



Forest Stewardship Council®



Approval of Forest Stewardship Standards

FSC-PRO-10-606 (V2-1 EN)



Title:	Approval of Forest Stewardship Standards
Document reference code:	FSC-PRO-10-606 V2-1 EN
Scope:	Internal, publicly available
Approval date and body:	October 24, 2017 by Policy and Standards Committee
Contact for comments:	FSC International Center GmbH Performance and Standards Unit Adenauerallee 134 53113 Bonn, Germany +49-(0)228-36766-0 psu@fsc.org

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APPROVAL OF FOREST STEWARDSHIP STANDARDS

FSC-PRO-10-606 V2-1 EN

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

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A Scope

The objective of this document is to provide an internal procedure for the FSC Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) to ensure a consistent decision making process for the approval of Forest Stewardship Standards. These include the following:

National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS)
Interim National Forest Stewardship Standards (INS)
Regional Forest Stewardship Standards (RFS)
Non-Timber Forest Product Standards (NTFP)

This procedure is based on the FSC Board of Directors - Standards Committee: Terms of Reference (approved in May 2005) and is binding for FSC staff as well as for members of the FSC Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) and the FSC Board of Directors.

The procedure is publicly available to provide guidance to interested parties including Standard Development Groups.

B Effective date

This procedure becomes effective upon approval.

C References

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

FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria FSC-STD-01-002 FSC glossary of terms
FSC-STD-60-002 Structure and Content of National Forest Stewardship Standards FSC-STD-60-006 Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards
FSC-STD-60-004 V1-0 EN International Generic Indicators
FSC-PRO-60-006 V2-0 EN Development and Transfer of National Forest Stewardship Standards to the FSC Principles and Criteria Version 5-1

FSC-PRO-60-007 V1-0 EN Structure, Content and Development of Interim National Standards

FSC-GUI-60-002 V1-0 EN Guideline for Standard Developers for addressing risk of unacceptable activities in regard to scale and intensity

PSU Standards Evaluation Checklists (internal)

D Terms and definitions

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

FSC Forest Stewardship Standard - The FSC Principles and Criteria together with the addition of indicators that are adapted to regional (trans-national, supra-national), national and/or sub-national conditions in order to be implemented at the forest management unit (FMU) level constitute an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard.

FSC Interim National Standard - The FSC Principles and Criteria together with the IGI that are adopted or adapted to the national conditions by a Technical Working Group (TWG). It specifies the requirements with which The Organization must conform in order to obtain FSC certification in countries that are lacking NFSS.

FSC Regional Standard - The FSC Principles and Criteria together with associated indicators that are adapted to regional conditions by a SDG. It specifies the requirements with which The Organization must conform in order to obtain FSC certification.

FSC Non-timber Forest Product Standard - The FSC Principles and Criteria together with the IGI that are adopted or adapted for non-timber forest products by a Technical Working Group (TWG). It specifies the requirements with which The Organization must conform in order to obtain FSC certification in countries that are lacking NFSS.

