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LIST OF CORE FSC DOCUMENTS SUPPLIED WITH THE N. I. MANUAL

Forest Stewardship Council A.C. Statutes, October 1996. FSC Doc. 1.1
\Official Documents\FSC Principles and Criteria Jan99.doc
\FSC Logo\FSC Logo Policy Manual Jun99.doc
FSC Logo Guide for Certificate Holders [Hard copy available]
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Preface

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is growing every year. One element of this growth is the National Initiatives, made up of locally active supporters of FSC. As the FSC is a decentralised organisation, the National Initiatives play a fundamental part in the success of FSC internationally and in promoting the aims and activities of FSC.

This manual has been specially designed for National Initiatives, as part of the support offered by the FSC Secretariat. It aims to provide National Initiatives, or potential National Initiatives, with a single information source, within which is found all the basic information about FSC and National Initiatives. The manual is designed to replace a large number of separate short documents, prepared since 1995. Some of these documents are now repetitive and outdated. In the future, NI documents will be drafted as parts of this manual, rather than as separate numbered FSC documents.

The aims, activities and geographical spread of FSC necessitates that its organisational structures and procedures are complex. For FSC to maintain and increase its international recognition as a credible organisation working for world-wide sound forest management, these structures and procedures must be upheld. Of particular importance are: development of regional forest stewardship standards, the use of the FSC trademark, promoting forest certification, and raising the profile of FSC. This National Initiatives Manual is designed to explain these structures and procedures, as well as to give guidance on other topics.

The National Initiatives Manual will be issued as a ‘Controlled Document’ to the Contact Person or National Initiative Co-ordinator. A register of Manual Holders will be held by the Programmes Director. Copies will be available to others on request to the Secretariat. When updates are issued, the relevant pages will usually be sent by email to all holders of controlled copies. Each updated page will show the words “National Initiatives Manual” and the date of issue of the update at the foot of the page. The person to whom the controlled Manual is issued (the Manual Holder) is responsible for replacing the old pages with the new. The accompanying note will clarify which part of the manual the pages should be put into. Any changes in the person acting as Manual Holder should be sent in writing to the Programmes Director.

We hope that this Manual helps you in your work for FSC. We welcome any comments for improving the manual. If possible, reference your comment to the section in the manual and include a suggested alternative. Please send feedback to your Regional Co-ordinator at the FSC Secretariat.

The FSC programme is new, dynamic and evolving rapidly. These guidelines are not set in stone. They will be reviewed constantly and will be revised and extended in the light of experience, learning from mistakes and adapting to changing circumstances. The FSC National Initiatives programme is and will continue to be flexible and realistic, responding to and making room for different national and regional circumstances. However, it is also important to have a co-ordinated programme, to make sure that FSC’s policies, and the message conveyed by certification, accreditation and FSC’s logo, are harmonised world-wide. Therefore this manual will form part of all formal agreements made between FSC and its Contact Persons, Working Groups, National Offices and associates world-wide.

This manual will be revised regularly by the FSC Secretariat, after discussion and agreement with National Initiatives, as one part of the Secretariat’s co-ordinating role.
Notes on drafting

This manual was developed by a consultant, Irene Evison, between March and August 1998 at the request of the Executive Director.

The drafts prepared prior to this first edition were reviewed and revised by FSC staff, as they were completed, section by section.

The first complete manual was ready in July and is now being submitted to a wider audience, including FSC Board members, national initiatives, certification bodies and many others.

This is the First Secretariat Edition of the National Initiatives Manual. It will be under constant review. Should you have any comments, please send them together with any suggestions for improvement, to your Regional National Initiatives Co-ordinator at the FSC Secretariat.

This edition will be reviewed at the 14th FSC Board meeting in Oaxaca in September 1998, and at the 1st FSC Annual Conference in November 1999, before final revision and adoption.

Updates of sections will be sent to National Initiatives when necessary, according to the procedures outlined in the Preface.

*   *   *
Example of update form

Each time that an item in this Manual needs updating or a new item is to be added or a section is to be taken out, the Secretariat will send all Manual Holders the updated sheets together with a form showing which part of the Manual is to be updated.

This is an example of what Manual Holders will receive.

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**IMPORTANT**

- Notify the Programmes Director as soon as the Manual Holder or contact details change.
Source documents used in preparing National Initiatives Manual

The following documents have been used in compiling this manual. Documents published by FSC can be ordered from the FSC Secretariat. A list of core FSC documents is included at the back of this manual. Many of these documents will now be replaced by this manual.

Statutes of the FSC, August 1994 (FSC document 1.1)

FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship, October 1996 note: formerly called the ‘FSC Principles and Criteria for Natural Forest Management’ (FSC document 1.2)

FSC Accreditation Manual, January 1998 (FSC document 3.1)

FSC Logo Guide, August 1997 (FSC document 3.5.1);

FSC Guidelines for Certification Bodies, January 1998 (FSC document 3.6);

FSC Process Guidelines for Developing Regional Certification Standards, February 1998 (FSC document 4.2)

FSC Technical Guidelines for the Development of Regional Standards, February 1998 (FSC document 4.5.9)

FSC Guidelines for Developing FSC Regional Forest Stewardship Standards (DRAFT) (FSC document 4.5.8)


FSC Board Decision on Percentage-Based Claims, October 1997 (FSC document 3.6.3)

Guide for Applications for Membership of the Forest Stewardship Council, March 1997 (FSC document 5.2.1)

Scrase, H (July, 1997) Briefing Note: Identifying Stakeholders

Scrase, H (April, 1996) Revised Proposal for Election for FSC UK Working Groups

Aryal, D. (January 1997) Status of National and Regional Certification Initiatives


FSC National Office Agreement

FSC Working Group Agreement

FSC Contact Persons Agreement


FSC Notes, Issue 7, February/March 1998


*     *     *
PART 1:

The Structure of FSC
CHAPTER 1

FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL A.C.

1.1 Forest Stewardship Council

FSC is an association of voting members, who may be individuals or organisations. FSC has been formed with the aim of promoting environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world’s forests. FSC is a Civil Association (Asociacion Civil), registered in Mexico.

1.2 Members

FSC membership is open to organisations and individuals who are supporters of FSC’s work. Membership of FSC entitles the individuals or organisations to full involvement in FSC.

On joining, members are assigned to one of three chambers, according to

1. Their primary area of interest:

   • The economic chamber is for those with a commercial interest in forestry and forest products, e.g. producers, certification bodies, forest owners, dealers, retailers, manufactures, consulting companies;

   • The environmental and is limited to non-profit, non-governmental organisations and individuals dedicated to biodiversity and environmental conservation or studies, with a demonstrable commitment to environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest stewardship;

   • The social chamber is for indigenous organisations and social movements and individuals involved in such organisations which are active in the promotion of environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management.

2. Their country of origin: North or South. Within FSC, these terms are defined in line with United Nations criteria.

   • Northern refers to those based in High Income countries, which is (1996) Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

   • Southern refers to those based in Low, Middle and Upper Middle Income countries.

The FSC Statutes describe the criteria for membership in more detail. Members will
usually be assigned to a country according to nationality or passport, but they may be approved for their country of residence, if they so request.

See Chapter 9, Section 9.1 for information on the FSC membership application process and membership requirements. See Chapter 6, Section 6.1 for information on National Initiative membership.

1.3 The General Assembly

Current Two-Chamber System
The highest authority of FSC is the General Assembly of members. The term ‘General Assembly’ refers to the collective membership and also to particular meetings open to all the membership.

The role of the General Assembly is to make decisions about revising the Statutes and Principles and Criteria, to admit and destitute (withdraw) members, to elect members of the Board of Directors and to be the final authority in the dispute resolution process. It delegates operational activities and most decision-making to the Board.

The General Assembly is made up of two chambers:
1) Economic;
2) Environmental and Social.

The social and environmental chamber originally held 75% of the voting power and the economic chamber held 25%. This was so that a balance of voting power between the different interests was maintained.

Future Three-Chamber System
With the growth and development of FSC, certain changes were approved by the members (at the First General Assembly, June 1996). These will take effect as soon as there are at least 15 member organisations in the north and south categories for each of the environmental, social and economic interests. The aim is to ensure that at no time do a few individuals or organisations have unreasonably high voting weights.

The social and environmental chamber will be split into separate components, so that there are three chambers. Each chamber will hold equal voting weight, i.e. one-third. Within each chamber, the voting weight of individuals will be limited to 10% of the chamber’s total weight. Within each chamber, the total voting weight is divided equally between northern members (high income countries) and southern members.

As yet, the threshold levels have not been reached and so the final structure has not been adopted. However, an interim structure is in place, by which the social and environmental chamber remains as one, but with a reduced two-thirds of the vote, and the economic chamber now holds one-third of the vote.

Ordinary General Assemblies must be held at intervals of not more than three years, as convened by the Board. The first Ordinary General Assembly was held in Oaxaca in June 1996. An Extraordinary General Assembly may be called at the request of the Board, or by one third of the members of each chamber.

1.4 Board Of Directors

The direction of the FSC as a whole is overseen by the Board of Directors, which
consists of nine elected members representing the environment, economic and social chambers from Northern and Southern countries. The regulations governing the Board’s exact composition (which reflects the membership structure) are outlined in the *FSC Statutes*. Much of the Board’s operational and management work is done through sub-committees, which are set up and disbanded as necessary.

Board meetings are held two or three times a year. FSC members may propose agenda items for Board meetings by submitting them in writing six weeks before each meeting.

The role of the Board of Directors is indicated in the statutes.

(A more detailed description will be prepared.)

**1.5 The Secretariat**

The FSC Secretariat, headed by the Executive Director as Chief Executive, is the means by which the FSC is guided and supported internationally on a day-to-day basis. The Executive Director is responsible for the finances, accounting and administration of the FSC and for ensuring that the legal requirements for business are met in all countries where FSC is operating, and for implementing FSC programmes, policy and board decisions.
CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

2.1 Introduction to National Initiatives

The role of National Initiatives is described briefly in the FSC Statutes of 1994. Since they were written, the activities of National Initiatives have expanded and developed rapidly world-wide.

The achievements of National Initiatives have played a major part in the development of regional forest stewardship standards and public awareness of FSC and forest certification in general.

The roles, rights and responsibilities of National Initiatives have been clarified in a steadily increasing collection of documents including the FSC Agreements and the FSC strategic planning project of 1998. The National Initiatives documents developed since the foundation of FSC are brought together within this National Initiatives Manual. All previous National Initiative documents should be ignored, as they are superseded by this Manual. Copies of the National Initiatives Agreements are held in Appendices 1 - 3.

The roles of the National Initiatives are continuing to expand and strengthen, and now, with a clearer emphasis on decentralisation, these roles are being formalised and institutionalised. The role of the FSC Secretariat is to co-ordinate the programme.

FSC has recognised Contact Persons in several countries. In mid-1998, these countries are Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Mexico, Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and USA. Contact details of all FSC Contact Persons are available from the FSC Secretariat and from FSC A.C.’s homepage on the Internet.

So far, the growth of National Initiatives has been an organic process, where individuals and organisations in a country have become interested in FSC’s mission and activities and have then made the effort to institutionalise this interest at their local level. This process has included gaining FSC membership and forming some sort of group. It is this group that has become known as a National Initiative. The National Initiative may be an independent body or a separate part of an existing organisation. The National Initiative grows in line with its activities and resources.

FSC aims to include as many stakeholders as possible in the development process of National Initiatives. Growth of National Initiative structures strengthens FSC in the achievement of its mission, spreads the workload and encourages the participation of a broad spread of members in the development of FSC and its activities.

The Statutes of 1994 describe four types or stages of National Initiative:

1) FSC Contact Person
2) FSC Working Group
3) FSC Advisory Board
4) FSC National/Regional Office.
The establishment of each stage should develop in a step-by-step process, culminating in a national/regional office, where appropriate. These stages can be thought of as a progression upwards, where each step involves a greater degree of commitment, responsibility and activity. Accordingly, the requirements for endorsement become more rigorous.

At each stage, the National Initiative may hold “interim” status, while it prepares for formal endorsement. This means that it is working to achieve a particular stage of National Initiative e.g. Working Group, but has not yet been endorsed by FSC. See also Chapter 6, Section 6.2 for more information about interim status.

National Initiatives are strongly encouraged to seek formal endorsement at the earliest opportunity.

The nature of the relationship between the National Initiative and FSC A.C. is determined by the type of Agreement signed by the parties. The Agreements outline the requirements and rights of the particular type of National Initiative.

See Chapter 3, Section 3.2 for more details about National Initiative Agreements. Copies of each type of FSC Agreement can be found in Appendices 1 - 3.

2.2 Aim And Role Of National Initiatives

2.2.1 The Aim of National Initiatives

National initiatives are FSC’s way of decentralising many of its activities to a local/regional base, in order to
• aid the local/regional promotion of FSC and its aims;
• make FSC more accessible and more locally appropriate;
• encourage further local participation;
• develop and test regional forest stewardship standards;
• work effectively with its international membership; and
• support successful implementation and monitoring of certification activities.

With the expected rapid growth of certification activities around the world, FSC needs to be increasingly active, especially in countries where there are certified forests, larger markets for certified wood products, and active non-governmental and governmental interest. This is reflected in FSC’s adoption of ‘focus countries’ within its annual business plan. The up-to-date list of focus countries is available from the FSC Secretariat.

2.2.2 The Role of National Initiatives

National Initiatives have a very active role to play in the mission and activities of FSC. National Initiatives work in three equally important ways:
• in supporting FSC A.C., certification bodies and the members;
• as being the primary motivating and co-ordinating body at the local level for particular FSC activities, such as promotion of certification, and publicity and information programmes; and
• development of national/regional standards.
The types of general activities expected of National Initiatives, as well as activities particular to a single type of National Initiative, are outlined below. For each type of National Initiative, the selection criteria are outlined. See Parts Three and Four for more details on National Initiative activities.

2.2.3 General National Initiative Activities

The following is a summary of some of the requirements for National Initiatives. Please see the Associate Agreement and the Contact Person Agreement for the exact legal requirements.

**Information distribution:**
The National Initiative is responsible for the distribution of FSC information to FSC members in its country and other national stakeholders. This information will include ‘FSC Notes’, FSC documents, discussion papers and press releases, as well as information about certified forests and their products. This responsibility may be supplemented by writing articles and informing the media. National Initiatives should consult with their Regional Co-ordinator at the FSC Secretariat about how widely information needs to be distributed.

**Updating the FSC Secretariat:**
The National Initiative is responsible for quarterly updates to the FSC Secretariat about progress in its region. If the concerns are urgent, the FSC Secretariat should be notified at the earliest opportunity.

**Local fund-raising:**
The National Initiative is in principle responsible for raising the funds needed for the operation and execution of its activities in its region. See Chapter 15 for details about fund-raising.

**Provision of local perspective in policy development:**
The National Initiative should be actively involved in policy dialogue and consultative processes to develop policies and regional forest stewardship standards in its region. This may require a proactive approach to initiate policy dialogue with national stakeholders, and the FSC Secretariat and preparation of discussion papers.

**Educational activities:**
Staff or other representatives of the National Initiative may represent FSC A.C. in seminars, conferences or any other training event, when requested by the FSC Secretariat, the FSC Board or other interested organisations. See Chapter 16 for more information.

**Protection of the FSC name and logo:**
An individual within the National Initiative is the de facto Nominated Agent for the FSC trademark (unless delegated to someone else). This gives the National Initiative the responsibility of monitoring the use of the FSC name and logo in its region. They should inform the Secretariat promptly regarding any suspected incidents of misuse of the trademark. See Chapter 10 for more information about the National Initiative’s role in relation to the FSC trademark.

**Membership management:**
Although membership applications are processed by the Secretariat, National Initiatives should provide an effective support to the system. National Initiatives
will often be the first point of contact for a potential membership applicant. They should be able to provide applicants with the correct application form and be ready to give advice on making their application.

Trouble spotting:
The National Initiative should notify the Secretariat and the relevant certification bodies (when appropriate) about any problems, issues and concerns relating to certification and the FSC programme. The National Initiative should report problems to the Secretariat before they become serious. This requires maintaining good contacts with stakeholders and the Secretariat, and keeping an eye on the local media and other sources of information.

Certification consultations:
Certification bodies are required to consult with the FSC National Initiative as part of various elements of their work. The National Initiative is expected to respond promptly and constructively. See Chapter 8, Section 8.4 for more information. The FSC Secretariat is required to consult with the FSC National Initiative at several stages of its accreditation evaluations and monitoring. The National Initiative is expected to respond promptly and constructively.

2.3 Contact Person Role

Promoting and initiating FSC National Initiative Working Groups:
A Contact Person is responsible for promoting and initiating the establishment of an FSC Working Group in her or his region. This may involve providing advice, providing information on identifying stakeholders, conducting consultations, carrying out case studies or other research exercises. The Contact Person may then become the Co-ordinator of the Working Group. FSC realises that a National Initiative creates more work than a Contact Person can often do on her or his own. The progression towards Working Group status enables the Contact Person to develop the scope and achievements of her or his National Initiative.

Stakeholder identification:
A Contact Person should identify stakeholders and keep them and the FSC Secretariat informed about certification activities, latest developments in National Initiatives, concerns, policies etc. The Contact Person should provide the secretariat and certification bodies with details of stakeholders, subject to relevant legislation regarding privacy or data protection, recommended for consultations during certification and accreditation evaluations and monitoring, as deemed appropriate.

Promotion of certification as a tool to encourage sound forest management and promotion of information about FSC products:
A Contact Person should start the process of promoting the idea of forest certification and its benefits to in-country stakeholders, as well as promoting information about FSC products.

2.4 Working Group Role

Facilitation of consultative processes:
FSC Working Groups are encouraged to conduct consultative processes on certification, chain of custody and other FSC-related issues. Working Groups should also facilitate the development of regional forest stewardship standards.
Forum for debate:
Through workshops, conferences and other promotional activities. The Working Group should continue to raise awareness about forest certification in general and FSC in particular.

