



## **BRIEFING NOTE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MOTION 23/2022 ON IFL PROTECTION**

A summary of the implementation process of Motion 23/2022: ‘Use landscape-wide approaches for FSC certification in IFLs adapted to local conditions and strengthen Standard Development Groups (SDGs) to improve protection of Intact Forest Landscapes’.

This Briefing note is part of a set of support guidelines for FSC Standard Development Groups and members.



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CH	Certificate Holder
CoC	Chain of Custody
FM	Forest Management
MU	Management Unit
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GA	General Assembly
HCV	High Conservation Value
ICL	Indigenous Cultural Landscape
IFL	Intact Forest Landscape
IGI	International Generic Indicator
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NFSS	National Forest Stewardship Standard
NP	Network Partner
PSC	Policy and Standards Committee
PSU	Performance and Standard Unit
SDG	Standard Development Group

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# CONTENTS

<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
A SET OF SUPPORTING GUIDELINES FOR FSC SDGs AND MEMBERS	4
INTACT FOREST LANDSCAPES, AN ONGOING DISCUSSION IN FSC SINCE 2014	4
<b>2. A PILOT APPROACH</b>	<b>6</b>
TIMELINES FOR THE PILOT	7
<b>3. OBJECTIVE OF WORK TO IMPLEMENT M23</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. THE FLOW OF THE FSC APPROACH TOWARDS LANDSCAPE CONSIDERATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION IN IFLS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5. GUIDELINES FOR SDGS/NPS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR FEEDBACK</b>	<b>12</b>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This briefing note aims:

1. To inform FSC members and interested stakeholders on the implementation of *Motion 23/2022 Use landscape-wide approaches adapted to local conditions and strengthen Standard Development Groups (SDGs) to improve protection of Intact Forest Landscapes* (General Assembly, 2020), approved at General Assembly 2021-2022 in Bali Indonesia.
2. To gather feedback from members and interested stakeholders on the implementation process.
3. To gather feedback on conceptual key questions.

## A SET OF SUPPORTING GUIDELINES FOR FSC SDGs AND MEMBERS

The FSC Secretariat, supported by Professor Claude Garcia from Bern University of Applied Sciences and by the Focus Forests Advisory Group, developed a set of guidelines, aimed to support FSC Standard Development Groups (SDGs) to implement Motion 23/2022. This document is the process summary of the process. The Guidelines themselves provide a much deeper understanding of support. The overview of documents that will be provided for the implementation of Motion 23/2022:

- Preamble – an overview of the different landscape approaches, used by other organizations than FSC. This preamble is developed by Bern University of Applied Sciences, for the purpose of using best knowledge, why not re-inventing the wheel. The pre-able is for information.
- This Briefing Note – a summary of the process and steps to implement Motion 23/2022 (for feedback)
- Guidelines Part 1: Landscape Identification (for feedback)
- Guidelines Part 2: Stakeholder Identification and Engagement (for feedback)
- Guidelines Part 3: Landscape Conference (for feedback)

The Guidelines are with the Focus Forests Advisory Group for their feedback, and are expected to be shared with SDGs, members, and stakeholders in the coming week, for feedback.

## INTACT FOREST LANDSCAPES, AN ONGOING DISCUSSION IN FSC SINCE 2014

At the FSC General Assembly in 2014, *Motion 65/2014 High Conservation Value 2 (HCV2) – Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) protection* called for the protection of the vast majority of IFLs within certified management units (MU). This has been implemented through IFL-specific requirements in FSC-STD-60-004 V2 for the incorporation into Forest Stewardship Standards, and through Advice Note ADV-20-007-018 V1-0 for areas where there is no approved Forest Stewardship Standards.

