






Forest Stewardship Council®



The Development and Revision of FSC® Normative Documents

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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 true value of forests is recognized and fully incorporated into society worldwide. FSC is the leading catalyst and defining force for improved forest management and market transformation, shifting the global forest trend toward sustainable use, conservation, restoration, and respect for all.

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A. Objective

The objective of this procedure is to define a process to develop, review, revise and withdraw normative documents based on streamlining principles (see Annex 2), to promote agility of the FSC system while balancing needs for stability and predictability. The procedure aims to ensure conformance with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

B. Scope

This document defines the process to be followed by FSC for the development, review, revision and withdrawal of normative documents, with the exception of Forest Stewardship Standards¹.

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

As part of the FSC normative framework, this document is subject to the review and revision cycle as described in this procedure.

NOTE: This procedure does not apply to internal FSC requirements, as they are part of the organization's institutional regulatory framework.

C. Effective and validity dates

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Approval date | tbd |
| Publication date | tbd |
| Effective date | tbd |
| Period of validity | until replaced or withdrawn |

D. References

The following referenced documents are relevant for the application of this document.

FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms

E. Terms and definitions

For the purpose of this procedure, the terms and definitions given in *FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms*, and the following apply:

Administrative Revision: non-substantive revision to correct typographical, grammatical and administrative mistakes.

Advice Note: amendment of selected normative requirement(s) during the source normative document(s) period of validity.

Chamber and sub-chamber: refer to the groupings and subgroupings the FSC memberships is divided into. Membership in FSC is grouped in three chambers: environmental, social and economic. Each chamber is further divided into northern

¹ The development and revision of Forest Stewardship Standards is guided by separate documents.

and southern sub-chambers.

Change request: a documented and justified request from any stakeholder for adding, deleting or changing a requirement of an approved and valid FSC normative document.

Consensus: General agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests (particularly by those directly affected) and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Consensus need not imply unanimity (ISO/IEC)².

Consultation types:

Public Consultation: open to all stakeholders, e.g. FSC members, FSC International, FSC Network Partners, FSC accredited certification bodies, certificate holders, FSC Board of Directors, other interested stakeholders.

Targeted Consultation: open only to a selection of stakeholders.

Consultative Forum: is a group of stakeholders who choose to be more closely involved in developing or revising a FSC normative document. FSC can also nominate stakeholders to provide input.

Coordinator(s): person(s) assigned by FSC to coordinate revision and development processes of normative documents and to draft normative documents. Where two coordinators are assigned per process one coordinator takes on the role as process coordinator and the other as technical coordinator.

Decision-making body: the responsible body that decides on different deliverables during the development/review/revision/ withdrawal of a normative document.

Defined dates and time frames associated with the implementation of a normative document (in order of events):

Approval date: the date on which the FSC normative document is approved by the decision-making body.

Publication date: the date on which the approved FSC normative document is announced and published on the FSC website (usually a minimum of 90 days prior to the effective date).

Effective date: the date on which the published FSC normative document becomes applicable for use.

Transition period: the period of time after the effective date in which the new version of a FSC normative document is phased-in and in parallel the old version is phased-out (where it exists). To allow for gradual introduction, both versions are valid for an overlapping period of time. At the end of the transition period, certificates issued against the old version are considered invalid.

Period of validity: period of time for which a normative document is valid, that lasts from the effective date until it is withdrawn or replaced by a new version.

NOTE: each normative document shall include a section on defined dates.

² ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1 Procedures for the technical work. Consolidated ISO Supplement – Procedures specific to ISO.

https://www.iso.org/sites/directives/current/consolidated/index.xhtml#_idTextAnchor167

Directives: compilations of Advice Notes.

Document owner: An individual or a programme responsible for monitoring the implementation of normative documents, responding to enquiries and for collecting change requests, comments and proposals for revision related to the normative document during its period of validity.

FSC normative framework: the collection of certification, accreditation and standard development requirements. Whenever the term “normative document” is used, it refers to any document that is part of the FSC normative framework.

Policy: a documented fundamental principle. The objective of every FSC policy shall be to further the mission of FSC in line with the aims and aspirations of its members, and taking equal account of the concerns and interests of the three FSC chambers, and its 'northern' and 'southern' membership.

Standard: a document, established by consensus and approved by a decision-making body, that provides, for common and repeated use, rules or characteristics for products, services or related activities, processes and methods, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of outcomes in a given context (adapted from ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004).

Procedure: a set of requirements that regulate process(es) to implement other normative documents. Procedures aim at maximizing positive effects of the FSC system.

Guidance: technical information outlining some means of conformity with the requirements of a normative document. Guidance in the FSC system is considered to be informative only.

Interpretation: a formal normative clarification provided by the FSC Performance and Standards Unit of requirements included in normative documents.

Invalidation of normative documents: removal of normative documents from the FSC normative framework. An invalidation can take the form of a:

Merge: applies when a normative document (A) is included in the revision of another one (B). The normative document (A) is no longer valid. For example, the Advice Note A is merged with Standard B in the revision of the latter. Consequently, Advice Note A is no longer valid.

Replacement: applies when a normative document is no longer valid due to the publication of an updated version of the same document. For example, version 1 of Standard A is replaced by the version 2 of Standard A. Consequently, version 1 of Standard A is no longer valid after the end of the transition period.

Withdrawal: applies when a normative document is removed from the FSC normative framework. The document then ceases to exist. For example, Standard A has been found to be outdated. It will not be merged with another normative document or replaced by an updated version. Standard A will be withdrawn and removed from the FSC normative framework.

Policy and Standards Committee (PSC): a sub-chamber balanced committee consisting of FSC members appointed by the Board of Directors in order to streamline, facilitate and accelerate decision-making processes in relation to the development of new and revision of existing FSC policies, standards, procedures and other normative FSC documents.

Performance and Standards Unit (PSU): a unit of FSC International responsible for managing the FSC normative framework in accordance with relevant procedures. PSU leads in the technical writing of normative and procedural documents and manages the process to produce them. PSU also provides advice and training on FSC policies and standards to increase the quality and consistency of their application by auditors and certificate holders.

Policy Steering Group (PSG): Steering committee with a fixed composition of FSC global and regional management team members established to guide and supervise the development and revision process of normative documents and to take decisions in accordance with this procedure.

