



Forest Stewardship Council®

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# Conversion Remedy Procedure

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Draft 2-0

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**DRAFT 2-0**

The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organization established to promote 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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## Introduction

FSC has developed this conversion remedy procedure to incentivize global commitments towards restoration of degraded and converted forests, by enabling responsible forest owners and forest managers to enter global markets upon demonstration of remedy actions. This procedure provides remedy requirements in line with international best practices with a primary focus to remedy harm caused by conversion of natural forests, and the people that depend on them.

Since the global awakening that occurred in the early 1990's that led to the establishment of FSC and the increasing urgency of preventing further losses of forests, biodiversity and critical ecosystems, FSC has taken a strong position of discouraging further conversion. In terms of past conversion, FSC applies the requirements of standards that were in place at that time. Considering FSC was not established until 1994 and acknowledging the difficulties of assessing historical harm caused prior to 1994, FSC does not require any remediation for conversion that happened prior to November 1994. With the introduction of this procedure, FSC requires that harm caused by conversion of natural forests between November 1994 and October 2021, and High Conservation Value Forests based upon the adoption of the Policy for Association between 2009 and 2021 shall be remedied. Evidence of remedy progress must be present and auditable prior to applying for FSC forest management certification and/or association.

## A Objective

The objective of this procedure is to define permanent, equitable and effective measures required for remediation of social and environmental harm caused by past conversion.

## B Scope

This procedure applies to organizations that were directly or indirectly involved in conversion that occurred after November 1994 and before October 2021 and that seek to remedy harm caused by this conversion.

Conformity with this procedure provides a pathway to remedy for environmental and social harm caused by the conversion for organizations that seek:

- Association against FSC-POL-01-004 Policy for Association; and/or
- FSC certification against *National Forest Stewardship Standards or Interim National Standards*; or
- FSC certification against FSC-STD-30-010 *Controlled Wood Standard for FM enterprises*.

This procedure does not apply to:

- Conversion that took place prior to 1994, or
- Any area that was under FSC forest management certification at the time of this procedure becoming effective, or
- Organizations that were associated with FSC based on PfA requirements in effect at the time of this procedure becoming effective.

## C Effective and validity dates

Approval date	xx
Publication date	xx
Effective date	xx

Valid until replaced or withdrawn.

## D References

The following referenced documents are relevant for the application of this document. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

FSC-POL-01-004 *Policy for Association*

FSC-POL-01-007 *FSC Policy on Conversion*

FSC-STD-01-001 *FSC Principles and Criteria*

FSC-STD-01-002 *FSC Glossary of Terms*

FSC-STD-60-004 *International Generic Indicators (IGI)*

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

FSC-STD-30-010 *Controlled Wood standard for FM enterprises*

FSC-STD-40-005 *Requirements for Sourcing FSC Controlled Wood*

FSC-PRO-60-002a *FSC National Risk Assessment Framework*

FSC-PRO-30-006 *Ecosystem Services Procedure*

FSC-GUI-30-003 *FSC Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)*

## E Version History

Draft 0-0 was developed by FSC Motion 7 Technical Working Group (TWG) technical coordinator on 15 Jan 2020.

Draft 0-1 was developed considering input from the Technical Working Group (TWG) during their first Face to Face meeting.

Draft 0-2 was developed considering revisions made by the Technical Working Group (TWG) to draft 0-1 to reflect the views of the Group Members and to refine definitions based on common definitions used in remedy actions, include Policy requirements for amalgamation and small-scale smallholders. Adding in initial requirements for chain of custody / controlled wood and Policy for Association.

Draft 0-3 was developed to considering revisions made by the Technical Working Group, including changes to the *conversion threshold*\* to consider HCV and changes to the remedy action. Other changes were primarily grammar and formatting changes.

Draft 0-4 was developed considering revisions made by the Technical Working Group to develop draft 1-0, finalizing outstanding questions on the draft. This also included formatting and terminology changes to align with FSC standard practices.

Draft 1-0 was developed considering final input from the Technical Working Group and includes updates to the definitions and moving sections to enable the remedy procedure to focus on actual remedy of harm.

Draft 1-1 was developed considering revisions made to Terms and Definitions following input from consultation and to align definitions with the conversion policy.

Draft 1-2 was developed considering revisions made to the Terms and Definitions based on input from the public consultation, and to split the Baseline Assessment into social and environmental assessments.

Draft 1-3 was developed considering revisions made to Baseline Assessments, Analysis of the of these baselines, site selection and determination for remedy, and the Concept Note considering input from the public consultations.

Draft 1-4 – was developed considering revisions made to the Remedy Plan section covering the development of thresholds for initial consideration for association with FSC and a grievance mechanism considering input from public consultations.

Draft 1-5 – was developed considering revisions made to sections covering the Concept Note, Remedy Plan development and implementation sections of the procedure considering input from the public consultations.

Draft 1-6 – was developed considering revisions to sections covering Remedy Plan development and implementation sections of the procedure considering input from public consultations.

Draft 1-7 – was developed to finalize the definitions and Part 1.

Draft 1-8 - was developed to finalize Part 2 of the procedure.

Draft 1-9 – was developed to finalize Part 3, 4 and 5 of the procedure.

Draft 1-10 – was developed to finalize Part 6.

Draft 1-11 – was developed considering input from the Technical Working Group (TWG) during their second intensive discussion week.

Draft 1-12 – was developed to add considerations for association with FSC.

Draft 1-13 – was developed to add conversion threshold diagram.

Draft 1-14 – was developed to finalize input from the Technical Working Group prior to public consultation.

Draft 2-0 – was developed to finalize formatting and language requirements by PSU.

### **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 document.

“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.

“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: General requirements

Part 1 introduces the general requirements of the conversion remedy procedure and basic principles for applying the procedure within the FSC system. It also outlines requirements for the establishment of a grievance system for *affected stakeholders\** and *affected rights holders\** prior to entering Part 2 baseline assessment.

### 1. General principles

- 1.1. *Organization\** that was *directly or indirectly involved\** in *significant conversion\** after November 1994 and before October 2021 are eligible to associate with FSC upon demonstrated conformity with this procedure.
- 1.2. *Organization\** that was *directly or indirectly involved\** in *conversion\** on the *Management Unit (MU)\** after November 1994 and before October 2021 are eligible for FSC forest management certification <sup>1</sup> of that *MU\** upon demonstrated conformity with this procedure, following a conversion-free period of five years after the last *conversion\**.

**NOTE:** in the five years conversion-free period, the *organization\** may start implementing the remedy process.

#### Explanatory box for clause 1.1 and 1.2

The Working Group (WG) developing the conversion policy did not reach consensus on Principle 3 related to the remedy of harm caused by past conversion and proposed 2 options instead. Information on the latest draft of conversion policy is available [here](#). The difference between the 2 options relates to organizations not involved in conversion and is highlighted in red in the tables below.

Principle 3 related to conversion occurred between Nov 1994 and effective date of conversion policy			
Purpose	<i>Organization*</i>	<i>Natural forests*</i>	
FM Certification of <i>MU*</i>	<i>Organization*</i> involved in <i>conversion*</i> in the <i>MU*</i>	<i>Remedy*</i>	
	<i>Organization*</i> <u>not involved</u> in <i>conversion*</i> in the <i>MU*</i>	Option 1: No restriction Option 2: Remedy for <i>social harm*</i>	
Purpose	<i>Organization*</i>	<i>Natural forests*</i>	HCV forests
<i>Association*</i> with FSC	<i>Organization*</i> involved in <i>significant conversion*</i> within their group of affiliated organizations	<i>Remedy*</i>	<i>Remedy*</i>

The conversion remedy procedure Version 1-0 Draft 2-0 is developed based on those parts of principles 3 for which the WG reached consensus. Following this 2<sup>nd</sup> public consultation, the conversion remedy procedure will be updated based on the finalized conversion policy. Further information on the finalization of conversion policy is available in the consultation materials and on the policy webpage [here](#).

<sup>1</sup> This refers to certification against National Forest Stewardship Standard, Interim National Standard or FSC-STD-30-010 Controlled Wood Standard for FM enterprises.

- 1.3. The *organization\** applying for FSC forest management certification shall use the *conversion threshold\** (or an FSC approved nationally adapted threshold) to determine whether the vegetation cover change constitutes *conversion\** according to the FSC Policy on Conversion and triggers the application of this procedure (see Annex 1 for further details on *conversion threshold\**).
- 1.4. *Small-scale small holders\** are not required to conform with this procedure for the certification of a *MU\** of less than 50 hectares (these 50 hectares may be defined to a smaller area in a national standard development process), and when they can demonstrate that they:
- depend on the land for most of their livelihood, and / or
  - employ labor mostly from their family or neighboring communities.

## 2. Formal requirements

- 2.1. The *organization\** shall sign a written agreement with FSC, prior to undertaking the *remedy\** process, subjecting themselves and their *remedy\** process to the FSC Dispute Resolution System to manage *complaints\** associated with this procedure. This shall include a commitment by the *organization\** to the FSC Mission.
- 2.2. The ultimate responsibility for the plan, implementation, and delivery of *conservation\** outcomes and social benefits shall rest with the *organization\**.
- 2.3. The *organization\** shall establish a *culturally appropriate\** grievance mechanism for *affected stakeholders\** and *affected rights holders\** prior to conducting the baseline assessment. The Grievance Mechanism shall:
- a. include written procedures, methodologies for providing access to grievance resolution during the *remedy\** process;
  - b. have a clear, transparent structure;
  - c. ensure that its outcomes and remedies meet internationally recognized human rights standards and are based on *Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)\** processes.
- 2.4. The *organization\** shall:
- a. ensure *affected stakeholders\** are aware of and informed appropriately about the grievance mechanism and its use in practice;
  - b. ensure records are kept of grievances, indicating timing and status of response to grievances;
  - c. provide for dialogue and engagement, focusing on processes of direct and if needed mediated dialogue to seek agreed solutions, leaving adjudication to independent third-party mechanisms, whether judicial or non-judicial, and where necessary, be reviewed and revised.