In 2017 at the FSC General Assembly, members passed *Motion 34/2017 Regional assessments of the short and long term impacts -positive and negative -of the management and protection measures associated with the implementation of the motion 65/2014 and the International Generic Indicators (IGI)* asking for an economic, environmental, and social review of the impact of the FSC requirements for IFLs. This resulted in regional impact reports for Russia, Congo Basin, Brazil and Canada, a summary report was developed by the FSC Secretariat in 2022. In addition, FSC received letters and concerns

from members from all chambers, stakeholders, and governmental institutions with a call to re-assess the requirements as proposed in Motion 65.

At the FSC General Assembly in 2022 Motion 23/2022 and the associated Implementation Note was passed with an overwhelming support of 95% of the members. This motion asks FSC to review and revise the current approach to achieving effective IFL conservation and enable and guide Standards Development Groups (SDGs) to identify and recommend improvements to FSC's normative framework, to strengthen approaches for identification, protection, maintenance and/or enhancement of HCV2s, including IFL conservation at landscape level in National/Regional Standards.

While this review and revision process is ongoing and until a comprehensive global approach has been developed and agreed, FSC was requested to develop an Advice Note indicating criteria for an interim rule. In December 2022 ADV-20-007-018 V1-0 has been revised to reflect the interim rule, which resulted in ADVICE-20-007-18 V2-0 Protection of Intact Forest Landscape (IFLs). A summary of the changes in the Advice Note can be found here below:

The infographic is a dark green rectangular box with white and light green text. At the top left, it says 'Interim advice note in place' in large white font, followed by 'ADVICE-20-007-18 V2-0' and a green checkmark icon. Below this is the subtitle 'addressing interim measures to maintain stewardship of Intact Forest Landscapes in Latin America, including the Amazon and in Central Africa.' In the top right corner is the FSC logo with the tagline 'FORESTS FOR ALL FOREVER'. The main content is divided into two columns: 'GENERAL RULE' and 'INTERIM EXCEPTION ON CONDITIONS UNTIL END 2024'. The 'GENERAL RULE' column describes the impact limits on IFLs. The 'INTERIM EXCEPTION' column lists conditions for a lower threshold, such as operating in Latin America or Central Africa and holding FM or FM/CoC certification since October 2022.

GENERAL RULE	INTERIM EXCEPTION ON CONDITIONS UNTIL END 2024
Forest Management operations, including harvesting and road building, shall not impact more than 20% of IFLs within the management unit and shall not reduce any IFLs below the 50,000-ha threshold in the landscape.	Conditions include e.g: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Operates in <b>Latin America or Central Africa</b> and holds FM or <b>FM/CoC certification at least since 14 October 2022</b></li><li>Exhausted all feasible harvest options in non-IFL</li><li>Impacts not more than 50% of IFLs within MU and does not reduce any IFL below 50,000 ha in the landscape</li><li>presented and analyzed the status and plans for HCV-2 management in the management unit</li></ul>

**Under the current requirements** an 80% default protection threshold for IFLs in the management unit exists. It is allowed to establish a lower threshold in two scenarios:

- 1) SDGs are allowed to lower the default threshold up to 50+% when developing a Forest Stewardship Standard based on FSC-STD-60-004 V2 International Generic Indicators and following FSC-GUI-60-004 Develop a National Threshold for the Core Area of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) within the Management Unit.
- 2) Forest management operations in countries where there is no Forest Stewardship Standard based on FSC-STD-60-004 V2 may proceed on a need's basis beyond the 80% threshold (i.e. impacting more than 20% of the IFL within the management unit), if The Organization is in

conformance with Advice 2 in ADVICE-20-007-18 V2-0 Protection of Intact Forest Landscape (IFLs). This exception was requested as interim solution in Motion 23/2022, and only applies for operations in Latin America (including the Amazon) or in Central Africa and if the operation has held FM or FM/CoC certification at least since 14 October 2022. It is valid until 31 December 2024.

