

## FSC® PROCEDURE

Development and Transfer of National Forest Stewardship Standards to the FSC Principles and Criteria Version 5

FSC-PRO-60-006 V1-0 EN



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## **DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFER OF NATIONAL FOREST STEWARDSHIP STANDARDS TO THE FSC PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA VERSION 5**

The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organization established to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC's vision is that the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.

## Foreword

Following the membership approval of the Principles and Criteria Version 5 (P&C V5) in February 2012, all National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSSs) need to be transferred or developed to comply with the approved P&C V5.

With the purpose of supporting the implementation of the P&C V5, FSC and its global membership launched the development of a coherent set of International Generic Indicators (IGIs). This global set of indicators will serve as a starting point (see clause 2.1 below for definition of starting point) for Standards Development Groups (SDGs) with existing<sup>1</sup> NFSS, to transfer their standard to the P&C V5, and for new<sup>2</sup> NFSSs to be developed according to the P&C V5.

With the development of the IGIs, FSC aims at improving global consistency in content and therefore implementation of NFSSs.

Since the beginning of the IGI development process, the Policy and Standards Unit (PSU) of FSC has made several publications on the background of the process and how the organization envisions a pragmatic, consistent and efficient NFSS transfer and development process.

This document serves as a formal and required Procedure that describes the role of the IGIs as a starting point to the transfer and development of NFSSs.

The proposal to develop this document was endorsed by the IGI Steering Committee, and PSU was mandated to produce a Procedure together with a Working Group consisting of FSC Network Partners.

### **Comment on this version of the Transfer Procedure:**

When developing Version 1-0 of the Transfer Procedure, both PSU and the Working Group acknowledged the fact that since the IGIs and the corresponding Notes had not been approved yet, it was challenging to finish a Procedure to precisely address the final status of the IGI Notes. Therefore, the Procedure will be reviewed once the IGIs get approved, and revised if deemed necessary.

<sup>1</sup> Existing standards are approved National Standards that cover the full scope of forest management in the country; approved National Standards with limited scope (SLIMFs; Plantations; Natural Forests, NTFP, etc.); and draft National Standards.

<sup>2</sup> For those countries where there is currently no Forest Stewardship Standards as described in point 1 above.

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## A. Objective

The objective of this Procedure is to provide clear methods for transferring or developing National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSSs) to the Principles and Criteria Version 5 (P&C V5).

## B. Scope

This document is to be used exclusively during the transfer or development of NFSS to the P&C V5 by registered Standards Development Groups (SDGs). FSC will phase out this Procedure when all existing NFSS are successfully transferred.

Existing standards in the FSC Normative Framework that outline requirements on content and structure, and the process for development of NFSSs (FSC-STD-60-002 and FSC-STD-60-006) are to be used together with this Procedure. These standards will be revised after the transfer period to incorporate relevant aspects of this Procedure.

All aspects of this Procedure are considered to be normative, including the scope, effective date, references, terms and definitions, notes and tables and annexes, unless otherwise stated.

## C. Effective Date

Approval date	16 May 2014
Publication date	03 June 2014
Effective date	03 June 2014
Period of validity	until December 2019 (or until replaced or withdrawn)

## D. References

The following documents are relevant for the application of this document. For references without a version number, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

*FSC-PRO-01-001 The Development and Revision of FSC Normative Documents;*

*FSC-STD-60-006 Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards;*

*FSC-STD-60-002 Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards;*

*FSC-TPT-60-007 Proposal for the transfer of Forest Stewardship Standards to the Principles and Criteria version 5.*

## E. Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this Procedure, the terms and definitions given in *FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms*, *FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship* and *FSC-STD-01-004 FSC International Generic Indicators*, and the following apply:

**Normative element:** a single aspect within one Criterion, which needs to be addressed by at least one auditable indicator.

**IGI Notes:** Notes in the context of the International Generic Indicators (IGIs) and this Procedure are instructions and information for Standards Developers (e.g. Standard Development Groups, Certification Bodies). These Notes shall be considered by Standards Developers. The compulsory nature of each Note is reflected in its language, expressed according to ISO requirements as should, shall, etc. where:

- A 'shall' indicates a requirement that must be complied with;

- A 'should' indicates a recommendation, a requirement that is advised to be complied with;
- A 'may' indicates that there is the option to choose whether to follow the instruction or not.

The Notes have been introduced to:

- Keep the IGIs globally applicable and generic;
- Explain the intent of an IGI;
- Provide guidance on adapting IGIs to geographical region, biome or ecosystem.
- Facilitate correct and consistent adaptation of IGIs at national level;
- Provide support in applying the concept of Scale, Intensity and Risk (SIR) and in defining thresholds.