1 General Principles

- 1.1 Formal decision-making authority in relation to approval of FSC Forest Stewardship Standards rests with the FSC Board of Directors (Sections 2.10 and 8, FSC-PRO-01-001 V3-1). The FSC Board of Directors may delegate its powers to a formal committee charged with this duty, subject to oversight by the FSC Board of Directors (FSC Statutes 2013, section 24 on page 8, and FSC-PRO-01-001 V3-1 section 1.1).
- 1.2 The FSC Board of Directors delegated the authority to approve Forest Stewardship Standards to the Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) at Board Meeting 58. (See Annex 3, PSC Terms of Reference).
- 1.3 The FSC Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) acts as the Secretariat to the PSC and shall prepare a Recommendation Note for each Forest Stewardship Standard that is submitted by an FSC National Office, registered Standards Development Group (SDG) or registered Technical Working Group (TWG) is the body charged with the development of an Interim National Standard, (INS) for formal approval. The PSU Recommendation Note should not be more than twelve (12) pages and shall include:
- A decision request cover sheet with a list and explanation of all documents and materials associated with the standard;
 - A confirmation by the Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) that all FSC procedures and rules relevant to the development and endorsement of a Forest Stewardship Standard have been followed and that the Standard is ready for PSC consideration and decision;
 - Observations about any major issues with the Standard that should be evaluated by the PSC, including major issues resolved between the SDG and PSU that require PSC consideration, and any issues not resolved between SDG and PSU;
 - Recommendations about any potential conditions to be associated with approval that the PSC should consider;
 - A brief outline of the forest sector and forest conditions in the country;
 - A summarized description of the standard development process applied by the Standard Development Group (SDG) together with PSU's evaluation of the SDG process and conclusions on conformance to FSC requirements;
 - A summarized description of the content of the standard together with PSU's evaluation of the contents and conclusions on conformance to FSC requirements;
 - Identification of the numbers of International Generic Indicators (IGI) that have been adopted, adapted, or dropped and the number of new Indicators that have been added;
 - A summary of the comments and issues identified by external reviewers; and,
 - Any other key information deemed relevant by PSU for decision-making by the PSC.
- 1.4 Together with the Recommendation Note, PSU shall submit the following Key Documents to the PSC:
- A copy of the Forest Stewardship Standards that has been submitted for formal approval;
 - The PSU detailed evaluation of the Standard and a summary of the interactions between PSU and SDG and final conclusions by the PSU on any outstanding process or content matters raised by the PSU;
 - A Transfer Matrix showing all Indicators in the Standard, the consistency of these Indicators with the IGI, and any PSU or external reviewer comments;
 - A draft of the PSC Forest Stewardship Standards Decision Form for PSC consideration and decision;

- Third party evaluations of the NFSS; and,
 - Any other documents of significance.
- 1.5 In addition to the Recommendation Note and the Key Documents, PSU may provide additional Supplemental Documents. These documents may vary by country but could include, for example:
- Membership of the SDG;
 - Stakeholder consultation process;
 - Details of public meetings; and,
 - Any other supplemental information deemed potentially useful for the PSC
- 1.6 All related information (PSU checklists with analysis of process and content) shall be available to the PSC through the PSC Intranet and on request.
- 1.7 The PSU shall only submit a Regional or National Forest Stewardship Standard to the PSC if in its evaluation it believes all relevant requirements have been met and it deems the standard ready for consideration by the PSC, and ready for approval or conditional approval.

2. The Approval Process

- 2.1 The Policy Manager – Forest Stewardship Standards (the Manager) shall, at least four (4) weeks prior to a scheduled PSC meeting, submit the Recommendation Note on the standard (the PSC version as per Clause 1.3 above) to the PSC, and email the PSC members to advise that all documents related to a NFSS are posted on the PSC intranet site and invite questions and requests for additional information.
- 2.2 Prior to the PSC meeting scheduled to consider the decision on the standard the Manager shall have responded to any comments, queries and additional requests for information with the aim of addressing these prior to the meeting.
- 2.3 The Manager shall collate and keep records of these communications on issues raised in relation to the standard and the response of the PSU, in order to annex them to the decision form and minutes.

3. Decision making

- 3.1 At the scheduled PSC meeting that has quorum (at least 4 of 6 members present and one from each chamber) the PSC may make a decision on an FSS following consideration of the Recommendation Note, PSU Evaluation and any additional information provided by PSU and any recommendations provided by PSU relating to the standard.
- 3.2 The Chairperson of the PSC shall structure and facilitate discussion on the submitted FSS and PSU documents and, with approval of PSC members, shall record and sign the decision reached in consensus by the members of the PSC.
- 3.3 The PSC shall normally seek to make a decision on a standard at the first scheduled meeting following submission to the PSC, or in exceptional circumstances shall make a decision within a maximum of three scheduled meetings that have quorum.
- 3.4 PSC decisions shall be made by consensus.
- 3.5 The PSC has four options for making a decision about an FSS submitted through PSU for consideration:

- a) Approve the submitted FSS as a FSC Forest Stewardship Standard;
- b) Approve the submitted FSS as an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard, upon completion of conditions;
- c) Return the submitted standard to the SDG through PSU for additional work prior to re-submission for approval; or
- d) In situations where the PSC is unable to reach a consensus decision on approval or approval with conditions, the PSC shall defer the decision making process to the Board of Directors. The PSC shall request that the Board of Directors either:
 - provide direction to the PSC on how to address specific issues identified by the PSC and, with Board guidance, allow the PSC to continue deliberation on the Standard; or,
 - take responsibility for decision making on the Standard from the PSC.