## 2. A PILOT APPROACH

Mandated by *Motion 23/2022* approved at General Assembly 2021-2022 in Bali Indonesia, FSC is developing through engagement with members, SDGs, stakeholders, and partnerships revised landscape considerations for FSC certification of Management Units (MUs) in forests with high social and environmental values, in particular Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs). As an outcome of this motion SDGs will be able to implement a landscape consideration process to protect and manage IFLs following developed, relevant, and published requirements in the normative framework.

To address *Motion 23/2022* the FSC Board of Directors at its meeting in August 2023 (BM96) approved the implementation of “major process” according to FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 Development and Revision of FSC Requirements based on a piloting approach.

*Motion 23/2022* grants one year to review and revise the current approach to HCV2s/IFLs conservation and enable SDGs to identify and recommend improvements to be made. While the revision of the normative framework is expected to be completed by 2026, through pilot testing SDGs will be able to implement a landscape considerations process to protect and manage HCV2/IFLs, which will enable the consequent certification of management units before this date. Pilot testing allows the implementation of draft requirements which may result in temporary use of FSC trademarks in the labelling and promotion of FSC-certified products.

The workplan approved by the FSC Board of Directors considers that:

- 95% of FSC members voted in favour of *Motion 23/2022*, which asks for a solution in 1 year.
- The discussion on IFLs is ongoing since 2014, and has put certification in IFLs on hold, while risking loss of existing certifications, and loss of protection in IFLs.
- FSC stakeholders from all chambers have been asking towards the FSC General Assembly (GA) for solutions, including standard development groups (e.g. in Brazil, Peru and Congo Basin)
- Members, Network Partners (NPs), certificate holders (CHs), and the FSC Secretariat all want a robust solution soon, also in light of the FSC Global Strategy and FSC’s growth plans for certified areas.

## **This pilot approach may enable first certifications already in 2025**

The pilot approach is described in Annex 3<sup>1</sup>: Requirements for Testing of FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 Development and Revision of FSC Requirements. Based on results of the testing, requirements (i.e. the correspondent IFL requirements in NFSS) can be amended. The FSC Secretariat would facilitate the process of pilot testing.

Requirements for pilot testing are amongst others:

- Terms of Reference for the pilot and a legally binding agreement
- Monitoring of the implementation of the test agreement
- Submitting deliverables of the testing to FSC
- The Secretariat using conclusions from the test to complete the viability assessment of the revision or development process.

## **TIMELINES FOR THE PILOT**

By implementing a pilot approach, we can speed up the work in a robust way, without compromising on consultation processes with national stakeholders. Towards the end of 2023 or latest beginning of 2024, the FSC Secretariat, the Focus Forest Advisory Group and a research consortium will develop:

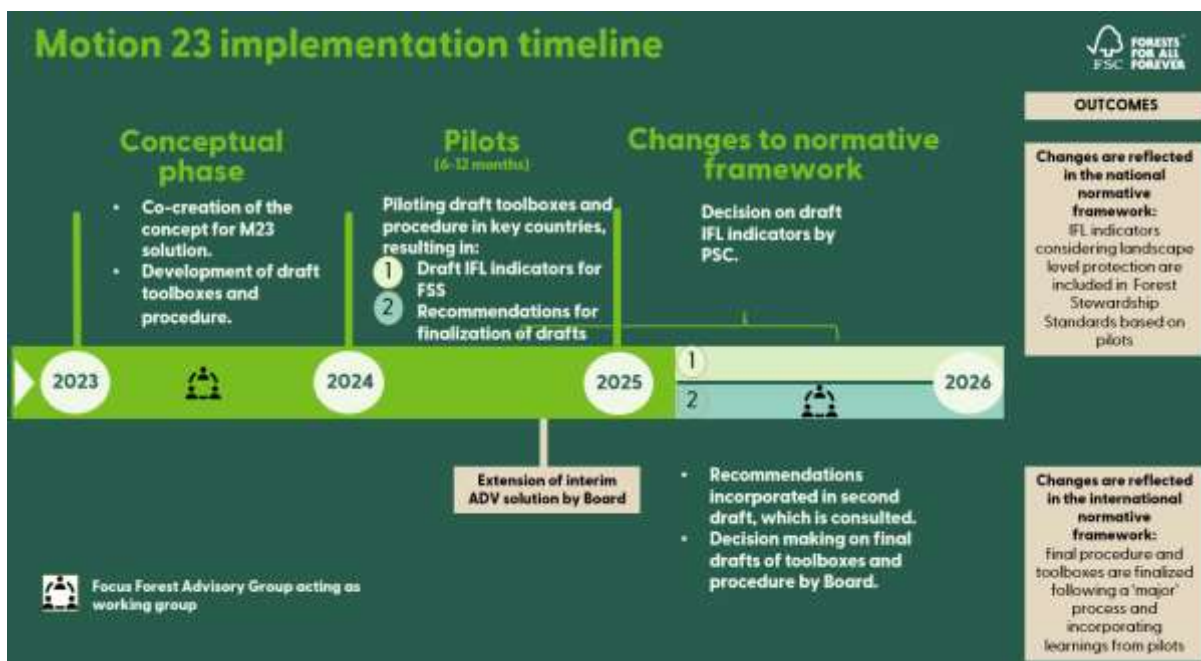
- A New Procedure for SDGs to determine the placement and extent of IFL core areas and conservation measures, based on the conditions in the wider landscape.
- Terms of reference for SDGs for piloting the guidelines and procedure to implement Motion 23.
- A set of accompanying guidelines to help national SDGs to implement pilots.

The Secretariat will keep the membership updated on a regular basis regarding progress on the implementation of the Motion. For 2024, we expect interested national SDGs in key countries can start their pilots. The FSC Secretariat will financially support SDGs through funding mechanisms for this implementation.

The process to complete the FSC Landscape considerations for HCV2/IFL conservation includes the development of the Procedure and guidelines based on discussions with relevant stakeholders (conceptual phase), the national pilots to develop indicators for IFL protection considering the landscape, the incorporation of the results in the national standards, certification of MU's under the requirements of national standards, and finally the incorporation of learnings from pilots into the international normative framework. A timeline overview of this is presented:

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<sup>1</sup> See page 28 of FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 Development and Revision of FSC Requirements for more information.



### 3. OBJECTIVE OF WORK TO IMPLEMENT M23

Implementation of *Motion 23/2022* aims developing revised landscape considerations to protect HCV2s/IFLs, through engagement of members, stakeholders, and partnerships and empowering of Standard Development Groups.

This landscape consideration, wider than the MU only, encompasses:

- risk and benefits as well as threats and opportunities to IFL conservation.
- best available information and expert knowledge
- ground-based environmental, social, and economic impact analysis to complement IFL identification and conservation measures, when possible.

#### **IMPORTANT!**

The objective of the work is **not** to develop a full land use plan for an Intact Forest Landscape but rather engage with stakeholders to achieve effective HCV2/IFL protection at a landscape level both inside and outside a FSC certified MU. Landscapes extending beyond the boundaries of a certified MU are mostly out of FSC's sphere of control. FSC's voluntary certification system currently looks at forest management units. An innovation proposed is to incorporate the concept of a *sphere of influence* into the management and certification of a management unit, both from the landscape to the management unit, as well as from the management unit into the landscape.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The sphere of control is the area under which the CH can legally intervene. The sphere of influence is the surrounding area of the management unit – where the decisions of the CH interact with the decision of other stakeholders to shape the landscape.



