



Forest Stewardship Council®



Frequently asked questions on CAB requirements for ecosystem services (Part V FSC-PRO-30-006)

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The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organization established to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC's vision is that the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.

A Objective

The objective of this FAQ is to provide support for the implementation of Part V of the FSC-PRO-30-006 *Ecosystem Services Procedure: Requirements for certification bodies*.

B Scope

This FAQ is to be used primarily by FSC accredited certification bodies that want to evaluate ecosystem services impacts and approve FSC trademark use in association with FSC ecosystem services claims. It may also be used by FSC assessors from Accreditation Services International (ASI).

C References

The following referenced documents are relevant for the application of this document. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship

FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms

FSC-STD-20-001 General requirements for FSC accredited certification bodies

FSC-STD-20-007 Forest management evaluations

FSC-STD-30-005 FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups

FSC-STD-50-001 Requirements for use of the FSC trademarks by certificate holders

FSC-STD-60-004 International Generic Indicators (IGI)

FSC-PRO-30-006 Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact demonstration and market tools

FSC-GUI-30-006 Guidance for Demonstrating Ecosystem Services Impacts

FSC-DIR-20-007 FSC Directive on Forest Management Evaluations

D Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this guidance, the terms and definitions provided in *FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms*, *FSC-STD-60-004 FSC International Generic Indicators* and *FSC-PRO-30-006 Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact demonstration and market tools* apply.

FAQ 1	
Question	Do Certification Bodies need a separate accreditation for ecosystem services and do they need to pass a witness audit before being able to evaluate ecosystem services impacts?
Answer	No. The scope section of the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure (p.6) states that: “Evaluating compliance with this procedure is within the scope of FSC forest management accreditation. An audit by Accreditation Services International (ASI) is not required before the certification body evaluates compliance with this procedure; ASI will carry out surveillance of the certification body’s compliance with Part V of this procedure through regular desk and witness audits.” The same applies for chain of custody-accredited certification bodies approving FSC trademark use in accordance with Part IV of the procedure. However, at least one member on the forest management audit team shall be trained on the ecosystem service(s) under evaluation or have proven competence based on past experience (requirement 20.1 of FSC-PRO-30-006, p.29), see FAQ 2 below.

FAQ 2	
Question	What kind of training or competence on ecosystem services would be considered sufficient for the member of the audit team under requirement 20.1?
Answer	In requirement 20.1, training and competence refers to education and/or professional experience that the member of the audit team has acquired through, for example, education at university, courses and/or on-the-job training and experience on one or more ecosystem services. Annex 3 (audit teams) of FSC-STD-20-001 is relevant in this regard, particularly box 2 on key considerations for selection of audit team members for forest management audits. Under the heading ‘Environmental issues’, “other environmental issues that are likely to be of importance during the audit” includes the declared ecosystem service(s). The member on the audit team needs to be able to assess the choice and use of the methodology and interpret the results for the ecosystem service(s) under evaluation. This means that he or she may need to have a background or knowledge in, for example, ecology, forestry, biology, natural resources management, hydrology, soil management, or ecotourism. The certification body shall ensure that the team member is competent in the ecosystem services subject matter that is being evaluated. Ways in which such competence can be demonstrated include: university diploma, course certificate, technical outputs (e.g. report, presentation, data analysis) of a project in which the team member had a leading role on the technical aspects and/or publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

FAQ 3	
Question	What training and support does FSC offer to Certification Bodies and ASI?
Answer	FSC is developing a training and support programme for ecosystem services that includes: • A webinar for all interested stakeholders offering a general introduction to the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure; • A training targeted to certification bodies accredited for forest management certification focusing on the verification of ecosystem services impacts; • A webinar training targeted to ASI about the requirements for certification bodies that evaluate ecosystem services impacts and approve trademark use for the promotion of ecosystem services claims. Note that the scope of FSC's training is limited to the use of the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure and does not extend to creating competence in ecosystem services; this expertise would need to be obtained in another way (see FAQ 2).

FAQ 4	
Question	How much time should be calculated for the verification of an ecosystem services impact?
Answer	ADVISE-20-007-19 (FSC-DIR-20-007) provides advice to certification bodies on forest management auditing time. When the evaluation of ecosystem services is included in the scope of the assessment, this will increase audit time. The time required to verify ecosystem services impacts depends on a number of factors, including: • whether the verification of ecosystem services impacts is integrated in the forest management audit or scheduled separately; • the number of ecosystem services impacts to be verified; • the type of impact(s) to be verified and the chosen methodologies to measure the outcome indicator(s); • whether it is the first ecosystem service impact evaluation or a subsequent evaluation; • the specific context of the forest management organisation. To minimize costs for the forest manager and maximize efficiency for the certification body, ecosystem services impacts should be evaluated during forest management certification audits (requirement 17.4 of FSC-PRO-30-006). Generally, the more ecosystem services impacts are to be verified, the more time will be required for the evaluation. Experiences from pilot testing and field testing of draft versions of the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure revealed that about 1-3