2.5 FSC Advisory Board Role

Local accreditation decisions:
The Advisory Board is expected to make substantial and critical input into any local accreditation decisions.

2.6 National Office

2.6.1 National Office Role

Co-ordination and implementation of FSC activities:
The FSC National Office should co-ordinate and implement national FSC activities, including training and education regarding certification and forest management.

Accreditation:
National Offices may be requested by FSC A.C. to submit local accreditation recommendations to FSC.

Dispute resolution:
The National Office is expected to provide a national mechanism for dispute resolution.

CHAPTER 3
INTEGRATION AND CO-ORDINATION OF FSC A.C. AND NATIONAL
INITIATIVES

3.1 Co-ordination and Communication

The functioning of each National Initiative and its relation to other National Initiatives and to the international membership, Board of Directors and Secretariat, is crucial for the success of FSC. The Secretariat has the responsibility for co-ordination.

Several mechanisms already exist within FSC for co-ordinating and communicating within and between National Initiatives and FSC A.C.; others are being developed. Examples of those already in place are FSC Annual Conferences and participation of FSC National Initiative representatives in FSC meetings held in their territory.

As a decentralised body, it is vital to maintain good communication between members, the National Initiatives, the Secretariat and the Board.

The National Initiatives have responsibilities to communicate with the Secretariat, other National Initiatives, FSC members and certification bodies and other stakeholders in their territories.

3.1.1 Internal communication

Internal communication refers to communication within FSC – between the Secretariat and National Initiatives, between National Initiatives, between National Initiatives and members, between the Secretariat and members, etc.

The FSC Secretariat expects certain information to be submitted to the Regional National Initiatives Co-ordinators at the Secretariat on a regular basis.

All National Initiatives are responsible for keeping the FSC Secretariat informed of progress. National Initiatives are strongly encouraged to send quarterly progress reports, contribute articles to FSC newsletters and updates, highlight key issues and current certification initiatives, and provide all relevant documents, minutes, and published materials to the FSC Secretariat.

In more detail, National Initiatives should submit the following documents to the Secretariat:

- Quarterly and annual progress reports;
- Annual accounts;
- Annual work plan;
- Minutes of formal national initiatives meetings;
- Copies of national promotional literature;
- National/Regional newsletters; and
- Information on fund-raising approaches that might impact on applications from other National Initiatives or FSC Secretariat, e.g. applications to the European Union, or to international foundations.

In return, the FSC Secretariat undertakes to provide certain information to National Initiatives:

- Board meeting minutes;
- Notification of international meetings;
• Internal discussion documents;
• Annual report;
• Annual accounts;
• General Assembly minutes;
• Reports or minutes of working groups, workshops and committees; and
• Copies of international promotional literature, including FSC Notes.

Informal contact is also encouraged between National Initiatives. This is important in order to keep up-to-date with progress, to learn from each another, and to support one another.

The Contact Person or Working Group Co-ordinator is the focal contact point for in-country members, particularly those on working groups or committees. The National Initiative representative should ensure that his or her contact details (address, telephone, fax, email) are given to each member and updated promptly when necessary. Should you plan to be out of contact for any length of time (e.g. on holiday), make sure that you have made arrangements for your absence.

It is important to maintain an up-to-date list of in-country members, with their contact details. The FSC Secretariat keeps a complete membership list. The Contact Person should circulate this to members to facilitate internal communication, in accordance with members’ requirements for privacy of address details as noted on their application forms.

Note, the national initiative will need to ensure that those members without email are not excluded from communications. FSC may help future contact persons obtain email service, subject to available resources.

3.1.2 External communication

External communication refers to communication with individuals or organisations that are not a part of FSC. Communication in terms of promotion of the FSC is discussed in Chapter 14. Communication in terms of speaking on behalf on FSC is discussed in Chapter 13.

The Contact Person or Working Group Co-ordinator is the in-country focal point for people outside FSC to get in touch with the organisation. In this capacity, he or she should be able to explain the aims and activities of the FSC clearly and concisely. He or she should also be prepared to assist with responding to external queries, within realistic time constraints. In particular, requests for information or other assistance may be time-consuming and should be prioritised in relation to other work pending. Some National Initiatives set targets for responding to queries, such as three days to answer straightforward requests for information.

Beyond this, the National Initiatives are responsible for the timely distribution of FSC information to other national stakeholders. This information will include the FSC newsletter ‘FSC Notes’, documents, discussion papers and press releases, as well as information about certified forests and their products. This may be supplemented by writing articles and informing the media. National Initiative representatives should consult the FSC Secretariat to assess how widely information needs to be distributed.

National Initiatives can expect a certain level of support from the Secretariat. This includes:
• Provision of basic promotional literature;
• Prompt and efficient replies to queries; and
• Provision of up-to-date copies of FSC documents and other information, such as
  lists of certified forests.

**IMPORTANT**

- Submit copies of all the following documentation to the Secretariat:
  - Quarterly and annual progress reports;
  - Annual accounts;
  - Annual work plan;
  - Minutes of formal national initiative meetings;
  - Copies of national promotional literature;
  - National/Regional newsletters;
  - Information on fund-raising approaches that might impact on applications from
    other National Initiatives or FSC Secretariat, e.g. applications to the European
    Union, or to international foundations.
- Keep up-to-date records of in-country members.
- Make sure that Contact Person or National Initiative Co-ordinator contact details
  are kept up-to-date and distributed to all in-country members.
- Distribute all information – ‘FSC Notes’, update lists of certified forests, etc. –
  promptly.
- Give timely and accurate responses to all queries.

### 3.2 National Initiative Agreements

Each endorsed FSC National Initiative must sign a formal and legally binding
agreement with FSC, which confirms the relationship between the two bodies.

It is very important that FSC is able to maintain its integrity and to protect the credibility
of its mission, activities and trademark. The agreements are one mechanism for
protecting this, by clarifying the rights and responsibilities of both parties, particularly in
relation to representation of FSC and the aims of FSC.

There are three types of National Initiative Agreement:
1) Contact Person’s Agreement;
2) Associate Agreement, or Working Group Agreement; and
3) National Office Agreement.

The latest versions are in Appendices 1 - 3. The main elements of each type of
Agreement are summarised in Table 1.

To date, there are no Advisory Board level National Initiatives, and so there is not an
Advisory Board Agreement. One may be drafted in the future should the need arise.

3.2.1 Contact Persons Agreement

A Contact Persons Agreement is signed with a single person. In legal terms, the Contact Person is technically a ‘branch’ of FSC A.C. as an individual person, who represents FSC for the purposes covered in the FSC Contact Persons Agreement.

3.2.2 Associate/ Working Group Agreements

Associate Agreements are signed with an entity that represents the Working Group. The Working Group maintains independence from FSC and has its own separate identity, but agrees on the respective missions and purposes. The Working Group is a distinct legal entity, not a ‘branch’ of FSC A.C.

Under the terms of the Working Group Agreement, the Working Group has a dual role. Firstly, it represents its own members of Board, or other people or organisations in its own territory, for the purposes covered in its own statutes and bylaws. Secondly, it has a representation role and forms part of the international FSC network for the purposes covered in the Agreement.

The FSC Agreement will remain valid, even after changes in the composition of the Working Group originally endorsed by FSC, provided that due process has been followed. The FSC National Initiative is the legal entity, with its office holders and staff, rather than the individuals named in the original application for endorsement. The procedures governing internal changes must be covered by the National Initiative’s own statutes or by-laws.

3.2.3 Main/National Office Agreements

Main Agreements are signed with entities recognised as an FSC Regional Office. Through a Main Agreement, the entity is formally recognised as an FSC national organisation.

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**DIAGRAM 1 – SUMMARY OF NATIONAL INITIATIVE AGREEMENTS** (see Appendix for full documents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTACT PERSONS AGREEMENT</th>
<th>WORKING GROUP AGREEMENT</th>
<th>NATIONAL OFFICE AGREEMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• For 1 person</td>
<td>• For a group or legal entity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formally recognises a person’s agreement to act as a Contact Person</td>
<td>• Recognises shared objectives for forestry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contact Person is not employed by FSC and</td>
<td>• National Initiative remains independent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• National Initiative and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a legal entity

For a legal entity

Formally recognises the National Initiative as an FSC national organisation

Recognises National Initiative authority to use
remains independent
• FSC name and logo and title “FSC Contact Person for (the territory)” may be used alongside the person’s own details on letterheads and card
• Agreement may be terminated at 1 month’s notice by either side

FSC remain financially self-sufficient
• National Initiative is identified by its own name and logo, with the right to write “Associated with FSC”
• FSC and National Initiative will support each other with institutional support, including training and general management
• The National Initiative represents FSC on forestry matters in the territory only by separate contract
• Requires exchange of procedural information, e.g. members lists
• Of fixed duration
• Open to termination by either party at 3 months’ notice

the name, initials and logo of FSC (in accordance with the terms of the Licensing Agreement)
• Details the obligations of FSC and the National Initiative towards each other, including services, structures and policies
• Runs indefinitely, with conditions for both parties regarding termination

3.3 FSC Meetings

There are a number of ways that the membership and staff of FSC get together to discuss issues, to vote and to carry out the activities that are the purpose of FSC.

General Assemblies: Ordinary General Assemblies will be held at regular intervals of not more than three years – the first was in June 1996 in Oaxaca, Mexico. Extraordinary General Assemblies may be convened at the request of the Board or of one-third of the members of each chamber. Postal ballots are held to allow members to vote, but without the need to meet. These will be held when deemed necessary by the Board to get decisions on a particular issue, such as changes of the Statutes, and also annually in order to elect Board members.

Working Groups and Committees: As required, committees, workshops and technical committees representing a variety of membership interests are established. They are formed to discuss and report back with recommendations for policy development to the Board of Directors or Secretariat. Those currently in action include Principle 9, Non-Timber Forest Products and Percentage based claims, as well as board committees. Some technical committees meet in person; others use an email forum. Each technical committee will have a co-ordinator or convenor, often a Board member. Information about a particular technical committee can be obtained from the Secretariat. Any member of FSC may propose the establishment of a technical committee, but only the Board or E.D. can authorise an official FSC technical committee and its terms of reference.

Annual Conferences: FSC will also hold annual conferences of key stakeholders.
These will include endorsed FSC National Initiatives, accredited certification bodies, the board staff and other invitees. They will meet to promote better communication within and between the major institutional groups of FSC stakeholders, and provide input on policies and issues.

Other meetings are convened when deemed necessary by the Board or E.D. to discuss particular issues. One recent example is the October 1997 FSC National Initiatives Meeting, which allowed participants to discuss National Initiative issues such as the harmonisation of standards and to give input to the strategic planning process from the National Initiative point of view.

FSC Board Meetings: These are held two or three times a year. They typically alternate between Oaxaca and other countries, responding to offers and invitations from national initiatives. The FSC Contact Person, or other representative of the FSC NI, is typically invited to participate in these meetings, in a non-voting capacity, to promote better communication and understanding.
PART 2:

Setting up a National Initiative
CHAPTER 4
HOST COUNTRY REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Organisational Status

Within each country, the National Initiative must meet any statutory obligations for the establishment and operation of a non-governmental organisation.

4.1.1 In-country legal requirements

Each National Initiative has a responsibility to ensure that it satisfies the legal requirements of its country. The FSC Executive Director is required by FSC Statutes to ensure that this responsibility is fulfilled.

Each country has its own requirements governing the establishment of organisations. These requirements will depend on the organisational basis of the National Initiative, i.e. whether it is an independent body or is hosted by an existing organisation. If hosted by another organisation, the National Initiative’s legal requirements may be covered by the organisational structures of its host.

National Initiatives may need to establish themselves as separate legal entities, especially for fund-raising purposes, if they are not based within an existing organisation. This is the case for some FSC Working Groups. All FSC National Offices must establish themselves as separate legal entities.

The Contact Person will need to find out the precise requirements for formal establishment of the National Initiative as a legal entity within her or his country. This information may be available from existing NGOs or an NGO umbrella body. Likely requirements include constitution or statutes and accounting procedures. These elements of the National Initiative will be needed by the FSC Secretariat to satisfy FSC’s institutional requirements. Extra work may be required to carry out any national registration procedures and to meet any recording and information requirements.

The Contact Person should select a lawyer and an accountant to act for the National Initiative as and when required, e.g. in preparing annual accounts. It is best to use those who are familiar with the needs of the small-scale NGO sector.

4.1.2 The Constitution or Statutes

The constitution or statutes describe the organisation’s aims and operational structure. It includes financial procedures and administrative officers. The exact nature of the constitution will be determined by the law of the country. Likely signatories would be the Contact Person, in-country FSC members or NI board members.

4.1.3 Financial procedures
The National Initiative should establish procedures to produce accounts as required for external auditing. The accounts will also be needed for internal FSC auditing and reporting.

4.1.4 Insurance

National Initiatives that are independent from a host organisation may need to take out insurance to cover themselves against legal action, loss or damage. These could include Public Liability, Employer’s Liability, Directors’ Liability and Contents and Building Insurance.

IMPORTANT

- The National Initiative must satisfy the legal requirements of its host country, in relation to its organisational status and its financial procedures. If hosted by an existing organisation, check to what extent the National Initiative is covered by the host organisation’s status. If a separate legal entity, find out exactly what is required.
- Identify a suitable accountant and lawyer.
- Establish appropriate and transparent financial procedures.
- Check on insurance requirements.
CHAPTER 5

NATIONAL INITIATIVE INTERNAL STRUCTURES

5.1 National Initiative Structure

The National Initiative chooses its own framework, depending on local circumstances. Examples of frameworks currently in use are shown below.

Through an appropriate internal structure, the National Initiative should aim to
- Optimise the skills and resources available;
- Spread the workload;
- Concentrate efforts on particular areas, as the need is identified; and
- Simplify communication between the National Initiative and FSC.

Subcommittees should work to agreed Terms of Reference, which should include
- The aims and objectives of the group; and
- The operating structure of the committee, including named officers and their roles, reporting structure, meeting frequency, membership.

5.2 Terms and Conditions

The terms and conditions under which FSC members or other stakeholders work within the National Initiative should be made clear to all participants. Generally, FSC members and committee members work on a voluntary basis, although their expenses should be met where necessary.

The National Initiative may take on local staff members. Each staff member should sign an appropriate contract, detailing her or his terms and conditions.

5.3 Transparency

In order for FSC as a whole to maintain its credibility and transparency, the organisation and its National Initiatives must act in an open and participatory fashion. Stakeholders who do not wish to become FSC members should be given the opportunity to attend National Initiative meetings and subcommittees as observers and to comment on drafts and documents, with the proviso that they do not undermine or block progress.

5.4 Grievance procedures
Procedures must exist within the National Initiative for complaints of FSC members or stakeholders to be properly considered. These should be established as soon as possible, to cover National Initiative procedures and regional forest stewardship standards development. The model for this should be the system used by FSC, as described in the FSC Dispute Resolution Protocol and in the FSC Statutes Paragraphs. 73-76. See also Chapter 11 for more information on FSC A.C. dispute resolution procedures. Informal procedures should be followed whenever possible.

At the minimum, a dispute resolution committee should be established from the national FSC membership, including a balance of economic, social and environmental representatives. Procedures relating to lodging a grievance should be clearly set out in a document available to all in-country FSC members. Note, proper grievance procedures are a requisite for a National Initiative to be endorsed by FSC.

### 5.5 Decision-making

The way in which decisions are made within a National Initiative should be decided by the National Initiative members. However, consideration should be given to the FSC three-chamber and voting system.

FSC recommends that all National Initiatives take decisions through consensus. A consensus decision may be reached when no party involved has registered a persistent or serious objection, i.e. all parties are willing to live with the decision.

When disagreements exist, issues should be put to a vote. If a vote is taken, a two-thirds majority should be required for a decision (rather than a simple majority). National Initiatives may choose to limit the voting to FSC members. All FSC Working Groups and Advisory Boards may include non-members of FSC as full participants or as observers.

### 5.6 Use of consultants

On occasion, it may be appropriate to commission a consultant to undertake work on behalf of the National Initiative. This may be needed

- Because Group members are unable to give the time necessary to get the job done;
- To provide additional expertise; or
- To add credibility to the National Initiative’s work.

As with the subcommittees, consultants should work to mutually agreed, detailed Terms of Reference. Where a consultant is considered necessary, the commissioning committee will be the lead body in securing the funding required. This could be with the support of the FSC Secretariat and/or the Contact Person.
In the case of the UK Working Group, its participants elected a Steering Group. The Working Group Co-ordinator, the former Contact Person, runs the Working Group on a day-to-day basis with the guidance of the Steering Group. The Working Group members decided to form sub-groups to work on regional forest stewardship standards and promotion. The chair of each sub-group sits on the Steering Group.
## Diagram 4 - Matrix of National and Regional Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Specific Role and Activities</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FSC Contact Person</td>
<td>The first stage of an FSC National Initiative.</td>
<td>Dissemination of information about FSC and its mission. Works towards the production of regional forest stewardship standards. Provides advice on and help to facilitate the formation of FSC working groups. Provide information to FSC regarding current certification initiatives. Identification of stakeholders.</td>
<td>An individual member of the FSC or a duly designated delegate of a member organisation. Ability to bring various stakeholder groups together, with links to other networks. Competent in a relevant field, credible to stakeholders, and supported by in-country FSC members. No vested interest in certification decision; no exclusive relationship with any one certification body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSC Working Group</td>
<td>A financially independent group, comprising a majority of FSC members, which acts on behalf of FSC A.C. to promote FSC's mission and activities. The composition of the Group should mirror that of the FSC Board of Directors, i.e. with a balance of economic, environmental and social interests.</td>
<td>Facilitate the development of forest management standards.</td>
<td>Working group must have a balanced composition, similar to the FSC. Must remain transparent and participatory, with clear grievance procedures. A majority of the working group members must be FSC members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSC Advisory Board</td>
<td>A financially independent, elected group, comprising a majority of FSC members, which acts on behalf of FSC A.C. to promote FSC’s mission and activities. The composition of the Board should mirror that of the FSC Board of Directors, i.e. with a balance of economic, environmental and social interests.</td>
<td>Continue to facilitate development of regional forest stewardship standards. Provide critical input into local accreditation decisions.</td>
<td>Advisory Boards must be selected through consensus and/or democratic decision-making procedures. The composition of the Advisory Board must be similar in balance to the FSC Board of Directors. A majority of Advisory Board members must be FSC members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSC National or Regional Office</td>
<td>A legal entity, including an elected Board of Directors, which works as a branch of FSC A.C. to promote and carry out FSC’s mission and activities. The composition of the Board of Directors should mirror that of the FSC Board of Directors, i.e. with a balance of economic, environmental and social interests.</td>
<td>Co-ordinate and implement national FSC initiatives and activities, including training and education. Provide an opinion and recommendation on local accreditation decision to FSC. Provide a national mechanism for dispute resolution.</td>
<td>An FSC National Office must have a formally elected Board of Directors, with a composition of interest similar to the FSC. The operational procedures and statutes must be similar to FSC A.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMPORTANT

- Ensure that the National Initiative operates in a transparent fashion.
- Establish a formal decision-making process for the National Initiative, preferably based on consensus, with a back-up voting system.
- Where FSC members or other stakeholders participate in National Initiative sub-committees, make the terms and conditions clear to them.
- Establish grievance procedures to cover National Initiative activities.
CHAPTER 6

FSC A.C. REQUIREMENTS

6.1 National Initiative Membership

See Chapter 9 for information about membership of FSC A.C.