NOTE: If the PSC is not in consensus and defers the decision-making process to the Board of Directors, it shall state the reasons for this decision as per normal PSC procedures, and may suggest what steps it considers necessary in order to address its concerns.

3.6 If the PSC has taken a positive decision to approve the standard as submitted, the Standard is formally considered approved. This decision does not require further ratification by the FSC Board of Directors.

3.7 If the PSC has taken a positive decision to approve a standard with conditions, the PSC may delegate authority to determine when those conditions have been met by the SDG and the authority to approve the standard to the Policy and Standards Director (PSU). The PSC may also delegate the authority to the Policy and Standards Director (PSU) to allow the partial meeting of a condition and to approve the standard in those circumstances where the SDG has demonstrated that it has made every effort to meet the condition and has provided satisfactory justification to the Director as to why the condition could not be fully met. These decisions do not require further ratification by the PSC or by the FSC Board of Directors.

3.8 If the Standard receives approval as an FSC Forest Stewardship Standard, the Manager shall inform the applicant of the approval, or the approval with conditions, and shall initiate the next steps according to FSC-STD-60-006.

3.9 If a standard submitted by an SDG does not receive approval by the PSC, the PSC shall provide reasons for the decision through the PSU. The Policy and Standards Director (PSU) shall inform the applicant of the rejection by the PSC and the reasons.

4 Review of a PSC Decision with respect to a Forest Stewardship Standard

Note: If an SDG wishes to challenge the PSC decision on an FSS, the following procedure will apply.

4.1 Upon receiving notice of a decision by the PSC to return a Standard to an SDG for further work, or of conditions imposed by the PSC on approval of a Standard, the SDG may file a request with the PSC Chair that the PSC review its decision. The SDG shall provide reasons for the request for review.

4.2 The PSC Chair shall immediately establish a chamber-balanced subgroup of the PSC to address the issues raised by the SDG and to make a recommendation to

the full PSC.

4.3 Upon receiving a request for a review from an SDG, the PSC shall complete review of the decision within 90 days.

4.4. Upon receiving a decision from the PSC, based on its review, the SDG may use the FSC dispute resolution process (FSC-PRO-01-005).

**Annex 1 Policy and Standards Committee Decision
Form**



**Regional and National Forest
Stewardship Standards Decision
Form**

Name of Standard

1. General information

1.1 Applicant Body (NO/ SDG)	
1.2 Document title	
1.3 Document number	
1.4 Date of submission by NO / SDG	
1.5 Author of the PSU evaluation report	
1.6 Date of the PSU evaluation report	
1.7 Date of submission to the PSC	
1.8 Name of the Chairperson of the PSC	

2. Decision

2.1 Decision by PSC	
Date	Signed PSC Chair, (non-voting) On behalf of PSC members

3. Conditions

Approval Conditions	Rationale	FSC Normative Reference (if available)

Annex 2 PSU Recommendation Note Template



Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS) Recommendation Note

FSC-REP- VERSION – EN

Country

Date

Decision Request Cover Sheet:

1. General Information on the Forest Stewardship Standard

1.1 Applicant Body (NO/ SDG)	
1.2 Document title	
1.3 Document number	
1.4 Date of submission by NO / SDG	
1.5 Author of the PSU evaluation report	
1.6 Date of the PSU evaluation report	
1.7 Date of submission to the PSC	
1.8 Name of the Chairperson of the PSC	

2. Decision

2.1 Decision by PSC	
Date	Signed (PSC Chair)

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3. A brief outline of the forest sector and forest conditions in the country.

4. A summarized description of the standard development process.

4.1 PSU evaluation of the process and conclusions on compliance with FSC requirements.

5. A summarized description of the standard content.

5.1 PSU evaluation of the content and conclusions on compliance with FSC requirements.

6. Evaluation of use of International Generic Indicators (IGIs) as starting point.

7. External reviewers' note

8. Issues identified from evaluation to be evaluated by PSC

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9. Additional note deemed relevant for PSC decision if any

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10. Annexes: Record of communication on the standard

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11. Recommendation Note by the Policy and Standards Director.