Review: Activity of analysing a normative document to determine whether it is to be reaffirmed, revised or withdrawn.

Revision: Introduction of all necessary changes to the substance and presentation of a normative document.

Testing: an activity conducted to learn how the requirements or concepts of a normative document (are likely to) work in practice. Different types of tests exist:

Desk test: the testing of requirements or concepts in a normative document is conducted based on a theoretical exercise that do not involve field tests.

Field test: the testing of requirements or concepts in a normative document is conducted in the field. Feedback is obtained directly from the exercise. A field test cannot result in the issue of an FSC certificate, or in the use of the FSC logo.

Pilot test: the testing of requirements or concepts in a normative document is conducted in the field. Feedback is obtained directly from the exercise. Based on draft requirements, a pilot test may result in awarding temporary certification and the use of the FSC logos.

Working group: consists of individuals with relevant knowledge or professional experience in the field of question, appointed to develop or revise a normative document. The different compositions are as follows:

- a) **For major processes: FSC members with professional experience in the field of question**, equally representing the perspectives of the social, environmental and economic chamber of the FSC membership and southern and northern perspectives.

NOTE 1: Members of the FSC Board of Directors and members of the Policy and Standards Committee are not eligible to participate as members.

NOTE 2: Members of the FSC Board of Directors, members of the Policy and Standards Committee, FSC staff and staff from FSC National or Regional Offices or ASI and FSC accredited certification bodies may attend the meetings of the working group as observers.

- b) **For regular or accelerated processes: Experts** with relevant knowledge or professional experience in the field of question.
NOTE: Members of the Policy and Standards Committee are not eligible to participate as members.
- c) **For accelerated processes: FSC staff and experts** (as needed).

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 with the standard.

“*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. A certification body can meet these requirements in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated and justified.

“*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.

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PART I: Process types for the revision and development of normative documents

1 Overview of process types

Informative guidance

The procedure offers different processes to revise or develop a normative document, depending on the type of normative requirements (e.g. a policy, a standard or procedure) and other characteristics.

There are three process types: “major”, “regular”, and “accelerated”.

Each process type has different steps to be followed. These are presented in table 1.

Withdrawal processes follow a separate process (see section 18) and are not allocated a process type.

- 1.1 Each normative document shall have assigned a process type for its revision.
- 1.2 A development of a new normative document shall also follow a process type.
- 1.3 Revision or development processes shall be assigned to a process type according to the following characteristics:
 - a) **Major:** applies to the development and revision of FSC policies and FSC Principles & Criteria.
 - b) **Regular:** applies to the revision of normative standards and procedures, and to the development of normative documents/ requirements based on existing policies or approved documented principles. It also applies to processes that require revision of FSC normative requirements to align with international regulations.
 - c) **Accelerated:** It applies to urgent processes to preserve the integrity and credibility of the FSC system (e.g., revisions of standards or procedures, or the development of Advice Notes). It also applies to processes that address non-substantial changes, like correction of typographical mistakes, changes of contact details, or changes that are necessary for information management and information security.

NOTE: It does not apply to processes that provide new documented normative principles on FSC requirements.
- 1.4 Designated decision-making bodies may add or modify steps that have been set out in this procedure during the development or revision process. Any changes shall be justified.

Table 1: Key steps or aspects of a revision process according to each process type

| Phase | Selected step / key aspect | Bodies and/or key aspects | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Major | Regular | Accelerated |
| Review / Proposal | Preparing a Review Report | Document owner (applies to all process types) | | |
| | Decision on Policy Plan | Policy Steering Group (applies to all process types) | | |
| Scoping | Preparing a background or discussion paper | Discussion paper | Background or discussion paper | Not applicable |
| | Establishing the Consultative Forum | Applies to major and regular process types | | Not applicable |
| | Consultation in the scoping phase | Public | Targeted | Not applicable |
| | Consultation Report | Full Consultation Report | Short Consultation Report | Not applicable |
| | Developing the terms of reference (ToR) | Coordinator (applies to all process types) | | |
| | Deciding on the ToR and changes | Board of Directors | Policy Steering Group | Director General |
| | Deciding on working group composition | Policy Steering Group (applies to processes types) | | |
| Drafting | Establishing the working group | Coordinator (applies to all process types) | | |
| | Drafting of normative documents | Coordinator (applies to all process types) | | |
| | Testing and viability assessment | Voluntary but encouraged. (Desk, field or pilot) | | |
| | Consultation in the drafting phase | Public | Public or targeted | Targeted |
| | Consultation Report | Full Consultation Report | Full or short Consultation Report | Short Consultation Report |
| Final decision | Final decision | Board of Directors | Policy and Standards Committee | Director General |

PART II: Review and Revision of Existing Normative Documents

2 Monitoring continued relevance of normative documents

Informative guidance

The implementation of normative documents is monitored to ensure that they remain relevant over time and effective in meeting their stated objectives.

- 2.1 The FSC Policy Director shall allocate a document owner to each normative document.
- 2.2 The document owner shall monitor the implementation of the assigned normative document based on input gathered from change requests, calibration activities, and available data.
- 2.3 Change requests may be submitted at any time by any stakeholder during a document's period of validity.

NOTE: The template for change requests can be found on the FSC website, under the Document Centre site.
- 2.4 The stakeholder should send the completed Change Request Form to psu@fsc.org or to the postal address specified at the beginning of this document.
- 2.5 The document owner shall compile the change requests and consider them during the preparation of a Review Report.
- 2.6 The document owner shall identify the need for revision as part of the regular monitoring.

3 Preparing a Review Report

Informative guidance

A Review Report is drafted when the document owner has identified the need to revise a normative document. The Review Report also indicates the process type to be applied in the development or revision process.

Reviews of normative documents consider stakeholder inputs based on change requests, new or changed FSC normative documents or legislation, General Assembly motions, FSC Board of Director decisions and other relevant factors.

NOTE: Review and revision of normative documents are two distinct concepts (please see 'Terms and Definitions' in Section E).

