

Briefing Paper: Preliminary Outreach to FSC Membership in Preparation for the Development of FSC International Generic Indicators

17th April 2012

Background and Key Points

In February 2012 the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) membership approved a major revision of the FSC Principles and Criteria (FSC P&C), FSC's international standard for forest stewardship. FSC is now about to initiate a process to develop a set of 'International Generic Indicators' to support consistent implementation of the FSC P&C.

Approval of the revised FSC P&C was the culmination of a long consultative process, during which FSC sought to achieve consensus amongst its diverse stakeholders. Whilst many FSC members are satisfied with the revisions made, particularly regarding social issues, all FSC members are not fully satisfied with all aspects of the final text. The development of International Generic Indicators provides one potential avenue to resolve outstanding issues, prior to the implementation of the revised FSC Principles and Criteria.

Before starting to develop the set of International Generic Indicators the FSC Policy and Standards Unit wishes to reach out to FSC members to gain a better understanding of:

- the nature of any major outstanding issues;
- the remedies (including, but not limited to, the development of certain International Generic Indicators) that FSC members believe could resolve such issues to their satisfaction;
- lessons from the FSC P&C revision process that could improve the process for developing the International Generic Indicators.

To this end, the FSC Policy and Standards Unit has contracted OneWorldStandards Ltd (www.oneworldstandards.com) to undertake a survey and a series of follow-up interviews with FSC members, as described in this briefing paper.

Part One provides background information on FSC 'International Generic Indicators' (IGIs), their role, and the process for their development.

Part Two introduces the specific areas on which FSC is seeking input at this stage.

Part Three explains how FSC members can participate in this preliminary process.

A link to the survey can be found at the end of this briefing paper, and all FSC members are invited and encouraged to participate. The survey will remain open until May 7th 2012. The survey also provides the entry point for FSC members interested in taking part in follow-up interviews, if they so wish.

A full report on the findings of the survey will be published on the FSC IGI website (www.igi.fsc.org) at the end of May 2012.



PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description and Role of the 'International Generic Indicators'

The definition of an FSC Indicator is given in *FSC Glossary of Terms FSC-STD-01-002*¹, sourced from *Structure, content and local adaptation of Generic Forest Stewardship Standards FSC-STD-20-002 (V2-1)* as follows:

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

The same Standard specifies requirements relating to the role of an Indicator in the context of an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard. The requirements are reproduced in full Annex 2, and include the following:

“3.3 Each indicator shall specify outcomes or levels (i.e. thresholds) of performance that are measurable during an evaluation.

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

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

“3.5 Indicators shall only include elements that contribute to the achievement of the objective of the applicable FSC Criterion.”

The guidance paper *FSC Forest Stewardship Standards: structure, content and suggested indicators FSC-GUI-60-004 (V1-0) EN* provides background on FSC's decision to develop a set of 'International Generic Indicators'. The paper links the development of International Generic Indicators to the decision taken at the FSC 2005 General Assembly (Motion 48, merged with Motion 20) to devise an appropriate way to phase out the use of certification body interim standards. The guidance paper proposed that:

- FSC should aim to generate a single set of International Generic Indicators applicable to all forest types and regions.
- FSC should aim to allow the minimum possible scope for variation by certification bodies at the level of Indicators. If technically possible, generic indicators should be fixed at the international level, with no variation being permitted by certification bodies at the national level. In order to achieve this objective whilst optimizing national stakeholder support and necessary technical flexibility, FSC should draft indicators that are internationally applicable, whilst allowing variation to take place at the level of 'means of verification'.

¹ All FSC Standards and Procedures referred to in this briefing paper are listed in Annex 1, with brief explanatory notes.



FSC-GUI-60-004 (V1-0) EN provides a set of suggested International Generic Indicators for the implementation of the 2006 version of the FSC Principles and Criteria. An example taken from this document is shown in Annex 3.

FSC is now initiating a process to develop a revised set of International Generic Indicators, designed to implement the revised FSC Principles and Criteria. Once approved, the new International Generic Indicators will serve as baseline requirements for the development of National and Regional Forest Stewardship Standards, and will take the place of certification body interim standards for regions without their own Standards.

