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Foreword

Stakeholder consultation may be designed to achieve a number of different objectives in different circumstances. Consultation with stakeholders is a requirement of forest managers in relation to FSC Principle 4, for example (*FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship*, February 2000). Consultation is also an essential requirement for the local adaptation of certification body generic forest stewardship standards (see *FSC-STD-20-003 Local adaptation of certification body generic forest stewardship standards*). This standard does not address either of these issues.

This standard considers a third area in which consultation is essential: in order for a certification body to evaluate a forest manager's compliance with the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard.

Stakeholder consultation provides an essential and effective means of verification for many indicators of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard. National and local stakeholders can provide relevant information as to an applicant's compliance with the environmental, legal, social, or economic requirements of the Forest Stewardship Standard. Such stakeholders include local and national government and non-government organisations (NGOs) involved in forest management, as well as individuals and members of communities directly affected by the forest management.

The certification body cannot guarantee to identify every stakeholder concern prior to, or during, an evaluation. The objective of this standard is to ensure that the certification body carries out a level of consultation sufficient to provide a credible guarantee that the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard are complied with.

This standard is designed to give certification bodies and stakeholders more clarity as to the nature and extent of stakeholder consultation required for evaluation of FSC Forest Stewardship Standards.

Note on use of this standard

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

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A Scope

This standard applies to all certification bodies carrying out FSC forest evaluations.

B Standard effective date

This standard shall be used for the purpose of FSC accreditation from 1st April 2004.

FSC-accredited certification bodies shall comply with this standard by 1st January 2005.

C References

- FSC-STD-01-002 FSC glossary of terms
- FSC-STD-20-003 Local adaptation of generic forest stewardship standards
- FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluation

D Terms and definitions

Terms and definitions are provided in *FSC-STD-01-002 FSC glossary of terms*. The following terms in particular are relevant to implementation of this standard: **Indigenous peoples, stakeholders**.

1 General requirements

- 1.1 The certification body shall consult with a range of stakeholders who can provide relevant information as to an applicant's compliance with the environmental, legal, social, and economic requirements of the Forest Stewardship Standard.
- 1.2 Relevant information may include alleged examples of non-compliance, as well as confirmation of compliance with:
 - a) Legal requirements (FSC Principle 1),
 - b) Social requirements (FSC Principles 2, 3, 4 and 9),
 - c) Technical or economic requirements (FSC Principles 5, 7, 8, 10),
 - d) Environmental requirements (FSC Principles 6, 9, 10).
- 1.3 The certification body shall develop and document its methodology for conducting stakeholder consultations.
- 1.4 The methodology shall ensure that:

- 1.4.1 a range of stakeholders is consulted, appropriate to the scale and range of impacts of the forest management being assessed;
- 1.4.2 stakeholders have the opportunity to present their points of view to the auditor(s) in confidence;
- 1.4.3 information and opinions given by consulted stakeholders are evaluated objectively, and affect the certification decision only in so far as they provide evidence of compliance or non-compliance with the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard.

2 Identification of and information for stakeholders prior to the main evaluation

- 2.1 The certification body shall have effective procedures to identify the range of stakeholders that are likely to have information relevant to the evaluation of the applicant for certification, and/or that may be able to put the certification body in contact with other such stakeholders. The range and number of individuals and organisations to be contacted depends on the scale, intensity and complexity of the forest management's impacts.
- 2.2 The certification body should aim to ensure that any stakeholder that has information relevant to the compliance of the applicant with the requirements of the Forest Stewardship Standard has the opportunity to bring such information to the attention of the certification body, prior to the finalisation of the certification decision.
- 2.3 For all operations except those which meet the eligibility criteria for small forests (see *FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF eligibility criteria*) stakeholders to be contacted directly by the certification body shall include:
 - a) Any FSC National Initiative in the country or region,
 - b) The state forest service or equivalent,
 - c) Statutory bodies with some legal mandate over the FMU under evaluation
 - d) NGOs that are active in respect of social or environmental aspects of forest management at the national level, or at the sub-national level in the environs of the forest to be evaluated, as appropriate,
 - e) Representatives of Indigenous Peoples and forest-dwelling or -using communities that are active at the national level, or at the sub-national level in the environs of the forest to be evaluated, as appropriate,
 - f) Labour organisations or unions of forestry sector workers,
 - g) Contractors who provide services to the forest operation to be assessed.
- 2.4 The certification body should contact stakeholders at the scale of organisation most likely to have information relevant for the assessment. In the case of large scale enterprises this is likely to include organisations which operate at the national level, and/or at the sub-national level in the environs of the forest to be evaluated. In the case of smaller enterprises it may include only local organisations, interest groups or individuals.
- 2.5 The certification body shall inform the stakeholders identified in 2.3, above, at least one month prior to the start of the main evaluation site visits:

- a) that an FSC forest evaluation is due to take place,
- b) the start date of the evaluation;
- c) the applicant's name and the location of the forest area to be assessed;
- d) how to acquire a copy of the Forest Stewardship Standard to be used for the evaluation,
- e) that the certification body is seeking the views and opinions of stakeholders as to whether the applicant's forest management complies with the requirements of the standard,
- f) how stakeholders may contact the certification body in confidence to let the certification body know of their views and opinions,
- g) that the team will make arrangements to allow stakeholders to meet with team during the evaluation, if necessary,
- h) of the existence of the certification body's mechanisms for resolution of complaints or disputes,
- i) that the source of any information provided will be confidential to FSC and to the certification body carrying out the evaluation.