- 3.1 The document owner shall prepare a Review Report considering the following items:
 - a) motions approved at FSC General Assemblies and/ or strategic guidance provided by the FSC Board of Directors;
 - b) change requests: the document owner shall summarize, and where necessary, expand on the key topics stakeholders have requested to be addressed in a revision process;
 - c) assessment of the positive and negative impacts of the normative document (e.g. costs in relation to certificate holders, certification bodies, FSC Network Partners and FSC International);

- d) new or changed legislation or best practices;
 - e) emerging technologies or scientific knowledge;
 - f) the results of FSC's monitoring and evaluation activities, e.g. implementation problems, competitive advantage or threats; and
 - g) existing interpretations and Advice Notes to be incorporated.
- 3.2 The Review Report shall include:
- a) an analysis of the items listed in clause 3.1.
 - b) a recommendation on whether the normative document requires revision or not.
 - c) a proposal for the process type (see section 1) to be applied in the revision process, including all process steps and specific actors.
 - d) when necessary, the related normative document(s) that should also be jointly revised or aligned.
- 3.3 The document owner should submit the Review Report during the third quarter of the calendar year to the FSC Policy Director.

4 Developing the Policy Plan and decision to revise or develop a normative document

Informative guidance

All revision and development processes that are planned to be initiated for two years are collected. This collection of planned revision/ development processes is referred to as a 'Policy Plan'. The purpose of the Policy Plan is to present a collective plan of prioritized normative revision and development processes for decision-taking.

The Policy Plan also includes the process type for each of the processes.

The Policy Plan is updated annually and published on the FSC website to allow stakeholders to be informed about planned processes and upcoming opportunities for stakeholder comment.

- 4.1 Documents in the FSC normative framework shall not be revised outside of the defined review and revision schedule, except when the FSC Board of Directors approves an extraordinary revision as a result of:
- a) a duly approved motion of the FSC General Assembly;
 - b) a proposal from the FSC Policy Director calling for revision as a result of substantial evidence for a need for change.
- NOTE: substantial evidence for a need for change may include, but is not limited to: new or changed legislation, formal complaints, serious implementation problems, threats to FSC's credibility, seriousness of change requests, foreseen competitive advantages or threats, and/or emerging technologies.
- 4.2 The Policy Director shall draft a 'Policy Plan', providing an overview of planned revision and development processes, based on individual requests for revision (Review Reports) and proposals for the development of new normative documents (see also Part III).
- 4.3 The Policy Director shall submit the draft Policy Plan and individual requests

for revision (Review Reports)/ development proposals to the Policy Steering Group in the fourth quarter of each calendar year.

- 4.4 The Policy Steering Group shall evaluate the Policy Plan and individual requests for revisions (Review Reports)/ development proposals.
- 4.5 For each Review Report or proposal for development, the Policy Steering Group shall either:
 - a) approve the Review Report or proposal for development; *or*
 - b) request further work on the Review Report or proposal for development prior to re-submission; *or*
 - c) reject the Review Report or proposal for development.
- 4.6 The Policy Director shall finalise the Policy Plan based on the approved Review Reports and approved development processes.
- 4.7 The Policy Plan shall be published on the FSC website. It shall include:
 - a) the process type per process;
 - b) the start date of the process;
 - c) the estimated length of the process;
 - d) a web link to the Review Reports and proposals for development;
 - e) any other information deemed relevant.
- 4.8 The FSC Policy Director shall assign a coordinator to manage the revision or development of a normative document.

5 Preparing a background or discussion paper

Informative guidance

Depending on the type of process and normative document either a background paper or a discussion paper is drafted.

A background or discussion paper complements the Review Report/ proposal.

The purpose of a background paper is to describe the intent of the normative document, the key problems the new/revised normative document needs to address and information about how the revision process will be conducted.

A discussion paper usually additionally includes the intended outcomes of the (revised or developed) normative document and/ or for a set of requirements. It also usually includes proposals to address key topics.

- 5.1 The FSC Policy Director shall confirm if a process requires outcome-oriented requirements to be defined.

NOTE: FSC is responsible for the definition of outcome-oriented requirements and for the development of the methodology to measure them. Stakeholders are invited to provide comments during the consultation in the scoping phase.
- 5.2 The coordinator shall manage the process to develop the background or discussion paper.
- 5.3 The background or discussion paper should be prepared by a technical expert.
- 5.4 Upon approval by the FSC Policy Director, the coordinator shall submit the background or discussion paper for consultation.

6 Establishing a Consultative Forum

Informative guidance

The Consultative Forum consists of a group of individuals that register their interest to be more closely involved in developing or revising a FSC normative document.

FSC may also actively approach stakeholders to join the Consultative Forum to provide their input to specific revision or development processes.

- 6.1 A Consultative Forum shall be set up by the coordinator.
- 6.2 Membership of a Consultative Forum shall be open to any stakeholder on request.
- 6.3 The coordinator, upon agreement with the Policy Director, should identify stakeholders to join the Consultative Forum, to provide technical input to the working group during the drafting phase of a normative document.
- 6.4 The coordinator shall:
 - a) invite FSC stakeholders to participate in the Consultative Forum via different communication channels, e.g. FSC newsletters, FSC Email Fora and the FSC website (www.fsc.org); and
 - b) keep a list of all Consultative Forum members, identifying the stakeholder group to which they belong.

7 Consultation in the scoping phase

Informative guidance

The consultation is the main opportunity for stakeholders, in particular FSC members, to engage in the revision and development process of normative documents and to contribute to the development of intended outcomes of normative documents.

- 7.1 The type of consultation (public or targeted) is determined by the process type (section 1).
- 7.2 The coordinator shall conduct a consultation according to the process type and based on the inputs presented in the background or discussion paper.