Membership of a National Initiative and its committees (if any) is open to all stakeholders, although the majority must be members of FSC. Working Groups, Advisory Boards and National Offices must have a composition similar in balance to that of the FSC Board of Directors. This means that social, economic and environmental interests must all be represented in approximately equal proportions. Other balances are desirable, including gender and local areas.

Members of the National Initiative need to agree on a process of election of members. This is for two reasons:
1) To maintain and encourage transparency; and
2) To comply with requirements for an FSC Advisory Board and National Office (for which formal election is compulsory, under Paragraph 72c of FSC Statutes 1994).

It is the responsibility of the National Initiative to develop a suitable election process, taking into consideration
• Who is eligible to stand for membership of the Working Group;
• Structure of the voting chambers;
• Who is eligible to vote;
• Length of term; and
• Whether all or any of the subcommittees should be elected bodies.

Government representatives may participate in technical subcommittees and national Working Groups, but may not be appointed or elected to serve on FSC Advisory Boards or on the staff or boards of National or Regional Offices (but see section 4.2.4).

IMPORTANT

❖ Establish an election process for Working Group membership, including eligibility to stand, eligibility to vote, structure of the voting chambers, and length of term.
6.2 Interim National Initiative Status

National Initiatives usually establish themselves and operate for some time before achieving endorsement by the FSC Board of Directors.

When appropriate, the FSC E.D. will provide technical and financial support to individuals, NGOs and other national initiatives that are not endorsed by FSC. The purpose will be to promote consultations and other activities leading in due course to an endorsed FSC National Initiative. For fund-raising purposes, the E.D. will sign letters of support, on behalf of FSC, endorsing funding proposals for activities that support FSC’s objectives. In these cases, FSC will recognise the existence of an interim national initiative.

This has several benefits:

• Putting forward the ‘manpower’ with which FSC can further the development of regional forest stewardship standards, and certification in general;
• Spreading the net of knowledge and promotion potential about FSC;
• Increasing access to funding sources; and
• Providing a mechanism for transparent and participatory development of FSC and its activities. As an interim body, it is not subject to the regulations governing an endorsed National Initiative, and therefore has a level of flexibility which allows it the space to bring on a representative and truly committed membership over time. However, the aim should be to gain endorsement at the earliest opportunity.

Such an interim group should not use FSC’s name or other trademarks in its name, stationary or other materials claiming they are associated with FSC.

6.3 Endorsement of a National Initiative

FSC recognises that early activities for FSC may be made on an informal or interim basis. However, FSC strongly encourages the National Initiatives to seek formal FSC endorsement as soon as possible. The reason for endorsement is to ensure that FSC requirements for National Initiatives are adhered to, and to ensure that National Initiative applications are made within a consistent and fair framework.

The endorsement of the other types of National Initiatives is subject to due process. If the Initiative meets all requirements, the FSC Secretariat will submit its recommendations to the Board of Directors, which makes all formal FSC endorsement decisions.

The endorsement of all types of National Initiatives is subject to signing the appropriate FSC Agreement, which specifies the National Initiative’s rights and responsibilities. Normally the Board will not take this decision until the National Initiative representative has signed the Agreement, or confirmed in writing the readiness to sign it. FSC reserves the right to withdraw recognition from a National Initiative if the terms of this agreement are not respected.

6.4 Application and Evaluation Procedures
6.4.1 FSC Contact Person

The first stage of an FSC National Initiative is the selection and endorsement of a Contact Person.

Candidates for endorsement may be proposed by
- an interim national Working Group, which may or may not have a balanced representation of major stakeholder groups;
- an endorsed Working Group – this is most likely to be the case when an existing Contact Person withdraws from her or his post;
- a group of local FSC members;
- a group of local stakeholders;
- the candidate; or
- the FSC E.D.

This may occur when
- there are several FSC members in the country;
- there is an active interest in developing standards and promoting certification within the FSC framework;
- there are several candidates for certification; or
- the FSC Secretariat’s links reach such a size that a more streamlined communication system is needed.

When a candidate is proposed by the Secretariat, the Secretariat will liaise with any national FSC members to ensure their agreement with the proposal.

The application to become an FSC Contact Person should be sent to the FSC Secretariat and should include
- an application letter explaining a strong commitment to FSC and how he or she fulfils the requirements to become a Contact Person;
- a letter of support from the FSC members or the national group proposing the application; and
- in the case of an individual working for a membership organisation, a letter stating that the employer will allow for sufficient time for the individual to carry out the work.

The FSC Executive Director then evaluates the credentials for the nominated Contact Person. When satisfied, the Executive Director recommends the nomination to the FSC Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors will evaluate the Executive Director’s recommendation and then make a decision.

Contact Person Requirements and Recommendations
- Is the proposed Contact Person an FSC member or duly-designated representative of an FSC-member organisation?
- Is the proposed Contact Person free from conflict of interest charges and is he or she elected or endorsed by a national multi-stakeholder working group?
- Has the candidate been in regular contact with FSC?
- Is there adequate corroboration that the proposed person has the qualities needed for open and constructive communication with all national stakeholder groups, FSC members and the FSC Secretariat?
- If the proposed Contact Person is a representative of an FSC-member organisation, has the employer stated that enough time will be given to carry out
the Contact Person duties?

Contact Person endorsement criteria
An individual is eligible to be an FSC Contact Person if he or she is an individual member of FSC or a duly designated delegate of a member organisation. No-one who has a personal vested interest in any certification decisions, or has an exclusive relationship with any one particular certification body, can be endorsed as a Contact Person because of the risk of perceived conflicts of interest.

Some working experience of certification or audit assessments may be an advantage.

FSC recommends that a Contact Person has ready access to institutional support, which could be in the form of salary, office facilities, support staff and organisational support for consultations. This may be through an affiliated organisation.

The Contact Person (and his or her affiliated organisation, if there is one) should have professional credibility within his or her region.

The Contact Person should have the support or endorsement of a majority of FSC members in the region, and of any national or regional working group operating in line with the FSC mission.

The Contact Person must have the ability to bring together and build a relationship of confidence between all the main stakeholder interest groups, a relationship of collaboration with and support for FSC and the FSC Secretariat.

FSC will seek Contact Persons who have had a successful collaboration with FSC over sufficient time to develop mutual confidence and a positive and constructive working relationship.

6.4.2 FSC Working Group

The following checklist is used by FSC to determine whether or not National Initiatives meet the requirements for FSC endorsement.

Working Group Requirements and Recommendations

- Does the composition of the Working Group mirror the FSC Board composition?
- Was adequate consultation taken during the formation of the Working Group? Did the Working Group consider the viewpoints of all affected stakeholder groups?
- Does the Working Group operate with effective procedures for regular consultations with a broad range of stakeholder interests?
- Are the activities of the Working Group transparent and participatory?
- Is there adequate corroboration that the membership represents, and is perceived as representing, all stakeholder groups?
- Are clear grievance procedures established?
- Is the majority of the Working Group composed of FSC members or FSC member-applicants?
- Are clear, democratic decision-making procedures established and followed?
- Do any sub-committees (standards, publicity, other) follow similar processes? Are the meetings and forums of the sub-committees transparent and participatory?
- Is the Working Group liaising with all certification bodies operating in the area?
Working Group endorsement criteria

Working Groups must have a composition similar in balance to the FSC Board of Directors, i.e. with about one-third of its members from each the economic, environmental and social interest. A majority of working group members must be FSC members, or represent FSC member organisations.

Working Groups must remain transparent and participatory in nature, with access to the process for any interested stakeholder group.

Working Groups should establish clear grievance procedures for itself and for any regional forest stewardship standards or documents that are developed.

FSC may recognise exceptions to the above requirements. Exceptions may apply if there is a lack of NGO infrastructure in the country, or a high level of government involvement, regional difficulties in achieving adequate FSC membership, or a balanced composition of members. As a minimum, the Working Group must have a minimum of two representatives from each chamber who clearly represent the interests of their chamber. Where a balance of interests is not represented in the working group, a clear demonstration must be made often of extra efforts made to seek input from under-represented interests.

6.4.3 FSC Advisory Body

Advisory Board Requirements and Recommendations

- Has the National Initiative completed its work on developing national or regional standards?
- Is the Advisory Board similar in chamber composition to the FSC Board?
- Are election rules for the national Advisory Board clear and are elections transparent and independently monitored?
- Has the Advisory Board created a dispute resolution mechanism?
- Are the majority of the Advisory Board members FSC members or duly designated representatives of FSC member organisations?
- Does the participation of any member on the Advisory Board constitute a clear conflict of interest?

Advisory Board endorsement criteria

Once a consultative process has been completed in a country or region, a national or regional assembly of stakeholders may be called to formally elect a national or regional Advisory Board. The functions of the board will be to promote FSC and its mission, to maintain ongoing consultations on certification, to facilitate and oversee the process of developing national forest stewardship standards in accordance with the FSC Principles and Criteria and to review and make recommendations on applications by certification bodies to the FSC Secretariat for accreditation.

The composition of the Advisory Board must be similar in balance to the FSC Board of Directors and a majority of Advisory Board members must be FSC members.

The Advisory Board must be selected through democratic decision-making procedures, through a postal election, at a national assembly or by other means. It is the responsibility of the National Initiative to decide on the exact election procedures.
An FSC Advisory Board is not an essential requirement of an endorsed FSC National Initiative. FSC Working Groups or National Offices may establish other mechanisms to achieve the same results.

6.4.4 FSC National Office

National Offices Requirements and Recommendations

- Is an Advisory Board or FSC Working Group established in the country/region?
- Are the operational procedures and statutes of the National Office similar to those of FSC A.C.?
- Is there regular reporting to and communication with FSC?
- Is a National Office needed and justified by the workload of monitoring, communication and publicity? (Give details.)

National Office endorsement criteria

National Offices must have a formally elected Board of Directors with a composition similar to that of the FSC A.C. Board of Directors.

The operational procedures and statutes must be similar to those of FSC A.C.

IMPORTANT

- Follow the required processes when applying for endorsement of any type of National Initiative.
- Make sure that the application meets all the requirements in the above checklists.
- Make sure that the National Initiative co-ordinator is satisfied with the terms and conditions and prepared to sign the relevant National Initiative Agreement.

6.5 Transition from Contact Person to Working Group

In a change from the historical situation where some countries have had both a Contact Person and a Working Group, there will now be a clear transition from Contact Person to Working Group.

When a national Working Group is ready to sign the FSC Working Group or Associate Agreement, a clear written understanding will be agreed as to the individual who will serve as the point of contact between FSC A.C. and the Working Group. This will typically be the previously endorsed FSC Contact Person.

As soon as this has been agreed, and the FSC Working Group Agreement signed, the position of FSC Contact Person will cease to exist, and the Contact Person Agreement will be cancelled. The FSC National Initiative will then be the FSC Working Group (known also by its legal title, e.g. Voluntary Forest Certification Canada). Thereafter, the FSC list of National Initiatives will refer only to the FSC Working Group, with its
legal title, the name of the chair or president or head, and the name, title and full contact details of the co-ordinator.

If a National Initiative wishes to maintain an FSC Contact Person separate in name and function from the FSC Working Group, this will be negotiated and agreed with FSC on a case by case basis.

PART THREE:
CORE FSC OPERATIONS AND THE ROLE OF NATIONAL INITIATIVES
CHAPTER 7

ACCREDITATION

This section provides an overview of accreditation and the role of the National Initiative. However, FSC accreditation procedures are quite complex, and National Initiatives are encouraged to study The FSC Accreditation Manual, (January 1998), FSC Doc. 3.1, for detailed information.

7.1 Introduction to accreditation

FSC-accredited certification is a voluntary, market-driven process. It is an independent, objective, and third-party process.

FSC-accredited forest certification is a means by which producers can achieve public recognition of the quality of their forest management practices, and by which consumers can ensure that their purchases of forest products do not contribute to the destruction and degradation of the world's forests.

Accreditation is the procedure by which an independent third party endorses the competence of an organisation to undertake the certification activities. The role of accreditation is to provide a credible assurance that the certification bodies are competent and independent in providing specified certification services.

FSC, as an accreditation body, achieves this assurance by evaluating the organisational structure, responsibilities, procedures, practices and resources of the certification body against published operational norms. After accreditation, FSC monitors and if necessary regulates the activities of certification bodies. A successful accreditation programme enhances the credibility of registered certification bodies by ensuring that the same high professional norms are maintained by all.

The objective of the FSC accreditation programme is to ensure that the certification bodies it accredits have the highest levels of credibility and integrity. Forests and forest products certified by these accredited certification bodies can be promoted using the FSC Logo.

FSC accredits certification bodies in two aspects: firstly, for conducting independent third-party evaluation of a forest management operation, according to specific environmental, social and economic standards in conformity with the FSC Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship (forest certification); and secondly, for conducting verification of the chain of custody of forest products from the forest, through processing and manufacturing, to the end-user (chain of custody certification).

Certification bodies may apply to FSC for accreditation with respect to either forest certification or chain of custody certification or both. See Chapter 8 for more information on the nature of certification.

7.2 Geographic scope of FSC accreditation
Accreditation is normally world-wide in geographic scope, but may be limited. The geographic scope must be specified in the accreditation contract.

If a certification body has accreditation within a limited geographic scope, it may not undertake forest management or chain of custody evaluation or certification outside of that area without the prior consent of FSC.

7.3 The Accreditation Process

A responsible officer of the certification body interested in seeking accreditation informs the FSC Executive Director of the certification body’s intent to apply for FSC Accreditation, and requests a copy of the FSC Accreditation Application Pack from the FSC Secretariat. The pack contains all the materials necessary to complete an application. FSC charges US$200 for each pack.

The FSC Secretariat sends the certification body an application pack. A staff member is assigned to the certification body to oversee the application, and is available to answer any enquiries regarding the evaluation process or FSC’s requirements.

In order to formally apply for accreditation, the certification body submits to the FSC Secretariat a completed FSC Accreditation Application Form, together with the application fee. The application form commits the applicant certification body to abide by the rules and procedures for evaluation as described in this manual. The application fee is currently (1998) US$ 1000.

The application form must be accompanied by a series of documentation, as listed in The Accreditation Manual.

Once the Secretariat has received and evaluated the documentation submitted by the applicant, the Secretariat will make arrangements for a visit to the applicant's main offices. The details of the evaluation procedures for the office visit are described in the FSC Accreditation Manual, Part 2.2 Section 3. At this stage the FSC evaluation team leader (usually a staff member of the FSC Secretariat) will contact any regional National Initiative to let it know about the visit, and to solicit comments and suggestions for further consultations. In the past, the FSC Secretariat has asked the National Initiative to inform all FSC members in the territory that the visit is taking place, and to solicit comments from the members.

After the office visit has been completed successfully, the FSC Secretariat will arrange for site visits to forests and forest product suppliers certified by the applicant. These sites may or may not be in the same territory as the head office of the applicant certification body. When a visit has been arranged, the FSC evaluation team leader for the visit will contact any regional National Initiatives in the territory to inform them of the dates of the visit, and to make arrangements to meet them during the period of the evaluation (see FSC Accreditation Manual Part 2.2 Section 4).

After the office and site visits have been successfully completed, the FSC Secretariat prepares an evaluation report, which will be submitted to the FSC Board for decision making. Following a decision of the Board, a public summary of the report is also prepared (see FSC Accreditation Manual Part 2.2 Section 6).

FSC monitors all accredited certification bodies annually. Monitoring includes a visit to the certification body's head office, and visits to a sample of certified forests and chains of custody. Procedures for monitoring visits, including consultation with and
involvement of FSC National Initiatives, follows the procedures for initial evaluation (see Accreditation Manual Part 2.4 Section 4).

The accreditation decision is made by the FSC Board. The decision is made on the basis of the evaluation reports and findings, the recommendation of the FSC Executive Director, and any other information that is brought to the attention of the FSC Board by FSC Members.

When the FSC Board decides to approve an application, it authorises the FSC Executive Director to sign an Accreditation Contract with the certification body once the E.D. is satisfied that all agreed Pre-Conditions have been fulfilled and after the expiration of the appeals period (2 months). Once the accreditation contract has been signed the certification body is formally accredited by FSC. Positive accreditation decisions are announced in the FSC newsletter ‘FSC Notes.’ The name of the certification body is added to the FSC register of accredited certification bodies.

Accreditation is for a period of five years, as stipulated in the Accreditation Contract.

FSC undertakes annual monitoring of the records of each accredited certification body in order to ensure continued conformity with the conditions of accreditation. At least one certificate holder is also visited each year. The frequency of inspections will depend on the scale and intensity of the operations of the certification body. FSC reserves the right to undertake inspections of certification body records, offices and certificate holders at short notice.