1.2 The Process for Developing International Generic Indicators

The process for developing International Generic Indicators will follow the procedure defined in *FSC-PRO-01-001 V2-0*. In summary:

Between April and June 2012 the FSC Policy and Standards Unit (PSU) will:

- Establish a sub-chamber balanced IGI Working Group (plus regional and technical experts from national Standards Development Groups, FSC National Offices and Certification Bodies to serve on a Technical Expert Group)
- Establish a Consultative Forum
- Prepare a gap analysis between the old and the revised FSC Principles and Criteria
- Prepare a “Zero Draft” of the International Generic Indicators as a starting point for the Working Group, based on the existing set of “Suggested Indicators” (*FSC-GUI-60-004*), the Explanatory Notes developed for the revised P&C, and other resources such as the feedback from this outreach process
- Collect and prepare background information, such as:
 - results from FSC General Assembly Motions contributing to indicators development
 - results from a review of existing Policies and Advice Notes
- Organize an initial stakeholder workshop for members to provide input on key issues that should be addressed in the development of the IGI (targeted for June)
- Commission a preliminary FSC membership survey and outreach on key issues to be addressed in the IGI (see section 1.3, below).

All the results from the preparatory work will be made available to the IGI Working Group. Between May 2012 and December 2013 the main work of developing the revised International Generic Indicators will take place.

A minimum of three IGI Working Group meetings will take place, together with a series of conference calls and webinars. To ensure regional applicability, interactive workshops in the five FSC geographical regions will be conducted in between the working group meetings.

The draft International Generic Indicators will undergo at least two rounds of public consultation of 60 days each before a final version is submitted to the FSC Board of Directors for approval.

The intent is to complete the process by December 2013, so that the new FSC Principles and Criteria can be implemented from the start of 2014.



FSC has established a dedicated website to provide ongoing information about its process for developing revised International Generic Indicators at www.igi.fsc.org. The site provides an overview of the process, links to relevant documents, and will provide a platform for communication over the course of the process. Stakeholders can also subscribe to the FSC weekly newsletter and technical updates at <http://www.fsc.org/subscribe-newsletter.html>.

Background documentation relevant to the process is listed in Annex 1 at the end of this document. All documents may be located and downloaded from the FSC website via the document search page (<http://www.fsc.org/414.html>) or by using a search engine.

PART TWO: FOCUS FOR PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION

2.1 'Outstanding Issues'

A key objective of this preliminary consultation process is to identify 'outstanding issues' which FSC members do not consider to have been resolved to their satisfaction through the revision of the FSC Principles and Criteria.

It is not the intent to re-open negotiation on the full text of the FSC Principles and Criteria, but rather to highlight issues where further work may be able to resolve ambiguities, apparent inconsistencies, or other concerns.

A particular objective of the outreach process is to identify issues that may be resolved through the improvement of the explanatory notes which accompany the FSC Principles and Criteria, and/or through the development of the International Generic Indicators. However, a range of other potential approaches is also available within the FSC system, and FSC members may propose other possible remedies if these seem more appropriate.

Examples of issues that have already been identified by some members as requiring further work are listed below. The list is not supposed to be definitive, but rather to illustrate the *kinds of issues* that FSC members may wish to highlight as requiring further work in order for them to be fully resolved:

- Restoration requirements, especially for more intensively managed Management Units.
- Sustained yield provisions, particularly in primary forests.
- Inconsistencies between explanatory notes and the FSC P&C in relation to High Conservation Values (HCVs), and the need for more proactive conservation language in Principle 9
- Lack of incorporation of carbon dense areas into HCV, as laid out in Motion 17 of the FSC 2011 General Assembly.
- Implementation of the FSC P&C in relation to the use of fertilizers.

The on-line survey provides an opportunity for FSC members to identify these or any other issues that they believe require attention.

2.2 Potential approaches to resolve outstanding issues

There are four possible approaches by which 'outstanding issues' in the revised FSC P&C may be resolved within FSC's normative framework. These approaches are outlined (A – D) below.



The on-line survey invites FSC members to highlight the approach they believe is most appropriate to resolve any outstanding issues they have previously identified.

