

FSC Strategic Framework for Climate and Biodiversity (2026-2032)

Executive summary

The FSC Climate and Biodiversity Strategic Framework 2026–2032 outlines FSC’s direction to tackle the interconnected global crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. Building on FSC’s legacy of promoting responsible forest management (RFM) through certification, the framework outlines FSC’s contributions to climate and biodiversity goals. These contributions extend beyond certification, including leveraging markets to increase incentives for responsible practices, products and services, and shaping policies and frameworks to enhance recognition of RFM and FSC certification at global and national levels.

Vision

The Strategic Framework provides the pathways for FSC to achieve the 2050 vision of resilient forests that sustain life on Earth, by contributing to have **forests valued and managed to mitigate and adapt to climate change, while enabling biodiversity and forest dependent people to thrive**.

In this context, forest-dependent people include those that take responsibility for and derive benefits of forests, i.e. Indigenous Peoples (IPs), local communities (LCs), forest managers, and workers.

Context and challenges

- Forests cover 30% of global land, store 7.6 billion tonnes of CO₂ annually, host 80% of terrestrial species, and provide other multiple ecosystem services, yet are under unprecedented threat from deforestation and degradation.
- Around 1.6 billion people rely directly on forest resources for their livelihood. IPs’ and LCs’ practices are central to climate resilience and biodiversity conservation, but they remain vulnerable due to insecure rights and limited access to resources and finance.

Theory of Change

To achieve the vision of this Strategic Framework, FSC will nest its interventions along three interconnected critical pathways:

1. **Knowledge & Practices:** Scalable, climate-smart, and biodiversity-friendly forest management.
2. **Markets systems and finance:** Incentives and investments rewarding climate-smart practices and biodiversity outcomes in forest management.
3. **Policies & Partnerships:** Enabling policy frameworks and collaborations amplifying forest-based solutions for climate and biodiversity.

Cross-cutting enablers include innovation, data and digital systems, scientific research, people-centred approaches, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Strategic Priorities

These pathways have been translated in the following strategic priorities:

1. **Promote forest management (FM) practices that contribute to global climate and biodiversity goals.**
2. **Leverage markets and finance to incentivize forest management practices that contribute to global climate and biodiversity goals.**
3. **Advance policy and partnerships to promote forests as climate and biodiversity solutions.**

The following page presents FSC’s results and proposed intervention strategies. These strategies will be turned into actionable interventions in a subsequent Implementation Plan, detailing roles and responsibilities, budget and resources, and key performance indicators (KPIs).

Strategic Results for FSC contribution (2026-2032)		
Outcome 1. Forest management practices integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity conservation objectives	Outcome 2. Market and finance increasingly support responsible forest management enhancing its role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity conservation	Outcome 3. Policies and partnerships advance the uptake and scaling up of forest management contributing to climate and biodiversity objectives
Outputs and key FSC interventions		
1.1. FSC FM standards include climate change mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity protection. ○ Revision of Principles and Criteria and International Generic Indicators (PCI). 1.2 Afforestation and restoration are facilitated. ○ Showcase FSC restoration solutions. ○ Conduct market analysis for potential development of new ones. 1.3 Risk assessment frameworks integrate climate risks. ○ Revision of risk assessments. 1.4 IPs' and LCs' knowledge acknowledged and integrated in forest management practices. ○ Strengthen involvement of IPs in the development of Forest Stewardship Standards. 1.5 Forest stewards have improved capacities to implement climate-smart and biodiversity-friendly practices. ○ Develop and implement training and guidelines. 1.6 Relevant data and insights on climate and biodiversity outcomes available through FM certification. ○ Incorporate key intended outcomes in Forest Stewardship Standards. ○ Improve data collection templates and reporting.	2.1. Increased awareness among buyers of the importance of certified products and of forest-based substitutes for fossil-fuel based products. ○ Communication and marketing campaigns on the value of responsibly managed forests for climate and biodiversity. 2.2. Actors through the supply chain have increased incentives for responsible forest management and sourcing. ○ Communicate FSC value proposition on climate and biodiversity to different users, such as government, private companies, and IPs and LCs. ○ Promote FSC solutions as a prerequisite for impact investment. 2.3. Mechanisms in place to reward climate and biodiversity contributions of IPs and LCs. ○ Work with IPs and LCs on implementation of FSC solutions to facilitate access to payments for ecosystem services. ○ Develop solutions that recognize the positive impact of their practices. 2.4. Access to finance for forest restoration facilitated. ○ Provide evidence of impact of restoration through FSC solutions. ○ Build financial feasibility cases. 2.5. Improved monitoring mechanisms and data availability to build trust and demonstrate impact of FSC solutions on climate and biodiversity. ○ Gather data of spatial boundaries of FSC-certified forests. ○ Produce more user-friendly reports and dashboards. ○ Facilitate acquisition of data for mandatory or voluntary non-financial sustainability disclosures (e.g. CSRD, GRI, CDP, TNFD).	3.1 Relevant international and national institutions have increased evidence to recognize responsible forest management and FSC certification in their climate and biodiversity policies and regulatory frameworks. ○ Engage and advocate in international and national fora (e.g. to advocate for recognition of FSC certification in National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions). ○ Facilitate participation of IPs and LCs in decision making processes. 3.2 Public and private institutions providing grants finance have increased evidence and awareness to support responsible forest management and FSC certification, including restoration. ○ Establish and strengthen engagement with global funds such as Green Climate Fund (GCF) or Global Environment Facility (GEF). 3.3 Data, evidence, and analysis for policymaking are available. ○ Establish and strengthen partnerships with research institutions.