NOTE: other documents may be added as supporting informative material.
- 7.3 Draft documents for public consultation shall be consulted in English and Spanish.
- 7.4 The coordinator should inform the FSC Network Partners and FSC staff about the start date of the consultation two (2) weeks in advance and should share consultation documents in this period upon request to allow for preparatory work (e.g. translation).
- 7.5 The coordinator shall upload the consultation documents to the FSC Consultation Platform and announce the consultation in the designated fora.
- 7.6 The coordinator shall be responsible for culturally appropriate outreach to representatives of all stakeholder categories identified as being impacted by the implementation of the document, in particular to any marginalized groups that may be affected by the document (see the internal stakeholder

- engagement guidance).
- 7.7 The duration of the first round of consultation is specified per type of consultation:
- a) **public consultation:** The first round of consultation shall consist of a period of at least sixty (60) days. In exceptional circumstances, including, but not limited to, urgent issues of health and safety, legislation and market conditions, the consultation period can be reduced to no less than thirty (30) days by decision of the Policy Steering Group. The reasons for any such reduction shall be included in the public summary of the consultation process.
 - b) **targeted consultation:** The first round of consultation shall consist of a period of at least thirty (30) days. In exceptional circumstances (described above), the consultation period can be reduced to no less than fifteen (15) days by decision of the Policy Steering Group. The reasons for any such reduction shall be included in the public summary of the consultation process.
- 7.8 The development of new normative documents requires a public consultation of at least sixty (60) days.
- 7.9 The final number of rounds of public consultation shall be at the discretion of the Policy Steering Group, taking into account the number and substance of comments received.
- 7.10 The duration period of the additional rounds of consultation shall be proposed by the coordinator and approved by the Policy Steering Group.
- 7.11 In order to be accepted as a formal comment, feedback gathered during consultation shall be submitted:
- a) in English or Spanish;
 - b) to the address provided in the consultation announcement;
 - c) by the close of the comment period;
 - d) with the required information such as name, stakeholder type and organization of the commenter.
- 7.12 Comments not meeting these criteria shall be considered as informal comments. Whenever possible, FSC will encourage that informal comments be made formal. Response to informal comments will be based on FSC staff capacity.
- 7.13 All submitted comments (formal or informal) shall be attributed to the commenter. Anonymous comments shall not be formally recognized.
- 7.14 After the consultation period, the coordinator shall prepare the type of Consultation Report that corresponds to the type of consultation:
- a) public consultations require full Consultation Reports.
 - b) targeted consultations may use full Consultation Reports or short Consultation Reports.
- 7.15 The coordinator shall prepare a full Consultation Report of the formal comments for all public consultations, including:
- a) an analysis of the range of stakeholder groups who have submitted comments;

- b) a summary of the issues raised (in relation to requirements);
- c) a general response to the comments and an indication as to how the issues raised were addressed.
- d) all received comments in its original form.

NOTE: FSC maintains anonymity by default, but may refer to the stakeholder group.

7.16 The coordinator shall prepare a short Consultation Report of the formal comments for all targeted consultations, including:

- a) an analysis of the range of stakeholder groups who have submitted comments;
- b) all received comments in its original form.

NOTE: targeted consultations may also be presented in a full Consultation Report.

7.17 The Consultation Reports shall be circulated to all parties that submitted comments and may include the set of anonymized original comments.

7.18 The Consultation Report shall be published no later than the publication of the terms of reference for the drafting of the normative document.

8 Developing and deciding on the terms of reference

Informative guidance

The terms of reference (ToR) is a key document that presents the objectives of the revision/ development process, the organizational set up of the process, the tasks and responsibilities of working group members and FSC staff, and describes the topics to be addressed in the process.

The ToRs are informed by the Review Report, background/ discussion paper and stakeholder consultation process.

8.1 The coordinator shall prepare the terms of reference for the development or revision of the normative document, taking into consideration:

- a) key insights from the Review Report, background or discussion paper, and Consultation Report;
- b) defined outcomes (where present);
- c) the process type and process steps.

8.2 The coordinator may propose changes to the process type to the designated decision-making body. All changes shall be justified.

8.3 The coordinator shall submit the terms of reference to the designated decision-making body.

8.4 The designated decision-making body shall either:

- a) approve the terms of reference and/ or the changes to the process; *or*
- b) approve the terms of reference with conditions and/ or the changes to the process; *or*
- c) reject and request further work on the terms of reference and/or the changes to the process prior to re- submission.

- 8.5 A summary of deliberations in arriving to the decision shall be captured in the minutes of the designated decision-making body.
- 8.6 The coordinator shall publish the approved terms of reference on the FSC website.

9 Establishing the working group

Informative guidance

Working groups are established to provide detailed input to the drafting process. The composition of the working group depends on the process type.

- 9.1 Upon approval of the ToR, the coordinator shall establish a working group for each development and revision process. The responsibilities of the working group are to:
- provide detailed input to the development or revision of the normative document in accordance with the terms of reference;
 - seek advice on aspects of the development or revision of FSC normative documents from e.g. the Consultative Forum, FSC members, the FSC Network, FSC certificate holders, certification bodies, other FSC stakeholders and/or relevant technical experts;
 - review and consider comments received during consultations;
 - formally recommend that the final draft be submitted for its approval.
- 9.2 The working group shall be administered and managed by the coordinator.
- 9.3 Working groups consist of individuals with relevant knowledge or professional experience in the field of question. There are different compositions for a working group, as presented in the definition of “working groups” in section E.
- 9.4 The coordinator shall adapt the below specified criteria for selection of working group members to the specific needs of the process. A summary of these criteria is presented in table 2:

Table 2: Summary of the framework of criteria to select WG members

| Category | Criteria (examples) | Comments |
|---------------------|--|---|
| I. Technical Skills | Knowledge of FM certification, CoC certification, General FSC system, etc. | These criteria should remain unaltered across working groups. |
| II. Soft Skills | Working together in teams, clarity of expression, etc. | |
| III. Contribution | Looking for solutions, delivering a number of quality deliverables, etc. | |
| IV. Engagement | Actively participating, demonstrating judgement on conduct, etc. | |

- 9.5 The coordinator shall consider past evaluations of applicants in preparing the proposal for the selection of working group members.
- 9.6 The Policy Steering Group shall decide on the members of the working group and on the allocation of stipends.
- 9.7 All members of the working group shall receive a copy of this procedure, and the final terms of reference prior to commencement of work.
- 9.8 The working language of working groups shall be English.
- 9.9 Additional people can participate in a working group as observers. Observers can be invited by the coordinator to attend working group sessions, but may only contribute to the discussions upon request and cannot make decisions.

10 Drafting of normative documents

- 10.1 The coordinator shall use conclusions reached by the working group and draft the new or revised normative document.
- 10.2 The coordinator shall consider the following internal guidance documents when drafting normative documents:
 - a) Guidance to draft simplified normative documents;
 - b) Guidance to draft risk-based normative documents;
 - c) Guidance to draft outcome-oriented normative documents;

10.3 The coordinator shall ensure that the draft is aligned with the topics presented in the terms of reference.

10.4 The coordinator shall draft the roll out plan.

NOTE: A roll-out plan defines the activities scheduled to introduce a new, or revised normative document to stakeholders when it is published. It indicates how the revised/ new version is communicated to stakeholders (e.g. by providing a main changes document or “crosswalk document”, and/ or by offering webinars). Where necessary, it can include training activities, calibration workshops, or development of guidance material.