## Part 2: Baseline assessment and proposed remedy action

Part 2 introduces the requirements of a baseline assessment to identify, in consultation with *affected rights holders\**, *affected stakeholders\** and experts, the social and environmental harm caused by *conversion\**. The analysis of assessment results will be used to determine site and actions needed to remedy the environmental and *social harm\**.

**Note:** The requirements for the social and environmental baseline assessments are explained below. *Organization\** may decide to do these as a single assessment or as separate assessments.

### 3. Identification of the converted area, *Affected Rights Holders\** and *Affected Stakeholders\**

- 3.1. The *organization\** shall identify and map the converted area using *best available information\**.
- 3.2. The *organization\** shall use the time periods when the *conversion\** occurred, after November 1994, for determining the timeframes to identify and map the extent of the conversion that would require remedy.
- 3.3. An *Independent Assessor\** shall determine who the *affected rights holders\** and *affected stakeholders\** associated with the *conversion\** are.

**Note:** At this stage of the process the *affected stakeholders\** may not be aware of who has rights or where these rights have been violated. Elements 4.2 and 4.3 in the process are designed to make *affected stakeholders\** aware of who has rights and to help clarify where these rights may have been violated as a result of *conversion\**.

During consultations with *affected stakeholders\**, the *organization\** and the *Independent Assessor\** should ensure *affected stakeholders\** are made aware of their rights (which may be either legal or traditional rights) and any violation of these rights. Those identified as having rights shall be referred to as *affected rights holders\**. *Social harms\** associated with *conversion\** would not just be limited to the area of the converted forest as the development might equally have been developed on farmland or other areas under *management control\** vital to livelihoods and where people have rights.

- 3.4. The *Independent Assessor\** shall map *affected rights holders\** and *affected stakeholders\** impacted by harm emanating from *conversion\**.
- 3.5. Where there are no *affected rights holders\** the *organization\** shall map *affected stakeholders\** impacted by harm emanating from *conversion\**.
- 3.6. The *organization\** shall verify the accuracy of the mapping of the converted area in consultation with *affected rights holders\**, *affected stakeholders\** and experts.
- 3.7. As an initial step in the *FPIC\** process, the identified *affected rights holders\** shall be consulted with the objective of gaining consent on:

- a. Others that shall be considered *affected rights holders*<sup>\*</sup>;
- b. Their rights and those that have been harmed as a result of *conversion*<sup>\*</sup>;
- c. Potential action that may provide remedy for these identified harms;
- d. The process to implement and monitor remedial plans and actions.

#### 4. Social baseline assessment

4.1. The *organization*<sup>\*</sup> shall carry out a social baseline assessment, using *best available information*<sup>\*</sup>, and in consultation with *Independent Assessors*<sup>\*</sup>, *affected rights holders*<sup>\*</sup> and *affected stakeholders*<sup>\*</sup> to determine *social harms*<sup>\*</sup> caused.

4.2. Where there are identified *affected rights holders*<sup>\*</sup> and *affected stakeholders*<sup>\*</sup>, the *Independent Assessors*<sup>\*</sup> shall:

a. Assess the historical state of social and cultural values at the time the *organization*<sup>\*</sup> commenced its *direct*<sup>\*</sup> or *indirect involvement*<sup>2</sup> in the area under assessment, the status of *ecosystem services*<sup>\*</sup>, and how these values and services may have been lost or damaged, including:

- *Rights*<sup>\*</sup> of *affected rights holders*<sup>\*</sup> impacted by the *conversion*<sup>\*</sup> within the neighborhood or *landscape*<sup>\*</sup> of the converted area,
- *Social harm*<sup>\*</sup> emanating from *conversion*<sup>\*</sup> on *affected stakeholders*<sup>\*</sup>, in respect to *community needs*<sup>\*</sup> and *cultural values*<sup>\*</sup>.

b. Assess the current state of the social and cultural aspects of the converted area and where applicable the *MU*<sup>\*</sup>, and the current status of *ecosystem services*<sup>\*</sup>, including those that have been lost or damaged, covering the following:

- *Rights*<sup>\*</sup> of *affected rights holders*<sup>\*</sup> impacted by the *conversion*<sup>\*</sup> within the neighborhood or *landscape*<sup>\*</sup> of the converted area,
- *Social harm*<sup>\*</sup> emanating from *conversion*<sup>\*</sup> on *affected stakeholders*<sup>\*</sup> in respect to *community needs*<sup>\*</sup> and *cultural values*<sup>\*</sup>.
- The current state of *ecosystem services*<sup>\*</sup>, including those that have been lost or damaged.

4.3. Where there are no identified *affected rights holders*<sup>\*</sup>, the *organization*<sup>\*</sup> shall:

a. Assess the historical state of social and cultural aspects at the time the *organization*<sup>\*</sup> commenced its *direct*<sup>\*</sup> or *indirect involvement*<sup>\*</sup> in the area under assessment, the status of *ecosystem services*<sup>\*</sup>, and how these values and services may have been lost or damaged, including:

- *Social harm*<sup>\*</sup> emanating from *conversion*<sup>\*</sup> on *affected stakeholders*<sup>\*</sup> in respect to *community needs*<sup>\*</sup> and *cultural values*<sup>\*</sup>.

b. The current state of the social and cultural aspects of the converted area and where applicable on the *MU*<sup>\*</sup>, and the status of *ecosystem services*<sup>\*</sup>, including those that have been lost or damaged, covering the following:

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of social and environmental baseline assessments, a baseline of organization's commencement of *direct*<sup>\*</sup> or *indirect involvement*<sup>\*</sup> within the area where *conversion*<sup>\*</sup> occurred, or 1994, whichever occurs later, shall be used.

- *Social harm\** emanating from *conversion\** on *affected stakeholders\** in respect to *community needs\** and cultural values.
- The current state of *ecosystem services\**, including those that have been lost or damaged.

## 5. Environmental baseline assessment

5.1. *The organization\** shall carry out an environmental baseline assessment using *best available information\** and expert knowledge to determine environmental aspects associated with the project<sup>3</sup> and harm caused to *environmental attributes\**.

5.2. The baseline assessment shall include:

- a. The historical state at the time the *organization\** commenced its *direct\** or *indirect involvement\** in the area under assessment including:
  - Forest type according to national forest classifications or, as a minimum, according to Annex 2 of this procedure;
  - Forest condition status: cover and use including levels of *degradation\** and *degradation\** drivers, biodiversity, *ecosystem attributes\** *environmental values\**, successional phase (based on National Forest Stewardship Standard guidance; Natural Forest definition);
  - *Landscape\** context, including habitat fragmentation level.
- b. The current state of the area converted and where applicable within the *MU\**, covering the following, but not limited to:
  - Land cover and use by area and management classification;
  - Identified areas with potential for *restoration\** and / or *conservation\**;
  - Remaining natural ecosystems considering ecosystem condition, use status, biodiversity, *ecosystem attributes\**, *environmental values\**, successional phase, level of *degradation\** and *degradation\** drivers.
- c. *Landscape\** context, including habitat fragmentation levels within the neighborhood of the converted area and where applicable within the *MU\**.

**NOTE:** The aforementioned requirements may be extracted from the forest management plan.

## 6. Recognition of previous assessments and remedy

6.1. Where the *organization\** has already undertaken social or environmental *remedy\** for *conversion\** prior to implementing this procedure, these remedial actions shall be considered and included in “current state” sections of the baseline assessments.

6.2. Where the *organization\** has already undertaken assessments prior to implementing this procedure, the conversion remedy procedure required assessments should build on these assessments. Previously conducted

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this procedure the term project refers to the planned actions to remedy the environmental and social harm caused by conversion.

assessments may include, but are not limited to, *HCV\** assessments, legally required Social and Environmental Impact Assessments, Due Diligence Assessments, and Human Rights Impact Assessments carried out in accordance with the *organization's* CSR requirements.

## 7. Analysis of the assessment results

- 7.1. The baseline assessments and their analysis shall be undertaken in full consultation with *affected rights holders\** and / or *affected stakeholders\** and experts, and shall be based on best practice guidelines.
- 7.2. The minimum requirements that the analysis shall include are listed in Clause 7.3 and 7.4, below.
- 7.3. The environmental harm caused by the *conversion\** is determined, in consultation with experts, specific to:
  - a. The size of the converted area,
  - b. The quality, including levels of *degradation\** of the converted area, and
  - c. *Ecosystem Attributes\** lost.
- 7.4. The *social harm\** caused by the *conversion\** is determined, in consultation with *affected rights holders\** and / or *affected stakeholders\**, as per requirements in section 3 above, specific to:
  - a. Social and cultural values,
  - b. Legal and *customary rights\** to land,
  - c. Livelihoods,
  - d. Violation of *human rights\**, and
  - e. *Ecosystem services\** lost within and emanating from the converted area.
- 7.5. *Organization\** that were *directly or indirectly involved\** in *conversion\** and are found to be in violation of other Policy for Association *unacceptable activities\** shall be required to follow Policy of Association processes to address the unacceptable activities not directly associated with *conversion\**.

## 8. Site selection and determination of remedy action

- 8.1. The *organization\** shall determine the actions and sites that would be required to *remedy\** the harm caused by the *conversion\**. The goal of a *remedy\** process shall be to maximize the outcomes of *conservation\**, *restoration\** and *restitution\** activities undertaken by the *organization\**.
- 8.2. Environmental *remedy\** shall consist of restorative activities, reforestation, *enhancement\**, preservation, *conservation\**, *substitution\**, including any or all of them.
- 8.3. Social *remedy\** shall consist of agreed processes with *affected rights holders\** following *FIPC\** to *remedy\* priority social conflicts\** as part of the initial implementation and to develop processes for *remedy\** of all *social harm\** caused by the *conversion\**.