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Annex 3

FSC Board of Directors – Policy and Standards Committee (PSC)

Terms of Reference and Operating Procedure V4-0

Last revision: November 17, 2017
Approved by the FSC Board of Directors – 08 December 2017

1. Background

1.1 The FSC Board of Directors (BoD) established the Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) 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.

2. Objective

2.1 The PSC acts on behalf of the BoD with respect to all technical matters related to the development, execution and decision making on all FSC Policies, Standards, Procedures and other normative documents.

3. Duties

3.1 Where involvement of the BoD is formally required, the PSC will be acting on behalf of, and making recommendations for decisions to, the BoD with regards to the development or revision of FSC Policies, Standards, Procedures and other normative documents.

This particularity refers to:

I. FSC Policy for Pilot Tests (FSC-POL-01-001)

- Decision on proposals for pilot testing

II. The Development and Revision of FSC Normative Documents (FSC-PRO-01-001)

- Decision on proposals to:
 - o develop a new normative document;
 - o revise a normative document;
 - o withdraw a normative document.
- Decision on applications for deviation from the procedure

III. Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards (FSC-STD-60-006)

- Approval of National / Regional Forest Stewardship Standards

NOTE: at their 58th meeting the FSC BoD decided the following:

“National standards on which there is consensus in the PSC are considered automatically approved and do not need to be submitted to the FSC BoD for specific approval.”

3.2 PSC members shall seek to make recommendations and decisions which benefit the Organization as a whole and represent the views and concerns of the sub-chamber which they

represent (e.g. South/Social) in the Committee deliberations, rather than simply reflect personal views or the views of the organization with which they are affiliated.

3.3 In addition the PSC shall provide guidance and advice to the FSC Performance and Standard Unit (PSU) on which 'direction' to take with a policy or standards issue in particular (e.g. policy and standards interpretations) or in general (e.g. on position or discussion papers).

4. Structure and Accountabilities

4.1 The PSC should consist of six (6) FSC members, one (1) from each of the six (6) FSC sub-chambers, selected by the BoD based on an application process open to all FSC members.

4.2 Effective September 1, 2017, the term of PSC members is four (4) years which shall cover a suitable transition period for the introduction of new members, including becoming familiar with the process, procedures and scope of the Committee, their responsibilities towards reaching out to and representing their sub-chamber and the overall time commitment involved.

4.3 The term for the appointed member of PSC can be renewed for one (1) additional period.

4.4 A neutral non-voting Chair may be appointed by the Board for a two (2) year period and can be extended for further two (2) years on an annual basis.

4.5 The PSC is supported by and in general interfaces with PSU through a single staff person assigned by PSU. All necessary administrative, minute taking, technical and logistical support will be provided by the PSU via this staff person.

4.6 Additional support is provided by the staff person assigned to lead the development or revision of a certain FSC Policy, Standard, Procedure or other normative document. Under normal circumstances the PSC will not be expected to consider any issue or policy, standard, etc., unless a formal paper has been prepared and circulated in advance and is part of the PSC workplan.

4.7 The PSC is accountable to the BoD. All decisions taken by the PSC, except for approval of forest stewardship standards (FSS), are considered as recommendations to the BoD, and have to be reported to and confirmed by the BoD.

NOTE: at their 58th meeting the FSC BoD decided the following:

“National standards on which there is consensus in the PSC are considered automatically approved and do not need to be submitted to the FSC BoD for specific approval.”

4.8 When requested by a Steering Committee, the PSC may identify members to serve in the roles of advisor or liaison persons as provided in FSC-PRO-01-001 V3-1, Clause 3.4.

4.9 The PSC submits an annual report to the BoD, which includes a self-assessment of PSC's work.

5. Member qualifications and obligations

5.1 PSC Members and Non-Voting Chair will be selected from among the FSC International Membership in good standing based on their qualification, expertise and experience in relation to FSC Policy and Standards. The selection process shall be initiated at least six (6) months before the term of the existing PSC members and Non-Voting Chair expires.