## OUTCOME:

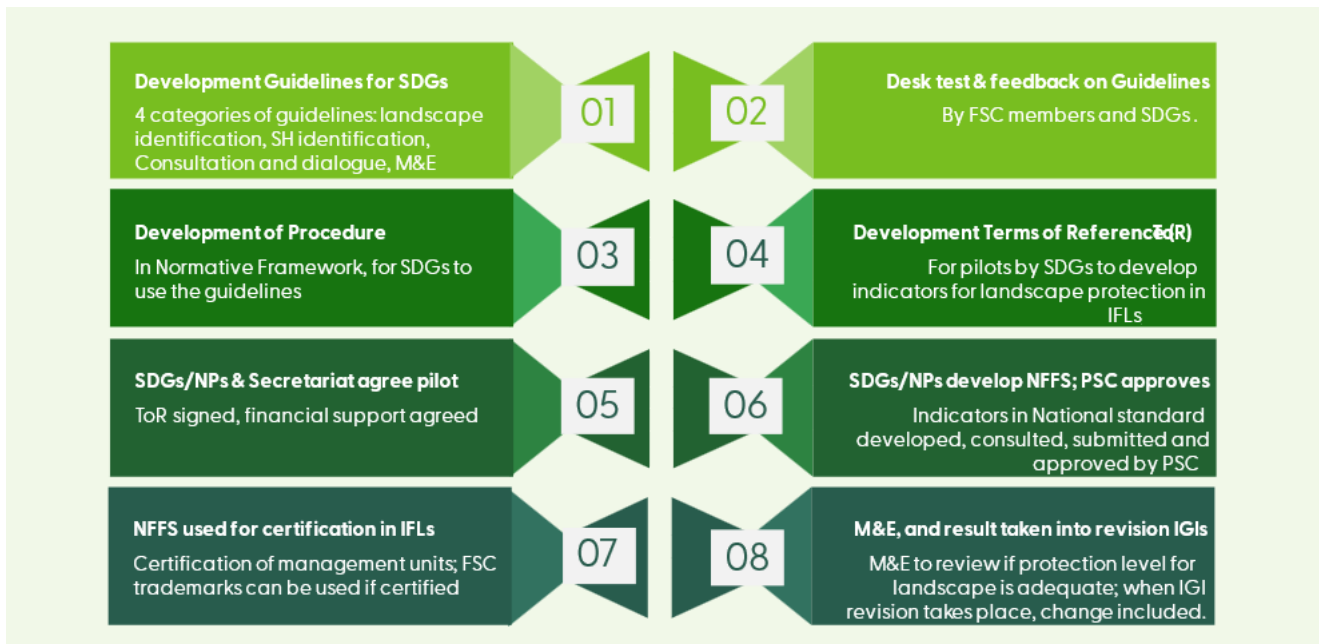
**Standard Development Groups** would implement a process of landscape considerations to set requirements for certificate holders (CH) to protect and manage Intact Forest Landscapes. This will be addressed and fast-tracked via a Procedure for SDGs to determine the placement and extent of IFL core areas and conservation measures (including thresholds for strict IFL conservation). The Procedure would require the use of guidelines to consider the wider landscape and will be implemented through pilots.

**Forest Managers** would use the requirements developed in the NFSS that result from pilot implementation to certify management units situated in an IFL. These are valid certifications (for new and existing management units) and FSC trademarks can be used.

## 4. THE FLOW OF THE FSC APPROACH TOWARDS LANDSCAPE CONSIDERATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION IN IFLS

Implementing *Motion 23/2022* will take several years. However, the pilot approach will allow for a differentiated landscape protection level, would engage a diversity of landscape stakeholders, and will allow for certification towards an agreed landscape protection level as soon as the indicators in the national standard are approved by the Policy and Standards Committee (PSC). This work for the SDG/NP can start beginning of 2024, based on the Procedure and guidelines developed in 2023, and once finalized into the National FSC Standard, will be valid for existing and new certifications in IFLs. It plans to enable to change current international requirements for placement and extent of IFL core areas and conservation measures (including thresholds for strict IFL conservation related to FSC certified Management Units (MUs)) as defined in FSC-STD-60-004 International Generic Indicators and FSC-GUI-60-004 Guidance for Standard Developers to Develop a National Threshold for the Core Area of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) within the Management Unit, to achieve best possible contribution to conservation of HCV2/IFL across the entire landscape.