- 8.4. To determine the extent of *remedy\** required to address the harms from *conversion\** and the feasibility of such *remedy\** being achieved, proposed remedy action shall demonstrate that the sites and activities selected for *remedy\** are *proportionate\** to the *scale\** and as a minimum shall be *equivalent\** and *proportionate\** to the harm caused by the *conversion\**.
- 8.5. Demonstrating that *remedy\** is *proportionate\** and *equivalent\** requires the *organization\** to:
- a. identify and document the forest type/s and its area per forest type that were removed by the *conversion\**; and
  - b. document best practice methods for remedial action that will be used to restore and / or conserve similar forest type/s and *proportionate\** areas to those that were converted, and
  - c. document best practice methods, *affected rights holders\** and *affected stakeholders\** identified and consulted for remedial action that will be used to make *restitution\** for *social harms\**; and,
  - d. identify any *High Conservation Values\** lost that would require specific consideration to remedy for values lost.
- 8.6. The *organization\** shall demonstrate that the selected sites meet the definitions of *additionality\** and *longevity\** of existing *conservation\** and *restoration\** requirements.
- 8.7. The *organization\** shall have written long term contracts with the entity having tenure to the land or the entity undertaking the *conservation\** and / or *restoration\** project where these *remedy\** sites are not under the *management control\** of the *organization\**. As a minimum these contracts shall secure the *longevity\** of the *remedy\**.
- NOTE:** Remedy sites that are not under the *management control\** of the *organization\** are sometimes also referred to as offsite or offset areas.
- 8.8. The *organization\** shall select the *remedy\** action based on input from *affected rights holders\** and / or *affected stakeholder\** and experts related to maximizing *conservation\** outcomes and social benefits.
- 8.9. The *organization\** shall identify, in consultation with *affected rights holders\** and experts, activities that may be considered as *priority activities\** that shall be completed as part of the *initial implementation threshold\**.
- 8.10. When evaluating how to maximize *conservation\** outcomes, the *organization\** shall justify the site selection and the choice of project and / or activity in relation to other options available to the *organization\**. Justifications may include increased *scale\** of project and impact *remedy\** actions related to the extent of the harm caused; focus on more critical habitats, ecosystems and species; or a focus on *priority activities\**.
- 8.11. Site selection shall be prioritized in consecutive order to identify areas either: (1) in the converted area, (2) adjacent to the converted area, (3) within the *landscape\** where the *conversion\** occurred, (4) or within the province or country where the *conversion\** occurred.

8.12. Where the *remedy*\* actions are planned outside the converted area, consultation shall also be conducted with *affected rights holders*\* and *affected stakeholders*\* in the area where proposed *remedy*\* actions are planned.

8.13. The *organization*\* shall respect the following principles of best practice for identifying *priority social conflicts*\* that shall be considered in setting the *priority activities*\*:

- a. Conflict resolution processes shall be established and agreed together with the *affected rights holders*\*;
- b. Conflict resolution solutions shall go beyond the legal obligation of Corporate Social Responsibility or general community development interventions and address the root cause of the conflict or the harm identified.

8.14. *Organizations*\* may aggregate their *remedy*\* with other *organizations*\* in order to maximize *remedy*\* outcomes. Each *organization*\* shall demonstrate that it meets the *proportional*\* and *equivalent*\* requirements of this procedure for the harm caused by their converted areas.

## 9. Baseline assessment report

9.1. The *organization*\* shall develop a baseline assessment report containing the following information at minimum:

- a. Base maps of the remaining forest and converted areas;
- b. Description of environmental and social conditions of the area at the time the *organization*\* commenced *its direct*\* or *indirect involvement*\* of the conversion and at the present time,
- c. Methods used, *affected rights holders*\*, *affected stakeholders*\* consulted and, the credentials of experts consulted for the implementation of Part 2 in the procedure,
- d. Identified *affected rights holders*\* and their *rights*\* and *affected stakeholders*\*;
- e. Analysis of environmental and *social harm*\* caused by *conversion*\*;
- f. Site selection result and its justification/s;
- g. Proposed *remedy*\* actions and their justification/s;
- h. Proposed *priority activities*\*;
- i. All expert's reports, including *independent assessor*\* reports.

## Part 3: Concept Note for the Remedy Plan

Part 3 describes the requirements of the Concept Note for the Remedy Plan. The Concept Note shall briefly introduce the proposed action for *remedy*\* of the determined environmental and *social harm*\* following Part 2 and shall be submitted to the *Third-Party Verifier*\* for review and approval, prior to developing the Remedy Plan as defined under Part 4 of the procedure.

## 10. Development of the Concept Note

10.1. The *organization*\* shall develop and submit a Concept Note referencing, and including, the baseline assessment report and *FPIC*\* agreements that briefly

describes the proposed action to be taken to *remedy*\* the identified harm caused by *conversion*\*.

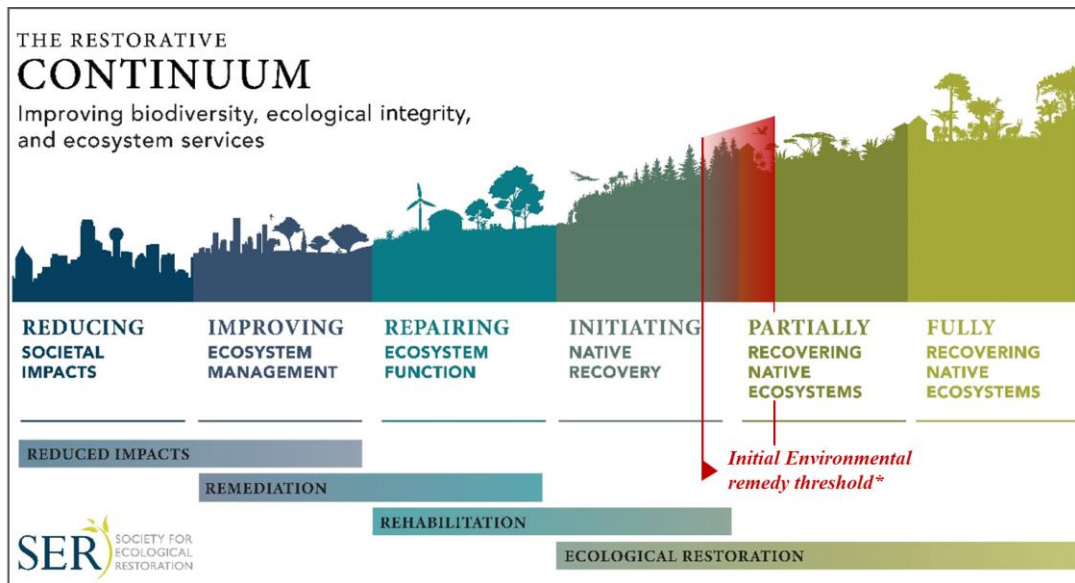
**NOTE:** The intent of the Concept Note is to enable a review of the process to date, establish the goals and objectives of planned remedial action and enable all parties concerned, including FSC, to determine the practicality and appropriateness of the organizations proposed remedy actions in line with the requirements of the FSC Policy on Conversion and this procedure. This will also then enhance the potential success of the project as these aspects will be checked prior to further resource commitments.

10.2. The Concept Note is an initial implementation step towards *association*\* and, where applicable, certification to FSC forest management standards and shall include, but not limited to:

- a. An evaluation of resources (financial, ecological and human) to ensure feasibility of *remedy*\* options being proposed.
- b. Recommendations for the most effective options based on the outcome of Sections 8 and 9 above. The environmental and social values of the recommended options must demonstrate *equivalent*\* *remedy*\* value when considered against the harm caused.
- c. Proposed timelines to achieve *initial implementation threshold*\* for both social and environmental remedy at which time the *organization*\* is eligible for association with FSC or for forest management certification of a *MU*\*, and it includes:
  - The implementation of the *initial social remedy threshold*\* (See Guidance Box 2 below). It includes as a minimum:
    - i. Resolution of *priority social conflicts*\*.
    - ii. Completion of remedy of *priority activities*\*
    - iii. Initiation of roadmap process to *remedy*\* all other social remedy processes.
  - The implementation of the *initial environmental remedy threshold*\* (See Guidance Box 1 below).
- d. The process to monitor progress against key objectives in the Remedy Plan.
- e. Estimated full implementation time of remedial action. This shall include short, medium and long terms goals of the Remedy Plan (See Guidance Boxes 1 and 2 below).

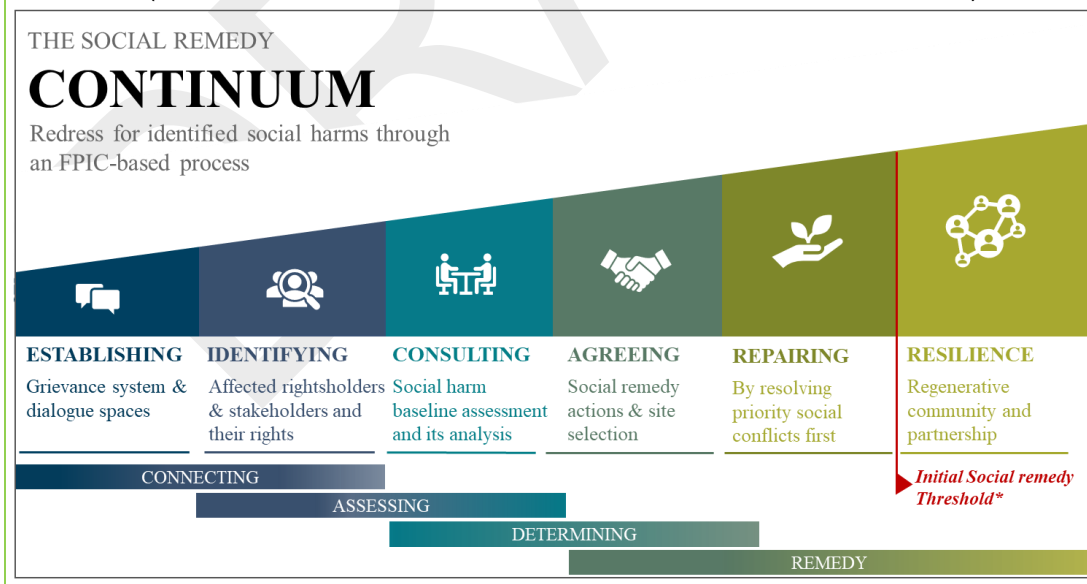
**NOTE:** At the Concept Note phase it is not necessary to detail measurable monitoring against key objectives, this should be covered in detail in the Remedy Plan (refer to Part 4 below). However, a description of the monitoring process shall be included in the concept note.