7.4 The accreditation process and the role of the National Initiative

The role of National Initiatives in FSC accreditation procedures has already been touched upon earlier in this chapter. This section explains the role in more detail. The extent of the role will vary depending on the resources and experience of the National Initiative. In order to maintain consistency, evaluation for accreditation is a core responsibility of the FSC Secretariat. However involvement of National Initiatives is encouraged.

The first stage of National Initiative involvement involves providing information to potential applicants for accreditation as an FSC approved certification body. The National Initiative should be familiar with the basic stages of evaluation for accreditation, and the likely costs. The National Initiative may wish to provide copies of the FSC Accreditation Manual to potential applicants, on computer diskette or hardcopy. The FSC Accreditation Manual has a nominal price of US$50.00, which the National Initiative may charge for provision of the manual. The National Initiative should refer potential applicants to the FSC Secretariat for further information, and should in all cases provide the Secretariat with names and contact details of enquirers. Further discussion regarding accreditation will usually take place between the FSC Secretariat and the potential applicant.

The second stage of National Initiative involvement occurs when a candidate has applied for accreditation. At this stage, the FSC Regional Co-ordinator will contact the National Initiative representative to discuss the application, and request any background information on the applicant. In addition, the FSC Secretariat encourages the applicant itself to contact FSC National Initiatives in any areas in which they operate or wish to operate, to discuss its application.
The third stage of National Initiative involvement occurs during evaluations of the accredited certification body. The National Initiative will always be consulted by the FSC accreditation assessors during initial and annual evaluations of certification bodies registered in its territory, and during field assessments of certified forests in its territory. The FSC Secretariat will inform the National Initiative (Contact Person, Working Group Co-ordinator, or Chair) in writing of its request for comments, including advice on stakeholders to be consulted and any issues relating to accreditation, certification and forest management. The National Initiative must send its comments in writing to the Secretariat.

The National Initiative can be involved as consultants to the Secretariat in a number of areas, or as evaluation team members, retained on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Secretariat. Consultants will be selected according to their experiences and training in audits and forest management issues in the region, their track record in certification and in FSC, their travelling distances, availability, fee scales and their relations with certification bodies. Personal or professional interests or conflicts of interest will be taken into account, including any previous working relations with the certification body or the certified enterprise. Certification bodies and forest owners or managers are always consulted in the selection of assessors, and have the right to refuse the FSC Secretariat proposal, if they have reasonable grounds for their objection.

**Note:** This section describes the agreed due process, as currently documented. This process has evolved steadily over the past three years, and was not always followed in the past. It should be followed in future, subject to further evolution and efforts to increase efficiency and reduce bureaucracy.

**IMPORTANT**

The National Initiative’s role in relation to accreditation is one of support to FSC A.C. and to the certification bodies.

In the case of applicant certification bodies, have the Accreditation Manual available (in hard copy or disk format) to sell to them; be prepared to answer any queries they may have; and inform the FSC Secretariat as soon as possible of the applicant certification body’s expression of interest.

In the case of FSC A.C., be prepared to provide any relevant information to the Secretariat concerning a certification body’s application for accreditation or during evaluations of the certification body.
CHAPTER 8

CERTIFICATION

8.1 Introduction to certification

Certification is the process by which an independent organisation provides a guarantee that a product or service conforms to certain specified requirements. These independent organisations are the accredited certification bodies. The independence and quality of any FSC accredited certification body is in turn guaranteed by FSC (following the accreditation process described in Chapter 7).

FSC accredited certification is a voluntary, market-driven process. It is an independent, objective, and third-party process.

FSC accredited forest certification is a means by which producers can achieve public recognition of the quality of their forest management practices, and by which consumers can ensure that their purchases of forest products do not contribute to the destruction and degradation of the world's forests.

8.2 Forest certification

Under the FSC scheme, certification bodies provide two separate kinds of guarantees.

The first is that the forest management in a particular forest conforms with the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship. This is referred to as 'forest certification.' In order to certify a forest, the certification body has to study the forest management system and policies, and carry out an evaluation visit in the forest itself. The forest visit may take from one day to two weeks, and may involve from one to four inspectors, depending on the size and complexity of the forest. Once the forest is certified, the certification body must carry out annual monitoring visits to ensure that the standards of forest stewardship are maintained throughout the period of certification.

8.3 Chain of Custody Certification

The second kind of guarantee relates to the origin of forest products. If the certification body can certify that a product originates from a certified forest, the product is eligible to carry the FSC Logo. This is known as chain of custody certification.

Chain of custody certification refers to verification of the chain of custody of forest products from the forest, through processing and manufacturing, to the end-user.

The procedure follows the wood product through every stage of its transport and conversion. A separate certificate is issued each time it passes from one stage of 'custody' to the next. For example, a wooden door starts life as a tree. After felling, it is taken to the sawmill. The timber is bought by a door manufacturer, who will turn it into a door and then sell it to a retailer.
Through the process, chain of custody certification verifies that products from certified forests are not mixed with products from uncertified forests. There should be separate areas of storage for certified and uncertified products. Each batch of certified product must be separately identifiable. During any process of manufacture, the certified product must remain separate or separable from uncertified products; this may be achieved through separate production lines or batch production or by clearly visible marks, tags or labels. Information confirming this must be shown on all production records.

8.4 The National Initiative's role in forest certification and chain of custody certification

National Initiatives are not directly involved in the evaluation and certification of forests or the chain of custody. However, the National Initiative is an important point of contact for certification bodies and assessors, who must consult with the National Initiative on various subjects, particularly certification assessments and standards, and as part of the certification body's dispute resolution mechanism.

The role of National Initiatives is
- to support the certification bodies to carry out their work;
- to provide a local listening point for FSC; and
- to facilitate early identification of any problems that may occur concerning evaluations or certified operations and to contribute to the certification body's dispute resolution mechanism.

The certification body is required to inform any National Initiative of its intention to carry out an evaluation in the territory of that National Initiative, as soon as a contract (or equivalent agreement) to carry out the work has been signed (see FSC Accreditation Manual, Part 3.2 Section 7, paragraph 7.2.1). In territories in which there is an endorsed FSC Regional Forest Stewardship Standard, this is the minimum requirement. CBs are required to consult NIs one month prior to field assessments, and before annual assessments.

In cases where there is an FSC endorsed Working Group, the certification body must consult with the Working Group regarding the standards used for certification, as well as the certifiability of the forest operation. In cases where there is an FSC endorsed Advisory Board, the certification body must meet all of the above requirements, and must consider the recommendations of the Advisory Board in the certification assessment. In cases where there is an FSC endorsed National or Regional Office, the certification body must explicitly consider any recommendations and comply with FSC approved regional standards.

In territories where there is no endorsed FSC Regional Forest Stewardship Standard, the certification body is required to consult with the National Initiative at the time of the evaluation (see FSC Accreditation Manual, Part 3.2 Section 2, paragraph 2.2.3.1.e). In particular, the certification body is required to liaise with the National Initiative in order to solicit comments on the implementation of the certification body's generic standard in the region concerned, and inform the National Initiative in the region concerned as soon as a contract to carry out an evaluation has been signed. The National Initiative must be given enough time to comment and provide suggestions on the standard before the assessment. The National Initiative must be ready to consult quickly with national members, and to respond to the certification body within the time available.
The National Initiative provides various resources to facilitate an evaluation (see below), and certification bodies are expected to make use of these resources. National Initiatives are encouraged to be proactive once they have been contacted by a certification body, and help inform the certification body about any local issues that are considered significant.

The National Initiative must be able to provide certification bodies with the following resources and information (see FSC Accreditation Manual, Part 2.1 Section 8):

- Information about FSC national and regional activities;
- Information about national/regional standards development;
- Copies of draft or approved regional forest stewardship standards;
- Copies of relevant national legislation;
- Contact details of potential stakeholders and consultants for forest evaluations; and
- Up-to-date information about important forest stewardship issues.

National Initiatives may express their own opinions regarding a forest management enterprise. The certification body is not obliged to consult with the National Initiative regarding the certifiability of the forest itself. The National Initiative should be careful to avoid involvement, or implied involvement, in the certification decision itself. The certification decision is entirely the responsibility of the certification body. As in the case of all comments received by consultants, the certification body is required to consider the comments, and explain how they were taken into account in coming to a certification decision. The certification body is not required to comply with any recommendations of the National Initiative.

Whilst this policy may at first seem odd, it is in fact very important. A certification body may take account of a National Initiative's advice, but cannot argue that advice given by a National Initiative over-rides the certification body's obligation to come to its own, independent decision as to whether a forest conforms with the standards required to achieve certification.

All certification bodies must establish a dispute resolution mechanism. When a dispute occurs, such as an appeal against a certification decision, certification bodies are obliged to consult with the National Initiatives. The comments and opinions of the National Initiative will be extremely important. Policies and procedures regarding National Initiatives' roles in deciding appeals are still under development. One option being considered is that in the case of FSC endorsed Regional Forest Stewardship Standards, the Regional Initiative that submitted the standard to the FSC Board will be the main point of appeal for issues regarding that standard.

**IMPORTANT**

- National Initiatives play a vital role as a local point of contact for certification bodies.
  - As part of this, be prepared to:
    - Provide information, as detailed above;
    - Contribute to certification body grievance procedures, as requested; and
Contribute to certification body evaluations, as requested and according to FSC Regulations.

**IMPORTANT**

- Where certification evaluations are being carried out, National Initiatives are expected to provide all the information listed below to the certification body:
  - Information about national/regional standards development;
  - Copies of relevant national legislation;
  - Contact details of potential stakeholders and consultants for forest evaluations;
  - Up-to-date information about important forest stewardship issues; and
  - Any other local information relevant to the evaluation.

- The National Initiative must be a part of the certification body’s grievance procedures.

- In countries where FSC Regional Forest Stewardship Standards are in place, certification bodies must inform the National Initiative of its plans to carry out an evaluation, but are not obliged to consult the National Initiative about the certifiability of a forest management enterprise.

- In countries where no FSC Regional Forest Stewardship Standards are in place, certification bodies must consult the National Initiative regarding the forest management enterprise and in relation to the implementation of the certification body’s generic standards.

- FSC A.C. expects National Initiatives to act in a pro-active manner towards certification bodies active in their territories.
CHAPTER 9
MEMBERSHIP

FSC is a membership organisation. This means that any stakeholder who wants full involvement in FSC must become a member. Membership entitles the organisation or individual to vote as part of FSC’s General Assembly.

9.1 Application for FSC membership

There is a standard application process, which is shown overleaf. Membership of the National Initiative is dealt with in Chapter 6, Section 6.1.

Application forms for membership are found on the reverse side of the FSC Document 5.2.1 Guide for Applications for Membership. A copy of this is included with other core FSC documents at the back of this manual.

Individuals or organisations who are thinking of becoming members should contact their National Initiative in the first instance. In countries where no National Initiative has yet been endorsed, interested parties should contact the Secretariat directly. Application forms, fees and all the required documents should be returned in full to the National Initiative or Secretariat as appropriate. Contact Persons or Working Group Co-ordinators can obtain application forms from the Secretariat. Following formal FSC endorsement, National Initiatives will take over much of the direct responsibility for membership application and fees.

Prospective members are required to submit the following documents:

- A letter of application, with a statement of support from the governing body, describing how the organisation or individual meets FSC’s aims, and indicating which Chamber the applicant wishes to join;
- Letters of support from two FSC members (or other suitable reference where there are no FSC members in-country who know the applicant);
- If the applicant is an organisation, an annual report, information on funding, membership, Board of Directors and Statutes, and any other relevant public documents showing status and aims; if the applicant is an individual, a curriculum vitae;
- If the applicant is a non-profit organisation, evidence of charitable or non-profit status;
- For applicants to the economic chamber, FSC also requires details of commercial activities and a formal commitment to the mission and activities of FSC. An example for producers is “The Board of Directors of this organisation has made a formal commitment to obtain at least half of all its trade or production of forest product certified by an FSC-accredited certification body within two years. The remainder will be certified as soon as possible afterwards”;
- Payment of the appropriate annual fee. Failure to pay may lead to withdrawal of membership;
- On request from the FSC Secretariat, provision of a report to the Executive Director summarising their annual forestry activities or forest product trade, which
should be accompanied by any publicly available accounts for the previous year; and

- On becoming a member, circulation to their staff and members, shareholders, clients and affiliated organisations, announcing its FSC admission, with a view to disseminating the objectives of the FSC.

If the applicant is a forest owner or manager, FSC requires that the whole forest property be certified, or a commitment to have it certified within a reasonable period of time (typically two years).

Members are subject to certain requirements:

- Payment of the appropriate annual fee. Failure to pay may lead to withdrawal of membership or voting rights;
- On request from the FSC Secretariat, provision of a report summarising annual forestry activities or forest product trade, which should be accompanied by any publicly available accounts for the previous year; and
- On becoming a member, announcement to their staff and members, shareholders, clients and affiliated organisations of their FSC membership, with a view to disseminating the objectives of the FSC.

The *FSC Statutes* describe two situations in which members may face a destitution (membership withdrawal) process:

- If a member engages in activities contrary to the interests of FSC; and
- If a member no longer meets the membership criteria.

A process is laid down in the *FSC Statutes* that follows a proposal for suspension of a member or removal of membership. This is shown in Appendix 9.
9.2 The National Initiative’s role in membership applications
and membership support

The role of the National Initiative in relation to membership in as, or will be as,

- First point of contact for membership enquiries and applications;
- Source of advice for people or organisations seeking to apply for membership;
- Focal point for existing members within its region/country; and
- Conduit for information and opinions between members and Board and Secretariat.

The National Initiative should maintain an up-to-date list of all in-country members, including their interest chamber and full contact details. The Secretariat has a responsibility to inform the National Initiative of any new members approved and of any changes in status of members in its territory.

The Secretariat holds an up-to-date list of all members, which is published on the FSC website home page (http://www.fscoax.org).

**IMPORTANT**

- Keep a store of membership application forms available to supply to in-country applicants on request.
- Be prepared to advise applicants on the application process, or to answer any other of their queries.
- Keep an up-to-date list of members, including their contact details and allocated chamber.
CHAPTER 10

THE FSC TRADEMARK

10.1 General Information

At the heart of FSC is the issue of independent, credible and verifiable labelling. This is represented to the public by the trademark logo of a half tree, half tick (check) with the initials ‘FSC.’

The Forest Stewardship Council owns the copyright to the logo, and has registered the full name, the initials ‘FSC’ and the design mark as trademarks in many countries. Registration provides the legal basis to protect the integrity and value of FSC’s name. FSC has substantial legal rights for defending its name and trademarks against misleading uses, trademark infringement and “passing off.”

The logo may be used by FSC National Initiatives for general promotional and communications activity. In this context, FSC National Initiatives and other FSC nominated agents may provide copies of the FSC Logo to the media, NGOs, FSC Members and educational establishments for the purposes of illustrating articles, talks, lectures etc. on the subject of FSC and forest certification.

This manual does not provide guidance for correct graphical use of the FSC Logo. Guidelines for graphical use are provided separately in the FSC Logo Guide. Additional support for users and others authorising the use of the FSC logo can be found through the Secretariat’s forum for trademark issues. Any questions can be launched into this forum. In this way, FSC hopes to find out about any inconsistencies and gaps in the existing guidelines. Also, it will help to build the experience of the people dealing with use of the trademark. Please refer to the FSC Logo Policy Manual for further information. Also, please see FSC Guidelines for Certification Bodies Doc. 3.6, section 2.8, for information on the labelling of non-timber forest products.

10.2 The trademark and the role of the National Initiative

The National Initiative plays a number of roles in relation to the trademark:

1. In its own use of the trademark;
2. As Nominated Agents, managing and guiding other people’s and
organisations’ use of the trademark; and
3. In monitoring all use of the trademark.

The FSC Secretariat provides training to all FSC National Initiatives prior to (or soon after) nominating them as FSC nominated agents. Training for new personnel, and refresher sessions are available by arrangement.

It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to ensure that all FSC nominated agents and accredited certification bodies are kept up to date with changes or additions to FSC policy with regard to use of the FSC Logo. The FSC Secretariat aims to achieve this by use of an electronic mailgroup devoted to issues regarding use of the FSC Logo. FSC nominated agents and accredited certification bodies should contact the Secretariat to ensure they are included in this mailgroup.

10.2.1 National Initiative use of the trademark

Once an FSC endorsed National Initiative has signed the legally binding FSC licensing agreement, it gains legal rights to use the FSC name, initials and logo, under the terms of the Contact Person, Working Group and National Office Agreements (copies in Appendices 1 - 3). However, FSC National Initiatives are required to seek FSC approval prior to use of the FSC Logo, as detailed in the FSC Logo Policy Manual.

The terms FSC and Forest Stewardship Council may be used when they refer directly to FSC as a whole, embracing its international membership and system, or to FSC A.C. as a Mexican civil association.

The FSC Logo may be used by FSC National Initiatives on stationery, brochures, leaflets, reports, and for general promotional and communications activity, in accordance with the appropriate FSC Agreement. Legal requirements relating to use of the FSC Logo are included in the agreement signed by FSC National Initiatives at the time of FSC Board endorsement. Information must be accurate and complete. The FSC identification code for the FSC Logo Resource Pack need not be included.

In the context of promotional and communications activity in their geographical territory, FSC National Initiatives and nominated agents may provide copies of the FSC Logo to the media, NGOs, FSC Members and educational establishments, for the purposes of illustrating articles, talks, lectures etc. on the subject of FSC and forest certification. In such cases the FSC Logo must be distributed in an FSC Logo Mini-pack. The National Initiative or nominated agent should offer to provide visual inspection of the use of the material to ensure that the logo has been used correctly. FSC Logo Mini-packs are issued without FSC ID codes, and such a code is not required for correct graphic reproduction in these uses.