A. Development or Revision of Explanatory Notes

FSC prepared a detailed set of 'Explanatory Notes' to accompany the revised FSC Principles and Criteria. The Explanatory Notes are not normative, but are "*intended to be one of the bases for the development of FSC Forest Stewardship Standards including FSC international generic indicators, and reduce differences in the interpretation of FSC requirements*" (FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship FSC-STD-01-001 (V5-0) D5-0).

The IGI Working Group will be reviewing and recommending revisions to the Explanatory Notes as part of the IGI development process. Modifications of the Explanatory Notes will guide the future interpretation of the FSC Principles and Criteria by Standards Development Groups developing national and regional FSC Forest Stewardship Standards, and will guide the development of the international generic indicators that will be implemented by all FSC accredited certification bodies.

This approach is likely to be the most appropriate if concerns relate to:

- apparent contradictions between different Explanatory Notes
- ambiguities in the drafting of the current Explanatory Notes
- apparent contradictions between Explanatory Notes and FSC Normative Documents (Standards, Policies, Procedures or Advice Notes)
- ambiguities in interpretation of Criteria that could be resolved through the development of Explanatory Notes

In some cases apparent ambiguities in the interpretation of the revised Criteria are addressed through the current Explanatory Notes. Modifying the Explanatory Notes may then address concerns for some stakeholders whilst creating new concerns for others. The process for modifying current Explanatory Notes will need to take this into account, so FSC members are requested not only to identify aspects of the Notes that they believe need to be modified, but also to highlight Notes that they believe are critically important as they currently stand.

Explanatory Notes must be consistent with all currently applicable normative documents (FSC Standards, Policies, Procedures and Advice Notes) so this approach cannot be applicable where the proposed Note would contradict an existing normative document.

B. Drafting of International Generic Indicators

The development of the International Generic Indicators themselves allows for resolution of an issue by demonstrating the intent of the FSC Principles and Criteria and the Explanatory Notes in practice, and at the same providing a mechanism for implementing such intent directly.

At this stage FSC is seeking input in relation to key aspects of the Explanatory Notes that need to be included explicitly in the International Generic Indicators, and in relation to any other information that should be incorporated.

As in the case of Explanatory Notes, International Generic Indicators have to be consistent with all other applicable normative documents.

C. Development or Revision of FSC Standards, Policies or Advice Notes

An outstanding issue may be the result of the application of a previously approved FSC Standard, Policy or Advice Note. In this case the only way to resolve the issue is through the review and subsequent revision of that document, following FSC's review and revision procedure *FSC-PRO-01-*



001. The first step in this process is to identify and bring to FSC's attention the document that creates the problem.

Alternatively, an issue may be of sufficient importance that it merits development of a new Standard, Policy, Procedure or Advice Note. This is likely to be the case where resolution would have significant impacts on one or more groups of stakeholders, and where opinions as to the best solution are likely to be divided. In this case the first step is to clarify the nature of the concern and bring it to FSC's attention, requesting that the procedure to develop a new normative document be initiated. The decision to implement the process would again be taken under FSC's procedure *FSC-PRO-01-001*.

D. Revision of the FSC Principles and Criteria

Finally, an issue may be a direct result of the wording of the revised FSC P&C. If the issue results from an unintended ambiguity of the text, then it may be possible to resolve it quickly by minor editing without a full review process. However, if the issue would require substantive change to the text, then it would require a full revision process to be completed or a motion to be put to the FSC General Assembly, and ultimately a vote of the FSC membership to agree changes.

2.3 Feedback on the FSC P&C review and revision process

The third area in which FSC would like to seek input from FSC members at this point is in relation to the *process* to be followed for the development of the International Generic Indicators.

As noted above, FSC has determined that the process will follow the requirements of *FSC-PRO-01-001*. *FSC-PRO-01-001* establishes a standardised approach and minimum requirements, but provides for some flexibility as well.

The FSC Policy and Standards Unit is therefore seeking feedback from FSC members on their experience in the recent revision of the FSC Principles and Criteria, so that the lessons from that process can be learned, and appropriate improvements can be made to the procedure in the case of the development of the International Generic Indicators.

