

**Forest Stewardship Council®**



**Terms of Reference – Field Testing of FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluations V4-0 D2-0**

**FSC Forest Management Program**

May 2022

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## INTRODUCTION

FSC is revising its Forest Management Evaluations Standard (FSC-STD-20-007) as part of streamlining the FSC normative framework.

This draft of the revised version (Draft 2-0) aims for increased transparency, outcome-oriented and risk-based forest management evaluations. For example, it introduces the possibility of conducting full or partial remote auditing in FM evaluations and provides mechanisms for the national forest stewardship standard (NFSS) risk-based approach concept to be implemented across FM evaluations. Additionally, the several requirements of the standard have been revised and the structure has been revised to facilitate its implementation. In particular, former addenda, relevant advice notes and interpretations have been incorporated directly into the main standard and redundancies with other standards have been removed.

To collect additional stakeholder input for the development of the draft standard, FSC is inviting certification bodies to field test the application of the draft requirements and provide their feedback to FSC.

Considering that many requirements of the standard already exist and have been applied by certification bodies for years, FSC concluded that rather than testing the full standard, the field tests would be more effective if focused on three (3) scenarios where revised and new requirements are being introduced:

- **Scenario 1:** Organization Profile application
- **Scenario 2:** Remote auditing feasibility
- **Scenario 3:** Selecting sites, contractors and determining sample size in FM Groups evaluations

This Terms of Reference outlines the expected outcomes of the field tests and the types of certificate holders to be evaluated considering diversity in terms of geographic location, type/maturity/size of certificate as well as forest types for each of the three scenarios.

## OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the field testing the draft FSC-STD-20-007 *FSC Forest Management Evaluation V4-0 D2-0* is to assess the feasibility of its practical implementation for the evaluation of the management unit with account of ecological, economic, and social peculiarities. A field test consists of a desk audit of some portion of the draft standard as well as a field test of the standard within a forest environment.

The following are the main objectives of the field tests:

- 1) To gain certification bodies and auditor feedback on the practicality and applicability of some of the main changes applied into the current draft of the revised FSC-STD-20-007, including the desk and field assessment of these requirements.
- 2) To collect certification bodies' recommendations to address issues identified during the application of the draft standard.
- 3) To provide systematically collected field test results to the technical working group for their consideration in finalizing revision process of the FSC-STD-20-007.

## SCENARIO 1- ORGANIZATION PROFILE APPLICATION

<b>Desired number of field test sites</b>	4 - 6 (Covering Global South and Global North)
<b>Type of certificate</b>	All types of FM certificates
<b>Forest types</b>	Plantation and natural forest
<b>Section(s) from the standard</b>	Section 5 – Determination of the audit method Annex 1 – Organization Profile

### Field testing method

The certification body is expected to test the application of the Organization Profile in the planning and execution of a real audit. Specific field-testing questionnaires related to the application of the Organization Profile regarding the determination of audit method in forest management evaluations will be provided by FSC.

### Objective

Evaluate the applicability of the Organization Profile as a tool for the determination of the audit method.

### Field test focus areas

- 1) Feasibility of filling in and updating the Organization Profile between evaluations;
- 2) Data collection methods and information technologies the certification bodies are using (and could adopt) for assessing the feasibility of conducting parts of the evaluation remotely or opting for full remote evaluation;
- 3) Utilization of the Organization Profile as part of decision making for the determination of the audit method;
- 4) Test if the questions in the Organization Profile to determine the eligibility of remote auditing are adequate.

## SCENARIO 2 - REMOTE AUDITING FEASIBILITY

<b>Desired number of field test sites</b>	4 - 6 (Covering the Global South and Global North)
<b>Type of certificate</b>	All types of Forest Management (FM) certificates
<b>Forest types</b>	Plantation, natural
<b>Section(s) from the standard</b>	Section 5 – Determination of the audit method Annex 1 – Organization Profile

### Field testing method

The field tests will be conducted as a combination of remote and on-site auditing. In these field tests, the certification bodies will look into the Organization Profile and the relevant information it contains to enable certification bodies to assess the feasibility of conducting full or partial remote audits.

### Objective

To assess if full or partial remote auditing methods are feasible when conducting forest management evaluations.

### Field test focus areas

- 1) To assess if full remote auditing provides adequate assurance for conformance evaluation;
- 2) To determine what type of tools could be used to ensure that stakeholder consultations are being conducted in a manner that is accessible, secure, and culturally appropriate in remote audits; and
- 3) Understanding how data collection methods and information technologies can be applied to replace/complement on-site audits with remote audits.

## SCENARIO 3 - SELECTING SITES, CONTRACTORS AND DETERMINING SAMPLE SIZE IN FM GROUPS EVALUATIONS

<b>Desired number of field test sites</b>	4 - 6 (covering Global South and Global North)
<b>Type of certificate</b>	Forest Management (FM) Group certificate
<b>Forest types</b>	Plantation and natural forest
<b>Section(s) from the standard</b>	8 Selecting management units and sites for evaluation 10.1.4 Auditing multiple management units 12.2 Sampling rate at re-evaluations

### Field testing method

The certification body is expected to follow a specific questionnaire to provide their feedback on the applicability of the proposed sampling methodology, as well as to provide input on the rationale to select sites and contractors for evaluation.

### Objective

Evaluate the applicability of the revised sampling methodology and revised requirements related to the selection of sites, especially with large FM Group certificates, and the sample of contractors.

### Field test focus areas

Evaluating how intensity of management and relative frequency of management activities per management unit affects the sample size. It is advised that special attention would be paid to ensure that certificate holders would represent different forest types, group size and intensity of management (e.g., one plantation forestry certificate holder with short rotation forestry and one natural forestry certificate holder with rotational age forests).

## EXPENSES AND REMUNERATION

Participation in the field tests takes place on a voluntary, unpaid basis, as add-on to ongoing evaluation processes.

## PROJECT TASKS AND DELIVERABLES

The certification body will be expected to undertake the following tasks:

1. Conduct the field-testing according to the approved audit plan by FSC International Center.
2. Submit a draft Field-Testing Report using the template provided by FSC within 15 days of conducting the field-test, latest by 31 July 2022.
3. If applicable, address the questions or feedback received from FSC International Center.

## PRODUCING FIELD TEST REPORT

The certification body shall prepare a report, which has to include results of the desk review and the field test and recommendations on further improvement of draft of the *FSC-STD-20-007 FSC Forest Management Evaluations V4-0 D2-0* (in English language) using a report template that will be provided by the FSC International Center.

The report must include findings of each scenario, where comments are warranted and must include both desk review and field testing. The report for each scenario, in the required template, should not exceed 10 pages, without prior authorization from FSC International Center.

The cover sheet of the report must clearly identify the following information: name and contact data of the certification body, including contact person and web-address; date (day/month/year) of report finalization; name and contact data of The Organization; and management unit location of The Organization as provided in the template.

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Expressions of interest (EOI) are sought from the FM FSC accredited certification bodies outlining the following:

1. Proposed name of the certificate holder, location, forest type and type of FM certificate and the time for the field test.
2. Proposed audit and field test plan.
3. Name of the auditor or team of auditors responsible for the field tests and their qualifications.

## SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Interested FSC accredited certification bodies are encouraged to submit their Expression of Interest not later than 31 May 2022 to Lucia Massaro, Forest Management Policy Manager at FSC International Center by email to [l.massaro@fsc.org](mailto:l.massaro@fsc.org).