



# FSC® STANDARD FOR SMALL SCALE, LOW INTENSITY AND COMMUNITY FORESTS - KEY CHANGES DOCUMENT

September 26, 2023



## **SMALL-SCALE, LOW INTENSITY AND COMMUNITY FORESTS IN CANADA**

Canada is known for its vast area of large, publicly owned forests, and is home to some of the most advanced and large-scale forest operations in the world. However, Canada is also home to approximately 450,000 private forests owned by farmers, families, municipalities, First Nations communities and private companies. Although a small proportion of the total forest area, these forests make a disproportionately large contribution to the national timber supply, forest-related ecosystem goods and services (EG&S), as well as the socioeconomic well-being of families living in rural regions.

Back in 2019, FSC Canada published a new national stewardship standard applicable to large scale and high intensity forests. At the time, a conscious decision was made not to include specific requirements for small scale and low intensity forests, but to leave the adaptation for a later time.

Five years later, we are proud to say that we have succeeded at adapting the NFSS with specific standard requirements that are applicable and workable in the context of small scale, low-intensity forests (SLIMF) and Community forests.

### **STANDARD REVISION PROCESS**

The new Standard for Small-Scale, Low Intensity and Community Forests was developed to replace the three existing standards (Maritimes SLIMF Standard, BC Small Operators Standard, Great Lake St-Lawrence SLIMF Standard) currently applicable to small scale and low intensity forests. Having one standard instead of three will also ensure a level playing field among Canadian producers, whether they are located in Western, Central or Eastern Canada

FSC Canada convened an eight-member Standards Development Group (SDG) who provided strategic and technical direction for this new Standard. The group was comprised of two members from each stakeholder group or chamber (Indigenous, Social, Environmental and Economic) with consideration for regional representation, gender balance and diversity of experience.

The SDG assessed each indicator of the NFSS in the context of small producers, low intensity and community forests. If the indicator was suitable, it was kept as is or slightly modified, and incorporated into the new Standard for Small-Scale, Low Intensity and Community Forests. In cases where the NFSS indicator was not suitable, the SDG went back to the International Generic Indicator (IGI) and chose one of the four options available: Adopt it, Adapt it, Drop it or simply Add a New Indicator.

# NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGED REQUIREMENTS

## NEW REQUIREMENT

## WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

### COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES (1.6)

**A CONSISTENT APPROACH HARMONIZES THE STRUCTURE, DEFINITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS - WITH THE AIM OF CREATING A MORE USER-FRIENDLY STRUCTURE FOR CERTIFICATE HOLDERS TO APPLY AND A MORE ACCESSIBLE PROCESS FOR GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS WHO HOLD A COMPLAINT, TO USE.**

Modified or new definitions for 'complaints', 'disputes' and 'dispute of substantial magnitude'.

The structure of the Criteria (and Indicators) addressing disputes is designed to address the various types of concerns raised by individuals or groups of interest, and to ensure the appropriate level of response and action is taken by the Organization.

A system to receive and record complaint, as well as culturally appropriate engagement with complainant, is now required. A cease of operations is now required for disputes of substantial magnitude.

### GENDER EQUALITY (2.2)

**THE NEW STANDARDS ALIGNS WITH FSC'S APPROACH TO PROMOTE EQUALITY AND WORKERS' RIGHTS INCLUDING GENDER EQUITY.**

The new Standard requires measures to be taken to promote gender equality and prevent gender discrimination in employment practices.

### INDIGENOUS RIGHTS (3.1 & 3.1.2)

**THE NEW STANDARDS ENHANCES AND CLARIFIES "FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT" AS DEFINED IN THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (UNDRIP).**

Previous regional standards, while requiring Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) were less clear and precise about what was expected.

The new Standard requires the identification of legal and customary rights through culturally appropriate engagement for all types of tenure. It also requires an ongoing FPIC process to be established with Indigenous Peoples.

The indicators in Principle 3 facilitate constructive and process-oriented actions that promote relationship building and engagement in order to reach agreements.

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Clearer guidance for how to apply FPIC within the group certification and private land context.

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## **CONSERVATION AREAS NETWORK (6.5)**

### **A KEY FSC GLOBAL FEATURE, CONSERVATION AREA NETWORKS REQUIRE A RIGOROUS APPROACH FOR IDENTIFYING AND SETTING ASIDE CONSERVATION AREAS.**

The new Standard requires a minimum of 10% to be set aside as Conservation Areas Network.

What can be included in the Conservation Area Network has been expanded and is outlined at indicator 6.5.1

Clear guidance on how this new requirement applies to group of SLIMF Management Units at indicator 6.5.3.

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## **HCV ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING (P9)**

### **STANDARDIZE THE ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING OF HCV.**

The new Standard requires the use of the National Framework (Annex C) to complete the HCV assessment. The assessment also needs to be reviewed every 5 years, involving engagement with stakeholders and Indigenous People.

The HCV monitoring requirements have been clarified. Implementation, status and effectiveness monitoring are now required.

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