PART THREE: THE PRELIMINARY OUTREACH PROCESS

The process aims to collect FSC membership input in relation to three key areas described in Part Two, above, has two main elements: i) an on-line survey which all FSC members are invited to complete; ii) a series of follow-up phone interviews with FSC members who complete the survey and express a specific interest.

The on-line survey is available in English and Spanish, from 23rd April 2012 through to 7th May 2012, and interviews (also in English or Spanish, as preferred) will be scheduled over the same period. If there is an overwhelming response interviews will take place in groups, and/or be selected in consultation with the FSC Policy and Standards Unit to ensure that key issues are discussed and that representatives from all FSC sub-chambers are involved.

If you wish to be interviewed, please make sure that you complete the survey and indicate when you would be available for interview as soon as possible.

As an FSC member you are both invited and encouraged to take part in this process. The more FSC members that participate, the better the picture FSC will have of the areas that it needs to focus on in the upcoming process for developing International Generic Indicators.



As many FSC members have recently reviewed the FSC Principles and Criteria in the context of the recent vote, it is hoped that it will not take long to respond at this stage by highlighting any key issues where you believe further work is required. We estimate that the survey will take between fifteen and thirty minutes to complete.

The findings from the survey and interviews will be used as a key resource in developing Draft Zero of the International Generic Indicators. A final report of the survey will also be published by FSC on the IGI website.

NEXT STEPS

If you would like to comment on any of the issues raised above, please do so by taking part in this survey.

Click on one of the following links, or copy and paste the appropriate link into your browser, which will take you straight to the on-line survey:

in **English** (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GVKHVZ3>)

or in **Spanish** (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9QJ6X2T>).



Annex 1: Selected FSC documents relevant to the development of FSC International Generic Indicators

Background documentation relevant to the process is listed in the table below. All documents may be downloaded from the FSC website via the document search page (<http://www.fsc.org/414.html>) or by using search engine.

FSC documentation	Notes
<p><i>The Development and Approval of FSC Social and Environmental International Standards</i></p> <p><i>FSC-PRO-01-001 (Version 2-0) EN</i></p>	<p>An FSC Procedure, defining the process that FSC follows in the development of its International Standards with specific social and environmental objectives.</p> <p>The standard covers the processes for deciding to develop a new standard, establishing working groups and consultative forums, and managing the process from initiation to final approval of a new standard.</p> <p>This procedure is currently in effect (as of March 2012), but is due to be replaced by a new version (see below) shortly.</p> <p>FSC has determined that the process for developing the IGI will follow FSC-PRO-01-001.</p>
<p><i>The Development and Revision of FSC Normative Documents</i></p> <p><i>FSC-PRO-01-001 (V3-0) EN (FINAL DRAFT)</i></p>	<p>A revision of the current procedure for developing international standards (see above).</p> <p>The new version has a broader scope, applying not only to the development of international social and environmental standards, but to the development of all documents in FSC's 'Normative Framework', that are mandatory to follow. This includes FSC Policies, Standards, Procedures and Advice Notes, but does not include Guidelines.</p> <p>When this procedure is approved it will replace FSC-PRO-01-001 (Version 2-0) EN as well as FSC-PRO-01-002 (Version 1-0) <i>The Development and Approval of FSC Policies</i>.</p>
<p><i>FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship</i></p> <p><i>FSC-STD-01-001 V5-0 D5-0 EN</i></p>	<p>The revised version of the FSC Principles and Criteria, approved by the FSC Membership in February 2012.</p>
<p><i>FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship: supplemented by Explanatory Notes and Rationales</i></p> <p><i>FSC-STD-01-001 V5-0 D5-0 EN</i></p>	<p>As above, with additional explanatory notes and rationales. This document was prepared and made available to FSC members to clarify the meaning and desired outcomes of the revised FSC Principles and Criteria, prior to voting by the FSC membership. The notes also provide background information on the context of particular Principles and Criteria, including reference to applicable FSC and other documents, where needed.</p>