**Guidance Box 2:** Shows a pictorial representation of the environmental remedy continuum indicating the stage at which it may be possible to consider that the *initial environmental remedy threshold\** of the Remedy Plan is achieved (Refer to terms and definitions for the definition of this threshold).



Source: SER International Standards (Gann et al., 2019)

**Guidance Box 2:** Shows a pictorial representation of the social remedy continuum (Inspired by SER’s restorative continuum) indicating the stage at which it may be possible to consider that the *initial social remedy threshold\** of the Remedy Plan is achieved (Refer to terms and definitions for the definition of this threshold).



**11. Approval of the Concept Note by the Third Party Verifier\***

11.1.FSC shall approve a *Third Party Verifier\** based on the expertise required to evaluate social and environmental harms and plans to *remedy\** these harms.



11.2. The *organization\** shall submit the Concept Note and the associated baseline assessment reports to the *Third Party Verifier\** for evaluation and approval.

11.3. The *Third Party Verifier\** shall review the Concept Note and assess the qualitative information provided, evaluating the proposal to ensure it will maximize *conservation\** and *restitution\** outcomes. Where it verifies that the Concept Note meets the requirements of this procedure, the *Third Party Verifier\** shall approve the Concept Note, so that the *organization\** can continue to develop the Remedy Plan.

11.4. Where the *Third Party Verifier\** deems that there are deficits in the Concept Note, it shall request that the Concept Note is revised to provide the required information prior to permitting the development of the full Remedy Plan.

11.5. The *organization\** shall make the approved Concept Note, excluding *Confidential Information\**, *publicly available\** on request, free of charge.

## Part 4: The Remedy Plan

Part 4 describes the requirements for the Remedy Plan. The Remedy Plan shall be developed by the *organization\** upon approval of the Concept Note by the *Third Party Verifier\**.

## 12. Development of the Remedy Plan

12.1. The *organization\** shall develop the Remedy Plan based on the approved Concept Note and baseline assessment, and shall demonstrate that the harm caused by the *conversion\** will be remedied by the planned actions.

12.2. The Remedy Plan shall detail how each required action shall be addressed, including, but not limited to:

- a. *Priority activities\** that shall, at a minimum, reduce ongoing *social harm\** and demonstrate ecosystem management and protection.
- b. Timeframes and benchmarks for *priority activities\**, Initial Implementation achievement and completion of remedy actions.
- c. Activities selected for *conservation\**, *restoration\** and *restitution\** shall demonstrate at least a 25-year project life span, *equivalence\** and *proportionality\** and be protected from a reversal of the *remedy\** gains achieved.
- d. An evaluation of resources (financial, ecological and human) to ensure feasibility of options selected to achieve completion of the Remedy Plan.
- e. Identification of *conservation\** and / or *restoration\* reference models\** and *ecosystem attributes\** (*ecosystems\** or *habitat\** that were lost and should be restored or conserved based on the forest types in Appendix 1), which shall be used to set remedy targets, goals and objectives.
- f. Identification of social *restitution\** actions (these may include *restitution\** of livelihoods and / or *restitution\** of cultural values) which shall be used to set *remedy\** targets and objectives.
- g. Measurable indicators (area and properties of *ecosystem attributes\** or social values that should be restored and / or conserved) for monitoring

according to the expected recovery trajectory indicating that the Remedy Plan is achievable within the timelines. This shall include benchmarks for monitoring at a defined frequency. One or more indicators is required for each activity.

- h. Referenced and justified Best Practice Guidelines that were used in establishing the Remedy Plan.

**Guidance Box 3:** In order to ensure consistency across Remedy Plans, the following terminology should be used:



#### **THE SCOPE**

Is the broad geographic or thematic focus of a remedy plan.



#### **THE VISION**

Is a general summary of the desired condition one is trying to achieve through the work of the project. A good vision is relatively general, visionary (inspiring), and brief.



#### **GOALS**

are formal statements of the medium to long-term desired ecological or social condition, including the level of recovery sought. Goals must be clearly linked to targets, measurable, time-limited, and specific.



#### **OBJECTIVES**

Objectives are formal statements of the interim outcomes along the trajectory of recovery. Objectives must be clearly linked to targets and goals, and be measurable, time-limited, and specific.



#### **THE TARGETS**

Identify the natural ecosystems to be restored and / or conserved at a site as informed by the reference model, along with any social outcomes or constraints expected.



#### **INDICATORS**

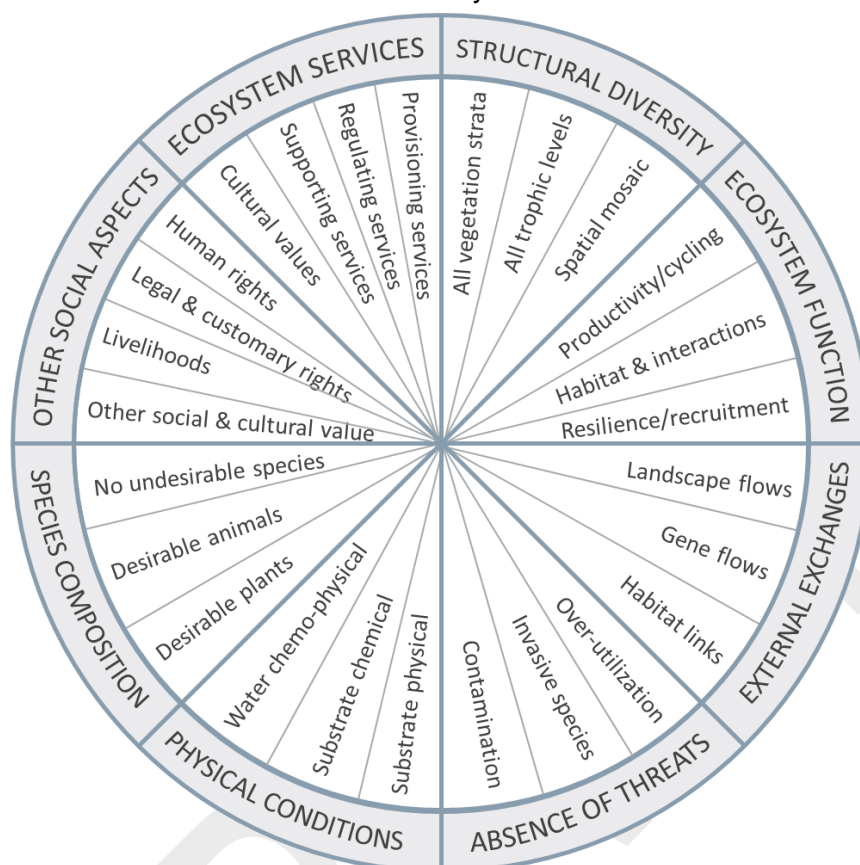
Indicators are specific, quantifiable measures of attributes that directly connect longer-term goals and shorter-term objectives. Ecological indicators are variables that are measured to assess changes in the physical, chemical or biotic ecosystem attributes as guided by the reference model. Social–ecological or cultural indicators measure changes in human wellbeing such as participation in traditional practices, governance, language and education.

*Source: SER International Standards (Gann et al., 2019)*

**NOTE:** To meet requirements for Clause 12.2.c) for offsite projects this may include the use of formalized contracts or agreements between the *organization\** and the project implementor. This may also include protecting projects from anthropogenic and illegal activities and local community awareness programs to raise awareness of the projects and the need to preserve these projects.

**NOTE:** Generic Indicators under Clause 12.2.g) will be provided by the Technical Working Group in instructions to Standard Development Group's to develop indicators for regional and national forest stewardship standards.

**Guidance Box 4:** Remedy Wheel adapted from SER International Standard's ecological recovery wheel to visualize examples of remedy targets and goals related to the environmental and social key attributes.



Source: SER International Standards (Gann et al., 2019)

12.3. At least one *remedy\** objective shall be set for each activity. The aggregate measurable objectives shall be stated in the Remedy Plan and shall be used to determine progress and completion of the Remedy Plan.

12.4. Previous *conservation\**, *restoration\** or *social restitution\** actions as identified in the baseline assessments may be considered in the Remedy Plan upon conformity with the requirements of *additionality\** for those actions.

12.5. The Remedy Plan shall be agreed by *affected Rights Holders\** through an *FPIC\** process, and considering the input of *affected stakeholders\**, *interested stakeholders\** and experts prior to submission.

12.6. The *organization\** shall submit the completed Remedy Plan to the *Third Party Verifier\** for evaluation.

### 13. Approval of the Remedy Plan

13.1. The *Third Party Verifier\** shall evaluate the Remedy Plan to determine the Remedy Plan's potential to achieve the targets, goals and objectives.

- 13.2. The *Third Party Verifier\** shall submit the Remedy Plan for peer review by environmental and / or social experts.
- 13.3. The *Third Party Verifier\** shall request the *organization\** to revise the Remedy Plan when the Remedy Plan or elements of the Remedy Plan are not able to demonstrate the achievement of the targets, goals and objectives and/or to address concerns and issues raised in peer review.
- 13.4. The *organization\** shall address these requests before the Remedy Plan can be re-submitted for further evaluation.
- 13.5. The *Third Party Verifier\** shall approve the Remedy Plan when it determines that the Remedy Plan demonstrates that targets, goals and objectives are likely to be achieved.
- 13.6. Once the Remedy Plan has been approved by the *Third Party Verifier\**, the *organization\** shall make a summary of all elements and components of the Remedy Plan, excluding confidential information\*, publicly available\* on request, free of charge.