- 10.5 The coordinator should consult the roll-out plan with the working group.
- 10.6 The coordinator shall propose the length of the transition period considering feedback from the working group.

NOTE: The transition period is the timeline in which there is a parallel phase-in of the new version and phase-out of the old version of a normative document.

- 10.7 The coordinator shall submit the draft version of the normative document for consultation when it:
 - a) meets the terms of reference; *and*
 - b) has received approval by consensus from the working group.

10.8 When the working group cannot reach consensus on whether the draft is ready to be submitted for consultation, the coordinator shall refer the decision to the Policy Steering Group.

11 Testing and viability assessment

Informative guidance

Testing allows for learning how the requirements or concepts of a normative document are likely to work in practice.

Testing is highly encouraged. The type of testing depends on the specific needs of the process:

- **Desk tests** may be helpful for any type of process and for the first draft version of a normative document.
- **Field tests** are suggested for regular processes.
- **Pilot tests** may be helpful in the process to develop a new normative document or to test the incorporation of new concepts.

The drafting and testing phases work in iteration. The results of the testing phase improve the drafting of a normative document.

The results of the testing inform the viability assessment. The viability assessment aims to assess the likely effects that proposed changes to a normative document will have on different stakeholders (e.g., certificate holders, certification bodies, FSC members, FSC International, among others).

- 11.1 The terms of reference specify the planned type of tests (if any).
- 11.2 The coordinator should manage and design the testing of a normative document.
- 11.3 Desk and field tests shall be approved by the FSC Policy Director. Pilot tests shall be approved by the FSC Board of Directors according to FSC-POL-01-001.
- 11.4 The coordinator shall conduct a viability assessment on (changes to) a normative document.
- 11.5 The coordinator may conduct the viability assessment before, during, or after a consultation in the drafting phase.

12 Consultation in the drafting phase

Informative guidance

The general objective of the consultation in the drafting phase is to invite stakeholder feedback on the draft requirements and to assess how they address the topics explored and discussed in the scoping phase.

Stakeholder input will be used to create the updated version of the normative document.

- 12.1 The type of consultation (public or targeted) and type of consultation report is determined by the process type (section 1).
- 12.2 The consultation documents shall be consulted in English and Spanish.
- 12.3 Consultation documents include:
 - a) the draft document; *and*

- b) the transition period; *and*
 - c) other documents may be added to the consultation as supporting informative material, including the roll-out plan; *and*
 - d) the assessment on the viability of changes (optional).
- 12.4 The coordinator should inform the FSC Network Partners and FSC staff about the start date of the consultation two (2) weeks in advance and should share consultation documents in this period upon request to allow preparatory work (e.g. translation).
- 12.5 The coordinator shall upload the consultation documents and background material to the FSC Consultation Platform and announce the consultation to the Consultative Forum.
- 12.6 The time period for the consultations follows the same requirements as presented in section 7 (Consultation in the scoping phase).
- 12.7 The development of new normative documents requires a consultation of at least thirty (30) days, without reduction, in the drafting phase.
- 12.8 The final number of rounds of consultation shall be at the discretion of the Policy Steering Group, taking account of the number and substance of comments received. Additional rounds may be required when substantive, unresolved issues persist after the previous round.
- 12.9 The coordinator shall prepare a Consultation Report (as presented in section 7).
- 12.10 The Consultation Report should be sent to consultation participants and published before the next consultation round. In case there is no further consultation planned, the Consultation Report should be sent to consultation participants and published before the publication of the final revised or new normative document.

13 Creating the final draft and preparing for decision making

- 13.1 The coordinator shall amend the draft normative document based on the joint analysis of stakeholder input and conclusions reached in working group meetings.
- 13.2 The working group shall formally recommend that the final draft is ready to be submitted for decision making.
- 13.3 The coordinator shall prepare an accompanying report for the designated decision-making body, containing the following information:
- a) summary of the purpose and main objectives of the document;
 - b) summary of the development process, taking into account any deviations from the original work plan or from procedures;
 - c) summary of assessment of the viability of changes;
 - d) explanation of the main issues and concerns raised during the process, and how these have been addressed;
 - e) record of any outstanding concerns by members of the working group (e.g. lack of consensus on a specific issue);
 - f) Annexes:
 - a) terms of reference;

- b) assessment of the viability of changes;
 - c) a list of the names and affiliations of the members of the working group and the Consultative Forum;
 - d) the Consultation Reports produced in the scoping and drafting phases, including the names and affiliations of all stakeholders that have submitted comments in the consultation processes (including whether the stakeholder is an FSC member, and, if so, of which chamber and sub-chamber);
 - e) the roll-out plan for the implementation of the approved normative document (including the transition period).
- 13.4 The coordinator shall request the Policy Steering Group to review and approve that the final draft is ready for submission to the designated decision-making body.
- 13.5 The Policy Steering Group shall present the draft normative document to the designated decision-making body, as specified in the terms of reference, when it:
- a) has undergone sufficient consultation and testing; *and*
 - b) meets the terms of reference; *and*
 - c) has been recommended for approval by the working group.
- NOTE: The decision-making procedure for working group members is specified in the terms of reference.
- 13.6 The Policy Steering Group shall submit the draft normative document together with the report to the designated decision-making body for decision making.

14 Final decision and communication of the normative document

- 14.1 The designated decision-making body shall either:
- a) approve the document; *or*
 - b) reject and request further work on the document prior to re- submission.
- 14.2 If the designated decision-making body requests further work or that a different decision-making body makes the decision:
- a) it shall state the reasons for the decision and may suggest what steps it considers necessary.
 - b) the Policy Steering Group shall decide what further actions should be taken before the document is re- submitted to the designated decision-making body for decision.
- 14.3 Decisions on the normative document shall be captured in the minutes of the designated decision-making body.
- 14.4 Approved normative documents shall be published a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to the effective date.
- 14.5 The coordinator shall implement activities of the roll-out plan to publish and communicate a newly developed or revised normative document after it is approved, using FSC's different communication channels, e.g. FSC newsletters, FSC Email Fora and the FSC website.

