



## FSC CONSULTATION PLATFORM

Daniel Simonds,

Thank you for participating in the consultation.

Below are the answers you have submitted. If you need to edit your answers, you can do this before 01/1/2023.

[FIRST PUBLIC CONSULTATION: FSC-PRO-60-002A FSC CONTROLLED WOOD RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK \(Extension\)](#)

**To what extent do you find the definition and NOTE on the precautionary approach to be clear and implementable?**

Somewhat unclear and unimplementable

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

This key guidance is so opaque as to be incomprehensible. It requires an assumption

of risk in the absence of information. It defines a requirement that is functionally impossible to implement and will lead only to confusion and frustration. The "precautionary principle" is fine, general, ethical standard to apply in practice. It is only useful as a guide to human judgment. Never as a defined principle.

**To what extent do you agree with Clause 2.1, allowing FSC controlled wood risk assessments to cross national borders?**

Somewhat agree

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

The root clause is reasonably clear. The 1st NOTE is entirely unclear. The 3rd NOTE seems only to require clarity - which is only possible if the 1st NOTE is ignored.

**To what extent do you agree with Clause 2.4 and subclauses, introducing a standardized template for evaluating data in the FSC controlled wood risk assessment?**

Somewhat disagree

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

The proposed template is excessively complex and functionally opaque. The attempt to render significance scoring to an "objective" result is fundamentally flawed. Significance will (and should) remain subjective. The template is likely to make scoring decisions less transparent rather than more. A mistake. A scoring template that is straightforward and transparent may be useful. Otherwise this effort should be abandoned.

**To what extent do you agree with Clause 2.12, requiring that all risk assessment scales be presented as maps?**

Somewhat disagree

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

The logic behind risk mapping is clear. In practice, however, most risk designations will be based on data scaling that prevents useful mapping.

**To what extent do you agree with Clause 2.15 and subclauses, requiring only one type of risk threshold (Specified Risk Threshold) instead of two types as in the past?**

Somewhat disagree

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

2.15.a is clear. Thresholds are exceeded. 2.15.b should simply say "when...thresholds are not exceeded". The concept of "no other information" is flawed. This is impossible.

**To what extent do you agree with Clause 2.23, requiring to compare risk designations against the risk designations of similar areas?**

Somewhat disagree

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

Comparing assessments is theoretically sensible, but unlikely to lead to clear conclusions. In the case of NRA's - comparison will be impossible. In case of Company RA's, disagreement will require resolution - but no mechanism is suggested. CH's may reach different conclusions in good faith. Who will arbitrate?

**What other possible characteristics can define similarity in the context of FSC controlled wood risk assessments (e.g., proximity, size of area, type of forest, dominant management characteristics)?**

no suggestions

**To what extent do you agree with Clause 2.24, introducing the requirement for FSC controlled wood risk assessment authors to provide mandatory or recommended control measures depending on the risk scores entered in the template introduced in clause 2.4?**

Strongly disagree

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

The decision to include CM definition within the Risk Assessment process is deeply flawed. Risk Assessment should not be confused with Mitigation. They are separate topics that should be considered separately. It is also a mistake to assume that every

"risk" has a straightforward solution (Control Measure). Some do not. This approach simply "punishes" CW companies by making them work harder in Specified Risk zones. Raising costs for certified goods, without accomplishing anything positive.

**To what extent do you agree with Clause 2.28, requiring the presence of verifiers in the risk assessment when mandatory control measures are used?**

Strongly disagree

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

This clause continues to reinforce the flawed logic that Specified Risk can be "fixed" by companies through use of Control Measures. In most cases, this assumption is false. Requiring CH's to verify effectiveness simply raises the cost, complexity, and uncertainty of the whole Controlled Wood program. Mandatory CM's should be designed to promote improvements and judged, over time, in good faith. Requiring "proof" is a fools errand, based on false assumptions. It also perpetuates an adversarial relationship between CH's, CB's, ASI, & FSC. Very unhealthy for all.

**Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for how the indicators (e.g. Indicator 2.1 covering armed conflict) can change to cover systemic risks that are currently not covered by the requirements?**

The designation of the "Sacred 5 Categories", was somewhat simplistic and arbitrary. Continuing to worship them many years later is becoming a bit silly: Category 1 (Legality) is straightforward, if complex. It is also widely recognized as the core of all DDS systems. Category 2 (Human Rights) is somewhat more complex, but still clearly important, worthwhile, and commonly recognized. Category 3 (HCV) is based on the sensible concept of biodiversity conservation. But the added concept of "high" conservation lacks a logical basis. The resulting category is so wide-ranging and comprehensive that it becomes very difficult to assess and manage at logical scales. Category 4 (Conservation) is based on the flawed idea that removal of forests is the same (and always bad) everywhere in the world. This has NEVER been true and probably never will be. Category 5 (HMO) is a bit of a joke. The technology is fully integrated into food production, but must now be excluded from toilet tissue. Really? The need for ADV-20-001-12 is driven largely by the decision to exclude "conflict timber" from the FSC DDS indicators. Consider following PEFC and including this - for times (like now) when nation states act badly.

**To what extent do you agree with removing the specified risk threshold related to SLIMF in the context of the risk to labour rights being upheld (indicator 2.2)?**

Somewhat agree

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

This subject is far from simple. But it can be appropriately addressed in the context of a Risk Assessment.

**How do you think the indicator 4.1 should change in order to align with FSC -POL-01-007 Policy to Address Conversion?**

In my view, the decision to align FSC's approach to conversion for the CW program with the FM program is a serious mistake. Conversion of forests occurs for many reasons and in many, varied contexts. Some within the scope and influence of wood procurement programs, and some outside of this scope and influence. Conversion of forests in places of systematic forest decline is fundamentally different from conversion of forests in places where forests are stable or growing. They should NOT be considered alike. In the USA, the major driver of forest conversion is urban land use planning (or lack of planning). The forest products industry has no effective influence on this subject. Avoiding this material in procurement simply encourages waste. Requiring CM's to verify effective mitigation of urban sprawl will lead only to failure.

**To what extent are the requirements in Section 1 (Introduction) clear and implementable for the development of an FSC controlled wood risk assessment or extended company risk assessment?**

Neutral

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

not much to say

**To what extent are the requirements in Section 2 (FSC Controlled Wood Risk Assessment Development) clear and implementable for the development of an FSC controlled wood risk assessment or extended company risk assessment?**

Somewhat unclear and unimplementable

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

2.1 - 1st NOTE: "In case of doubt" is not very helpful. 2.3 - Avoiding information sources older than 5 years is quite impractical. Confirming their relevance and reliability would only be possible if new information exists. 2.4 - Listing requirements for a template - which will be provided by FSC staff - is unhelpful. If a template is used, it should be simple and very transparent. The current draft is neither. 2.5 - Last sentence should read "...may also gather additional or alternate information sources..." It should be assumed that WG access to information is at least as valid as FSC-IC staff. 2.6 Drop the note in parenthesis 2.7 Conflicts between legal and FSC requirements should be resolved first by the WG, not FSC staff. 2.8, 9, 10 - NRA's are coarse scale assessments by design. These requirements seem to require fine scale inclusions within the coarse scale assessment. This is recipe for disaster. Scale of assessment is important, but must be left to WG judgement and stakeholder feedback. 2.11 - This is sufficient guidance for setting CWRA scale 2.12 - Mapping of CWRA is desirable, but will not always be practical or reliable for intended use. Flexibility is required to allow WG to designate best available mapping. 2.13 - Aggregating and consolidating indicators should be allowed. 2.15 - "...when there is no other information..." is not a practical criteria. 2.18 - Avoiding and resolving conflict between categories is sensible. This clause fails to make this clear. NOTES add to confusion. 2.20,21- Assessing "management operations taking place" or "impact of these operations" will be far beyond the scope of many NRA's. Drop these references. 2.22 - Another requirement for fine scale assessment. Likely to be impossible for NRA scope. 2.23 - Comparing CWRA's done at national scale will be meaningless. In the event that USA and Canada differ (as now), how are differences resolved? This may be desirable, but probably impossible. 2.24 - The metric proposed here is arbitrary and illogical. Using Risk Assessment to also designate "remedy" for identified risks is a flawed concept. Better to separate assessment from mitigation. 2.26 - It is not necessary to require conformance to STD-40-005 2.27, 28 - This assumes CM's will be practically and objectively verifiable. Experience to date already has disproved this.