## 1. Generic requirements for developing or transferring NFSSs to the P&C V5:

- 1.1. Standard Development Groups (SDGs) shall be registered and approved by the FSC Policy and Standards Unit (PSU) for the transfer or development of National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSSs) to the Principles and Criteria Version 5 (P&C V5).
- 1.2. Registered SDGs developing a new NFSS shall meet the requirements of this Procedure and those of *FSC-STD-60-006 Process requirements for the development and maintenance of NFSSs*.
- 1.3. Registered SDGs transferring an existing NFSS shall meet the requirements of this Procedure and those of *FSC-STD-60-006 Process requirements for the development and maintenance of NFSSs*, except for Clauses 7.3, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.7 (Section 7 - Preparatory drafting and consultation) and Section 9 (Forest testing), which should only be applied to the new requirements contained in the transferred NFSS.
- 1.4. In order to register, SDGs shall complete and send to PSU the FSC Transfer Template *FSC-TPT-60-007 Proposal for the transfer of Forest Stewardship Standards to the Principles and Criteria Version 5*.
- 1.5. The formal transfer or development of a NFSS shall not commence until receipt of official notification from PSU that the SDG is registered. SDGs that already started work on their NFSS prior to receipt of PSU notification will not be qualified for transfer or development of NFSSs.
- 1.6. Registered SDGs shall carry out the transfer or development of NFSSs to the P&C V5 within the timeline specified in the FSC Transfer Template sent to PSU.
- 1.7. Registered SDGs shall submit a request to PSU to extend the transfer or standard development deadline mentioned in their Transfer Template if there is a need for variation in timelines at national level.

NOTE: The transfer process timeline is inherently tied with the timeline for developing *FSC-STD-01-004 FSC International Generic Indicators (IGIs)*.

- 1.8. NFSSs developed or transferred in accordance with this Procedure shall have a five (5) year validity after the effective date.
- 1.9. Registered SDGs shall meet the requirements of *FSC-STD-60-002 Structure and content of NFSSs* when developing or transferring NFSSs.

## 2. Using the IGIs

- 2.1. The IGIs shall be used together with the IGI Notes as the starting point in the transfer of NFSSs or in the development of new NFSSs to the P&C V5. Starting point means that each IGI and the associated Notes shall be considered in line with the requirements specified in this Section.
- 2.2. While transferring or developing NFSSs, each IGI shall be considered by using one of the following options:

### a. Adopting

The SDG copies an IGI into the NFSS as it is written in *FSC-STD-01-004 FSC International Generic Indicators (IGIs)* and implements the instructions from the corresponding IGI Note.

### b. Adapting

The SDG reviews and revises an IGI in order to address terminology, scope, or effectiveness in measuring conformance to a Criterion in a regional/ national context. This may take multiple forms:

- I. Revision of the wording of an IGI to include terminology appropriate in the regional/national context, while maintaining the intended scope and outcome of the IGI.

- II. Adding locally relevant thresholds, other national/regional norms, or best practices to an IGI to improve intended outcomes and consistency in measuring conformance with a Criterion.
- III. Splitting an IGI to allow more effective and efficient measures of conformance to a Criterion without narrowing the intended outcome of the IGI.
- IV. Using an existing indicator from an approved NFSS instead of an IGI where it corresponds directly with the elements of the IGI and with the relevant Criterion. In this case, language and terminology shall be aligned with the one used in the IGIs.

NOTE: The alignment required refers to the language and terminology which are used in the P&C V5 and the IGIs, such as HCV instead of HCVF; starting indicators without including “*The Organization shall.....*”, etc., not to the adaptation to national context. If this adjustment to the national indicator is required beyond alignment, then it’s recommended using the corresponding IGI instead of the national indicator.

- V. Expanding or focusing the scope of an IGI, in order to better achieve intended outcomes and conformance to the Criterion based on national context. This option results in narrowing or expanding the intended outcome of the IGI.

NOTE: Item V is intended for those IGIs that contain lists or other multiple or complex requirements. For example, in cases of IGIs with lists, the SDG may agree to include all elements of a list, or only some of the elements of the list, or to add new elements to the list, as applicable. When an IGI is adapted with justification, the instructions contained in the corresponding IGI Notes can be adjusted to the national context as well.

### c. Dropping

The SDG may omit an IGI where it is determined to be inapplicable or otherwise non-contributing in measuring conformance to a Criterion in a national context.

