



Announcement

Expanded Review and Revision of FSC Principles and Criteria (FSC-STD-01-001 Version 4-0)

Date: 03rd September 2008

Summary

Through this communication FSC would like to inform all stakeholders about the Review of the FSC Principles and Criteria. The initial review efforts have been revised to take into account stakeholder comments received during May and June 2007. As a result, the process has evolved to a full review and a new working group will be established to lead the process. Please visit the FSC website (www.fsc.org) for more information.

1. Background

The development and approval of FSC social and environmental international standards is subject to FSC-PRO-01-001 (Version 2-0). According to section 16.4 of the said procedure it is also applicable to revisions of standards that require substantive changes.

The FSC Principles and Criteria were developed in the beginning of the 1990s, after a long consultation process with stakeholders. They remain very similar to the original version approved in 1994 and have never been consistently reviewed in their almost 15 years of existence.

Over the past few years, there has been a growing recognition by many stakeholders of the need to review and when applicable revise the FSC Principles and Criteria. The 2005 General Assembly approved two motions related to the review of the FSC Principles and Criteria (Motion 7¹ and motion 66). Furthermore, the Policy Phase of the Plantations Review, after a strong consultation process, also made a few recommendations that can only be accomplished by a review of the FSC Principles and Criteria.

¹ **Motion 7 'Alternative motion to those related to changes in P&C':** Recognizing the need for careful deliberation on any proposed revisions to the Principles and Criteria, and in view of the number of motions proposing such revisions, the General Assembly decides that the FSC shall establish a formal Working Group to analyze these motions and make recommendations to the FSC membership for vote, regarding whether, and in what form, any revisions should be made. The Working Group shall be representative of FSC's membership, balanced according to sub-chamber, and should begin its work with motions related to Principle 4. To maximize FSC's efficiency in addressing these issues, the General Assembly also calls upon all existing FSC working groups, task forces or other committees that already may be working on subjects related to any of these motions to examine such issues in the context of their own work.



Following up on motion 66, FSC created a procedure for the Development and Approval of Social and Environmental International Standards (FSC-PRO-01-001). Version 2-0 of this procedure, amended to ensure compliance with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Developing Social and Environmental Standards was approved by FSC Board of Directors in early 2007 and is the currently valid version.

This procedure regulates the process through which FSC develops and revises its social and environmental international standards. Normally, according to section 1.2 and 1.3 of FSC-PRO-01-001 (Version 2-0) the FSC Executive Director takes the decision to authorize the development (or in this case a review). In the specific case of the FSC Principles and Criteria, given the mandate of the FSC membership at the 2005 General Assembly and the results of the Plantations review and the results, the FSC Executive Director concluded that a review of the FSC Principles and Criteria was necessary.

In discussions with the FSC Board of Directors, it was at first concluded that the review should be limited to the specific motions off the 2005 General Assembly and recommendations of the Plantations Review. Following this decision, FSC circulated in July 2008 a 1st draft of the Revised FSC Principles and Criteria (FSC-STD-01-001 Version 5-0, Draft 1-0) for consultation. The changes in the 1st draft were based on the motions from the 2005 FSC General Assembly and on recommendations of Policy Working Group and subsequent Expert Teams of the FSC Plantations Review.²

During the consultation on the 1st revision draft of the Principles and Criteria (FSC-STD-01-001 (Version 5-0, Draft 1-0) FSC received a few comments expressing concerns related to the review process. These concerns went from implementation difficulties related to the limited scope of the review, to questions regarding compliance with FSC's own internal procedure (FSC-PRO-01-001, Version 2-0) for the Development and Approval of FSC Social and Environmental International Standards.

As some of the concerns raised valid points and should thus be addressed the FSC Board of Directors decided that the review process of the Principles and Criteria needed to be broad-

² In response to continued stakeholder criticism regarding FSC certification of Plantations FSC in September 2004 launched the Plantations Review aiming at comprehensively analyzing issues with the certification of plantations and providing solutions to these issues. The first (Policy) phase of this process ended in March 2007 with the approval of the final report of the Plantations Review Policy Working Group. In April 2007 the Technical Phase of the Plantations Review, aiming at further developing the recommendations of the Policy Phase into technical solutions was launched. 4 Expert Teams were set up and charged with making, based on the recommendations of the Policy Phase, proposals for revisions of the Principles and Criteria. These proposals were, when appropriate, incorporated in the 1st draft of the revised Principles and Criteria (FSC-STD-01-001 (Version 5-0, Draft 1-0). The final report of the Policy Working Group can be downloaded here: [http://www.old.fsc.org/plantations/docs/Resources%20-%20FSC%20docs%20and%20reports/Final%20Plantations%20Policy%20Review%20Report%202006-10-20%20\(EN\).pdf](http://www.old.fsc.org/plantations/docs/Resources%20-%20FSC%20docs%20and%20reports/Final%20Plantations%20Policy%20Review%20Report%202006-10-20%20(EN).pdf)



ened to a full review and that a new working group, balanced by FSC sub-chamber, be established to lead the process.

This document represents the official announcement by FSC of the comprehensive review and revision of the FSC Principles and Criteria according to Section 2 of FSC-PRO-01-001 (Version 2-0).

2. Announcement of Review and Revision of FSC Principles and Criteria (FSC-STD-01-001 Version 4-0)

2.1. Description, scope and objective of the review and revision

The objective of this comprehensive review and revision is to analyze all issues identified in the past regarding the FSC Principles and Criteria and to propose, when necessary, revisions to the Principles and Criteria needed to solve the identified issues. The review and revision covers the entire Principles and Criteria including their introduction and glossary of terms.

2.2. Justification for the review and revision

There is a need to ensure continued relevance and appropriateness of the FSC Principles and Criteria. There are several sources of information indicating that, after having been in existence since 1994, the Principles and Criteria would benefit from a comprehensive review and revision.

The need for a review and revision was also already formally indicated at the 2005 General Assembly when several motions were submitted aiming at revisions of the Principles and Criteria (see above).

In addition, there are also a number of other, often interrelated, sources of information, such as FSC advice notes, discussion papers, background papers, stakeholder input, decisions of the FSC Board of Directors, that indicate the need for a comprehensive review and revision. Partly related to the examples provided above, many of the recommendations of the Plantations Review require changes to the Principles and Criteria.

2.3. FSC Registration Code

The FSC registration code will be FSC-STD-01-001 (Version 5-0).



2.4. Contact Point

The contact point for the review and revision is Matthias Fecht, who can be reached at m.fecht@fsc.org, phone: + 49 (228) 367 66 28.

2.5. Estimated Timeline

The expected timeline for completion of the review and revision is the end of 2009.

2.6. ISEAL Code

The review and revision will be conducted according to FSC-PRO-01-001 (Version 2-0) and thereby comply with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.