The flow of work is planned as follows:



The last phase in this process (no.8) may happen only when the revision of International Generic Indicators (IGIs) is taking place in FSC. However, certification according to the NFFS approved during the pilot is valid until the next revision of the NFSS is finalized, for new and existing certifications in IFLs.

## 5. GUIDELINES FOR SDGs/NPs

The Guidelines for SDGs and NPs to develop locally adapted landscape considerations for differentiated landscape protection levels are developed by a research consortium led by Professor Claude Garcia of Bern University of Applied Studies and FSC staff. To develop this, the consortium summarized landscape approaches of a variety of organisations, to learn and prevent us from re-inventing the wheel. [This preamble is available](#) to members, for information and reflection. The landscape approaches summarized in the preamble offer additional useful resources in implementing the FSC approach to landscape considerations for certifications in IFLs.

Considering elements of the *Motion 23/2022*, the guidelines identify 4 categories of support to SDGs/NPs (please note that this is a summary of guidelines, further developed into the guidelines themselves, which will also be available for feedback):

<b>LANDSCAPE IDENTIFICATION</b> <b>(Guidelines Part 1)</b>	<b>STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND ENGAGEMENT</b> <b>(Guidelines Part 2)</b>	<b>LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE</b> <b>(Guidelines Part 3)</b>	<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b> <b>(Guidelines Part 4)</b>
<p>Includes elements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• considerations for regional or national approaches</li> <li>• mapping landscapes and considerations when identifying boundaries</li> <li>• considerations to respect Indigenous Cultural Landscapes</li> <li>• identify and consider the rights of Indigenous Peoples in relation to land tenure</li> <li>• guidance for proposing draft landscape priorities</li> </ul>	<p>Includes elements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• considerations for sphere of influence</li> <li>• considerations to engage Indigenous Peoples, respect Indigenous Cultural Landscapes and the interconnection of Indigenous Peoples with their territories, including the role of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)</li> <li>• considerations for engaging stakeholders from different landscapes, using FSC Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement (<a href="#">FSC-GUI-30-011 V1-0</a>)</li> </ul>	<p>Includes elements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• considerations to organize a Landscape Conference with stakeholders to discuss prioritized landscape(s) for the pilot and protection levels</li> <li>• tools for developing a landscape scenario</li> <li>• reporting on outcomes and development and consultation of indicators in NFFS, incl. approval of PSC</li> </ul>	<p>Includes elements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capturing the work done by the SDG/NP for future reference (incl. mapping etc)</li> <li>• monitoring and evaluating if the protection level in the landscape is adequate (with support of FSC International)</li> </ul>

The FSC Secretariat recommends SDGs/NPs to appoint a coordinator for this work. FSC International will provide financial support to those SDGs/NPs signing a Terms of Reference for the pilot and following the normative framework to develop differentiated protection levels for landscapes in their country/region.

## 6. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR FEEDBACK

FSC Secretariat welcomes your feedback on the implementation of *Motion 23/2022*. The following questions may serve to provide your input:

1. Differentiated landscape protection levels will be an outcome of this pilot testing phase. The default protection is 80% (FSC-STD-60-004 V2), with the exceptions mentioned earlier in Section 1 (see also ADVICE-20-007-18 V2-0).
  - a. Is there in your view also a default bottom-line in protection levels in HCV2s/IFLs within MUs?
  - b. If so, what do you consider as bottom-line?
  - c. What are the factors to consider with regards to placement and extent of IFL core areas with a lowering of the 80%, in particular in relation to taking an approach for landscape considerations?
2. What conditions would be needed to allow lower protection level of IFLs within MUs based on the situation of the landscape?
3. How should SDGs deal with dialogue results from the Landscape Conference?
4. What criteria should SDGs consider to translate these results into useful recommendations?
5. Please provide any additional recommendations.