## Part 5: Implementation of the Remedy Plan

Part 5 describes the process from when the Remedy Plan is approved by the *Third-Party Verifier\** and the *organization\** commences with the implementation of the Remedy Plan. Part 5 introduces the requirements for its implementation and the *initial implementation threshold\**. The end goal is to ensure that the area continues to develop towards a fully recovered and resilient natural forest condition, and, *affected rightsholders\** and *affected stakeholders\** agree that *harms\** caused have been remedied.

## 14. Implementation of the Remedy Plan

- 14.1. The *organization\** shall commence with the implementation of the approved Remedy Plan aimed at achieving the environmental and social *remedy\** goals outlined in the Remedy Plan.
- 14.2. During the implementation of the Remedy Plan, the *organization\** shall continue the engagement with *affected rights holders\**, *affected stakeholders\** and experts to ensure that the process is implemented in a demonstrably transparent way.
- 14.3. The *organization\** shall assess and monitor the implementation of environmental and social *remedy\** against the Remedy Plan using identified indicators as requested in clause 12.2 g.
- 14.4. The *organization\** shall record the results of the monitoring in reports which shall be made available to the *Third-Party Verifier\** during the verification audits.

- 14.5. Where the *organization\** makes changes to the Remedy Plan prior to its full implementation, changes shall be submitted to the *Third-Party Verifier\** for review and approval prior to implementing these changes.
- 14.6. The *organization\** shall request a verification audit by the *Third-Party Verifier\** when the *organization\** concludes that it has achieved the *initial implementation threshold\**, as described/ in the Remedy Plan

## 15. Confirming the initial implementation threshold

- 15.1. On request of the *organization\**, the *Third-Party Verifier\** shall conduct a verification audit to evaluate whether the planned outcomes for the *initial implementation thresholds\** have been achieved.
- 15.2. Where the verification audit confirms that the *organization\** has achieved the planned *initial implementation threshold\**, it is eligible for association with FSC or for forest management certification of a Management Unit\*.
- 15.3. The *Third-Party Verifier\** shall submit a report on the findings of the verification audit to FSC when the *organization\** has achieved the *initial implementation threshold\**.
- 15.4. Where the verification audit determines that the *organization\** has not achieved the *initial implementation threshold\**, the *Third-Party Verifier\** shall document these nonconformities and raise corrective action requests according to FSC-STD-20-001 Section 2.7.
- 15.5. Corrective action requests shall be addressed to the satisfaction of the *Third-Party Verifier\** prior to confirming the *initial implementation threshold\** achievement.
- 15.6. The FSC Dispute Resolution System shall be used when the *organization\** disagrees with the findings or decisions of the *Third-Party Verifier\**.
- 15.7. To prevent conflict of interest, the *organization\** shall not use the *Third-Party Verifier\** as the certification body for evaluating conformity to FSC certification standards.

## Part 6: Ongoing Monitoring

Part 6 describes the internal and external monitoring of the Remedy Plan implementation, the consequences of stopping or postponing the implementation of the plan, and the confirmation of the full implementation of the Remedy Plan.

## 16. Internal Monitoring

- 16.1. The *organization\** shall continue to monitor indicators determined under section 12.2 above to ensure the continued delivery of *remedy\** outcomes as outlined in the Remedy Plan.

16.2. The *organization\** shall continue to develop monitoring reports according to section 14.4 above, making these available to either the *Third-Party Verifier\** or the Certification Body, as applicable.

## 17. External Monitoring

17.1. Where an *organization\** has achieved FSC forest management certification, the Certification Body shall conduct the external monitoring of the continued implementation of the Remedy Plan as part of the annual certification audits. This shall include any remedy areas of *the organization\** outside of the *Management Unit*.

17.2. Where FSC forest management certification has not been achieved or is not intended, the external annual monitoring shall be conducted by the *Third-Party Verifier\**.

17.3. Where nonconformities with regards to the implementation of the Remedy Plan are detected, they shall be addressed according to FSC-STD-20-001 Section 2.7. In instances where the *organization\** has achieved FSC forest management certification and there are major nonconformities not corrected, the certificate will be suspended or withdrawn as per the above standard based on the situation. For *organization\** that has not achieved FSC Forest Management certification or not intended, failure to correct major nonconformities may result in suspension of this procedure and disassociation from FSC.

## 18. Stopping or postponing the implementation of the Remedy Plan

18.1. Where the *organization\** stops or terminates the implementation of the Remedy Plan, and later applies to resume the process, either the *Third-Party Verifier\** or the Certification Body, as applicable, shall evaluate the implementation status of the Remedy Plan

18.2. When the *Third-Party Verifier\** or Certification Body, as applicable, determines that the *organization\** is still on track, it may re-start the process where it was stopped. Such a decision requires the agreement of the *affected rights holders\**.

18.3. When the *Third-Party Verifier\** or Certification Body, as applicable, determines that the *organization\** is no longer on track, the remedy process shall re-start at the stage of re-submitting the Concept Note (Part 3 of this procedure) to address the changes that have occurred, including those that may have occurred during the time when the remedy process was stopped.

18.4. In the event of demonstrated and verified *force majeure\**, the remediation actions shall be re-initiated to address the goals and objectives of the Remedy Plan and be evaluated by either the *Third-Party Verifier\** or the Certification Body, as applicable.

## 19. Confirming the full implementation of the Remedy Plan

19.1. The annual external monitoring by the *Third-Party Verifier\** or Certification Body, as applicable, shall continue until *affected rights holders\**, *affected*

*stakeholders\** and experts agree that the harm caused by the *conversion\** has been fully remediated as defined in the Remedy Plan.

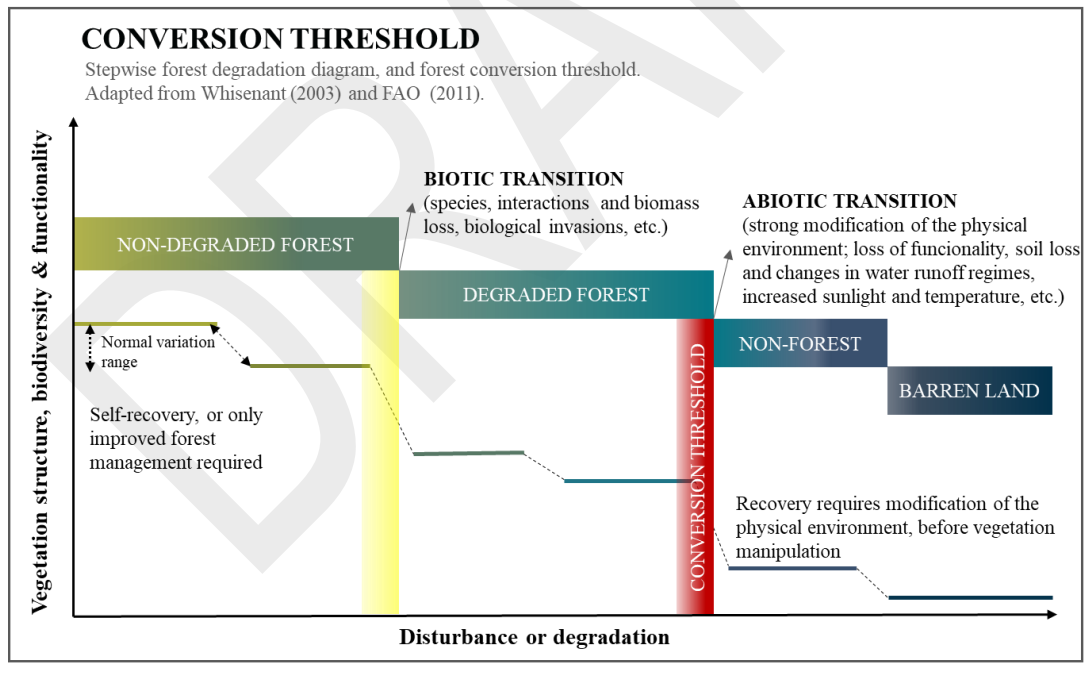
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## Annex 1: The conversion threshold

The *conversion threshold*\* diagram shows a representation of *degradation*\* leading to the conversion threshold. This needs to be viewed considering the forest type and natural tree coverage in line with the FSC natural forest definition as well as other aspects of forest health considering soils, biodiversity, species composition, structure etc. Critical to determining the conversion threshold is whether the forest type could recover back to *natural forest*\* without (human) intervention.

*Degradation*\* can be understood as a state of arrested succession, to be set in contrast to natural systems that undergo constant transitions subject to both neighbourhood effects and natural disturbances. The corollary of this is that a forest is not degraded provided that it retains dynamics that facilitate recovery to former steady states. Once in a state of arrested succession, external intervention is required to recover successional trajectories, for which decision-making and management processes may be involved and complex (Ghazoul et al, 2015)<sup>4</sup>.

**Guidance Box 4:** The conversion threshold diagram represents the degradation threshold is achieved by loss of species, interactions, biomass, and resources; the conversion threshold is achieved by irreversible modifications of the physical environment, and permanent loss of ecosystem functionality such as productivity, hydrological and nutrient cycles, and compositional shift, where no forest cover is able to persist. The conversion threshold can be achieved either by gradual degradation as in this diagram, or by sudden deforestation.