NOTE: IGIs may be considered inapplicable where the IGI addresses a condition that currently does not exist and will likely not exist in the national context for the period of validity of the standard. IGIs may be considered noncontributing where the SDG agrees that omission of an IGI will allow better overall performance of the standard, while not lowering conformance to any particular Criterion. When an IGI is dropped with justification, the instructions contained in the corresponding IGI Notes would not be applicable anymore.

### d. Adding a new indicator

The SDG may suggest additional indicators in order to better establish conformance to a Criterion in the regional/national context. Additional indicators shall comply with Section 4 of *FSC-STD-60-002 Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards*.

- 2.3. Options b) (adapting), c) (dropping) and d) (adding) require written justifications when submitting the NFSS for approval. Justifications may be brief and may address multiple IGIs simultaneously if the conditions and rationale for the decisions are uniform. Justifications shall not conflict with FSC Policies, Standards, Advice Notes or Procedures.
- 2.4. The IGI Notes shall be considered together with the corresponding IGI. The compulsory nature of each Note is reflected in its language, expressed according to ISO requirements as should, shall, etc.

NOTE: it’s recommended to read the IGI Notes before deciding whether to adopt the IGI, adapt it, etc.

## 3. Transferring an existing NFSS

- 3.1. Countries with an approved NFSS with full or limited scope (e.g. SLIMFs, Plantations, NTFFP, etc.) or a draft NFSS shall follow the requirements in this Section and the specifications for the Transfer Option as described in the FSC Transfer Template.



- 3.2. The SDG shall transfer their existing NFSS, to the structure and content of the P&C V5.
- 3.3. The recommended steps to transfer a NFSS are as follows:
- I. Identify indicators in the existing NFSS which cover the normative elements in the P&C V5 Criteria and transfer them to the new NFSS structure. Transfer may be done by using the Transfer Matrix in *FSC-TPT-60-008*.
  - II. Compare each transferred indicator with the corresponding IGI and choose whether the transferred indicator or the IGI best covers the normative element in the Criterion for the particular regional/national context. Justify the choice in accordance with Clause 2.3.  
  
NOTE: It's possible to use several indicators from the NFSS to fulfill one IGI, but it's recommended using the IGI instead.
  - III. Identify normative elements in the P&C V5 Criteria not covered by a transferred indicator and fill them with the corresponding IGIs as written in *FSC-STD-01-004 FSC International Generic Indicators (IGIs)*.
  - IV. Verify that all normative elements in each Criterion of the new NFSS are covered by the indicators.
  - V. Go through each indicator (transferred and selected IGIs) to adopt or adapt its wording, drop them or add new indicators as per Clause 2.2 and 2.3.
  - VI. Verify Criterion by Criterion that the set of indicators is coherent, without gaps and redundancies and consistent in language and terminology. Go through the new NFSS as a whole to edit it, check references and consistency.  
  
NOTE: PSU recommends a process along the lines presented above, but does not require the implementation of these steps in the number and order presented, as long as the process addresses the various stages of the transfer (gap analysis, IGI consideration, etc.).
- 3.4. When transferring the standard, the SDG shall evaluate the new NFSS for compliance with *FSC-STD-60-002* considering the modifications in Clause 4.2. Detected nonconformities shall be addressed before submitting the NFSS for approval. Completed matrices may be submitted to PSU for review.

#### **4. Developing a new NFSS**

- 4.1. Countries that do not have an approved or draft NFSS shall follow the specific requirements in this Section and the specifications for the Development Option in the FSC Transfer Template.
- 4.2. Requirements on structure and content as specified in *FSC-STD-60-002* shall be followed for the development of new NFSSs, with the following modifications:
- I. Clause 2.1 in *FSC-STD-60-002* shall read as follows: "*The standard shall be structured as a hierarchy of Principles, Criteria and associated indicators. As content, structure and numbering of the hierarchical levels of Principles and Criteria is already provided by FSC, national Standard Development Groups are responsible for developing the indicators and verifiers. The FSC International Generic Indicators (IGIs) (FSC-STD-01-004) shall be used as a starting point for the development of the standard to facilitate compliance with this requirement for a hierarchical framework.*"
  - II. Clause 4.1 in *FSC-STD-60-002* shall read as follows: "*The standard shall specify at least one indicator for each normative element of every Criterion in accordance to the requirements of this standard. The FSC International Generic Indicators (IGIs) (FSC-STD-01-004) together with the IGI Notes shall be used as the starting point for the development of national indicators.*"
  - III. Clauses 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 (above) shall be applied in addition to Section 4 of *FSC-STD-60-002*.