10.2.2 National Initiatives as Nominated Agents

Contact persons or Working Group co-ordinators are the de facto nominated agent (N.A.) for trademarks unless this responsibility is delegated to someone else. An agreement needs to be signed between each Contact Person and FSC. Contact Persons are the de facto nominated agents, not the organisation they may represent. As the nominated agent, the Contact Person is able to authorise use of the FSC name, initials and/or logo according to FSC’s guidelines. He or she may be called on to provide preliminary advice on the use of the logo and guidance on options available for the approval process.
FSC nominated agents are responsible for issuing the FSC Logo Resource Packs to non-certificate holders in their geographical territory, and for approving (where required) and controlling non-certificate holders’ use of the FSC Logo.

The FSC nominated agent who issued the FSC Logo Resource Pack must also inspect and approve proofs of the proposed use to ensure that it meets the graphic guidelines specified in the *FSC Logo Guide*, before the user proceeds to print. The process for granting approval is described in Section 3 of the *Logo Policy Manual*.

### 10.2.3 National Initiatives and monitoring the logo

National Initiatives and other FSC members are requested to inform the FSC Secretariat of any uses of the FSC name, initials or logo that appear to be incorrect or suspect. In such cases supporting information such as the source, date of use, etc. should also be forwarded to the FSC Secretariat. The Secretariat will evaluate the material to determine whether further action, including legal action, is required. The FSC Secretariat is responsible for initiating formal and/or legal action, at its discretion. National Initiatives may be requested to take further action, such as obtaining information or making enquiries. However, formal actions in the name of the trademark owner, FSC A.C., will be taken by the Secretariat. Legal action will be co-ordinated by the FSC trademark lawyer in Switzerland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPORTANT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✗ When using the FSC logo, initials or name, make sure that all procedures and guidelines for its use by National Initiatives, as described in the <em>FSC Logo Policy Manual</em> and the relevant National Initiative Agreement, are strictly adhered to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ As Nominated Agent, the National Initiative is responsible for authorising and overseeing the use of the trademark by non-certificate holders in its territory, according to the guidelines detailed in this manual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Be prepared to give advice to all potential and current users of the FSC trademark about regulations for its use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Monitor use of the trademark within the territory to ensure that it is only used according to the regulations of FSC A.C., as detailed in the <em>FSC Logo Policy Manual</em>, and the <em>FSC Logo Guide</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✗ Keep a supply of FSC Logo Resource Packs and FSC Logo Mini Packs for use as required.</td>
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CHAPTER 11

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

During the operations and activities of the FSC, disputes and grievances may occur in relation to (a) membership; (b) performance of the Executive Director, Secretariat or Board or National Initiatives; (c) accreditation and certification; or (d) regional forest stewardship standards.

A Dispute Resolution Committee has been set up, by election from among FSC members. The procedures for resolving disputes will follow the FSC Dispute Resolution Protocol (1998) and its subsequent revisions. National Initiatives may be called upon during this process.

National Initiatives also have a role to play in relation to the grievance procedures of certification bodies. See Chapter 8, Section 8.4 for more information.

IMPORTANT

- Make sure that a copy of the FSC A.C. Dispute Resolution Protocol is available to all in-country FSC members on request.

- Establish grievance procedures applicable to the National Initiative mission and activities. (See also Chapter 5, Section 5.4)
PART FOUR:

NATIONAL INITIATIVE OPERATIONS

CHAPTER 12
DRAFTING OF REGIONAL FOREST STEWARDSHIP STANDARDS

12.1 Introduction to Regional Forest Stewardship Standards

Regional forest stewardship standards are the locally applicable and workable versions of the FSC Principles and Criteria developed for use in certification assessments in that region. They must be derived from the global FSC Principles and Criteria, and be in accordance with local ecological, social and economic circumstances. The existence of locally defined forest management standards contributes to a fair, transparent and systematic certification process.

In order to ensure the consistency and integrity of standards in different regions around the world, each set of regional forest stewardship standards must be endorsed by FSC. Endorsement means that the standards meet all the requirements set by FSC to ensure the credibility of the FSC certification process. These requirements refer to both the content of the standards and the process used to draw up the standards, including compatibility with FSC Principles and Criteria, a local consultative process for their design and compatibility with local circumstances.

Once a set of regional forest stewardship standards has been endorsed by FSC, all local and international certification bodies must, at a minimum, use those standards in their certification processes. In addition, the standards form the basis for local grievance procedures.

12.2 The role of the National Initiative in the development of regional forest stewardship standards

Drafting regional forest stewardship standards is one of the most important roles of the National Initiative. The National Initiative may play a direct or indirect role in the standards drafting process. In a direct role, National Initiative members are closely involved in managing the process, through

- Stakeholder identification for inclusion in the consultative process and/or standards working group;
- Development and distribution of information about certification and regional forest stewardship standards;
- Promoting and initiating the formation of a standards working group;
- Raising the funds necessary to support the work of developing the standards;
- Communication about progress and problems between stakeholders, members and the FSC Secretariat; and
- Communication with other National Initiatives to facilitate harmonisation of standards within and between regions.

However, the National Initiative need not be directly involved and may simply evaluate and endorse the drafting process and standards developed by other parties.

(Pending Policy Change)
In some countries, National Initiatives have formed committees to develop regional forest stewardship standards. There may be more than one committee, with each one located in the region for which the standard they are developing would apply.

In countries where there are a number of forest types for which specific standards are necessary, this is a practical way to proceed. However, there are a number of concerns about this approach. This includes the lack of clear organisational links or contractual arrangements between the National Initiative and the standards development committees. These committees often use the FSC name and trademark to identify their work and to raise funds. The potential for misuse of the FSC name and trademark is a possibility. Also, the tendency to identify draft standards with FSC can confuse and alienate users in the region.

In addition, there continues to be effort put forward to develop standards based on the FSC system in countries where there is no National Initiative. Since FSC policy requires that only FSC endorsed Working Groups can submit standards for endorsement, there is no way in which these efforts could result in an endorsed standard.

As a result, FSC drafted the following proposal in May 1998.

Proposal
That FSC Secretariat develop policy guidelines which would specify the minimum requirements for a standards development committee. This would include requirements regarding the balance of the committee and the consultation process necessary. Process requirements in current FSC policy documents would be adapted to the specific role of the standard development committee. In addition, use of the trademark and name of FSC would be subject to the Logo Guide.

To implement this system, the Working Group Agreement would be modified to authorise endorsed Working Groups to create or recognise standards development committees subject to FSC policy.

In countries where there is no Working Group and where the local situation is not favourable to the establishment of one, the FSC Secretariat can recognise existing standards development committees subject to FSC policy. Standards submitted for FSC endorsement from so recognised committees would be treated in the same way as standards from FSC endorsed Working Groups.)

12.3 Preparation of Regional Forest Stewardship Standards

The broad process for the development of regional forest stewardship standards is shown in Diagram 7. National Initiatives are not required to follow the exact steps shown, although they may find it helpful to do so.

It will be necessary to identify the geographical borders of the regional standards. These boundaries may be drawn along ecological, social, political and economic lines, depending on regional circumstances. Ideally, these boundaries are developed as part of a co-ordinated plan with neighbouring regions, in order to reduce gaps and overlaps. If boundaries are drawn along other than ecological lines, it is important to identify and communicate with the neighbouring regions with similar forest ecosystems and forest cover types. This is part of the harmonisation process, which is detailed in this chapter in Section 12.6.
12.3.1 Regional Standard Drafting Requirements and Recommendations

Certain minimum requirements must be met before regional forest stewardship standards can be endorsed. Broadly, these are:

- **Compatibility with the FSC’s Principles and Criteria**
  The FSC Board must be satisfied that the standards are clearly in full compliance with all elements of the Principles and Criteria.

- **Compatibility with local ecological, social and economic circumstances**

- **Compatibility with similar and/or neighbouring regions**
  (This is the harmonisation process.)

- **Comprehensive consultative process**
  The FSC Board must be satisfied that the standards truly reflect the consensus of a broad range of stakeholder groups and that the standards are approved by those stakeholders in the region who support certification.

- **Submission of the standards to the board by an FSC endorsed Working Group**
  The FSC Board must be satisfied that the standards, whether drawn up by the Working Group or not, are fully recommended by the FSC Working Group as meeting all requirements for FSC endorsement. In cases where there is a national group working on drafting standards, but that group is not endorsed by FSC (for whatever reason), current FSC policy makes it impossible for those standards to be put to FSC for endorsement. However, this policy is under review. The discussion on this is summarised in Section 12.9.

Specifically, the Board must be satisfied that each of the following process requirements is met:

- **Shared ownership of process:**
  No one particular interest group can dominate the design or implementation of the consultative process; it must be co-ordinated by a working group that is independent of any one interest group (e.g. a government, certification body, etc.).

- **Working group procedures:**
  The structure of the working group must incorporate a balance of interests, including, but not limited to, ecological, social and economic interest groups. The working group must have clearly defined procedures, including avenues for participation of interested groups.

- **Fair decision-making processes:**
  The working group must have fair decision-making procedures. Decisions should ideally be made by consensus. If the working group is unable to reach a consensus, democratic decision-making procedures must be followed.

- **Maintain transparency and accountability:**
  The consultative process must be transparent and accountable, both to working group members, and to the wider public. Minutes of all meetings and draft standards should be made available to any interested party.
• Adequate participation and representation:
The consultative process should attempt to reach as many stakeholder groups as possible, including those groups that may not fully agree with or endorse the concept of certification. All FSC members in the area should be contacted.

• Mechanism for future revision:
The consultative process design must include clear avenues for input. A mechanism for encouraging the future review and revision of the standards, including ongoing, field-based input, should be included in the consultative process design.

• Clear grievance procedure:
The consultative process design must include a mechanism for reaching decisions and resolving disputes, preferably with a dispute resolution committee. In the absence of other local mechanisms, the FSC International Dispute Resolution Committee serves as the default mechanism for such disputes (FSC Statutes, paragraph 73).

• Harmonisation:
The Board of Directors must be satisfied that the standard document is compatible with those of similar and/or neighbouring regions. Discrepancies must be justified on the basis of differing ecological, social or economic conditions. The Working Group must submit (a) a list of existing regional, national and local standards that were analysed and (b) the feedback on the standard obtained by the Working Group / Standards Writing Group from appropriate other Working Groups. Note, FSC generally expects that standards will be harmonised in an upwards rather than downwards manner. Further discussion on harmonisation is given below.

The following are recommended elements of the standard drafting process:

• Process appropriate to scale:
The design and implementation of the consultative process should be appropriate to the scale of the region. The design should include, to the extent possible, varied scale perspectives. The inclusion of international, national, regional and local stakeholder groups in the process will help to ensure that multiple scale perspectives are represented.

• Adaptive to new learning:
The design of the consultative process should include a “learning process approach,” in order to incorporate new knowledge in the implementation and redesign of the consultative process.

• Incorporating diversity:
The consultative process design and implementation should make every attempt to incorporate a diverse group of perspectives. Such diversity may include professional, ethnic, age, gender, educational, and economic differences.

• Adequate attempts to address inequities:
Special efforts should be made to include stakeholder groups which are often excluded from decision-making processes. These groups may include: under-represented social and ethnic groups, women, youth, rural communities, land owners, loggers and foresters. The FSC places particular importance on those people whose livelihoods depend on the forest.

12.3.2 Desirable attributes of regional forest stewardship standards:
As well as the minimum requirements for endorsement, there are a number of other attributes that the standards should preferably exhibit. They should be

- **Easily understandable by a wide audience, using clear language:**
- **Cost effective:**
Regional standards should include indicators and criteria that are cost-effective and efficient. Ways to increase cost-effectiveness include developing criteria and indicators that (a) provide clear thresholds for non-acceptance of certification; (b) are easily measurable by certification bodies; (c) integrate several layers of information; and (d) can be scaled to match the size of the forest management unit;
- **Precisely defined:**
The language in the standards should be clear and easily understandable. Where appropriate, indicators and verifiers should include explicit threshold levels;
- **Easy to detect and record:**
The standards should be easy to detect and record. Quantitative indicators should be easily measurable; qualitative indicators should be easily evaluated;
- **Reliable and consistent:**
The standards should provide reliable and consistent information. Ideally, two different assessors, using the same set of standards in the same forest operation, will arrive at approximately the same conclusions;
- **Integrative:**
Indicators and verifiers that integrate several layers of information (e.g. residual stand damage) are likely to be more efficient and cost-effective than those indicators that focus on a single issue;
- **Useful and appealing to certification bodies and forest managers:**
The regional standards should be a useful and acceptable tool to forest managers and certification bodies working in the region. Working groups should consult with all certification bodies operating in the region during the development of standards. Ideally, standards will be field-tested, in partnership with certification bodies in the region, prior to their submission for FSC-endorsement.

The level of specificity of the standards may vary from region to region. At a minimum, indicators should be developed for most criteria of the FSC Principles and Criteria. This is particularly important for locally controversial issues: perhaps clearcut size, pesticide use, non-timber forest products or reserve size.

**12.3.3 Harmonisation**

The aim of harmonisation is for the regional forest stewardship standards to provide a consistent interpretation of the Principles and Criteria world-wide. This is of particular concern where ecological boundaries do not match the socio-political boundaries of national or regional borders. FSC recognises that regional standards, even those developed for the same forest ecosystem, may vary from region to region for legal, political or other reasons. However, significant variations in ecological indicators and verifiers for similar or identical forest ecosystems would imply inconsistent interpretation of the FSC Principles and Criteria and could lead to downward harmonisation of standards.
There is also a danger that the flexibility of the Principles and Criteria could allow alternative interpretations, which make different standards for regions that are apparently similar in terms of economic development and ecological factors either relatively ‘high’ i.e. hard to achieve, or ‘low’ i.e. easy to achieve. The danger of this is that the first standard in a region could calibrate norms for the rest of the region: if the first standard is very high or very low, others will be forced to follow.

It is therefore a requirement of FSC that all possible efforts are made to achieve harmonisation during the standards drafting process.

There are a number of mechanisms to approach the achievement of harmonisation in addition to the specific requirements specified above:

- Identification of regions that share similar forest ecosystems;
- Consultation and discussion with regions sharing similar forest ecosystems. This could be through (a) inter-regional meetings, or (b) sharing of staff and group members; and
- Circulation of first, intermediate and final draft standards (which should be in English or Spanish, as well as the local language if different) to all other National Initiatives and to the Secretariat’s Regional Co-ordinators.

In the situation where a National Initiative is starting to develop its own regional standards, and where a neighbouring region is well ahead in developing its own regional forest stewardship standards, it is very important not to reinvent the wheel. It may be possible to use its standards as a starting point and to use the in-country consultative process to assess them for suitability to the National Initiative, and to incorporate local adjustments where appropriate.

12.3.4 Required Steps of the Standard Writing and Endorsement Process

1. Explicit delegation of standards co-ordinator
   The Working Group that is responsible for developing and/or submitting standards for FSC endorsement must clearly delegate a national person, for example an FSC Contact Person or the co-ordinator of the Working Group, to co-ordinate, collate and distribute draft standards for consultation and harmonisation, and to submit the final version of standards for FSC endorsement. This person should be responsible for all communication regarding standards between the FSC Secretariat and the National Initiative.

2. Distribution of updated standards
   The delegated national person must ensure that an updated version of the standards has been provided to all the neighbouring regional and national working Groups, FSC endorsed Contact Persons, and the FSC Secretariat as soon as the standards are updated. The respective regional and national Working Groups, and FSC Contact Persons are responsible for distributing these standards to their national/regional stakeholders including FSC members in the country and forwarding their comments back to the designated delegate of the Working Group. It is recommended that the drafts should be in one of the official languages of FSC.

3. Harmonisation Meetings
   Harmonisation meetings (or equivalent) should be organised by the Working Group with delegates from neighbouring regions/countries and similar bioregions’ Working Groups. The objectives of the meetings should be, among others, to compare
procedures, to identify gaps, and to identify and resolve controversies and differences that may have negative effects on management or markets. The expected outcomes of the meeting should be a set of specific recommendations on the standards of the participating regions involved.

4. Consolidation of harmonisation outcomes
The Working Group should decide upon recommendations of harmonisation consultation or meetings to draft final standards for FSC endorsement. The Working Group must justify in writing the significant differences that remain, and the reasons for them. In drafting the final draft standards, consultation with the FSC Secretariat may also be appropriate.

5. Final draft standards
The final draft standards should be written in a hierarchical framework with principles, criteria, indicators and verifiers. They must be in one of the FSC official languages. They must follow FSC P&C structure.

6. Explicit endorsement by Working Group
Final draft must be sent to the FSC Secretariat, and FSC endorsed Contact Persons for a 30 day review, and must also be publicly available on request. The designated national persons should provide explicit comments (in writing) of the standards. It is expected that there are no last minute objections on the final standards, unless it is significantly different from pre-harmonisation meeting version or unless there are new developments or information.

7. FSC Secretariat's evaluation
The final draft standards must be submitted to the FSC Secretariat along with an application with tabulated justification of compliance with FSC P&C, and the FSC National Initiatives documents.

8. FSC Board of Directors' Decision
The FSC Secretariat submits to the FSC Board of Directors through the Board sub-committee its report. The designated delegate may be present during the Board decision.

9. Appeals period
Decisions on the endorsement of standards will be included in the Board meeting minutes. Any FSC member with two FSC members as seconders can appeal the FSC Board’s decision within 60 days from the date of the publication of the Board minutes.

10. Implementation
If no appeal is launched within 60 days, the standards will be implemented as the FSC standards in a country or region. If there is an appeal, the FSC Board will re-evaluate its decision and make a final decision. Further appeals will involve the FSC Dispute Resolution Committee.

11. Notification
Once the standards are endorsed, the FSC Executive Director will give a notice to all certification bodies about adding the endorsed standards to the terms of all accreditation contracts. The endorsed standards will also be published in ‘FSC Notes.’

12.3.5 Further Requirements of the Standard Writing Process, as of Jan. 1, 1999
At the beginning of 1998, FSC analysed the current use of the FSC Principles and
Criteria. The full findings can be found in the discussion paper *Implementation of the FSC Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship*, January 1998, M.G. Wenban-Smith. The summary is reproduced here. Its recommendations will be implemented as soon as the consultation on its content has been completed and any changes made.