<sup>4</sup> Further References include: FAO, 2011. *Assessing Forest Degradation: towards the development of globally applicable guidelines*. Rome, FAO Forest Resources Assessment Working Paper 177. Sasaki, N et al. 2011. *Approaches to classifying and restoring degraded tropical forests for the anticipated REDD+ climate change mitigation mechanism*. *iForest – Biogeosciences and Forestry*, 4: 1-6. doi: 10.3832/ifor0556-004



## Annex 2: Forest Type Classes<sup>5</sup>

**Note:** the forest type classes exclude native and exotic plantation forest types and disturbed forest types.

Temperate and Boreal Forest Types	
<b>1) Evergreen needleleaf forest</b>	Natural forest with > 30% canopy cover, in which the canopy is predominantly (> 75%) needleleaf and evergreen.
<b>2) Deciduous needleleaf forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, in which the canopy is predominantly (> 75%) needleleaf and deciduous.
<b>3) Mixed broadleaf/needleleaf forest</b>	Natural forest with > 30% canopy cover, in which the canopy is composed of a more or less even mixture of needleleaf and broadleaf crowns (between 50:50% and 25:75%).
<b>4) Broadleaf evergreen forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, the canopy being > 75% evergreen and broadleaf.
<b>5) Deciduous broadleaf forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, in which > 75% of the canopy is deciduous and broadleaves predominate (> 75% of canopy cover).
<b>6) Freshwater swamp forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, composed of trees with any mixture of leaf type and seasonality, but in which the predominant environmental characteristic is a waterlogged soil.
<b>7) Sclerophyllous dry forest</b>	Natural forest with > 30% canopy cover, in which the canopy is mainly composed of sclerophyllous broadleaves and is > 75% evergreen.
<b>8) Disturbed natural forest</b>	Any forest type above that has in its interior significant areas of disturbance by people, including clearing, felling for wood extraction, anthropogenic fires, road construction, etc.
<b>9) Sparse trees and parkland</b>	Natural forests in which the tree canopy cover is between 10-30%, such as in the steppe regions of the world. Trees of any type (e.g., needleleaf, broadleaf, palms).

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from UNEP-WCMC 2000. *Global Distribution of Current Forests*, United Nations Environment Programme - World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

[http://www.unepwcmc.org/forest/global\\_map.htm](http://www.unepwcmc.org/forest/global_map.htm) or [http://www1.biologie.uni-hamburg.de/b-online///afrika/africa\\_forest/www.unep\\_wcmc.org/forest/global\\_map.htm](http://www1.biologie.uni-hamburg.de/b-online///afrika/africa_forest/www.unep_wcmc.org/forest/global_map.htm)

<b>Tropical/Subtropical Forest Types</b>	
<b>1) Lowland evergreen broadleaf rain forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, below 1200m altitude that display little or no seasonality, the canopy being >75% evergreen broadleaf. Includes other types of ecosystems like salt marshes, spit forests, bamboo forests, palm tree forests.
<b>2) Lower montane forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, between 1200-1800m altitude, with any seasonality regime and leaf type mixture.
<b>3) Upper montane forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, above 1800m altitude, with any seasonality regime and leaf type mixture.
<b>4) Freshwater swamp forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, below 1200m altitude, composed of trees with any mixture of leaf type and seasonality, but in which the predominant environmental characteristic is a waterlogged soil. [including peat]
<b>5) Semi-evergreen moist broadleaf forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, in which between 50-75% of the canopy is evergreen, > 75% are broadleaves, and the trees display seasonality of flowering and fruiting.
<b>6) Mixed broadleaf/needleleaf forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, in which the canopy is composed of a more or less even mixture of needleleaf and broadleaf crowns (between 50:50% and 25:75%).
<b>7) Needleleaf forest</b>	Natural forest with > 30% canopy cover, in which the canopy is predominantly (> 75%) needleleaf.
<b>8) Mangroves</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, composed of species of mangrove tree, generally along coasts in or near brackish or saltwater.
<b>9) Deciduous/semi-deciduous broadleaf forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, in which between 50-100% of the canopy is deciduous and broadleaves predominate (> 75% of canopy cover).
<b>10) Sclerophyllous dry forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, in which the canopy is mainly composed of sclerophyllous broadleaves and is > 75% evergreen.
<b>11) Thorn forest</b>	Natural forests with > 30% canopy cover, in which the canopy is mainly composed of deciduous trees with thorns and succulent phanerophytes with thorns may be frequent.
<b>12) Sparse trees and parkland</b>	Natural forests in which the tree canopy cover is between 10-30%, such as in the savannah regions of the world. Trees of any type (e.g., needleleaf, broadleaf, palms). The two major zones in which these ecosystems occur are in the boreal region and in the seasonally dry tropics.

### Annex 3: Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the terms and definitions provided in FSC-STD-01-002 *FSC Glossary of Terms*, FSC-STD-01-001 *FSC Principles and Criteria*, FSC-STD-60-004 *FSC International Generic Indicators*, FSC-POL-01-007 *FSC Policy on Conversion Version 1-0 Draft 3-0* and the following apply:

**Additionality:**

- a. Additionality outside the *Management Unit*<sup>\*</sup>: *conservation*<sup>\*</sup> and/or *restoration*<sup>\*</sup> outcomes over and above those already achieved or planned to be achieved, and that would not have been achieved without the support and/or intervention of the *organization*<sup>\*</sup>. Projects must either be new (i.e., not already being implemented or planned), amended or extended so that *conservation*<sup>\*</sup> and/or *restoration*<sup>\*</sup> outcomes are enhanced beyond what would have been achieved, or planned or funded to be achieved without the *organization*<sup>\*</sup> planning to *remedy*<sup>\*</sup> for historical conversion.
- b. Additionality inside the *Management Unit*<sup>\*</sup>: *conservation*<sup>\*</sup> and/or *restoration*<sup>\*</sup> outcomes above and beyond those required by the applicable FSC Standards. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**Affected stakeholder:** Any person, group of persons or entity that is or is likely to be subject to the effects of the activities of a Management Unit. Examples include, but are not restricted to (for example, in the case of downstream landowners), persons, groups of persons or entities located in the neighborhood of the Management Unit.

The following are examples of affected stakeholders:

- Local communities
- Indigenous Peoples
- Workers
- Forest dwellers
- Neighbors
- Downstream landowners
- Local processors
- Local businesses
- Tenure and use rights holders, including landowners
- Organizations authorized or known to act on behalf of affected stakeholders, for example social and environmental NGOs, labor unions, etc.

(Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Affected Rights Holder:** Persons and groups, including Indigenous Peoples<sup>\*</sup>, traditional peoples<sup>\*</sup> and local communities<sup>\*</sup> with legal or customary rights<sup>\*</sup> whose free, prior and informed consent<sup>\*</sup> is required to determine management decisions.

(Source: FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0)

**Association:** An association with FSC is formally established through any of the following relationships:

- FSC membership
- Contractual relationship through:
  - o FSC accreditation agreement,
  - o FSC license agreement,
  - o FSC cooperation agreement,
  - o FSC partnership agreement.

(Source: FSC-POL-01-004 V2-0)

**Competence:** the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge, experience, skills and personal attributes in order to achieve intended results (adapted from DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065:2013-01).

**Complaint:** formal expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization presented as a complaint to FSC, relating to the activities of the FSC Certification Scheme and/ or the FSC accreditation program, where a response is expected (adapted from ISO/IEC 17011:2004). (Source: FSC-PRO-01-005 V3-0)

**Conservation/ Protection:** These words are used interchangeably when referring to management activities designed to maintain the identified environmental or cultural values in existence long-term. Management activities may range from zero or minimal interventions to a specified range of appropriate interventions and activities designed to maintain, or compatible with maintaining, these identified values. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Conversion:** A *lasting change of natural forest cover\** or *High Conservation Value\** areas, *induced by human activity\**. This may be characterized by *significant loss of species diversity\**, habitat diversity, structural complexity, ecosystem functionality or livelihoods and cultural values. The definition of *conversion\** covers gradual forest degradation as well as rapid forest transformation.

- **Induced by human activity:** In contrast to drastic changes caused by natural calamities like hurricanes or volcanic eruptions. It also applies in cases of naturally ignited fires where human activities (e.g., draining of peatlands) have significantly increased the risk of fire.
- **Lasting change of natural forest cover:** Permanent or *long-term\** change of natural forest cover, precluded from reverting back towards pre-conversion conditions. Temporary changes of forest cover or structure (e.g., harvesting followed by regeneration in accordance with the FSC normative framework) is not considered conversion.
- **Lasting change of High Conservation Value\* areas:** Permanent or long-term\* change of any of the High Conservation Values\*, precluded from naturally reverting back towards pre-conversion conditions. Temporary changes of HCV areas that do not negatively and permanently impact the values (e.g., harvesting followed by regeneration in accordance with Principle 9) is not considered a lasting change.
- **Significant loss of species diversity:** Loss of species is considered significant where rare, threatened and endangered or other locally important, keystone and/or flagship species are lost, whether in terms of numbers of individuals or in terms of number of species. This refers to both displacement and extinction.

**NOTE:** For the purposes of this Policy, the establishment of ancillary infrastructure necessary to implement the objectives of responsible forest management (e.g., forest roads, skid trails, log landings, fire protection, etc.) is not considered conversion. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

THE EVOLEMENT OF FSC DEFINITION ON  
**CONVERSION &  
SIGNIFICANT CONVERSION**

For the purpose of the conversion remedy procedure, the definitions applicable between Nov 1994 and effective date of the conversion policy apply.