PART III: Development of a new normative document

Informative guidance

Given the maturity of the FSC system, processes to develop new normative documents occur less often than processes to revise normative documents, which is why the process description of this procedure focuses on reviews and revisions.

Except for the start of the process, the development process of a new normative document follows the same steps as presented in the revision process. This section includes the process steps that are unique to the development process of a new normative document.

15 Establishment of a new normative document

15.1 Proposals to develop a new normative document can be made by any stakeholder.

15.2 A proposal shall meet the following formal requirements:

- a) a justification of the need for a new normative document, including an assessment of how the proposed document will meet that need;
- b) reference to any background papers, discussion papers, previous decisions by the FSC Board of Directors, approved FSC General Assembly motions, etc., that support the need to develop the proposed normative document;
- c) specification of clear aims and objectives of the new normative document, in particular those objectives that focus on social, environmental and/or economic aspects;
- d) explanation on how the aims and objectives contribute to FSC's mission;
- e) additionally in the case of standards a documentation of what other standards exist or are in the process of development which meet all or part of the expressed need; and an assessment of how broadly the final standard is intended to be applied.

15.3 Proposals to develop a new normative document shall be submitted in writing to the FSC Policy Director for a review and conformance check with the formal requirements as specified in Clause 15.2, above.

15.4 The FSC Policy Director shall confirm receipt of the proposal and within ninety (90) days and shall either:

- a) confirm that the requirements of Clause 15.2 have been met and the proposal shall move to the next stage of the process; *or*
- b) reject the proposal and communicate the reasons for rejection; *or*
- c) request further work prior to re-submission.

NOTE: When a proposal has been accepted at a General Assembly or by the FSC Board of Directors, it is considered as "confirmed" by the FSC Policy Director that the requirements of Clause 15.2 have been met.

15.5 Where the requirements of Clause 15.2 have been met, the FSC Policy Director shall complete the proposal by adding the following information:

- a) The process type;
- b) reference to how the proposed normative document relates to other FSC

- normative documents and analysis of the likely impact it will have on them;
- c) an assessment of risks in implementing the normative document and how to mitigate these, including identification of factors that could have a negative impact on the ability of the normative document to achieve its objectives; unintended consequences that could arise from its implementation; and possible mitigation measures that could be taken to address these potential risks;
 - d) the results of a stakeholder mapping exercise or updated version of an existing stakeholder map to identify all stakeholders that will be affected by the new normative document and the potential impacts on them;
 - e) stakeholder participation goals to establish clear targets for stakeholder engagement;
 - f) specification whether pilot testing is recommended;
 - g) an estimated budget for the development process of the new normative document;
 - h) the potential resources including funding for the proposed development process.
- 15.6 The Policy Director shall integrate the proposal in the yearly updated the Policy Plan (see section 4).
- 15.7 The development of a new normative document shall follow the steps presented in the process to revise normative documents (section 4 to section 14).
- 15.8 The development of a normative document may not need to follow section 5 – Preparing a background or discussion paper.

NOTE: The requirements to prepare a proposal for the development of a normative document greatly overlap with the ones needed for the preparation of a background or discussion paper.

PART IV: Supporting sections

16 Transition of revised normative documents

- 16.1 The transition period of revised normative documents for a regular or major process should be eighteen (18) months following the effective date, unless otherwise decided by the designated decision-making body.
- 16.2 By the end of the transition period all certificate holders and applicants for certification shall have been evaluated against the revised normative document. When using the revised version for the first time, certification bodies shall address major and minor nonconformities as usual, but extended timelines for their correction may be granted for new or significantly changed requirements.
- 16.3 At the end of the transition period the previous version of a normative document shall be replaced.
- 16.4 Certification granted on the basis of the previous version of a normative document will be considered invalid by FSC at the end of the transition period (i.e. eighteen (18) months after the effective date) without any further notification.

16.5 Approved normative documents shall be published a minimum of ninety (90) days prior to the effective date. Revised normative documents should be published in time to become effective on January 1st or July 1st. Significant departures from this schedule shall be justified and approved by the FSC Board of Directors.

Informative guidance: The review and revision cycle of FSC normative documents

A normative document is usually reviewed in Year 3 or 4 after publication.

If revision is necessary, then the revised document will generally be published at least 3 months before the end of the year of review (PUBLICATION date).

This document will then become EFFECTIVE for the year that follows the revision.

The period between the PUBLICATION date and the EFFECTIVE date is for the parties to adjust their systems, inform their clients and train their staff.

The following TRANSITION PERIOD is the period in which there is a parallel phase-in of the new version and phase-out of the old version, but both versions of the document are valid for an overlapping period of, for example, 18 months.

At the end of the TRANSITION PERIOD all certificate holders should have transitioned to the revised normative document and the previous version will be replaced. All certificates issued against the previous version will automatically expire and considered invalid at the end of the transition period (i.e. eighteen (18) months after the effective date).

A new cycle starts if the next review concludes that a revision is needed.