FSC documentation	Notes
	<p>The explanatory notes are not mandatory. However, they are intended to be one of the bases for the development of FSC Forest Stewardship Standards including FSC international generic indicators, and reduce differences in the interpretation of FSC requirements.</p>
<p><i>Structure, content and local adaptation of Generic Forest Stewardship Standards</i></p> <p>FSC-STD-20-002 (V3-0) EN</p>	<p>An FSC International Standard defining requirements for FSC-accredited certification bodies in relation to their own 'Generic Forest Stewardship Standards'.</p> <p>The standard is designed to ensure that certification body generic standards implement the FSC Principles and Criteria consistently, and identify and address key forest stewardship issues in the areas in which they are applied.</p> <p>It includes specifications for the structure and content of Indicators.</p>
<p><i>Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards</i></p> <p>FSC-STD-60-002 (V1-0) EN</p>	<p>This FSC International Standard defines requirements for the structure and content of national (or sub-national) standards implementing the FSC Principles and Criteria.</p> <p>It includes specifications for the structure and content of Indicators.</p>
<p><i>Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards</i></p> <p>FSC-STD-60-006 (V1-2) EN</p>	<p>This FSC International Standard defines requirements for the <i>process</i> of developing national/ sub-national FSC Forest Stewardship Standards. It provides for national or sub-national standards to be developed through the establishment of a national standards development group.</p> <p>It requires the structure and content of national standards (including requirements relating to Indicators) to comply with the requirements of FSC-STD-60-002.</p>
<p><i>FSC Forest Stewardship Standards: structure, content and suggested indicators</i></p> <p>FSC-GUI-60-004 (V1-0) EN</p>	<p>This document is a <i>guidance</i> document, and so is non-normative. Its content is advisory rather than obligatory. It includes extracts from FSC-STD-60-002, which are themselves obligatory.</p> <p>The document provides a (non-mandatory) template for the structure of national/ sub-national FSC Forest Stewardship Standards and certification body Generic Standards.</p> <p>However the bulk of the document consists of suggested international generic indicators for the implementation of the FSC Principles and Criteria, prior to their recent revision.</p>



Annex 2: The Content and Role of Indicators within an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard

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

3 Indicators

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

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

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

- 3.4 Indicators shall not be defined in terms of design or descriptive characteristics, and shall not favour a particular technology or patented item.
- 3.5 Indicators shall only include elements that contribute to the achievement of the objective of the applicable FSC Criterion.
- 3.6 The meaning of the indicators and the level of performance required to comply with the indicators should be clear to the reader.
- 3.7 Each indicator shall refer to a single aspect of performance to be evaluated.
- 3.8 Indicators should be free from subjective elements. The use of such phrases as “ordinarily”, “substantial”, “proactive”, “appropriate to”, “minimize”, “wherever possible”, “thorough” or “best available” should be avoided.
- 3.9 Indicators should be easy to measure at a reasonable cost.
- 3.10 The certification body generic standard shall be written using a clear and consistent vocabulary.
- 3.11 The certification body generic standard should include examples of means of verification for every indicator.

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

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



Annex 3: Illustration of the relationship between FSC Criteria and associated Indicators

FSC Criterion 2.1

Clear evidence of long-term forest use rights to the land (e.g. land title, customary rights, or lease agreements) shall be demonstrated (*from previous version of FSC Principles and Criteria*)

International Generic Indicators:

Indicator 2.1.1

The name and legal status of the entity seeking certification for the forest shall be clearly identified.

Indicator 2.1.2

There shall be documentation (including associated maps) which clearly identifies the ownership of all the lands and forests under evaluation.

Indicator 2.1.3

There shall be documentation (including associated maps) which clearly identifies and describes any customary rights and use rights applicable to the lands and forests under evaluation. The documentation explicitly identifies any local communities with legal or customary tenure or use rights.

Indicator 2.1.4

The entity seeking certification for the forest shall demonstrate that it has all the use rights and/or permissions needed to implement forest management which shall be compatible with long-term compliance with the requirements of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship.

Explanatory Notes

Notes on drafting and/or guidance on implementation of the proposed Indicators.

Guidance on application to small enterprises, or particular land-use categories.

Copy of text from Explanatory Notes from FSC P&C, additional references to other FSC Standards, Policies, Procedures, Advice Notes or Guidance documents, etc.

Illustration of the relationship between an FSC Criterion and associated International Generic Indicators, using Criterion 2.1 of the previous version of the FSC Principles and Criteria.

