

FSC Standard setting process

This document provides guidance on the process followed by the FSC in setting industry standards.

Objectives

FSC Standards provide public confidence, objectivity, credibility and professionalism within the industry.

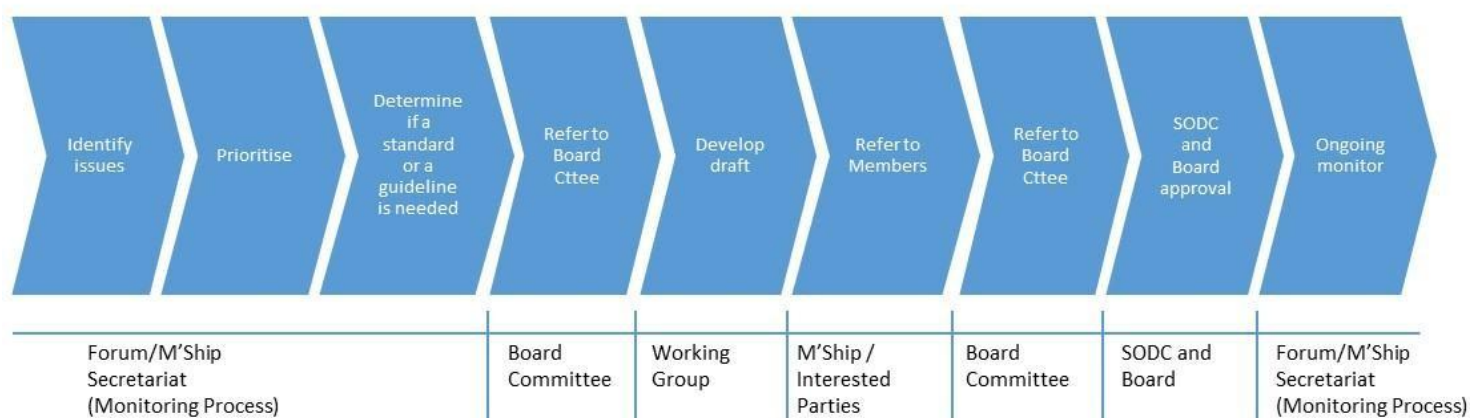
When setting Standards, it may be appropriate in some instances for **different stages or processes** to be adopted **provided that** the relevant Board Committee and the Standards Oversight and Disciplinary Committee (**SODC**) have had input into the adoption of a Standard (or Guidance Note) and the same is formally adopted by the FSC Board.

And provided further that the SODC may approve any non-material or non-significant amendments to any Standard or Guidance Note as it thinks fit, (such as correction of typographical errors, redundant wording or logos and manifest errors) and submit those for formal adoption by the FSC Board. If the SODC requires clarity as to whether any error is non-material or non-significant for these purposes, it will consider the advice of the FSC Secretariat and any relevant or appropriate Board Committee, Working Group or Expert Group.

The relevant stages are as follows:

- Stage 1:** Identification of an issue and an assessment of its priority.
- Stage 2:** Assessment of the need for a Standard or Guidance Note.
- Stage 3:** Put a case for the development of a Standard or Guidance Note to the appropriate FSC Board Committee.
- Stage 4:** Working Group to develop a draft for the purposes of consultation.
- Stage 5:** Submit an exposure draft to the broad FSC Membership and any interested parties as might be required for consultation.
- Stage 6:** Working Group to finalise the draft.
- Stage 7:** Final draft to be referred to the appropriate FSC Board Committee for endorsement.
- Stage 8:** Final draft to be referred to the SODC for approval and the SODC will refer the draft to the FSC Board for final approval.
- Stage 9:** Ongoing monitoring and enforcement (refer to the [FSC Annual Compliance Process](#) for further information).

Standard Setting process



Stage 1: Identification of an issue and an assessment of its priority

FSC Standards and Guidance Notes are conceived through the identification of issues that members consider require attention. Ideas for the development of new Standards are openly sought and the views of Members are welcomed on emerging issues. Changes to existing Standards should be thoroughly explored before the remainder of the development process is progressed.

The identification of emerging issues may be referred by the FSC Board, Board Committees, Forums, the Membership and the Secretariat, or may come about as a result of issues raised during the monitoring process. Issues are prioritised to ensure the appropriate allocation of resources.

Stage 2: Assessment of the need for a Standard or Guidance Note

Research should be undertaken to assess the need for a Standard or Guidance Note. Issues identified in the initial process may be addressed in a variety of ways: Member education, awareness campaigns, dialogue with a relevant regulator and other interested parties, as well as the establishment of a Standard or Guidance Note.

The best means for dealing with identified issues should be canvassed and a wide variety of potential solutions considered.

The Secretariat will develop or oversee the development of an Issues Paper, outlining a description of the problem, the need for a Standard or Guidance Note, a discussion of the problem, and a list of practical options for consideration.

Stage 3: Put a case for the development of a Standard or Guidance Note to the appropriate FSC Board Committee

The Issues Paper will be presented to the appropriate FSC Board Committee for deliberation. Once the FSC Board Committee has approved the direction of the Issues Paper, the production of the Standard or Guidance Note should be delegated to a new or existing Working Group.

Stage 4: Working Group to develop a draft

As directed by the FSC Board Committee in conjunction with the Secretariat, a Working Group will develop a draft Standard or Guidance Note for review by the Members.

Stage 5: Submit an exposure draft to the broad FSC Membership and any interested parties for consultation

Following the completion of a draft Standard or Guidance Note, an Exposure Draft should be distributed to all relevant Members and other interested parties, who will be given the opportunity to comment on the draft paper. A time limit for responses will be given to ensure prompt progression to the next stage of the standard-setting process.

Stage 6: Working Group to finalise the draft

Submissions from Members and other parties will be reviewed by the FSC Secretariat and the Working Group responsible for the draft paper to determine whether there is consensus on an issue.

Stage 7: Final draft to be referred to the appropriate FSC Board Committee for endorsement

A recommendation from the Working Group will be made to the appropriate FSC Board Committee, with an indication of whether the proposed Standard or Guidance Note is supported by all Members, and if not the nature and degree of opposition to it.

If the Board Committee is satisfied with the draft paper a recommendation will be made to the SODC for final approval.

Stage 8: Final draft referred to the SODC for approval and referral to the FSC Board for final approval

The draft Standard or Guidance Note will be presented to the next meeting of the SODC for approval. The SODC will provide its recommendation for final decision on approval by the FSC Board.

Once approved by the Board, the Standard or Guidance Note is issued with an Effective Date set at a suitable period after the Issue Date. This gives Members and interested parties an opportunity to prepare for implementation (subject to a Force Majeure Event occurring which may impact Members' ability to comply with the Effective Date, in which case the SODC may defer or delay the Effective Date if required).

Stage 9: Ongoing monitoring and enforcement

The Standards and Guidance Notes are monitored by the FSC Policy team. Any proposed amendments will be advanced in accordance with the standard setting process outlined above.

For more information on ongoing monitoring of compliance, best practice and disciplinary procedures, refer to the FSC information sheet on the [FSC Annual Compliance Process](#).