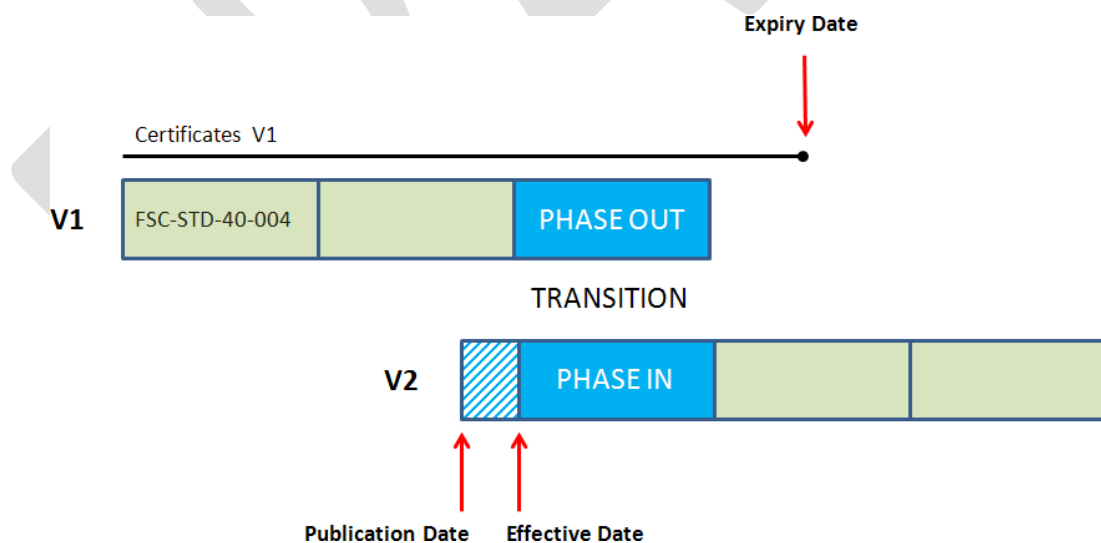


Figure. 1: Transition between two versions of a normative document (Example: FSC-STD-40-004)

17 Alignments

Informative guidance

An alignment process allows for updating of associated documents and normative requirements based on previously approved changes from a revision or development process (e.g. an approved change in the Chain of Custody Standard FSC-STD-40-004 requires alignment of other chain of custody normative documents).

- 17.1 The decision to conduct an alignment process shall be taken by the FSC Policy Director.
- 17.2 The FSC Policy Director shall appoint one or more staff members to make the alignments in the identified associated normative document(s).
- 17.3 The proposal to conduct the alignment shall be sent to the Policy Steering Group, the Policy Standards Committee and the FSC Board of Directors for a period of ten (10) working days.
- 17.4 The decision on the final draft of the aligned normative document(s) shall be taken by the FSC Policy Director.

18 Withdrawal of normative documents

- 18.1 A proposal for withdrawal of a normative document shall be developed by the FSC Policy Director. The proposal shall include the rationale for withdrawal and the steps proposed to implement the process in line with this procedure.
- 18.2 A targeted consultation should be conducted for a proposal to withdraw a normative document unless justification is submitted in a request to omit the consultation and approved by the Board of Directors.
- 18.3 The targeted consultation shall include FSC International, FSC Network Partners, FSC Board of Directors and FSC accredited certification bodies.
- 18.4 The time period to submit comments on the proposal for withdrawal is defined by the FSC Policy Director.
- 18.5 The final proposal for withdrawal and a synopsis of all comments and inputs received (if applicable) shall be submitted to the FSC Board of Directors for decision making at their next scheduled meeting.
- 18.6 The FSC Board of Directors shall either:
 - a) approve the proposal; *or*
 - b) request further work on the proposal prior to re-submission; *or*
 - c) reject the proposal.
- 18.7 In the case of an approved withdrawal, the normative document shall be invalidated and removed from the FSC website and the public document catalogue.
- 18.8 The withdrawal of a normative document shall be announced on the FSC website (www.fsc.org) and by email to:
 - a) FSC International;
 - b) FSC Network Partners;
 - c) the FSC Board of Directors;
 - d) all FSC-accredited certification bodies;

- e) other identified stakeholders.

19 Normative document work program

- 19.1 FSC shall publish its work program on the development, review and revision of normative documents on its website and should provide copies on request.
- 19.2 The normative document work program shall contain:
 - a) a contact point within the FSC Performance and Standards Unit for questions related to normative documents;
 - b) for each normative document listed in the work program, an overview of the review and revision schedule and the work area
- 19.3 The work program shall be updated at least every two (2) months.

20 Availability of approved normative documents

- 20.1 All approved newly developed and revised normative documents shall be made available free of charge.
- 20.2 Upon request, FSC will endeavor to provide translations of draft and final versions of normative documents, as resources are available.

21 Formal interpretation of normative documents

- 21.1 The FSC Performance and Standards Unit is the only body authorized to issue formal and binding interpretation to the requirements included in documents of the FSC normative framework.
- 21.2 Interpretations shall not contain additions, deletions or changes to requirements of normative documents.

NOTE: An addition, deletion or change to a requirement of a normative document is classified as a change request and will be compiled for inclusion in the next review process.
- 21.3 The FSC Performance and Standards Unit should issue formal and binding interpretations in line with the FSC Enquiry Procedure to their key clients. The Enquiry Procedure is available on the FSC website.
- 21.4 All interpretations will be recorded and published on the FSC website to ensure consistent implementation across the FSC system.

22 Record keeping

- 22.1 All formal records related to the development and revision of normative documents shall be filed for the whole period of validity of the specific normative document, or for a minimum period of ten (10) years, whichever is longer.
- 22.2 The set of records shall include:
 - a) the proposal to develop or revise a normative document;
 - b) the formal decision by the designated decision-making body authorizing the development or revision;
 - c) names and affiliations of members of the working group, Consultative Forum, and of other stakeholders that were consulted on the document

- d) during the development or revision process;
- d) copies of technical drafts;
- e) copies of public drafts circulated for comment;
- f) copies of all comments received on consulted drafts;
- g) the Consultation Reports;
- h) the decision on deviations from the specified procedures;
- i) the final approval of the designated decision-making body.

22.3 The records shall be made available to interested parties upon request.

23 Deviation from this procedure

23.1 When conformance with this procedure is not possible for reasons beyond the control of FSC, or when an alternative process would be in the best interest of FSC, the FSC Board of Directors may decide to deviate from this procedure.

23.2 The Policy Director shall prepare the written application for deviation, explaining the nature of the deviation, and the reason or justification for it and shall submit the application to the FSC Board of Directors.

23.3 The FSC Board of Directors shall decide on the application and specify any necessary corrective action to be taken in relation to the deviation.

23.4 The rationale for the decision to deviate from this procedure shall be documented and made available to the public as part of the records of decision-making.

24 Complaints and appeals

24.1 All formal decisions taken by the FSC Board of Directors in the course of the development or revision process may be appealed.

24.2 Complaints and appeals shall be addressed in line with the FSC Dispute Resolution System.

Annex 1: Simplified process flow of a regular process type

Figure 2 shows a simplified and linear representation of the process to review and revise a normative document following the “regular” process type.

