC system, we are still expected to adhere to this code.

You might not find answers to all situations that arise, but this code aims to give a good foundation to use good judgement in what you do and how to work in the FSC setting.

# FSC Values from the Global Strategic Plan 2015-2020:

## Embrace Diversity

FSC creates an environment of inclusiveness, tolerance, fairness, and mutual trust. This includes a recognition that peoples of the world live under a range of cultures and paradigms related to forest management, all of which deserve understanding and inclusion.

## Conserve Nature

FSC ensures that our activities serve to protect and restore natural processes in a holistic manner, thereby maintaining and enhancing ecological functions and the productive capacity of ecosystems.

## Empower People

FSC promotes equitable participation in decision-making and the empowerment of workers, Indigenous Peoples, communities, smallholders, women and other under-represented groups.

## Realize Rights

FSC upholds and promotes protection and implementation of the internationally recognized rights of people and communities, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples, women, and workers. This is critical to our uniqueness.

# Foreword

Every day we work with issues related to sustainability, including respect for people and the environment, and operating responsibly in the world. It might be self-evident that we should have the same standards when working with each other. As an organization that also promotes transparency, we should also be very clear on how we uphold these values in our everyday work and how we encounter each other.

The trust for the work FSC does lies in our structure, robust standards development, and assurance systems. It also grows from within the system: and from the way we work together, how we present ourselves to the world, and everything we do and say. This trust is fragile, and easily lost if we are not paying attention. We can only make a difference in the forests of the world if we are perceived worthy of this trust in all aspects of our work.

We ask a lot from others and we should ask a lot from ourselves as well. The only way we can lead the change is to lead by example. We have a common goal we work towards. This code is a tool to give direction on how to ensure we have the foundations to achieve this goal through the way work together.



**Rulita Wijayaningdyah**  
FSC International Board, Chairperson



**Kim Carstensen**  
FSC Director General

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## Embrace Diversity

At FSC, we work for a shared cause by coming together, carrying varying backgrounds, from different cultures and all parts of the world. That is one of our structural strengths and that is a big part of what makes working for and participating in FSC activities so interesting.

Encourage and embrace this diversity and be mindful of this diversity among colleagues and peers. Show consideration for different cultures and traditions by demonstrating cultural sensitivity. Remember, that what might be normal for you might not be normal for another person.

Enhance tolerance, inclusion and mutual trust in all your actions and exchanges.

## Show respect

Deeply embedded in the FSC culture is our respect for people and the environment, and this is the basis to overcome individual differences and work towards our common mission and goals.

Individuals and organizations with different needs and viewpoints coming together to discuss ways forward is at the very core of FSC. Diversity of opinions is the inherent nature of our organization and what makes us strong.

We need to be respectful of this fact and cherish it to harness the strength in it. You can do this by allowing space for everyone to voice their views and by listening carefully; by keeping a respectful tone in discussions, even if others are presenting views or ideas that differ from yours; and by acting in ways that create an atmosphere in which everyone feels that their skills and views are valued.

## Promote equality

At FSC, we recognize the worth and equal value of all people. We do not discriminate or treat others differently based on a person's, colour, ethnicity, nationality, origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, belief or other similar status.

We promote equitable participation and opportunities in all work activities, just like we ask certificate holders to do, according to our principles and criteria.

This you can demonstrate, for example, by having equitable selection for all processes from working groups to speakers in events, and by ensuring inclusion and participation on decision making at all levels.

## No harassment

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in any FSC work settings. Everyone working for or participating in FSC activities must be ensured a safe physical and psychological environment.

What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwelcome verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour that affronts the identity, personality, dignity or physical integrity of an individual or group of individuals, or that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Harassment can be general or sexual in nature. Examples of general harassment include public or private tirades, and threatening or insulting oral or written comments.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour or other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This could include unwanted contact, suggestive remarks or displaying suggestive pictures or gestures.

Harassment can take many formats and examples provided here do not form an exhaustive list.

It is important to remember that what may not be offensive to one person may seriously offend another, particularly one of a different age, from a different culture or in a more vulnerable position in the organization.