5.2 Application for PSC members and Non-Voting Chair shall be accompanied by:

a) Curriculum Vitae of the applicant

- b) Letter of support from at least two (2) members in the represented sub-chamber
- c) For organizational member, a letter of endorsement from the Designated Representative or Head of the Organization if the applicant himself/herself is not the Designated Representative of the organizational member.

5.3 It is the obligation of the PSC members:

- a) To actively and constructively participate in the PSC discussions and make available the time necessary for allowing the PSC to duly fulfill its duties as laid down in this document. This includes participation in at a minimum two meetings annually. Additional meetings may be agreed upon between the PSC and FSC. It also includes active and timely response by email or phone.
- b) To respect the decisions and policy directives of the organization taken through GA motions or from the Board.
- c) To seek to reflect the views of the sub-chamber that the member represents.
- d) To be proficient in English and the use of information technology.
- e) To declare in advance any potential conflict of interest, if applicable.
- f) To sign a service contract and confidentiality agreement with FSC upon selection.

5.4 It is the role and function of the Non-Voting Chair:

- a) To assist the appointed members of the PSC to carry out the mandate and responsibilities given to the PSC by the FSC Board;
- b) To work with the Chair of the FSC Board and the FSC Director General in facilitating interactions between the PSC and the FSC Board;
- c) To schedule PSC meetings and conference calls in consultation with PSC members and PSU staff, prepare the meetings agendas and ensure that materials for discussion are distributed by the PSU in timely manner in advance of the meeting.
- d) To review documents or briefing notes being sent to the PSC to ensure they are ready for PSC deliberations;
- e) To manage and chair PSC meetings following appropriate process and maintaining a neutral position;
- f) To assist the PSC to reach consensus decision, including drafting of potential decisions for consideration by the PSC;
- g) To prepare draft of decisions/recommendations of the PSC for approval by the PSC members, meeting minutes and Annual Report, in the appropriate format, for transmittal to the FSC Board or to Standard Development Groups;
- h) To seek to resolve any internal governance issue before it becomes a grievance;
- i) To liaise with the BoD Liaison to PSC on unresolved issues within PSC such as, but not limited to, internal grievances, lack of consensus in the deliberation of decision or recommendations, and advice sought from the board on particular agenda items;
- j) To assist PSU staff and others in communication with PSC members;
- k) To speak or communicate with external parties on behalf of the PSC, as mandated by the PSC.

5.5 Upon receipt of PSC's Annual Report, which includes the committee's self-assessment, the BoD reviews the performance of the PSC members.

5.6 PSC membership may be terminated by the BoD subject to any of the following conditions:

- a) Voluntary resignation or death of the PSC member.
- b) Shift of his/her FSC International chamber and sub-chamber membership allocation, and/or revocation of his/her FSC International membership.
- c) The PSC member had not fulfilled the obligations as stated in Clause 5.3, based on the recommendations by the BoD Liaison and BoD annual performance review on PSC.
- d) Written complaint by at least 50% of the PSC members against a particular PSC member to the BoD.

e) In the conditions c) and d), a probation between 3 to 6 months will apply for the PSC member concerned to correct or improve his/her conduct in the internal governance of the committee before a final decision on termination is confirmed by the BoD.

NOTE: the BOD can also terminate the mandate of the neutral Non-Voting Chair on the basis of the criteria listed above.

6. General Rules of Procedure

6.1 The PSC shall meet at least two (2) times annually and at a sufficient frequency to address the work presented to the PSC by PSU or the FSC Board.

6.2 The PSC shall decide on its own leadership, e.g. by appointing a vice chairperson and, when necessary, developing an annual Work Plan.

6.3 Quorum is required for decision making. Quorum is defined as a minimum of four (4) PSC members, with at least one (1) from each chamber.

6.4 Communication will mainly be via email. In addition to in-person meetings, telephone conferences can be organized by the FSC International Center if required.

6.5 PSU, through the staff persons assigned according Clause 4.5 and 4.6 above, is responsible for facilitating communication and decision making of the PSC by providing discussion papers, draft documents, administrative, technical and logistical support, including taking minutes, and requesting decision making as need arises. PSU is also responsible for the timely communication of all recommendations to the BoD and filing all relevant communications and resulting decisions of the PSC.