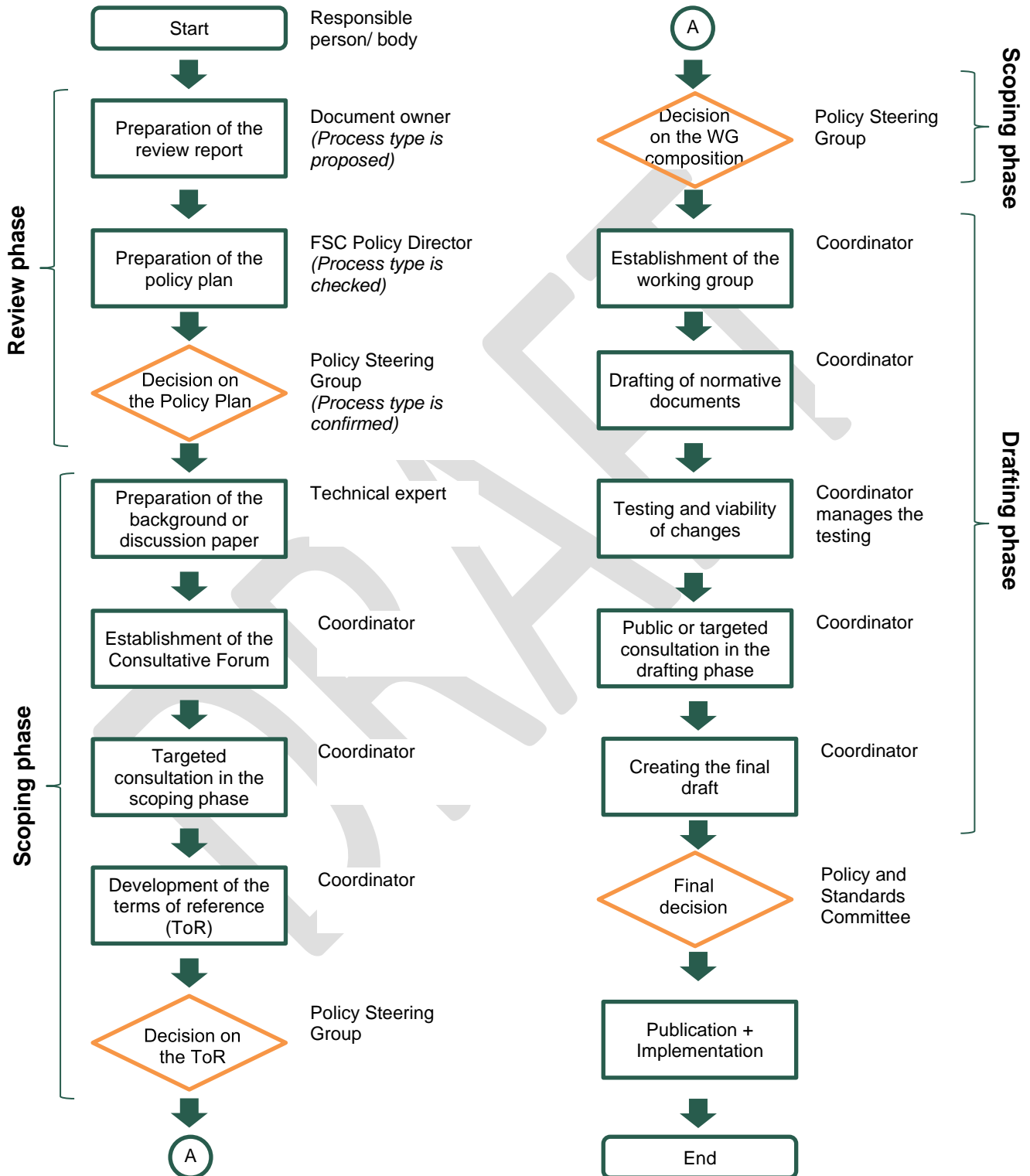


Figure 2: Simplified process flow of a regular process type

Annex 2: Streamlining principles

At the 82nd meeting of the FSC Board of Directors (November 2019), a paper was presented that outlined eight streamlining principles for the normative framework, which were described as objectives for making the normative framework more efficient and effective. These principles are based on the FSC Global Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and in alignment with FSC's enterprise risk policy: a tool used by FSC to make decisions based on the weighing of risks and opportunities for the organization.

The following principles are formulated:

1. We focus on outcomes and actions that maintain **system integrity**, transparency, and credibility.

Example: This is an overarching principle that applies to all streamlining activities.

2. We design our normative framework for its **intended users**. Forest managers, industries and companies, certification bodies and FSC staff are all users of our normative framework and deserve to receive products and services that fit well into their processes, that facilitate the implementation of FSC requirements and increase FSC value.

Example: De-spaghettifying the normative framework: e.g. merge procedures / standards for setting national standards (60-series)

3. We address the **root problems and risks** which prevent us from achieving our mission.

Example: Assurance Risk Management Plan and Risk Register

4. We focus on the **outcomes** we want to achieve, and orient effort to things that matter most.

Example: Develop guidance on how to formulate outcome-oriented requirements in revised FSC-PRO-01-001 Development and Revision of FSC Normative Documents

5. We embrace **risk management** as a guiding principle to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in our normative framework and as directed in FSC's enterprise risk policy:

- In the development and revision of normative documents we assess, weigh and balance risks and benefits and adapt risk-based approaches to its users;
- Risk-based approaches allow us to focus on the relevant items within the normative framework as a whole and within the context of its normative documents (policies, procedures and standards).
- Risk-based approaches (definitions and concepts) are aligned over time where this is feasible and where variations of approaches (customized solutions) for users are not needed.
- Risk is considered both a threat and opportunity and included in decision-making, e.g. reflected in FSC's procedure to develop and revise normative documents.

6. We **integrate work streams** within the organization to learn from different perspectives (communication, marketing, etc.) and to maximize efficiencies and effectiveness.

Example: Collaboration around new product development, e.g. Ecosystem Services and Community and Family Forests (former “New Approaches”)

7. We make the best use of **new technologies** in the design of our normative framework (user inter-face) as well as in the support we provide for its implementation (digital tools) and in our monitoring systems.

Examples: Develop IT platform for standards; online forest management reporting system

8. We **monitor our impact** and learn from our successes and failures to ensure **continuous improvement** of our normative framework.

Example: Impact assessments at level of individual documents guided by revised **FSC-PRO-01-001**

DRAFT

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