2.6 The certification body may employ a variety of means to inform stakeholders of the information specified in 2.5, above, appropriate to the group being contacted. Techniques may include:

- a) direct e-mail contacts in the language of the recipients,
- b) personal contacts by phone or letter,
- c) notice published in the national and/or local press in the country in which the evaluation is due to take place,
- d) local radio announcements,
- e) signage posted around the forest management unit in the language of the local people,
- f) announcement in village shop/ church hall or local customary notice board for issues of public interest,
- g) announcement by the applicant using existing, ongoing mechanisms for consultation between managers and local stakeholders.

2.7 The certification body should work with the applicant in the case of forest management units which meet the eligibility criteria for small or low intensity FMUs (see *FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF eligibility criteria*) to identify local, and where appropriate national stakeholders, and to agree the method of communication. Methods of communication may include those identified in 2.6 above. The certification body may delegate some or all of the implementation of this communication to the applicant, but shall ensure that stakeholders have access to

the information listed in 2.5, above, prior to the main evaluation taking place. The certification body shall ensure that there is adequate opportunity for stakeholders to comment directly to the certification body. In areas where tensions with stakeholders are known to exist certification bodies shall carry out direct consultation with local and, where appropriate, national stakeholders.

3 Consultation during the main evaluation

3.1 Consultation should be designed to solicit direct, factual observations with regard to compliance with the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard. The certification body shall carry out such consultation as part of the main evaluation. The consultation shall include a sufficient variety and number of people affected by or involved in the applicant's forest management, to evaluate the range of situations relevant to the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard (see *FSC-STD-20-007 forest management evaluation*).

NOTE 1: The stakeholder groups that need to be consulted is determined by the specific indicators and associated means of verification of the applicable standard. Evaluation commonly requires consultation with the stakeholder groups listed in Annex 1.

3.2 Consultation with stakeholders shall be carried out in confidence if requested. Consultation shall therefore, necessarily, be carried out without the presence of the forest manager(s) and/or their representatives.

3.3 The consultation techniques employed shall be culturally appropriate to the stakeholders with whom consultation takes place. Examples of such techniques include:

3.3.1 direct arrangements for individual or group meetings at the time of the evaluation;

3.3.2 individual or group meetings arranged through the help of a local interlocutor;

3.3.3 ad hoc interviews with managers, employees, contractors during site audits;

3.3.4 structured interview by telephone at the time of the evaluation;

3.3.5 contact by mail or e-mail with a request for written comments to a predetermined set of specific questions.

4 Consultation with forest communities and Indigenous Peoples

NOTE 2: This section is under development

5 Evaluating information received from consultation

5.1 Information provided by stakeholders shall wherever possible be independently corroborated from a second source or be confirmed by the certification body's auditors in the field.

5.2 In all cases information provided by stakeholders shall be evaluated objectively to determine whether it constitutes evidence of a non-compliance with any FSC certification requirement.

6 Records

6.1 The certification body shall keep the following records for each evaluation:

- a) names and contact details of individuals/organisations consulted on the applicant's compliance with the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard,
 - b) notes about all information received orally,
 - c) copies of all correspondence and/or written comments received,
 - d) notes or other information showing how information received was tested or corroborated.
- e) an explanation of the way in which the certification body interpreted or took account of these comments in coming to a decision as to the supplier's compliance or non-compliance with the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard.

7 Reporting

- 7.1 The certification evaluation report shall include a record of any evidence of compliance or non-compliance with the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard.
- 7.2 The certification body shall not identify individual stakeholders or stakeholder groups in the report without their prior informed consent.
- 7.3 After six months of the completion of the certification field evaluation, the certification body shall make available to stakeholders information on whether a certificate was issued or not. In the event of a certificate being issued, the certification body shall inform the consulted stakeholders on how the concerns they raised were addressed.

8 Surveillance

- 8.1 The certification body shall complete stakeholder consultation as necessary during surveillance evaluation to comply with the requirements for sampling specified in *FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluation*.

Annex 1: Examples of stakeholder groups

The following list provides examples of some of the stakeholders that may need to be consulted to assess compliance with specific aspects of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard. This is not a complete list, nor is the certification body required to consult with all the stakeholders listed here if this is not required to verify the applicable indicators.

FSC Principle	Stakeholder groups typically consulted to evaluate compliance
Principle 1	State forest service, statutory bodies with some legal mandate over the FMU under evaluation, e.g. tax or legal departments
Principle 2	Representatives and members of communities directly affected by the forest management enterprise Representatives and members of Indigenous Peoples directly affected by the forest management enterprise
Principle 3	Representatives and members of Indigenous Peoples directly affected by the forest management enterprise
Principle 4	Employees, contractors and subcontractors and their representatives, Labour organisations or unions of forestry sector workers
Principle 5	Employees Representatives and members of communities directly affected by the forest management enterprise Representatives and members of Indigenous Peoples directly affected by the forest management enterprise
Principle 6	National NGOs that are involved or have an interest in respect of environmental aspects of forest management, either at the national level, or at the sub-national level in the environs of the forest to be evaluated;
Principle 7	Employees
Principle 8	Employees
Principle 9	National NGOs that are involved or have an interest in respect of social or environmental aspects of forest management, either at the national level, or at the sub-national level in the environs of the forest to be evaluated; Representatives and members of communities directly affected by the forest management enterprise Representatives and members of Indigenous Peoples directly affected by the forest management enterprise
Principle 10	Various