



Forest Stewardship Council®

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FSC FOCUS FORESTS ADVISORY GROUP (FFAG)

As approved by FSC BM96, August 2023

PROJECT INFORMATION

1 Objective

The objective of the Focus Forests Advisory Group (FFAG) is to advise the FSC International Board and Secretariat on the potential risks, actions and outcomes inherent to FSC's role in forest stewardship, including conservation and productive management, of important forests with significant social and ecological values. This would include identification of the best approaches to engagement with FSC members, organizations and institutions of relevance to the related process.

To create a basis for this, FSC started in 2021 Focus Forest, in partnership with a consortium of researchers coordinated by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) and composed of ten researchers from different organizations and geographical origin and with extensive experience in tropical and boreal forests, forest management and restoration, remote sensing, sociology and dialogue methodologies. In 2022 the FSC General Assembly (FSC-GA) passed [Motion 23](#) *Use landscape-wide approaches adapted to local conditions and strengthen Standard Development Groups (SDGs) to improve protection of Intact Forest Landscapes*. Together with the [Implementation Note](#) developed during the FSC-GA, this forms the basis for further work in Focus Forests, developing a landscape approach. This work will be supported by a researchers team, coordinated by Professor Claude Garcia of Bern Fach Hochschule, Switzerland.

The purpose of this document is to specify the tasks, scope and rules of engagement of the FFAG.

2 Process coordination

Coordination group: Director General (Kim Carstensen), Director Stakeholder Solutions (Gemma Boetekees), Lead of the research consortium (Claude Garcia), Performance and Standards (Stefan Salvador), and FSC Board liaisons (Lincoln Quevedo and Elston Dzus).

Coordination Group secretary: Gemma Boetekees (Director Stakeholder Solutions) (g.boetekees@fsc.org)

The Coordination Group will provide an action plan with regular updates, including timeline and expected outcomes. The related process steps and input from FFAG will be presented to the full FSC Board as needed as advice to the board’s deliberation on landscape approaches and the implementation of the above-mentioned Motion 23/2022.

3 Background of the Project

For background of the project, please see the [Focus Forest documentation at the FSC International website](#). Every 6-8 weeks a Focus Forests Update will be provided to those FSC members and Stakeholders having subscribed.

5 Composition of the Focus Forests Advisory Group (FFAG)

The FFAG will be composed of members from countries with important Focus Forests in both Tropical and Boreal regions. The FFAG will be balanced by chamber and North/South origin, and will be representing the interests of the social, environmental, and economic chambers of the FSC membership. The FFAG consists of 6 (six) members. Membership of FFAG is based on an application process amongst FSC members, based on these criteria and the additional criteria and Rules of Engagement in this Terms of Reference.

Members of the FFAG are appointed by the FSC Board of Directors using the following additional criteria:

- a) Desire to seek and reach consensus on innovative and/or controversial issues, building upon shared values.
- b) Up-to-date knowledge and experience of FSC’s systems and procedures.
- c) Ability to review and comment in the FFAG’s working language.
- d) Understanding of and support for FSC’s mission and vision.
- e) Balance of gender
- f) Balance of geographical regions. Ideally, the composition between chambers and regions would be:
 - a. Economic chamber: member from boreal forests and tropical forests
 - b. Social chamber: preference for indigenous peoples’ representative
 - c. Environmental chamber: member from a region with IFLs not yet represented in the FFAG

Based on these criteria, the FSC Board of Directors has appointed the following members of the FFAG:

Sub-chamber	Member	Region
Economic North	Alan Thorne (organizational member, Canada)	North America
Economic South	Caroline Duhesme (ATIBT – RoC office)	Africa

Environmental North	Grant Rosoman (Greenpeace, New Zealand)	Asia Pacific
Environmental South	Amanda Andrade (individual member, Brazil) until 1 January 2024	Latin America
Social South	Alina Liviet Santiago Jiménez (individual member, Mexico)	Latin America
Social North	Leo van der Vlist (organisational member, Netherlands)	Europe

FFAG TASKS

5 Overall Tasks

FFAG members shall, to their best ability:

1. Participate in regular meetings and stay up to date with materials on the Focus Forest project, including the implementation of Motion 23, that are made available by FSC and/or the research partners.
2. Advise on relevant information, outcome-oriented work streams, existing or needed research and/or field trials, to understand opportunities, risks and potential for impact. FFAG shall strive to ensure the afore mentioned efforts provide a *balanced* view between environmental, social, and economic perspectives on all issues related to topics concerning the Focus Forest project.
3. Advise on the pertinence of discussion forums and other means of consultation, to facilitate a wider knowledge base, engagement and co-creation towards FSC solutions.
4. Help prepare, evaluate and provide feedback on the Focus Forests progress and results.

FFAG members shall regularly consult the members of their interest groups/chambers on the issues discussed during the process. For this purpose, the FSC secretariat will provide the opportunity of organizing webinars.

6 Specific Tasks in 2023 / 2024

For 2023/2024, it is expected that the FFAG will deliver advice on:

- a. the development and implementation of the Motion 23 (see draft Workplan in Annex 1).
- b. Function as a technical working group for the development of a procedure / advice note in 2023

OPERATING RULES

7 Expenses and Remuneration

Members of the FFAG will participate on a voluntarily basis. Reimbursement for eventual travel and accommodation expenses will be provided by FSC as necessary.

8 Confidentiality and conflict of interest

The FFAG operates according to the Chatham House Rule, and members shall not report or attribute neither the comments of individuals nor their affiliations outside of meetings, whether conducted face to face or virtual. When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed. The Chatham House Rule has the aim to encourage openness and the sharing of information at meetings.

Members are expected to declare any conflicts of interest, where they arise.

9 Language

The working language shall be English, including meetings, task instructions, outcome reports and routine exchange.

10 Minimum estimated annual time commitments

- a) 1 day/month to provide requested advice
- b) 2h/month to participate in the regular on-line meetings
- c) 10 days to analyze documents and provide input and feedback

11 Rules of engagement

- Proactive participation and time commitment to (presential or remote) FFAG meetings.
- Timely and transparent responses to requests made by the Board, Secretariat and other FFAG members.
- Deadlines given will usually span over 1-3 weeks. Input provided after a deadline will not be valid.
- FFAG members are expected to hold regular and effective communication updates with their respective Chambers about the process.
- Communications with other units within the Secretariat shall be channelled through the Coordination Group (secretary).
- FFAG members agree to sharing location, names, and contact details with the Secretariat and other FFAG members, as well as to publishing their names on FSC website or other public domains.
- FFAG will be provided with access to online file depository, to facilitate access and exchange of the documents.

12 Consensus and Decision making

FFAG is not a formal decision-making body. Advice provided in consensus among FFAG members will be preferable but is not a requirement. If consensus is not reached, this shall be made clear in the advice provided.

The secretariat is responsible for analyzing received input from FFAG to both the Board of Directors and Secretariat, and for using it to ensure progress in relevant processes. Nonetheless, following advice from FFAG shall not be seen as a requirement. It is the responsibility of the Secretariat to assess the relevance of received input from FFAG, including the consideration of its own capacity to implement the advice.

ANNEX 1 – DRAFT WORKPLAN 2023/24 OF FOCUS FORESTS INCL. IMPLEMENTATION OF MOTION 23