**To what extent are the requirements in Section 3 (Controlled Wood Category 1: Illegally harvested wood) clear and implementable for the development of an FSC controlled wood risk assessment or extended company risk assessment?**

Somewhat clear and implementable

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

Category 1 has always been relatively clear and practical. 2.9 - Examples is not very helpful

**To what extent are the requirements in Section 4 (Controlled Wood Category 2: Wood harvested in violation of traditional an human rights) clear and implementable for the development of an FSC controlled wood risk assessment or extended company risk assessment?**

Somewhat clear and implementable

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

Category 2 has also been generally understandable and practical. 3.9 - Examples is not very helpful

**To what extent are the requirements in Section 5 (Controlled Wood Category 3: Wood from forests in which high conservation values are threatened by management activities) clear and implementable for the development of an FSC controlled wood risk assessment or extended company risk assessment?**

Somewhat unclear and unimplementable

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

Category 3 (HCV) remains overly broad and extremely difficult to implement in a practical way. The category attempts to address such a wide scope of topics that it is widely incomprehensible. In the context of CWRA, the results become meaningless and arbitrary. A clean-sheet review of this topic is recommended.

**To what extent are the requirements in Section 6 (Controlled Wood Category 4: Wood from forests being converted to plantations or non-forest use) clear and implementable for the development of an FSC controlled wood risk assessment or extended company risk assessment?**

Very unclear and unimplementable

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

6.1 - The scope and definition of Conversion for CWRA is flawed and dangerous. It should be modified by addressing conversion resulting from forest management activity. 6.4/c,f - Requiring analysis of land use outside of the forest product sector is illogical and counter-productive. FSC manufacturers do not influence urban or agricultural land use policy in developed countries. Requiring them to mitigate these trends is bad business. 6.8/a - Most of these examples are out of scope for a sensible CWRA 6.9 - Consideration should be given to other, socially beneficial development, e.g. sustainable energy, affordable housing, critical transportation infrastructure, etc.

**To what extent are the requirements in Section 1 (Controlled Wood Category 5: Wood from forests in which genetically modified trees are planted) clear and implementable for the development of an FSC controlled wood risk assessment or extended company risk assessment?**

Neutral

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

Category 5 is a bit silly, isn't it?

**To what extent is Annex A (Minimum requirements for qualifications of experts to be involved in risk assessment processes and the establishment of control measures) clear and implementable for the development of an FSC controlled wood risk assessment or extended company risk assessment?**

Neutral

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

Consider consolidating the "confirmed by" and "based on" modifiers in one place - rather than using similar, but slightly different versions in many paragraphs. 1.2 - It should be more clear that indigenous people can serve as experts, representing their community interests directly. 1.4 - Knowledge about forest management practices provides no useful expertise for urban or agricultural land use planning.



**To what extent is Annex B (HCV assessment guidance) clear and implementable for the development of an FSC controlled wood risk assessment or extended company risk assessment?**

Very unclear and unimplementable

**Please briefly explain your rationale and/or include suggestions for improvement.**

As noted above, Category 3 is overly broad and unmanageable.