With all types of inappropriate behaviour, the key factor is the impact created and not the intention of the individual.

There is a zero tolerance of physical violence or threat of violence in all work settings in FSC.

## Avoid conflicts of interest

When performing FSC work, avoid situations where you might be perceived as having a conflict of interest. These are any situations in which your personal interest clashes with the interests of FSC. If it even appears that you have a personal bias that might make it difficult to stay impartial in discussions or decision making, this could be questioned and could undermine the credibility of the system.

If you are not sure if you have a conflict of interest or not, it is always best to disclose the possible conflict for evaluation. Many times, it is possible to find ways to avoid conflicts of interest if they are known beforehand, for example by recusing oneself from decision making on a topic. Examples of a conflicting situation could be a selection process of service providers or a hiring decision when there is a close connection between the incumbent and decision maker.

## No bribery

Do not offer or accept any bribes of money or any other format. Be mindful about accepting gifts or invitations that might be foreseen as buying favour. You may also have specific internal guidelines on accepting gifts to rely on. As with the conflict of interest, the appearance of improper influencing of decision making within FSC is harmful to our credibility.





## Respect property

Be responsible and scrupulous in the correct use of FSC funds, equipment, facilities and information.

FSC provides facilities, tools and equipment to do our work well. Be responsible in your use of these resources and do not be wasteful with them. The same is true for any funds you are provided with for FSC work, be those for projects, travel, procurements or other purposes. Be mindful of how they are spent to make sure the limited resources are efficiently used.

FSC's intellectual property rights - our trademarks, copyrights, and data - are among our most valuable assets. Unauthorized use can lead to their loss or serious loss of value. Protect these rights and do not misuse them.

## Protect the environment

FSC sets an example of how organizations can work in a way that respects and protects nature. This aspiration must be present in all levels of our work, from high level decision making to organizing events, from procurement practices to our everyday actions. Be conscious to embed environmental impact considerations of your actions in all aspects of your work and participation in FSC. Legal and regulatory compliance is not enough; always aim higher.

Ask yourself these questions, for example: Can event materials be FSC certified? Could the meeting be arranged in a sustainability conscious venue? Is an in-person meeting necessary, or could we cut back on travel? Or could we at least apply travel compensation, such as carbon offsetting - for the travel we cannot avoid?

## Maintain strong work ethics

We are all expected to adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour. This means you should carry out your tasks and responsibilities to the highest standard, taking ownership of them and following through. Commit to the FSC roles you agree to and take responsibility for your actions. Be in a fit state to work when performing your duties.

Have FSC's value and our shared goal in mind in all interactions and decisions you participate in or carry out.

Always uphold integrity; do the right thing even if no-one is watching.

## Guard our reputation

If speaking for FSC is not part of your job description, do not speak for FSC in public. If you are approached by journalists or anyone else in a public or official capacity for statements on behalf of FSC, direct them to the person or entity who is entitled to speak for FSC. This could be, for example, an assigned communications person or an events' organizer.

As an organization of global outreach and diversity, our individual or collective behaviour will reflect on how we are seen by others and can have an impact on the overall FSC reputation.

Being part of the FSC system, we all represent FSC with any statements we give and any public interaction we engage in. Be mindful of this at all times, be it giving presentations, participating in public discussions or posting on social media.



## Voice concerns

FSC is committed to creating an environment where individuals feel comfortable to raise concerns in good will about potential violations of this code. Anyone who raises issues of violations, is safe from any retaliation from FSC.

If you do experience or witness situations where you think the code has been violated, you are encouraged to speak up and raise a concern. You can contact FSC through different routes. As a staff member, you can contact your supervisor, human resources, or senior staff. FSC members can contact their assigned contact person in the global or regional offices.

How to determine if something is a violation of this code?

It is not possible to mention all instances in this document.

As a general guidance, you can ask yourself the following questions:

- Is it legal?
- Is it in line with FSC's values, codes and policies?
- Would it be fine to have the action published openly?

If you answer "No" to or if you are unsure about any of these questions, you can check the situation with the contact people above or with owners of the codes or practices.



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