**Summary**
The discussion paper concludes that the use of the Principles and Criteria for standards development by certification bodies, and by National Initiatives is leading to incompatible results. It predicts that this will lead to an increase in the number and seriousness of complaints submitted to FSC for resolution, and that this will be damaging for FSC.

The paper proposes that in order to resolve complaints, the proposed standards must be framed in terms of failures of individual Principles, and not in terms of failure of individual Criteria. This implies that certification bodies and National Initiatives need to provide greater clarity as to when a Principle is or is not considered to have been met by a forest management operation.

The focus on clarity at the level of Principles provides a unifying framework for the development of compatible standards by certification bodies and FSC National Initiatives. This will not only lead to a reduction in the number of complaints being submitted to FSC for resolution, but will also provide a framework for the way in which complaints can be resolved when they do.

**Recommendation 1:**
As of 1 January 1999 ALL certification body ‘generic’ standards and FSC national/regional Forest Stewardship Standards MUST be presented in a structure which follows the 10 FSC Principles.

**Recommendation 2:**
As of 1 January 1999 ALL certification body scoring and decision support systems must demonstrate explicitly, and at the level of each FSC Principle individually, that the Principle has been met by the forest management enterprise in order for a certificate to be awarded.

**Recommendation 3:**
As of 1 January 1999 FSC shall endorse national/regional Forest Stewardship Standards only if:
- They can be implemented for certification evaluations in the forest, without further interpretation or elaboration; and
- They specify operationally what they mean by ‘major failures’ of the FSC Principles and Criteria, as demonstrated by consideration of
  - the certification body standard for the country concerned, OR
  - the FSC-endorsed Forest Stewardship Standard for the region concerned.

The definition of ‘major failure’ must be based on consideration of forest management enterprise’s performance with respect to the criteria and indicators of the relevant standard, AND consideration of the importance and consequences of any failures at the levels of criteria and indicators.

This policy should be implemented in the form of guidelines to FSC Members, and incorporated into the FSC Dispute Resolution Procedures.

**Recommendation 5:**
The FSC Secretariat should prepare, as soon as possible, a detailed set of guidelines for regional working groups, describing and explaining the known options for the operational definition of ‘major failures’ at the level of each individual Principle.

12.3.6 Required Presentation Format for FSC Regional Standards -- Draft:

1. Table of contents
2. Preface
   2.1 Descriptive statement of the FSC
   2.2 Descriptive statement of the National Initiative (optional)
   2.3 List of members of the committee that prepared the standard
   2.4 List of key consultants and advisors who assisted the committee
3. Introduction
   3.1 Purpose for which the standard was prepared (optional)
4. Status of the standard
   4.1 Original date of the preparation and endorsement of the standard, subsequent edition dates, current edition date, and the next anticipated revision.
   4.2 Statement of the responsible parties that oversaw the development of the standard.
5. Context
   5.1 Statement of the specific geographic area covered by the standard
   5.2 List of publications which are referred to in the standard. This would include FSC documents, other FSC endorsed regional forest stewardship standards, legislation, and other relevant documents.
   5.3 Definitions (those terms which are crucial to the standard that are not defined in the FSC Principles and Criteria).
6. Body of the standard
   To be presented in the format of the Principles and Criteria such that for each criterion it is clearly indicated which data are to be used to evaluate performance, how those data are to be evaluated and the level above which performance is deemed acceptable. In addition, clear indication will be given as to what constitutes a failure to achieve acceptable performance for each principle. Failure to achieve adequate performance for a principle is to be considered a major failure and prohibits the awarding of a certificate by an FSC endorsed certification body. The standard will clearly distinguish information that is intended as guidance from information that constitutes a requirement for compliance with a criterion. If significant guidance is provided, the FSC may require that a separate document be prepared that includes only those required components of the standard.

DIAGRAM 7 – REGIONAL FOREST STEWARDSHIP STANDARDS PREPARATION PROCESS

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Stakeholder identification

Formation of standards development committee

Review of any existing standards in-country and for neighbouring regions

Interpretation of each FSC Principle and Criteria relevant to the country/region

Examination of national legislation

First draft of standards
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12.4 The consultative process

Although this explanation of a consultative process is written with standards drafting in mind, the broad principle is the same for any consultative process that the National Initiative might need to undertake.

The entire process of drafting regional forest stewardship standards is built on the consultative process. The consultative process is used
- To maintain FSC transparency and accountability;
- To provide a structured forum for stakeholder input; and
- To produce a consensus-driven set of regional forest stewardship standards, acceptable to the broadest possible range of stakeholders.

As with the overall standards production process, FSC sets out certain requirements and recommendations for the consultative process, which are designed to ensure that the standards are drafted in a transparent and democratic manner.

12.4.1 Role of FSC Board members and staff in the consultative process

All FSC members, including FSC Board members and FSC staff, are invited and encouraged to participate in the development and consultative process of forest management standards in their area. However, if a Board member or staff participates in this process, they must abstain from certain decisions at the FSC A.C. level. These include, but are not necessarily limited to (1) the vote for formal endorsement of the Working Group in which they have participated, (2) the vote for formal endorsement of the technical integrity of the standards, and (3) the vote for formal endorsement of the consultative process of the standards. Any disputes regarding the role of FSC Board members and staff in national initiatives should be resolved through the FSC’s Dispute Resolution system.

12.4.2 Role of certification bodies in the consultative process

Certification bodies are strongly encouraged to actively participate in the consultative process for the drafting of regional standards. Because of the inherent potential conflict of interest of a certification body’s role in developing, evaluating, and implementing a set of standards, special precautions must be taken to ensure that certification bodies do not dominate or control the consultative process. In order to be endorsed by the FSC, all standards must undergo a consultative process that is independent from any single group.

12.4.3 Limitations to the consultative process

Consultative processes can be expensive, time-consuming and difficult to manage, particularly when a true diversity of interests is represented in the decision-making process. The FSC recognises these limitations. The overall aim of the consultative process is to develop standards that are acceptable to the broadest range of stakeholders possible, without endangering the high level of integrity needed for certification to work as a credible mechanism. Therefore, Working Groups should attempt to include as many diverse groups as possible in the consultative process, within realistic financial and time constraints. Furthermore, the Working Group should focus its efforts on targeting those groups and individuals that are clearly and
12.4.4 Stakeholder identification

The success of the consultative process is determined by who is included in the process.

When initiating the consultative process, the first question is “Whom do we consult?” It is important to ensure that the process is not restricted to people who share your own perspective.

A stakeholder, or stakeholder group is defined as any individual or group who may be affected by, or expresses a strong interest in, forest management, or the development of forest management standards. In previous consultative processes, these groups have included foresters, environmental and conservation organisations, loggers, forest dwellers, research and academic institutions, social and human rights advocacy groups, indigenous communities, development and aid organisations, government representatives, timber trade dealers and associations, and concerned individuals. The extent to which a national or international stakeholder group is considered a local stakeholder should be determined by the Working Group. Every effort should be made to accommodate those groups that express an interest in the process. A dispute resolution mechanism (either locally, or via the FSC Secretariat) must exist for those groups that feel excluded from the consultative process.

Hannah Scrase, FSC-UK Contact Person, prepared Briefing Notes on how to identify stakeholders. Although these are based on the UK experience, it is expected that they hold wider relevance. These notes are included below.

**Step One**

Compile a list of different interests relating to forestry, forests and wood products in your country – without naming organisations at this stage. Divide them roughly into Environmental, Social and Economic interests. This could include, but not be limited to

a. Environmental: Campaigning environmental groups, environmental trusts that manage woodlands for conservation, youth groups, environmental education groups.

b. Social: Trades unions, contractors’ associations, community forestry groups, recreation and access groups, indigenous people’s groups, health and safety groups, consumer associations, rural development groups.

c. Economic: Forestry companies, processing companies, manufacturers, retailers, timber traders, forest owners’ associations, professional forestry associations, investment banks, trade associations, certification bodies.

d. Others: Academic and research institutions, Government departments (forestry, environment, trade/industry, national parks, agriculture) and parastatal organisations.

Consultants and other individuals may be considered in the interest group that mainly interests them. Forest owners or their associations may be considered as either economic or social interests, or both, according to circumstances.
Step Two
Use the list as headings and start to fill in the names of organisations and individuals under each heading. It is useful to get as many people as possible to help to compile this list so that no-one is missed. It may help to ask specific people from different regions to help with contact details for groups that are regional to one part of the country. The initial list may often have more than a hundred organisations and individuals on it. This list can always be added to in the future but it helps to invite as many as possible as early as possible to the process to avoid having groups feel excluded.

Step Three
All the groups identified should be sent basic information about FSC and an invitation to participate in the process. Those that respond positively will form a core group, which can be expanded over time. It is likely to be necessary to hold one or more seminars at an early stage to provide the opportunity for people to learn about FSC and to ask questions. A letter explaining what FSC is and asking them to register their interest if they would like to be involved in standards development or in any other way is a good start. When you are ready to hold an information seminar it is probably worth asking FSC in Oaxaca whether there are any National Initiatives in neighbouring countries that could help by sending someone to talk about his or her experiences in running an FSC Initiative.

Step Four
If the response is positive, you may find that there are too many people to work effectively as a group. If this is the case it is necessary to find representatives for each chamber who are supported by the other organisations in that chamber. As there will probably be few FSC members at this stage, it is probably best to set up an interim group elected from amongst those that respond positively to your invitation and then encourage them and others to become FSC members so that formal elections can be held later on.

12.4.5 Wider stakeholder communication

There will inevitably be various different degrees to which stakeholders become involved and you will probably need to maintain a database that reflects this. A single database of names and addresses that tags each name to show how he or she is involved will help to ensure everyone receives the information he or she requests but does not feel drowned by detail and paperwork. It may be best to add only those to the database who wish to receive information or to be involved. Each name is tagged ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for
1. FSC members – who receive most information including annual reports, policy papers, ballots etc.;
2. Members of the national working group;
3. Registered consultants on the national working group;
4. Receiving the national and/or international FSC newsletter;
5. Involvement in a particular policy discussion group;
6. The Buyers Group of companies committed to buying FSC labelled products; and
7. None of the above, but it is necessary to hold his or her address for some reason.

12.4.6 Possible problems with the consultative process
**Negative responses:** Inevitably some groups will not respond at all, and others will respond negatively. In the UK, the interim Working Group examined the responses and prioritised those groups that had not responded positively and whose input was considered particularly important. These groups were then followed up with individual letters, phone calls and meetings to encourage them to participate at some level. However, there may be groups that are ideologically opposed to FSC and thus refuse to participate. The National Initiative should ensure that they know the door is open (and should keep written records of correspondence to that effect). It may be better to move forward with those who offer their support rather than to be held up by those who do not.

**Unbalanced representation:** As work progresses, it is important to keep an eye on the balance of the group and to correct significant imbalances where possible by concentrating efforts on encouraging more input from the sectors that are less well represented. If there are simply too many representatives of one sector it should be possible for that sector to choose a smaller number of people from amongst its chamber who can represent its interests at meetings. If sectors are encouraged to choose their own representatives no-one should feel marginalised.

### 12.5 Endorsement of standards

Endorsement of standards refers to the process by which draft regional forest stewardship standards become formally approved by the FSC Board of Directors. Once endorsed, these standards become the standards that all accredited certification bodies operating in the region must meet or exceed.

There are several steps involved in achieving endorsement of regional forest stewardship standards, and are shown in Diagram 6 overleaf.

#### 12.5.1 National Initiative’s role in standards endorsement

Contact Persons or Working Group Co-ordinators are strongly advised to consult regularly with their FSC Regional Co-ordinator at the FSC Secretariat about the process, difficulties encountered, and successive drafts. This will help to avoid delays at the end of the process. Especially, it will help to avoid unexpected delays in formal endorsement by the Board of Directors, caused by misunderstandings that could have been cleared up earlier.

When the National Initiative is satisfied that all FSC guideline requirements have been completed, the following documentation should be submitted to the Secretariat. It may be submitted as one document or as a collection of separate reports.

- A letter to the FSC Board of Directors submitting the regional forest stewardship standards to the Board for formal FSC endorsement. This letter should be signed by the chair or the co-ordinator of the endorsed FSC Working Group, and sent to the FSC Executive Director; and
- A report on the reactions or positions of the main stakeholder groups consulted. This should include an explanation and summary of the main stakeholder interest groups. These groups should include at least forestry workers and industry trade unions, forest owner associations, forest industry associations or chambers of commerce, consumer organisations, indigenous peoples’ organisations, regional and national forest services, and
environmental NGOs.

12.5.2 Summary of Regional and National Standards Endorsement Process

1. Working Group Responsibilities

1.1 The Working Group must ensure that the standards fulfil all the requirements detailed in section 12.3 above, Preparation of Regional Forest Stewardship Standards. The Working Group must also explicitly endorse the standards.

1.2 The documentation submitted by the working group shall include the standards document and a document describing the process of standards development. The applicant should also include a list of individuals and organisations who endorse the standards (in writing).

1.2.1 The standards document shall (a) be presented in a structure that follows the 10 FSC Principles, (b) be implementable for certification evaluations in the forest, without further interpretation or elaboration and (c) specify operationally what is meant by ‘major failures’ of the FSC P&C, at the level of each individual Principle. The information for (c) may be included in an accompanying scoring document. Note, these requirements apply to all standards endorsed after January 1, 1999.

1.2.2 The standards development process document shall address specifically the following requirements:

1. consultative process -- the document shall address the elements detailed under the 12.3.1 Regional Standard Drafting Requirements and Recommendations section above;

2. harmonisation -- the document must satisfy the FSC Board of Directors that the standards are compatible with those of similar and/or neighbouring regions. Discrepancies must be justified on the basis of differing ecological, social or economic conditions. The Working Group must submit (a) a list of existing regional, national and local standards that were analysed and (b) the feedback on the standards obtained by the Working Group/ Standards Writing Group from appropriate other Working Groups. Note, the FSC generally expects that standards will be harmonised in an upwards rather than downwards manner;

3. technical requirements -- i.e. the required steps of the standard development process, the desirable attributes of standards, and the provision for revision of standards, must be fulfilled and/or addressed.

1.3 The draft standards and supporting documents may be submitted to the Secretariat at any time. The Secretariat will work with the Working Group to try to complete all the requirements.

2. FSC Secretariat

2.1 The FSC Secretariat evaluates the submitted standards and documents and prepares an evaluation report.

2.1.1 The FSC Secretariat uses the FSC Generic Regional Forest Stewardship Standard Evaluation Report in preparing the evaluation report.

2.1.2 The secretariat consults directly with national initiatives in neighbouring
countries and in similar eco-regions, to confirm the level of harmonisation achieved.

2.2 The Secretariat submits the completed checklist to the applicant for comments before the evaluation report is finalised.

2.3 Six week deadline for completing all requirements: In order to ensure a strong and positive recommendation to the Board, this whole process should be completed six weeks before the next board meeting, to allow time for preparation, translation and distribution of documents well in advance of the meeting.

2.4 The following documents are submitted to the FSC Board of Directors, at least two weeks before the board meeting:

   (a) the standards submitted for endorsement;
   (b) the secretariat report on all the documents submitted by the Working Group;
   (c) the completed checklists.

The full set of documents submitted by the Working Group will be made available to individual board members who request them, and will also be available for reference during the board meeting.

3. FSC Board of Directors

3.1 The FSC Board of Directors makes the final decision on the endorsement of the submitted standards.

3.2 The FSC Board of Directors may request further information or clarification. The standards may also be returned to the Working Group for further work, if the Board of Directors feels that the standards do not meet the FSC requirements.

12.6 Non-FSC standards

FSC recognises that forest certification began in many countries before the activities of FSC. Certification bodies, which may or may not be FSC accredited, are operating in accordance with their own standards. Accredited certification bodies are authorised, under contract, to issue certificates in such countries, using their approved generic standards and other elements.

The regional forest stewardship standards endorsed by FSC are subject to strict procedures and conditions (as outlined in this chapter), which are necessary for FSC to ensure the integrity of its own standards and activities in the different countries it operates in. However, this does not mean that the FSC ignores other standard-setting initiatives, which may be of an equally high quality. Rather, FSC aims to work in partnership, in an attempt to produce mutually acceptable standards that are still eligible for FSC endorsement.

Any organisation, individual, or group of individuals, including certification bodies and government representatives, may develop standards for consideration by an FSC Working Group. FSC strongly encourages National Initiatives to consider, and if appropriate, collaborate with, existing standards development initiatives, particularly when these initiatives include FSC members. The National Initiative then has the responsibility to ensure that the standards development initiative meets the technical and process requirements of FSC. For example, standards must cover all the FSC Principles and Criteria, and a sufficiently rigorous consultation process must have been carried out. Formal FSC endorsement is only possible if the draft standards have been
recommended and submitted by the National Initiative Working Group.

[One issue currently under discussion within FSC is whether it is possible, or even desirable, to set up a system to formally endorse standards that are not submitted by an FSC endorsed National Initiative Working Group but still meet all the other FSC requirements. This issue arises where, for political or other reasons, the Working Group cannot seek FSC endorsement. The draft discussion paper and a response are in Appendix 3. Contact Persons and National Initiatives are encouraged to send their views to the Secretariat.]
12.7 Potential problems with the standards drafting process

Diagram 8 – Standards Endorsement Process

- Adoption of standards by FSC Working Group, using Checklist
  - Presentation of standards to Secretariat, including but not limited to:
    - List of contact details of stakeholders consulted
    - Number of drafts
    - Description of process
    - List of individuals and organisations who endorse the process, in writing
  - Evaluation by Secretariat, using Checklist
  - Applicant’s comments
  - Secretariat report submitted to applicant for comment
  - Approval of Secretariat’s report by Executive Director
  - Final report submitted to Board of Directors
  - Board of Directors evaluate standards and report from Secretariat
    - Further information or clarification sought
    - Standards returned to Working Group for further work

Endorsement
As the requirements of the standards development process are rigorous, the National Initiative is likely to encounter problems as it works through the various phases. A few of these, together with possible solutions, are discussed below.