6.6 The staff person assigned to the development of a new or revision of an existing Policy, Standard, Procedure or other normative document shall participate in all communication leading to a decision and shall be informed about decisions by the PSC.

6.7 The PSC shall make its decisions by consensus, which is defined as the absence of sustained opposition. With the exception of decisions explicitly delegated to the PSC by the Board, decisions of the PSC are recommendations to the BoD and require ratification by the FSC Board of Directors. If consensus cannot be achieved, the applicable issue or element of a policy, standard, procedure or normative and non-normative document shall be deferred to the BoD for decision making, including reporting on the reasons for decisions, the different positions and the extent of disagreement within the PSC.

6.8 Recommendations to the FSC Board from the PSC are confidential until the Board makes a decision and releases Minutes.

6.9 The working language of the PSC is English.

ANNEX 1: PSC Operating Procedures:

1. Meetings, whether in person or phone are agreed as much in advance as possible to facilitate attendance, preparation and logistics, and are guided by the workplan and priority setting of the BoD.

2. PSC will adopt the same Conflict of Interest policy and procedures as adopted by the FSC Board.

3. A workplan will be developed from the priority issues guidance from the BoD and the PSU workplan, and with regard to the FSC decision-making matrix. The workplan will be formatted in such a way as to be able to track and timeline all items and will be updated regularly by the chairperson and PSU.

4. Agenda items to be discussed at a meeting must be supported by a short paper or document (similar to BoD papers) that are numbered and coded, give a summary of the issue and the options for addressing it, the impacts of the different options, the recommended decision, the level of priority and timeline for decision making, and links to FSC intranet or external sites where additional background or support documents can be found. It is expected that PSC members will have read the necessary documents prior to the meeting.

5. Additional agenda items can be considered if their consideration and a decision is required urgently. Urgent items or issues can be put to the PSC at any time and do not necessarily need a meeting for their consideration.

6. Additional agenda items may also be proposed by PSC members if they are within the scope of Policy and Standards issues.

7. Minutes of meetings will capture only a short summary of proceedings and discussion but aim to accurately record any decisions (recommendations to the BoD). To speed up the time for finalisation, for in-person meetings decisions will be confirmed by those present in the meeting via a screen or printed version. Absentee PSC members will need to confirm via email.

8. The PSC shall strive and make every effort to achieve consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved within the PSC then the minutes will need to include considerably more detail as per item 6 of the general rules above.

9. Consideration of agenda items will begin with a presentation from the person leading the item (usually a PSU staff person). Discussion will be preceded by a short round of the PSC to see what, if any, major or minor issues people wish to raise. PSC members are encouraged to be open and frank about concerns or questions, and the PSU to be equally so in their responses or clarifications – with the aim of coming to a very robust and well considered decision. To facilitate this, views or perspectives shared in the PSC are expected to remain in confidence, or at a minimum “Chatham House” rules apply in terms of recording in the minutes.

10. Agenda items which have already been decided in a higher level decision making bodies such as the General Assembly or by the FSC International BOD are considered as normative and shall not be further disputed in the PSC in terms of its content.

11. Internal grievances within the PSC shall be raised with the PSC Chairperson in writing with a copy to the BOD Liaison to PSC. The grievance process shall include:

- a) Issue or subject being complained;
- b) Justification; and
- c) Recommendation for resolution.

The PSC Chairperson, with the guidance from the BOD Liaison to PSC, shall determine whether the grievance can be processed individually or needs to be resolved collectively in the committee.

12. PSC members may consult or seek advice from members of the BOD on agenda items to be discussed before and after the PSC meeting.

13. Where necessary PSC members may also consult working group members and the BOD Liaison to a particular working group on related issues that are within the PSC agenda.

14. To assist PSC to deliberate on normative documents or forest stewardship standards, PSC may appoint a sub-committee from among the PSC members to provide review and/or recommendations for full PSC consideration.

15. PSC members are encouraged to participate in the public consultations or webinars organized on policy or standard matters, and the webinar presentation of BoD decisions to the membership.

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FSC International Center GmbH
Adenauerallee 134 · 53113 Bonn · Germany



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