IV. The concept of Scale, Intensity and Risk (SIR) shall be applied at minimum to all Criteria of the P&C V5 that explicitly require adaptation to Scale, Intensity or Risk in their wording (superseding Section 6 of *FSC-STD-60-002*).

**5. Phase-in of transferred NFSSs**

- 5.1. Approved NFSSs shall be implemented, as specified in accordance with its scope and standard effective date.
- 5.2. The standard effective date may be up to three (3) months following the announcement of the standard’s approval; in order to allow Certification Bodies to adjust their systems to the new standard. In exceptional circumstances, a longer period can be agreed between PSU and the Network Partner/SDG.
- 5.3. The phase-in period of the approved NFSS shall be twelve (12) months following the effective date, unless otherwise decided by the FSC Board of Directors.
- 5.4. All Certificate Holders and applicants for certification shall be evaluated against the new NFSS after the effective date.
- 5.5. By the end of the phase-in period, all Certificate Holders must have transitioned to the new NFSS.
- 5.6. Certificates issued to the previous NFSS will be considered invalid by FSC after six months after the end of the phase-in period (i.e. eighteen (18) months after the effective date of the new NFSS) without any further notification.

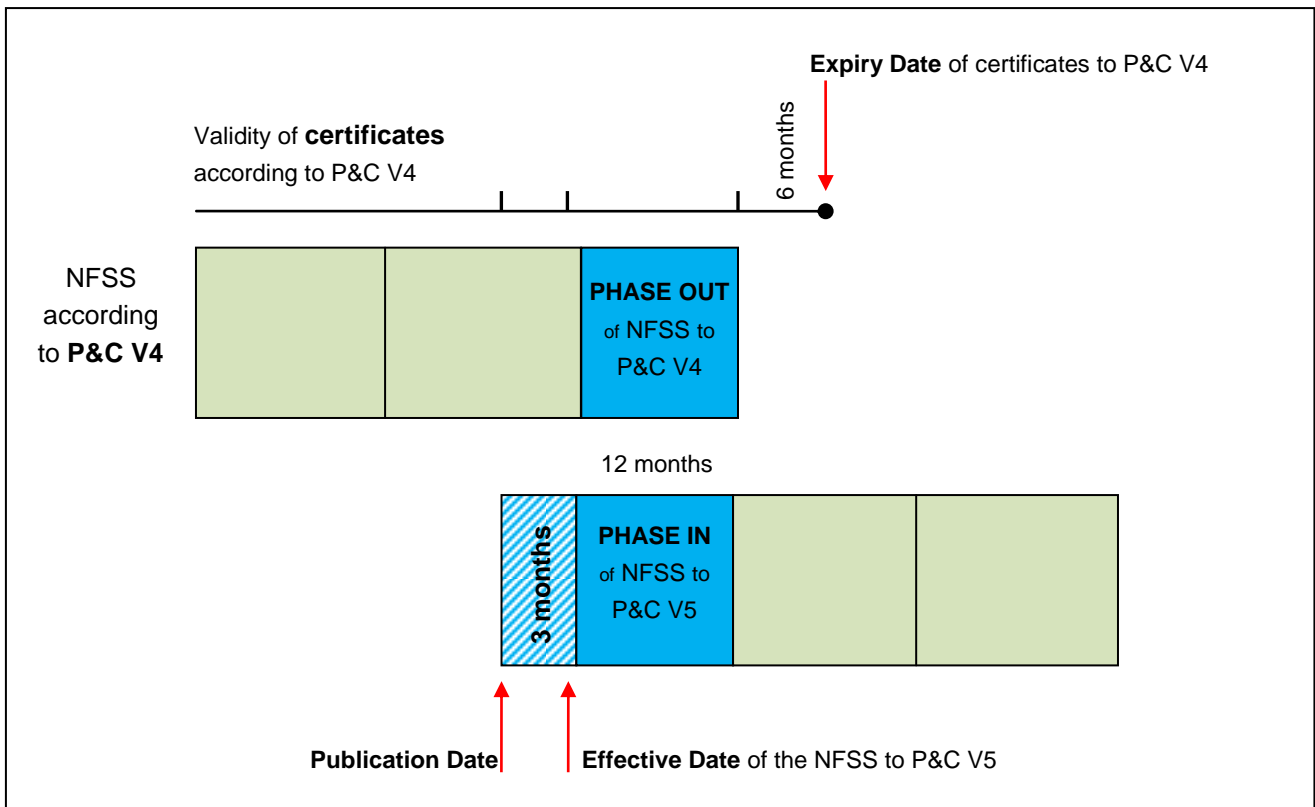


Fig. 1: Transition between NFSS according to P&C V4 and NFSS according to P&C V5.