**Volume of work and time commitment**
However long you think it will take to draft standards, it will take longer! The amount of work created by using a consultative process must be minimised and spread among group members. This enables the Contact Person to work on other tasks, as required in the *Contact Persons Agreement*, and avoids overloading individual Working Group members. Minimising and spreading the workload can be achieved in a number of ways, including

- Employing a consultant – an independent, well-known and generally trusted individual may also help to increase the credibility of the consultative process;
- Establishing a technical subcommittee, taking advantage of the skills and knowledge of stakeholders; and
- Where possible, adopting standards drafted for regions with similar forest ecosystems. This will also contribute to the process of harmonisation.

**Funding**
The consultative process and drafting of standards require money to cover the costs of staff and Working Group, consultants’ time and expenses, administration support, printing and distribution, among other things. The Contact Person’s role includes fund-raising and he or she can expect the support of Working Group members in identifying and approaching funding sources. Money may be available from the FSC Secretariat for some purposes.

Limited funding is available from the FSC Secretariat for some countries to develop standards. Funding will be in the form of financial and technical assistance. Financial assistance will be for initial certification workshops, consultative processes and for drafting standards. Technical assistance will be in the form of presentations on FSC certification processes, consultative processes, drafting standards, and training by the FSC Secretariat or individuals designated by the FSC Secretariat.

**Lack of input from key organisations**
One component of the consultative process is to identify those who either do not respond at all or those who respond negatively. Some of these organisations may be important to the consultative process because of the sheer weight of numbers represented, or because they are opinion leaders, or because they represent an important section of the stakeholder community, such as forest owners.

The Working Group should make every effort to enable such groups or their representatives to take part. Some methods used so far include

- Inviting them to get involved from very early on;
- Listening to the concerns expressed and attempting to overcome or minimise them. This could be done either by explaining how FSC really works, if the concern is due to a misunderstanding, or, if appropriate, making changes to the process. If the concerns are legitimate and caused by some aspect of the FSC’s structure (e.g. a problem of access for small producers), the FSC Secretariat should be informed together with any proposals you may have for overcoming it;
- Active encouragement to promote the organisations’ participation, through individual letters, telephone calls and meetings;
- Maintaining an open channel for communication with these organisations or
key individuals, by continuing to send the organisation FSC literature and invitations to attend events;
- Inviting observers to see how the FSC process works;
- Approaching some of their more progressive members individually;
- Use of an independent arbitrator to bring about talks.

Determining the relative weighting of different interests
In a process where the views of very different types of stakeholders are being gathered, it is likely that some of these opinions will be mutually exclusive. For example, it could be necessary to balance the views of the following: an international NGO that is not much concerned with local forestry but is a member of FSC, a national growers association that is involved in local forestry but is not supportive of FSC, a national NGO working in forestry that is supportive of FSC but not a member, and an ecological expert with no organisational affiliation but with an excellent subject knowledge.

Each National Initiative should make its own decision on how to balance these differences. Although the Consultative Process should be as comprehensive as possible, it is important that progress is not completely obstructed by the consultation.

Flexibility versus being auditable
One problem encountered is how to design standards that are specific enough to be used for audits and assessments within the certification process, yet also flexible enough to be usable throughout the country or region. This is a local issue, thus is best tackled with the advice of local expert stakeholders.

**IMPORTANT**
- Regional forest stewardship standards do not have to be prepared by the National Initiative, but must be approved by the National Initiative before being submitted to FSC A.C. for endorsement.
- Make sure that the proposed regional forest stewardship standards meet all the requirements for endorsement, before they are submitted to FSC A.C. These requirements cover the methodology used to draw up the standards, the structure and the content of the standards. The consultative process is a particularly important element of the standards drafting process.
- The National Initiative should communicate regularly with their Regional Co-ordinator at the Secretariat for advice in the standards drafting and endorsement process.

Standards should be designed so that they are compatible with the FSC forest stewardship standards in neighbouring territories, particularly where neighbouring territories’ forests share a similar ecology. This process is known as ‘harmonisation.’
CHAPTER 13

SPEAKING FOR FSC

Who represents FSC? Who has the right to speak for FSC? Different people have different answers, depending on what they mean by "representing" and "speaking for."

13.1 The formal position of FSC

FSC’s position on a given issue is defined by documents approved by the membership and board. These are public documents. In any situation, anyone (FSC member or not) may give extracts or summaries of these documents.

In cases where FSC’s position is unclear, undecided or provisional, anyone may provide a personal explanation of the position, and the issues. It should be made clear that these explanations are personal, unless they are based on extracts from FSC-approved documents.

FSC’s position may change in the light of experience or new information, and in response to members’ concerns. Changes are usually preceded by widely circulated discussion papers. The formal position of FSC is the one presented in the current approved documents.

13.2 Representing FSC during presentations and discussions

When making presentations, whether at a personal level or by stating the FSC position, anyone may explain his or her status within the FSC system. His or her status may be, for example, FSC member or endorsed Contact Person, or co-ordinator of an endorsed Working Group. National Initiatives have access to updated information, and regular communication with the FSC Secretariat, Board and other Contact Persons. Stakeholders and other members of the public will tend to place great confidence in his or her opinions, judgement and local knowledge. The National Initiative representative should be aware of this perceived authority.

FSC relies on the National Initiatives to explain its position, and also to explain the limits to its position. When they do so, they will be "speaking for" FSC. FSC National Initiatives are expected to endorse FSC’s position and system, but they may also have personal opinions and preferences on how issues should be resolved. They are free to explain and justify these opinions, but should then make it clear that they are speaking as individuals, or as members of other organisations, and are not "speaking for FSC."

The only people who may formally commit FSC, or negotiate on its behalf, are FSC’s legal representatives, and those who have been authorised in writing by FSC’s legal representatives (cf. FSC agreements for Contact Persons, Working Groups and National Offices).

As a general rule, FSC members taking part in discussions should make their FSC
status clear, and make a clear distinction between, on the one hand, explaining FSC
decisions or positions as defined in FSC documents and, on the other hand, giving their
personal opinions and interpretations.

**IMPORTANT**

- It is vital to clarify whether you are referring to the formal FSC position on a topic, or
  your own personal position.

- The formal position of FSC on a topic is expressed in approved FSC documents. Where a
  topic moves ahead of approved documentation, contact the Secretariat to
  establish the formal FSC position before making public comment.
CHAPTER 14

PROMOTION OF FSC

14.1 Introduction to promotion

The FSC can achieve its aims only if both producers and consumers are aware of FSC and its activities. This means that FSC must explore all possible avenues to inform as many audiences as possible. National Initiatives have a crucial role in this because they represent FSC at the local, national and regional levels. They are the approachable and most easily contacted face of FSC.

The National Initiatives’ role in promoting FSC has a number of elements:

- Distribution and production of information, including the international newsletter ‘FSC Notes’, information about certified forests and their products, discussion papers and other documents;
- Promotion of discussion on certification in-country; and
- Publicising the FSC in the country’s media, including trade journals, newspapers, the Internet, television and radio.

14.2 Promotional literature

Some promotional literature is available from the Secretariat, in both English and Spanish (the two official languages of FSC). This literature refers to FSC as a whole and is aimed at a very general international audience. As a National Initiative, you may need more detailed literature that targets your national audience and most importantly, is in a language that everyone will be able to read and understand. The type of national promotional literature that you will need will depend on the stage that your National Initiative has reached; the money available to produce and distribute the literature; and the target audience. Don’t expect to produce all the national promotional literature immediately; rather, prioritise them so that you work on the most important first.

The types of literature that a National Initiative may wish to have available are

- An introduction to the FSC as an international organisation;
- List of FSC accredited certification bodies, with contact details;
- List of forests certified by FSC accredited certification bodies;
- FSC Notes;
- National Initiative newsletter;
- An introduction to the National Initiative;
- Annual reports of the National Initiative and FSC A.C.; and
- List of certified timber and products available in your country, with details of where they can be bought.
Of the above list, the first four are available from the Secretariat. Some of these are discussed in greater detail further on in this chapter.

14.3 Promotion of certification

Promotion of discussion on certification will be an on-going feature of National Initiative work. It could happen in a number of ways, including

- National Initiative workshops on certification (See Chapter 16, Section 16.2 for more information on running certification workshops);
- National Initiative speakers at external conferences, seminars and training;
- Written contributions to the certification debate, in the press and in academic journals; and
- In press, exhibitions and advertisements.

14.4 Designing a national promotion strategy

In order to promote FSC and its activities most effectively, the Contact Person and/or National Initiative should plan how, when and to what extent it will promote the FSC. This strategy should form an integral part of the National Initiative work plan (See also Chapter 18). As with the overall work plan, the promotion strategy should include

- Specific targets;
- Chosen activities that will, all being well, result in achieving the targets; and
- A budget to cover the chosen activities.

Targets within the promotion strategy could be

- To raise consumer awareness of the FSC;
- To build interest/support amongst forest managers;
- To create demand for FSC labelled products; and
- To promote FSC labelled products already available.

Each target should be broken down to consider

- The exact activities by which the target could be achieved;
- Who would need to be involved. This includes (a) people with direct input in carrying out the promotion activities and (b) people in partner organisations, with whom the National Initiative could usefully work. For example, the FSC has strong links with some NGOs in various countries, which could be exploited to mutual benefit;
- The relative priorities of each target; and
- The timing for implementation of each activity.

You will need to assess whether you have the resources to deal with all aspects of promotion work. To date, National Initiatives have

- Formed a subcommittee of in-country FSC members to work on promotion;
- Included a promotion/information officer as a member of National initiative staff; and
- Employed a consultant.

For each possibility, the National Initiative should work with the individual or group to form Terms of Reference. In this way, each party is clear about its roles, responsibilities and commitment.
14.5 Publicising FSC through the media

Publicising FSC through national media requires careful preparation in terms of what you want to say and how you want to say it. The most common form of media used by National Initiatives is the press, including national newspapers, speciality publications and trade journals. You may also be asked to represent FSC on radio or television. Some basic information on dealing with the press and being interviewed is included below.

Publicity for FSC may be pro-active or reactive. In other words, the publicity may be initiated either by FSC (National Initiative or A.C.), or by others outside the FSC, to which the National Initiative must decide whether or not to respond. In the case of negative publicity, FSC A.C. policy is to provide the facts and explanations objectively, and to press for corrections to be published, without reacting defensively or critically to hostility. In tandem with this, the National Initiative should develop its own strategy for dealing with negative press, e.g. not to attack in return; to provide positive stories of FSC and certification; to provide calm factual correction when FSC is misrepresented.

14.5.1 The Press Release

The press release is a document that gives information to the media in a concise and easy-to-use format. It is one of the most important pieces of information you send out. Make sure that you only send out a press release when you have something interesting to report – an editor receiving lots of uninteresting press releases from an organisation is less likely to read and use them.

The press release must follow a certain format and contain no errors of fact, grammar or spelling. A mistake can ruin your credibility with an editor, and can mean that your piece of news or information will not used. Correctly prepared, a press release is a valuable document to the busy editor or reporter who, at deadline, appreciates a piece of news that is a concise summary of what has happened. A press release should always convey a favourable and professional image of your organisation.

To prepare a press release, keep in mind

- Who was (or will be) involved?;
- What happened or what is it about?;
- Why did it (or will it) take place?;
- When did it (or will it) take place?;
- Where did it (or does it) take place?; and
- How did it (or will it) happen?

The first paragraph introduces the story and should catch the Editor's attention. It should also answer the above questions. Make it clear exactly what is unique about the event – is it human interest? Local interest? A news story?

Succeeding paragraphs provide more details in descending order of importance. This enables the Editor to shorten the piece from the bottom up when space is limited. Some simple guidelines are

- Tell the important part of the story first;
- Be specific. Never use adjectives such as “fabulous.” Personal opinions should never be used in the body of the text; they are only appropriate within a quote. Quotations must be correctly attributed;
• Give precise measurements or weights rather than saying "large" or "heavy";
• Make sure names are spelt correctly. Never use initials unless they are in the middle of a name and include titles;
• Keep any writing simple. Do not use two words if one will do;
• Attribute information to a specific person: it gives more credibility to a story and also adds to its reliability;
• Use brief headings typed in capitals;
• Spell out numbers up to ten and use numerals for numbers over ten;
• Get all statements and stories approved by the appropriate authority;
• Provide at least one quote from a representative of the National Initiative;
• Keep copies of all press releases. Record and log success or failure;
• End press release by including contact names, telephone and fax numbers for yourself and anyone else who is relevant to the story; and
• Update your contacts to ensure that you are sending the release to the correct person.

Most press releases can be used by the press as soon as it receives them and therefore should have the words FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE at the top, along with the date you are sending it.

If you are sending a press release in advance to obtain maximum coverage, you can place an embargo on the story, meaning that it should not be used before a certain date or time. To do this you need to put the word EMBARGO in bold letters at the top of the press release, accompanied by the date and time when the embargo ends. This will, on most occasions, be honoured by the press but beware: if the press release deals with a particularly time-sensitive subject do not send it until you are sure the press can carry the story. You can not guarantee they will stick to the embargo, particularly if they think they can run it before their competitors and thereby break the story first.

The presentation of the press release is important:
• Press releases should be type in 1½ or double line spacing on one side of the paper only;
• They preferably should be sent out on special company Press Release paper. If this is not available, use ordinary headed paper with the words PRESS RELEASE clearly marked in bold at the top of the page;
• Leave wide margins on either side of the page;
• Try to contain the press release on one page. If you have to continue to another page, be sure to include the words MORE... at the foot of the first page and use the same heading as the first page on the top left hand side of the second page;
• Decide whether a photograph should accompany the press release. News photographs should either tell a story in themselves, be visually dramatic, or contain an easily recognisable celebrity. A photograph of a certified product on its own may not be used, but a photograph of the product being used by someone famous, or in an unusual way, will stand much more chance of being used;
• Present a list of contact names and telephone numbers at the foot of the press release, including your own details and those of anyone third parties who may be relevant; and
• Additional information should be presented as NOTES TO EDITORS on a separate page. This might contain a brief description of FSC and its history, a brief description of a third party who is mentioned within the press release, data such as total area of certified forest within a country or world-wide, or
14.5.2 Radio and TV interviews

Interviews are a much more immediate form of publicity than press releases. Although they have the advantage of good profile, they are potentially more dangerous because it is easy to say the wrong thing.

Always give yourself time to think before accepting an invitation for an interview. Don’t be pressured into taking part if you feel uncomfortable; it may be better to find a more suitable spokesperson who can take part.

There are a number of questions to ask before agreeing to take part in an interview:
- Who’s calling?
- What company is she or he calling from?
- What subject would the interview be covering?
- What is the programme?
- Who would the interviewer be?
- When is the interview?
- Where is the interview?
- Will it be live or pre-recorded?
- When will the programme go out?
- Why me / us?
- Who else is involved?
- Will they be showing any visuals?
- What is her or his telephone number? and
- When does she or he need your decision?

If you are asked to do the interview over the telephone, ask the above questions, and then arrange another phone call to give yourself time to prepare your thoughts.

In preparing for the interview, there are several important elements. Research has shown that an audience usually remembers no more than three points after listening to an interview, and often only one will really stick in their minds. It is important then to reduce your message to three key points, and decide in advance the main message you are trying to get across in the interview.

- Find out what audience the programme is aimed at.
- Listen / watch the programme beforehand to study the interviewer - Is she or he generally well informed? Is she or he confrontational? Is there any audience participation?
- Prepare your message in advance - maximum three points reduced to simple statements.
- Prepare responses to all possible difficult questions.
- Practice some phrases you can use to change direction in order to control the course of the interview.
- Practice being interviewed by a colleague until you are comfortable with what you want to say and with how you want to say it. Also practice taking the role of the interviewer as this gives you a better idea of what questions they might ask and how she or he will ask them.

In the interview itself, it is important to be as concise as possible in your answers, as
time is always short.
• Make your point(s) at the beginning.
• Stick to your own subject - don't waste time on digressions.
• Jump on untruths - interrupting if necessary.
• Be positive throughout.
• Speak in plain and simple language without using jargon.
• Make it personal, use personal pronouns.
• Make it interesting by giving examples where appropriate, but don't let these run on too long.
• Make it memorable by describing things visually and using analogies.
• Always be polite, don't get angry and never lose your temper -- you will be listened to and respected much more if you remain calm and logical.
• Never ignore the question, and be honest if you do not know the answer.
• Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question.
• Be aware of what you dislike in other people who are being interviewed, e.g. a politician's refusal to answer a question.
• Don't put anyone down or be drawn into strong arguments, just remain positive about your own point.
• Don't say things, especially about other people or organisations, unless you are sure that they are true.
• Don't answer hypothetical questions about what may or may not happen, because your answer will be misinterpreted.
• Don't let the interviewer put words into your mouth.
• Don't be drawn into revealing private or confidential information, just explain that you are unable to discuss that subject.
• If it's a radio interview you can refer to notes as long as you don't make a noise shuffling them, but it is better to be well prepared as you will be more fluent that way.
• If it is a television interview, make sure that your clothes are comfortable and not too colourful. Studios are usually very bright and hot, so try to wear something cool, and be aware that contact lenses may become dry in that atmosphere.

14.6 National Initiative newsletter

The role of a National Initiative newsletter is

• To provide a general, up-to-date form of publicity for the FSC, and the National Initiative in particular;
• To inform stakeholders of national activities and progress; and
• To provide an on-going presence for FSC.

It is not essential to produce a newsletter, but you may find it useful and worthwhile, particularly when your activities and achievements increase.

Aim to produce the newsletter on a regular basis, depending on (a) how often you will have sufficient information to make it worthwhile, and (b) available resources, especially money and time.