Pre-Nov 1994	Between Nov 1994 & effective date of conversion policy	Post to effective date of conversion policy
<p>The conversion policy and conversion remedy procedure do not apply to conversion that took place prior to Nov 1994.</p>	<p><b>Conversion:</b> FSC Principles and Criteria (P&amp;C) and glossary of terms do not include definition on conversion. Through criterion 6.9 and 6.10 in FSC P&amp;C, conversion is defined as the change from natural forest to plantations or other land uses.</p> <p><b>Significant conversion:</b> Conversion is considered significant in any case of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversion of High Conservation Value Forests</li> <li>• Conversion of more than 10% of the forest areas under the organization's responsibility in the past 5 years</li> <li>• Conversion of more than 10,000 ha of forests under the organization's responsibility in the past 5 years</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: FSC-POL-01-004 Policy for the Association of Organizations with FSC</i></p>	<p><b>Conversion:</b> A lasting change of <i>natural forest cover*</i> or <i>High Conservation Value*</i> areas, induced by <i>human activity*</i>. This may be characterized by significant loss of <i>species diversity*</i>, habitat diversity, structural complexity, ecosystem functionality or livelihoods and cultural values. The definition of <i>conversion*</i> covers gradual forest degradation as well as rapid forest transformation.</p> <p><b>Significant conversion:</b> <i>Conversion*</i> is normally considered significant in any case of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>conversion of high conservation value*</i> (HCV) area, or</li> <li>• conversion of more than 5 per cent of <i>natural forests*</i> under the associated organization and/or affiliated group's control within a national jurisdiction in the past five years, or</li> <li>• conversion of more than 10,000 ha of <i>natural forests*</i> under the associated organization and/or affiliated group's control within a national jurisdiction in the past five years.</li> </ul>

**Conversion\* Threshold:** Where degradation and clearing has occurred to a point where *natural recovery potential\* to natural forests\** or, where *social harm\** as a result of this degradation and clearing and recovery is unable to be achieved without direct intervention. This Conversion Threshold may be adapted by Standards Development Groups to reflect the varying forest types found within their countries.

**Customary rights:** Rights which result from a long series of habitual or customary actions, constantly repeated, which have, by such repetition and by uninterrupted acquiescence, acquired the force of a law within a geographical or sociological unit. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Degradation:** Changes within a *natural forest\** or *High Conservation Value\** area that significantly and negatively affect its species composition, structure and/or function, and reduces the ecosystem's capacity to supply products, support biodiversity and/or deliver ecosystem services. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**Ecosystem:** A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit (Source: Convention on Biological Diversity 1992, Article 2). (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Ecosystem function:** An intrinsic ecosystem characteristic related to the set of conditions and processes whereby an ecosystem maintains its integrity (such as primary productivity, food chain, biogeochemical cycles). Ecosystem functions include such processes as decomposition, production, nutrient cycling, and fluxes of nutrients and energy. For FSC purposes, this definition includes ecological and evolutionary

processes such as gene flow and disturbance regimes, regeneration cycles and ecological seral development (succession) stages. (Source: Based on R. Hassan, R. Scholes and N. Ash. 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Series. Island Press, Washington DC; and R.F. Noss. 1990. Indicators for monitoring biodiversity: a hierarchical approach. Conservation Biology 4(4):355–364). (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Ecosystem services:** The benefits people obtain from ecosystems.

These include:

- a. provisioning services such as food, forest products and water;
- b. regulating services such as regulation of floods, drought, land degradation, air quality, climate and disease;
- c. supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient cycling;
- d. and cultural services and cultural values such as recreational, spiritual, religious and other non-material benefits.

(Source: Based on R. Hassan, R. Scholes and N. Ash. 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Series. Island Press, Washington DC). (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Environmental values:** The following set of elements of the biophysical and human environment:

1. ecosystem functions (including carbon sequestration and storage)
2. biological diversity
3. water resources
4. soils
5. atmosphere
6. landscape values (including cultural and spiritual values).

The actual worth attributed to these elements depends on human and societal perceptions. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Equivalent:** For ecological equivalence - The same specific type of *natural forest\** or *High Conservation Value\** is restored or conserved as was destroyed.

For social *remedy\**, equivalence shall be based on an independent assessment and agreement on *remedy\** through *Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC)\** of the nature, quality and quantity of all *social harms\** as well as the on-going future benefits these would have provided. Equivalence shall entail provision of the best means possible to ensure future community wellbeing. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**Force Majeure:** any circumstances not reasonably anticipated at the date of an Agreement and not within the reasonable control of the Parties individually or collectively including, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, strikes, lockouts, shortages of labor or raw materials, civil commotion, riot, revolution, invasion, war, threat of or preparation for war, political unrest, fire, explosion, storm, flood, earthquake, subsidence, epidemic or other natural physical disaster.

**Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC):** A legal condition whereby a person or community can be said to have given consent to an action prior to its commencement, based upon a clear appreciation and understanding of the facts, implications and future consequences of that action, and the possession of all relevant facts at the time when consent is given. Free, prior and informed consent includes the right to grant, modify, withhold or withdraw approval (Source: Based on the Preliminary working paper on the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples (...)) (E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/2004/4 8 July 2004) of the 22nd Session of the United Nations

Commission on Human Rights, Sub-commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Indigenous Populations, 19–23 July 2004). (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Habitat:** The place or type of site where an organism or population occurs (Source: Based on the Convention on Biological Diversity, Article 2). (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Human Rights:** Rights set out in the International Bill of Human Rights (consisting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the main instruments through which it has been codified: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)

**Independent Assessor:** An entity without conflict of interest who is not subject to the organizations or its group of companies' authority, influence or control. The entity shall have:

- a. Expert knowledge on the presence and rights of Indigenous Peoples and/or traditional peoples and local communities associated with the conversion process, assessed based on confirmed experience and/or education and/or licenses in the relevant area;
- b. Knowledge (including awareness) of existing conflicts pertaining to the rights of Indigenous Peoples, traditional peoples and local communities; and
- c. Confirmed experience in consultation/mediation with Indigenous Peoples, traditional peoples and local communities.

**Intensity:** A measure of the force, severity or strength of a management activity or other occurrence affecting the nature of the activity's impacts. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Interested stakeholder:** Any person, group of persons, or entity that has shown an interest, or is known to have an interest, in the activities of the organization. (Adapted from FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Initial Implementation Threshold:** The threshold specifies the minimum remediation stage that an organization has to achieve in order to become eligible for association with FSC or for forest management certification of a *Management Unit*\*, it includes:

- **Initial environmental remedy threshold:** Where the *ecosystem attributes*\* has been restored and / or conserved to the point where native recovery potential\* to natural forest\* is ecologically viable (as per *ecosystem attributes*\*) or where a selected natural forest\* area is conserved, these conservation attributes should be *equivalent*\* or better than the converted area condition at the time of conversion\*. Additionally, priority activities\* have been implemented.
- **Initial social remedy threshold:** Social harm is being remediated through the agreement of a remedy process and priority activities\* have been completed.

**Landscape:** A geographical mosaic composed of interacting ecosystems resulting from the influence of geological, topographical, soil, climatic, biotic and human interactions in a given area (Source: Based on World Conservation Union (IUCN). Glossary definitions as provided on IUCN website). (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Longevity** is defined as a minimum of 25 years and ideally in perpetuity. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**Management Unit:** A spatial area or areas submitted for FSC certification with clearly defined boundaries managed to a set of explicit long-term management objectives which are expressed in a management plan. This area or areas include(s):

- all facilities and area(s) within or adjacent to this spatial area or areas under legal title or management control of, or operated by or on behalf of The Organization, for the purpose of contributing to the management objectives; and
- all facilities and area(s) outside, and not adjacent to this spatial area or areas and operated by or on behalf of The Organization, solely for the purpose of contributing to the management objectives. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Natural forest:** A forest area with many of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems, such as complexity, structure and biological diversity, including soil characteristics, flora and fauna, in which all or almost all the trees are native species, not classified as plantations.

'Natural forest' includes the following categories:

- Forest affected by harvesting or other disturbances, in which trees are being or have been regenerated by a combination of natural and artificial regeneration with species typical of natural forests in that site, and where many of the above-ground and below-ground characteristics of the natural forest are still present. In boreal and north temperate forests which are naturally composed of only one or few tree species, a combination of natural and artificial regeneration to regenerate forest of the same native species, with most of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems of that site, is not by itself considered as conversion to plantations;
- Natural forests which are maintained by traditional silvicultural practices including natural or assisted natural regeneration;
- Well-developed secondary or colonizing forest of native species which has regenerated in non-forest areas;
- The definition of 'natural forest' may include areas described as wooded ecosystems, woodland and savannah.

The description of natural forests and their principal characteristics and key elements may be further defined in FSC Forest Stewardship Standards, with appropriate descriptions or examples.

'Natural forest' does not include land which is not dominated by trees, was previously not forest, and which does not yet contain many of the characteristics and elements of native ecosystems. Young regeneration may be considered as natural forest after some years of ecological progression. FSC Forest Stewardship Standards may indicate when such areas may be excised from the Management Unit, should be restored towards more natural conditions, or may be converted to other land uses.

FSC has not developed quantitative thresholds between different categories of forests in terms of area, density, height, etc. FSC Forest Stewardship Standards may provide such thresholds and other guidelines, with appropriate descriptions or examples. Pending such guidance, areas dominated by trees, mainly of native species, may be considered as natural forest.

- Thresholds and guidelines may cover areas such as: other vegetation types and non-forest communities and ecosystems included in the Management Unit, including grassland, bushland, wetlands, and open woodlands.



- Very young pioneer or colonizing regeneration in a primary succession on new open sites or abandoned farmland, which does not yet contain many of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems. This may be considered as natural forest through ecological progression after the passage of years;
- Young natural regeneration growing in natural forest areas may be considered as natural forest, even after logging, clear-felling or other disturbances, since many of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems remain, above-ground and below-ground;
- Areas where deforestation and forest degradation have been so severe that they are no longer 'dominated by trees' may be considered as non-forest, when they have very few of the principal above-ground and belowground characteristics and key elements of natural forests. Such extreme degradation is typically the result of combinations of repeated and excessively heavy logging, grazing, farming, fuelwood collection, hunting, fire, erosion, mining, settlements, infrastructure, etc. FSC Forest Stewardship Standards may help to decide when such areas should be excised from the Management Unit, should be restored towards more natural conditions, or may be converted to other land uses. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2).

**Organization:** For the purpose of the procedure the term organization is used to cover the FSC defined term of *The Organization\** as well as any other legal entity.