	auditor (person) days are needed in addition to the forest management assessment. Ecosystem services impacts shall be verified at least every 5 years or at each main forest management evaluation (requirement 17.1 of FSC-PRO-30-006). There is no need to include ecosystem services verification in surveillance audits, unless: 1. there is a need to evaluate the closure of non-conformities identified in previous evaluations; 2. there are significant changes in the ESCD (see FAQ 5).
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FAQ 5	
Question	Who decides what a significant change in the ESCD is? And what is the process for determining whether or not to conduct a surveillance audit or a scope extension audit for ecosystem services?
Answer	Significant changes in the ESCD include: • the addition of a new impact; • significant changes to the theory of change (for example: a change in management practices); • changes to the selected outcome indicators; • changes to the methodologies used to measure the outcome indicator; • the addition of a new impact. Other reasons for conducting a surveillance audit include a change of scope in the management unit(s) for which the impact is demonstrated, and monitoring results that would question the verified ecosystem services impact. During the forest management audit preparation phase, the certification body should ask the certificate holder whether there are any changes to the ESCD and/or whether there could be any other reasons to conduct a surveillance audit. By latest 30 days prior to the scheduled forest management evaluation, the certificate holder should inform the certification body on the nature of any changes to the ESCD.

FAQ 6	
Question	How is an ecosystem services claim approved?
Answer	For any verified ecosystem services impact, an ecosystem services claim can be used. A separate approval is required when an FM, FM/COC or COC certificate holder or Promotional Licence holder uses FSC trademarks to promote ecosystem services claims (see FAQ 7). Certification bodies will also need to verify the passage of ecosystem services claims along the supply chain through sales and/or delivery documents.

FAQ 7	
Question	How does FSC trademark use approval work for ecosystem services claims?
Answer	There are different potential uses and users of the FSC trademarks in association with ecosystem services claims as explained in Part IV of the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure (FSC-PRO-30-006). Forest managers that have an ecosystem services claim for the forest under their management may want to promote this via a news item or a video on their website or via other communication channels. FSC chain of custody (CoC) certificate holders may want to promote forest products that carry an FSC Ecosystem Services Claim. CoC certificate holders and non-certificate holders alike may be involved as a financial sponsor of ecosystem services and as such may want to communicate about their support for the maintenance/conservation or restoration/enhancement of the ecosystem service. Whether certificate holder or not, retailers and other organisations may also want to promote FSC 100% products that carry an FSC Ecosystem Services Claim. Buyers and sellers of external assets (e.g. carbon credits) that carry an ecosystem services claim or the registries listing such assets may also want to promote these assets with an FSC ecosystem services claim. These buyers may be CoC certificate holders or non-certificate holders. The users of the FSC trademarks in association with ecosystem services claims will propose the content for the promotion of ecosystem services claims. The approval for the use of FSC trademarks in association with ecosystem services claims is done by: • Forest management accredited certification bodies for forest management certificate holders • Chain of custody accredited certification bodies for CoC certificate holders • FSC trademark service providers for non-certificate holders (use of trademark requires a promotional licence) Part IV of the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure (FSC-PRO-30-006) as well as section 7 and Annex 1 of the FSC Trademark Use Guide for Promotional Licence Holders provides examples of wording that can be used to promote ecosystem services claims. It is important that any embellishments of ecosystem services claims (for example when story-telling is used) are based on facts included in the publicly available ecosystem services certification document (ESCD). FSC trademark use shall be in compliance with FSC-STD-50-001.

FAQ 8	
Question	Can new members of forest management group certification also make ecosystem services claims for ecosystem services impacts that have been verified for that group?
Answer	Ecosystem services evaluations follow the existing normative requirements around group certification for forest management certification. FSC-STD-30-005, paragraph 3.4 states that “The Group entity or the certification body shall evaluate every applicant for membership of the Group and ensure that there are no major nonconformities with applicable requirements of the Forest Stewardship Standard, and with any additional requirements for membership of the Group, prior to being granted membership of the Group.” FSC-STD-20-007, paragraph 6.3.5 states that “The number of FMUs to be visited in a surveillance evaluation of forest management groups shall be determined according to Annex 1. If new FMUs (e.g. group members or newly acquired FMUs) have been added to the scope of the certificate since the main evaluation, the new FMUs shall be sampled at the rate of a main evaluation”. This means that group managers can add new members to the group without the immediate need of a certification body to evaluate compliance, as long as the certification body is confident that the procedures and internal control systems provide sufficient safeguards for a credible expansion of the group. Certification bodies can use the same sampling approach to select group member for the evaluation of ecosystem services, in line with Annex 1 of FSC-STD-20-001. When ecosystem services is part of the scope of an evaluation, this should be an additional factor to weigh in on the decision what members and sites to include and to visit during the evaluation.

FAQ 9	
Question	What role does FSC play in supporting the implementation of the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure?
Answer	FSC International’s Ecosystem Services Program offers guidance and training to support the smooth roll out and implementation of the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure. Further, it is exploring various business models for obtaining payments for verified ecosystem services impacts and investing in market development. Support by FSC National Offices and Regional Offices depends on their priorities and capacity and may include: • making a translation of the FSC Ecosystem Services procedure available in the national language • introducing national stakeholders to the new FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure • market development

	• leading or participating in training courses for forest managers and certification bodies • identifying and/or testing suitable methodologies to measure outcome indicators and identify regional or national reference levels that can be used as a comparison
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