Newsletters are usually relatively informal printed reports, which need not be lengthy, but should show a professional image. National Initiatives with desktop publishing facilities should be able to compile and edit a newsletter fairly easily.
There are several general things to consider in putting a newsletter together, as explained by Baird and Harford (1997):

- Decide what is going into the newsletter well in advance of the planned distribution date. The needs of the intended readers and the resources available have to be taken into account;
- Contact local printers and/or photocopy suppliers to get prices for the work. They can give the costs of different options, for example line drawings may be cheaper to print than photographs;
- Draw up a schedule with deadlines for copy (articles, features, letters, advertisements), artwork (pictures, photographs, cartoons), proofs (draft copies) and the final version. If other members of the group have been asked to submit copy, or outside experts have been commissioned, they should be given ample time. Let everyone concerned know what the schedule dates are;
- Decide on an appropriate and attractive layout with colleagues; and
- Write clear headlines and make the captions large enough to be easily read. Use pictures that tell a story and try to keep all text brief. When writing news items or features, answer the questions Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? Keep feature items to one page. List the contents near the front. If you are producing a long newsletter that is to be printed, always make the number of pages divisible by four.

14.7 FSC Notes

‘FSC Notes’ is the international newsletter of FSC, published in English and Spanish three times a year, funding permitting. Its target audience is all FSC members, all FSC stakeholders and anyone else expressing a strong interest in the FSC. It has a current circulation of about 10,000.

The content of ‘FSC Notes’ is determined by the Editor, in conjunction with an assigned member of the Secretariat, according to the best news available. The Editor welcomes contributions, particularly for the International Roundup page. National Initiatives are strongly encouraged to respond to calls for information. The Editor requests the following:

- Ideas for potential news or features ideas are welcomed. It is best to send a short summary of the story, which can be written in English or Spanish. It should be clearly marked for ‘FSC Notes’ and sent to the Secretariat in Mexico;
- It is essential that address, fax, telephone or email changes of the National Initiatives offices are sent to ‘FSC Notes’; and
- ‘FSC Notes’ always needs in-focus photographs of people involved in the FSC process. Ideally these should be black and white prints, but colour are also fine. We can also use transparencies (slides). If you have a particularly newsworthy event, please let ‘FSC Notes’ know. Pictures will be returned if they have a return address with them.

It is the responsibility of the National Initiative to distribute ‘FSC Notes’ to in-country members and stakeholders. Before each edition is produced, the Editor contacts each Contact Person or Working Group Co-ordinator to find out how many copies the National Initiative needs. The copies are then bulk distributed to the National Initiative for individual distribution by the National Initiative.
14.8 Websites

With the increasing profile and use of the Internet, a website may be a useful forum for promoting your National Initiative.

FSC A.C. has a website, which can be found at http://www.fscoax.org

Should you wish to establish a website, you may need to employ an expert to do so. There are several basic points to include in a brief for the expert:

- Keep it simple;
- Create a good index from which people can easily move to the area of information they require;
- Don’t use too many graphics – big files take too long to unload;
- Make use of other people’s sites. For example, you could connect to the world map of certified forests on the World Conservation Monitoring Centre web page. This saves having to reproduce them again yourself;
- Update your pages regularly. This need not be very time consuming. It gives a much better impression, and people are less likely to return to a page that is always out-of-date;
- If you are putting up information that people might want to download, such as National Standards, be aware of how easy it is to print this information when you are designing these pages;
- Make sure that you have a good service provider. It does not create a good impression if your pages are always unavailable;
- Get permission to use other people’s material;
- Think about your target audience;
- Ask for feedback; and
- Publicise your site.

There are many more technical points that need to be considered. More information on these can be obtained the Secretariat or other National Initiatives with well established websites. Also consider finding someone locally who has the right expertise.

IMPORTANT

- As a National Initiative, decide on how best to promote FSC, its mission and activities, within the context of the National Initiative’s own aims and available resources.
Keep a supply of up-to-date FSC A.C. promotional literature for distribution in-country.

Make sure that as much locally appropriate promotional literature as possible is available within the National Initiative’s own country, preferably in the local language.

Whenever possible, contribute items of interest to ‘FSC Notes’. Distribute ‘FSC Notes’ promptly to in-country FSC members and other interested stakeholders.

Respond positively and politely to negative comment in the media.

Plan media promotion with care, in line with the guidance given in this manual.
CHAPTER 15
FUND-RAISING

FSC as a whole depends on outside sources for the money it needs for its work in promoting sound forest management. Likewise, fund-raising is crucial to the operation of the National Initiative. Without money, very little can be done! This section looks at the following aspects: a strategy for fund-raising, how to identify funding sources and preparing a funding proposal.

FSC National Initiatives are expected to be largely independent organisations and as such, to be responsible for securing their own funding for all aspects of operation. FSC may provide financial support to National Initiatives for some activities, but only after formal agreements have been made between the National Initiative and FSC. FSC encourages National Initiatives to raise their own funds whenever possible.

However, there are no funding obligations in either direction (FSC A.C. to National Initiative, or vice versa).

15.1 National fund-raising strategy

Before embarking on any fund-raising activities it is very important to spend time producing a strategy for at least the next year. This will include

- Aims and Objectives: What do you hope to achieve over the coming year (be positive but realistic in your targets)? Include things such as Information Service manned a certain number of days a week, FSC membership targets, number of products available, first draft of standards produced etc.; and

- Detailed Income and Expenditure Budgets: Calculate as closely as you can the cost of the activities you plan to undertake, and the possible sum that could be generated by each of the sources of agreed or potential funding.

15.2 Identifying funding sources

There is a wide range of funding sources available to organisations. It often helps to be registered as a civil association, non-profit body, charity or equivalent in the country in which you operate. Many funding sources will not give to organisations that are not registered in this way.

Possible sources:
- European Union: Perhaps the largest source of funding available to FSC National Initiatives, particularly in developing countries. Contact your regional Euro Info Centre (EIC) if you are in the European Union, the European Commission Representative in your country or the Commission directly in Brussels for details of funding available. However, it should be noted that funding from the EU is complicated and time-consuming. Payment is often
delayed for several months after approval. The FSC Secretariat has succeeded in obtaining funding from the EU for the establishment of National Initiatives in several developing countries. Contact your FSC Regional Coordinator at the Secretariat for details of funding available from this and other sources. Note, National Initiatives should co-ordinate any funding approaches to the EU with other countries and Oaxaca as uncoordinated approaches from several groups may reduce the chance of any one receiving funding.

- **Charitable Trusts:** Bodies set up by individuals, groups or companies for the express purpose of giving money to good causes. In many countries, there are directories with full details of these organisations and their interests. For more information, contact the organisations concerned, embassies, other NGOs in your own country or abroad, and other FSC National Initiatives.

- **Corporate Donations and Sponsorship:** If there is a WWF Buyers Group or similar group in your country this is a good place to start. Liaise with the Buyers Group about approaching members for donations towards your activities. Also consider more imaginative ideas, such as a donation for events.

- **Government Funding:** It is possible that the government of your country, or the bilateral programme of other governments offers grants for environmental projects and/or education projects. Several governments have contributed to National Initiatives, e.g. Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria.

- **Individual Donations:** Either through approaching wealthy individuals on a one-to-one basis for substantial donations (this would need to be done by someone of high stature in the organisation or someone in his or her peer group who supports your organisation) or by building up a database of concerned and interested individuals and mailing them for smaller donations. Be aware that your country may have laws governing the use of databases.

- **Trading Activities:** If your constitution allows it, running a mail order catalogue of certified/environmentally sound products may be worth considering. However, first you need a database of interested customers, perhaps developed by linking with another established charity that shares your aims. Also, it can generate a lot of work that needs to be managed carefully.

- **FSC Logo:** In due course, FSC National Offices may be authorised to license the FSC logo for promotional purposes. This issue is under study, and is currently not approved.

### 15.3 Preparing a funding proposal

Both European Union and Government grant giving bodies tend to have fairly strict guidelines for the format in which an application may be submitted. Be prepared that the applications often take a very long time to complete. In some countries organisations exist to act as consultants/advisers for E.U. applications. They may even be able to make applications on your behalf, for a percentage fee of the grant. Again, contact regional offices for advice.

Applications to Foundations, Trusts and Companies: If at all possible, telephone the
contact you have for the organisation prior to making an application to talk through what types of organisations are supported, areas of interest, whether the organisation gives money for activities and/or equipment, and its application procedure and deadlines. Do as much research as you can before making an application. Ultimately this will save you time. Making personal contacts can only help your application.

The crucial thing is to make your application as brief, concise and persuasive as possible. Charitable Trusts always receive more applications than they can ever approve. The person dealing with corporate donations/marketing in a company will undoubtedly be very busy. You need to be able to capture his or her imagination and convince him or her that you are a competent and trustworthy organisation within a very short space of time. Initial applications should be 2-3 pages long at most.

Having thought carefully about your aims, planned activities, costs and expected income you should be able to summarise the key points clearly and succinctly. Back up the brief application with an annual report and audited accounts if they are available, letters of support/commendation from other more well-known NGOs or respected people, positive press coverage, and anything else that you think will convince the organisation that you are a worthwhile cause.

**IMPORTANT**

- The National Initiative is responsible for finding the financial support that it needs to operate.

- At the discretion of the Secretariat, some funding may be available to National Initiatives. This should not be relied on.

- Prepare a budget and budget forecast annually, based on the National Initiative work plan, so that the National Initiative can assess its financial needs for the coming year.

- Produce a fund-raising strategy, which identifies the funding opportunities available.

Communicate with the Regional Co-ordinator for the National Initiative for support in fund-raising. When making large bids, particularly to international funding bodies, make sure that the Secretariat is aware of the National Initiative’s intentions well ahead of submitting the proposal, in order to ensure that FSC presents a unified approach to funders.
TRAINING AND EDUCATION

In the context of this manual, training refers to what is available to National Initiatives to support them in their responsibilities to FSC. Education refers to the activities of FSC, including those of National Initiatives, to raise awareness of forest certification; the importance of purchasing forest products only from well-managed sources; and the FSC name and trademark.

FSC is not a training organisation, in that it does not run training programmes for its members or other stakeholders. Rather, whenever possible, FSC seeks to carry out training and education activities in partnership with others. When working in partnership, the training objectives and content will be jointly defined. FSC is willing to contribute to courses run by other organisations, e.g. by providing speakers.

16.1 Training

FSC recognises that National Initiatives may require training in specific areas if they are to carry out their responsibilities effectively and to achieve their stated objectives.

Currently, National Initiative training occurs on an ad hoc basis, as and when needs are identified or particular training is requested. All National Initiative training needs should be reported to the Programmes Manager at the Secretariat. The Programmes Manager will then assess these needs and attempt to arrange or advise appropriate training.

Training activities may be any of the following types:

- Formal courses, usually run by other organisations, including Certification Bodies;
- Regional training or information workshops, co-ordinated by FSC; and
- International exchanges by National Initiatives, where members travel to another country, usually for a few days and with a specific goal in place.

Financial support for training may be given wholly or in part by the Secretariat, if funds are available. Requests for funding, accompanied by full details of training needs, costs and proposed training activity, should be made to the Programmes Manager at least two months prior to the start date of the training. National Initiatives are encouraged to raise money within their own budgets for training purposes. It should be noted that certification bodies and other organisations have, in the past, either partly or wholly waived training fees for FSC participants. This option should be investigated in the first instance through the Programmes Manager at the Secretariat.

16.2 Education

The FSC Statutes make specific reference to educational activities.
“FSC shall conduct educational activities aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of improving forest management, and the advantages of the certification as a tool for this” (Paragraph. 6, FSC Statutes, 1994).

The most common educational activity for National Initiatives is certification workshops. The aim of these workshops is any or all of the following:

- To promote awareness of the certification process;
- To bring together all interested stakeholders in the initiation and co-ordination of certification initiatives;
- To give examples of certification in action, perhaps with input from other National Initiatives;
- To identify the opportunities and constraints of certification for the country;
- To share information and experiences about certification to provide a forum for debate on certification; and
- To provide stakeholders with the opportunity to learn about FSC and to ask questions.

Such workshops are often held in partnership with other organisations, such as other NGOs, universities and research departments, or government departments.

It is important to define the type of workshop that is appropriate to your country’s needs and circumstances, depending on the level of experience and understanding of certification of the stakeholders, the level of interest and knowledge in the FSC, and the likely type of stakeholders to attend. A list is presented below of things to remember when planning a workshop. This is not exhaustive, but rather aims to draw items of general relevance to your attention. You may find it useful to find out how other National Initiatives have prepared and run workshops. Some information about this is given in Status of National and Regional Certification Initiatives, Jan. 1997 by Dinesh Aryal, available from the Secretariat. For more detailed information about their experiences, it will be necessary to contact particular National Initiatives directly.

There are several elements to consider in preparing a certification workshop:

- Identify participants – this may simply mean using the list of stakeholders identified as part of an FSC consultation process (See also Chapter 12, Section 12.7 for more information on the consultation process).
- Identify aims and objectives of the workshop and then break these down into a timetable of activities.
- Arrange facilitators, trainers and speakers as appropriate to your chosen topics for discussion.
- Ensure sufficient funding or in-kind support. Funding may be available from the Secretariat – contact your Regional Co-ordinator to discuss your needs. The Secretariat may also be able to offer support through raising funds on your behalf. In-kind support, such as provision of venue or stationery or other training materials, will reduce your financial needs.
- Make arrangements for accommodation, food etc. well in advance. Make sure that all participants have accurate joining instructions, distributed well in advance of the start date.

The Secretariat holds a limited resource of training and information materials, including curricula for workshops and slide packs, and are available on request from the Programmes Manager.
IMPORTANT

- Identify internal training needs for National Initiative members as part of the work plan. If funding support is requested from the Secretariat, submit the proposal at least two months ahead of the start of training.

- Be prepared to contribute to or organise training or awareness-raising, both for FSC members and external interested stakeholders.
A work plan provides a planning framework within which the National Initiative can define

- Its aims, and
- The activities it plans to use to achieve these aims.

Once the activities are listed, the National Initiative will have a means to assess reasonably accurately its needs. These needs will primarily be financial, but can also include facilities, training, organisational structures, and other support.

In drawing up a work plan, the National Initiative must set realistic goals. The level of planned activities should be achievable, bearing in mind the following things: available money; people’s time and abilities; the consensus of opinion on desired progress; the climate of acceptance and approval surrounding FSC.

17.1 Suggested work plan structure

- Time period of work plan – standard practice is for a one-year work plan, which fits into a five-year long-term plan;
- Statement of National Initiative objectives for the time period of the work plan;
- Statement of National Initiative achievements to date;
- List of National Initiative aims, including specific targets and named activities;
- Budget – standard categories for the budget breakdown are staffing, office running costs, capital equipment, training, travel expenses, meeting expenses and contingency funding; and
- Fund-raising – total of funds raised so far and total money or in-kind support still required.

17.2 Work plan reviews

Work plans should be subject to regular reviews of progress. It is vital that the National Initiative holds an up-to-date assessment of

- What activities have been completed and which still remain to be done;
- What effect the activities have had; and
- Anything unexpected – positive or negative – that has happened.

With this information available, the National Initiative can decide whether to carry on working as it is or whether changes are needed in the light of events, successes and failures.

The National Initiative should agree on regular dates for production and review of work plans. It is best if this is designed to fit in with internal FSC and external funder
reporting requirements, and with accounting requirements, in order to minimise administrative and reporting effort and time.

17.3 Drawing up the work plan

The structure of the National Initiative will determine who is involved in drawing up the work plans. Where there is only a Contact Person, it is her or his job, but she or he can expect support from the Secretariat and in-country FSC members. Where National Initiatives are Working Groups and/or Advisory Boards, it is suggested that they work together to formulate the plan. There are two possible methods:

1) The Contact Person or Co-ordinator and staff, if any, draw up a draft plan, which is then circulated for input, comment and approval by the Working Group/Advisory Board members; and

2) The Contact Person or Co-ordinator and staff (if any) and Working Group/Advisory Board members hold a workshop-type meeting to brainstorm the plan.

Work plans should have the support of the FSC members in the country. Where the National Initiative holds a Main Agreement with FSC, it must submit its work plan to FSC. In other cases, National Initiatives are encouraged to send their work plan to the Secretariat, for information only.

IMPORTANT

- Draw up annual WORK PLANS, with targets and activities appropriate to the National Initiative’s resources, preferably using the structure suggested above as a basis.
- Make sure that the work plan is approved by the whole National Initiative and supported by in-country FSC members.
- Submit this work plan to the Secretariat for their information.
- Plan for a regular review of the work plans.
FSC Agreements make it clear that all FSC National Initiatives are expected to prepare and distribute annual reports.

The annual report is read by both internal and external audiences. If it is carefully designed, the annual report can also be used as promotion literature to be sent out to people requesting general information about FSC and the National Initiative.

There are a few simple things to bear in mind when preparing the report. Baird (1996) notes the following elements:

- What’s needed: Complete, signed set of financial year’s accounts; working/ printing budget; reasonable time frame; clear decision about who passes final copy.
- Write in a lively style to interest the people likely to read it, including donors, staff, volunteers, certification bodies, other organisations and media.
- The annual report puts the National Initiative on show – perhaps spend more to boost supporter confidence, impress fund-raisers or to make it classy enough for people to want to open the pages.
- Be selective with the content – give a sense of the work of the organisation throughout the year; highlight strong stories and personal testimonies; explain changes and your organisation’s remit.
- Use in-focus photographs and pictures that tell a story (check with subjects that it is all right to use their images). Graphs and pie charts are useful for explaining financial records.
- Even a short report benefits from a box on the first page that lists the contents.
- Fact-check all drafts; ask at least two people to read for mistakes.
- Everyone will be busy and may resent helping out with the report, but it is essential to request their advice and to get their approval about the content.
- Try to produce the annual report during a slack time.
- Costs will be incurred for the time and services of the editor or staff member assigned to produce the annual report, and for the design, printing, packing and posting.
- Put one person in overall editorial control. Make it clear who’s in charge and who approves what.
- Badly designed, unprofessional looking reports damage reputations. If you can’t afford to hand the whole report over to a design professional, try to get a professionally designed eye-catching front cover. A supporter or donor may cover some of the costs.
- Learn from other annual reports – what did you like or not like? What made it easy or difficult to read?

In addition, if the report is also to act as promotional literature, it should include
- Basic background information about FSC;
• FSC mission statement; and
• FSC Principles and Criteria.