**Proportionate:** A 1:1 ratio: The area to be restored or conserved is the same as the area of *natural forest\** and/or *High Conservation Value\** destroyed. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**Natural recovery potential:** Capacity of ecosystem attributes to return through natural regeneration to a site that has been degraded. Degree of this potential in a degraded ecosystem will depend on the extent and duration of the impact and whether the impact resembles those to which the ecosystem's species have adapted over evolutionary time frames. Natural recovery potential needs to be present for application of natural regeneration or assisted regeneration approaches to ecological restoration. (Source: adapted from *International Principles and Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration*. Gann et al 2019. Second edition. Society for Ecological Restoration [SER])

**Priority activities:** Activities that should be undertaken as a priority in the early phases of implementing the Remedy Plan prior to being able to demonstrate that the initial implementation threshold has been achieved. These activities shall include:

- Resolution of *priority social conflicts\** associated with *conversion\**;
- Independent identification of *Affected Rights Holders\** and *social harm\** caused.
- Agreement with *Affected Rights Holders\** on a roadmap to *remedy\* social harm\**, including realistic timeframes and a method for monitoring implementation.
- *Restoration\** and *conservation\** of *ecosystem attributes\** deemed to be critical for recovering ecosystem resilience as identified by environmental experts and input from *affected stakeholders\** (these may include but are not limited to critical ecosystem values identified in the FSC Principles and Criterion under principles 5, 6 and 9, including:
  - 5.1 resources and *ecosystem services\**,
  - 6.4 *rare species\** and *threatened species\** and their *habitats\**,
  - 6.5 representative sample areas of native ecosystems,
  - 6.7 natural water courses, water bodies, riparian zones and their connectivity
  - Principle 9 – all High Conservation Values.)

- *Conservation\** and/or *restoration\** of areas of the same ecosystem as that which was lost, if such ecosystems are considered HCV 3 in the local or national context of the Unit in question.
- *Conservation\** and/or *restoration\** of areas which specifically expand functional habitats, are adjacent to existing *conservation\** areas or intact forests, or form viable biodiversity corridors.
- Priority Activities for environmental harm aimed at halting further environmental damage, examples may include, but are not limited to: erosion control, fire management, water quality restoration, eradicating invasive species, protection measures from further harm.
- Locations where priority activity for environmental remedy are recommended to be identified should be in the following sequence:
  - The conversion site,
  - The management unit,
  - Any areas outside the management unit affected by the conversion.

**Priority social conflict:** Conflicts or processes that are preventing the *remedy\** from being initiated which need to be resolved in order to build confidence in the effectiveness of the remedy process. This can include accessibility to the process, equitable process, transparency, rights compatibility or legitimacy *Conflicts\** to be identified and prioritized for resolution against best practice criteria, some of which are included in UNGP implementation guidelines 2011.

- **Conflict:** A situation in which one actor or group is impairing the activities of another because of different perceptions, emotions and interests. A conflict situation is one in which the impairing behavior from one actor is experienced by another, while factors or conditions that drive such are considered the sources of impairment.

**Remedy:** To correct or return something as near as possible to its original state or condition. (Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. UN. 2011)

For environmental harms this includes actions taken to remedy deforestation, conversion, degradation, or other harms to natural forests\* and High Conservation Value\* areas.

Environmental remedy actions may include but are not limited to: *conservation\** of standing forests, habitats, ecosystems and species; *restoration\** and protection of degraded ecosystems.

For *social harms\** this includes providing redress for identified *social harms\** through an FPIC-based process for agreeing redress for all *social harms\**, and facilitating a transition to the position before such harms occurred; or developing alternative measures to ameliorate harms by providing gains recognized by the *affected stakeholders\** as *equivalent\** to the harms. Remedy may be achieved through a combination of *restitution\**, rehabilitation, compensation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**Remedy of Harm:** Refers to both the process of providing remedy for a negative human rights impact and the substantive outcomes that can counteract, or make good, the negative impact. These outcomes may take a range of forms, which must be agreed on a case-by-case basis, such as apologies, restitution, rehabilitation, financial or non-financial compensation, and punitive sanctions (whether criminal or administrative, such as fines), as well as the prevention of harm through, for example, injunctions or guarantees of non-repetition.

**Remedy Process Agreements:** Agreements on the process for developing the remedy of harm between affected parties and the organization.

**Restitution:** Measures agreed through an FPIC-based process to restore lands, properties or damaged natural resources to their original owners in their original condition. Where such lands, properties or natural resources cannot be returned or restored, measures are agreed to provide alternatives of equivalent\* quality and extent. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**Restoration / Ecological Restoration:** process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem, and its associated conservation values, that have been degraded, damaged, or destroyed. (Source: adapted from *International principles and standards for the practice of ecological restoration*. Gann et al 2019. Second edition. Society for Ecological Restoration [SER])

(Restoration doesn't necessarily aim at returning the natural/historic functions, but instead encompasses a broad range of activities with different goals).

Restoration includes a broad range of activities; with one or more targets that identify the native ecosystem to be restored (as informed by an appropriate reference model), and project goals that establish the level of recovery sought. Level of recovery can be from rehabilitation to full recovery:

- **Rehabilitation:** is the repairing of *ecosystem function\** and some native biota recovery (but not necessarily). The goal of rehabilitation projects is not native ecosystem recovery, but rather reinstating a level of ecosystem functioning for renewed and ongoing provision of *ecosystem services\** potentially derived from non-native ecosystems as well.
- **Full recovery:** is defined as the state or condition whereby, following restoration, all key ecosystem attributes closely resemble those of the reference model, and the ecosystem demonstrates self-organization. Where lower levels of recovery are planned or occur due to resource, technical, environmental, or social constraints, recovery is referred to as partial recovery.
- **Substitution:** defines the state or actions where the reconstructed ecosystem is completely different to the historical ecosystem that existed prior to *conversion\**, and deemed to be more suitable for restoration, due to impaired environmental changes. The substituted ecosystem or forest type must also produce clear, substantial, additional, secure, and long-lasting conservation outcomes in comparison to other options.
- **Ecosystem Attributes:** Key ecosystem attributes contribute to overall ecosystem integrity, which arises from properties of diversity, complexity, and resilience inherent in functional native ecosystems. Attributes include: Absence of threats; Physical and chemical conditions; Species composition; Structural diversity; *ecosystem function\**; and External exchanges. Key ecosystem attributes are used to describe the reference model (Source: adapted from *International principles and standards for the practice of ecological restoration*. Gann et al 2019. Second edition. Society for Ecological Restoration [SER])
- **Enhancement:** means the manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of ecosystems to heighten, intensify, or improve specific resource function(s). Enhancement results in the gain of selected resource function(s) but may also lead to a decline in other resource function(s). Enhancement does not result in a gain in resource area.
- **Reference Model:** The reference model aims to characterize the condition of the ecosystem as it would be had it not been converted, adjusted as necessary to accommodate changed or predicted change in biotic or environmental conditions (e.g., climate change). Reference models should be based on specific real-world ecosystems that are the targets of conservation and restoration activities. Optimally

the reference model describes the approximate condition the site would be in had conversion not occurred. This condition is not necessarily the same as the historic state, as it accounts for the inherent capacity of ecosystems to change in response to changing conditions. Reference models are developed based on information on specific ecosystem attributes obtained from reference sites, which are environmentally and ecologically similar to the site to be restored, but optimally have experienced little or minimal degradation. (Source: adapted from *International principles and standards for the practice of ecological restoration*. Gann et al 2019. Second edition. Society for Ecological Restoration [SER])

- **Protection:** means the removal of a threat to, or preventing the decline of, resources by an action in or near those resources. This term includes activities commonly associated with the protection and maintenance of resources through the implementation of appropriate legal and physical mechanisms.

**Rights:** Legal, customary and human rights as defined by national laws relevant to plantation forestry and forestry, as well as the International Bill of Human Rights, UNDRIP, and ILO 169, ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

**Scale:** A measure of the extent to which a management activity or event affects an environmental value or a management unit, in time or space. An activity with a small or low spatial scale affects only a small proportion of the forest each year, an activity with a small or low temporal scale occurs only at long intervals. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

**Significant conversion:** Conversion is normally considered significant in any case of:

1. conversion of high conservation value (HCV) area, or
2. conversion of more than 5 per cent of natural forests\* under the associated organization and/or affiliated group's control within a national jurisdiction in the past five years, or
3. conversion of more than 10,000 ha of natural forests\* under the associated organization and/or affiliated group's control within a national jurisdiction in the past five years. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**Small-scale smallholder:** Any person that is depending on the land for most of their livelihood; and/or employs labor mostly from family or neighboring communities and has land-use rights on a *Management Unit*\* of less than 50 hectares. Standards Developers may define this to less than 50 hectares. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**Social harms:** are negative impacts on persons or communities, perpetrated by individuals, corporations or States, which include, but may go beyond, criminal acts by legal persons. Such harms include but are not limited to: negative impacts on persons' or groups' rights, livelihoods and well-being, such as health, food security, healthy environment, cultural repertoire and happiness. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**Third Party Verifier:** An independent, third party company or organization approved by FSC international comprising expertise in, environmental and social harm and remedy required to verify compliance of remedy processes. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

**The Organization:** The person or entity holding or applying for certification and therefore responsible for demonstrating compliance with the requirements upon which FSC certification is based (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-0).

**Unacceptable Activities:** As listed in the Policy for Association:

1. Illegal logging or the trade in illegal wood or forest products
2. Violation of traditional and human rights in forestry operations
3. Destruction of high conservation values in forestry operations
4. Significant conversion of forests to plantations or non-forest use
5. Introduction of genetically modified organisms in forestry operations
6. Violation of any of the ILO Core Conventions - As defined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

**Very limited portion:** The affected area *shall*\* not exceed 5% of the *Management Unit*\*. (Source: FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0 D3-0)

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## Annex 4 Simplified flowchart of Conversion Remedy Procedure

