



FSC® General Assembly 2017

Vancouver, Canada, 8–13 October

How to Submit a Successful Motion

There are a multitude of factors that influence whether a proposed Motion may or may not be voted in by FSC members. The contents of this document don't guarantee a successful motion, but can help to increase the likelihood of success.

Real examples from past GA motion submissions have been used to demonstrate some of the advice given. The intention is not to point to errors in submissions; it is to point to places where Motion texts or related actions could have been amended to make that Motion better understood and supported.

Tip #1: Remember the Rules

The motion submission deadline is 3 March 2017, and no new submissions will be accepted after this date. In addition, please use the format given on the online Motions Platform.

Why? The Motions Committee needs the time provided by the deadline and the detail provided by the template to fully consider your motion.

Also note: The Motions Committee will then discuss your proposal, and may try to link together similar motions by putting their Proposers and Seconders into contact with each other.



Tip # 2: Focus on One Issue.

Decide what the main proposal is, and drop the other sub-proposals (i.e. those that are not as important) from that motion. If the other needs are so important that they can't be deleted, then submit a separate motion for them.

Why? If you are asking for only one thing, people will agree with it or not. If you're asking for more than one action, even if they are related, people might agree with one and not with the other. Some of those people might vote yes and others might vote no.

Example: Consider this proposed Motion:

Policy Motion:

That FSC resolves to support Responsible Urban Forestry Management through (1) review and amendment of Annex 1 of FSC-STD-40-007 V1-0 *Sourcing Reclaimed Material for Use in FSC Product Groups or FSC-Certified Projects* to clarify recognition of the recovery of urban trees and parts of urban trees as post consumer wood sources for reclaimed wood material; (2) designation of Urban Forests as a new forest type for inclusion under FSC Forest Management Standards. Items that may need to be developed include a definition of urban forest, urban trees and/or urban wood as well as guidance and policy documents for urban forestry standards

Request 1:
recovered urban
wood =
reclaimed

Request 2:
Urban forests =
new type of FSC
forest

What would I vote if I agreed with Request 1, but was against Request 2?

Tip # 3: Keep it simple.

Use easy to understand language, with limited technical words and abbreviations (also known as 'jargon').

Why? Not all members are mother-tongue English or Spanish speakers. While it is likely that most non-native English or non-native Spanish speakers will understand much of the terminology, it is open for misinterpretation. Therefore be as clear as you can, and use simple sentences, to avoid losing even a handful of votes because of misunderstandings!

Example:

This sentence is filled with complex words: "We recommend data points are gathered to determine if there has been a response to the intervention."

Rather, the sentence could be redrafted to be simpler and easier to understand, as follows: "We recommend research is conducted to assess if there has been a response to the activity."

Tip #4: Acknowledge the Opposition and Confront it.

Identify why people in other Chambers (or your own!) might not support your proposed Motion. Choose up to two of the main reasons, and respond to these concerns - in your Motion submission - clearly and positively. Many Motions have far-reaching impacts, and it is important that you express yourself clearly so that everyone can understand what you mean, and you must have thought through what it would mean to FSC if the GA accepts your Motion. For example, many Motions propose that the FSC Secretariat should take on extra tasks or spend extra money. In this case; you should explain where the resources will come from for this task and what else could be affected by it.

Why? This gives you the chance to address doubts others might have before they are voiced. Often, this can reduce the chance of them being voiced at all.

Example: Consider this proposed Motion:

Policy Motion (high-level action request):

"It is proposed that commencing from the time of certification for initial 5 years, monetary assistance should be provided to SLIMF certification holders (of Southern Region) to help them develop marketing capacities and market linkages."

GA high level action is requested.

If you were the Motion proposer and were aware of concerns about – for example – the amount of money that would be taken away from other FSC initiatives, that were seemingly more important than this one, then you should address it in the rationale of the Motion submission. It could be addressed by highlighting the social benefits for FSC of a more efficient SLIMF programme, or the knock-on benefits to FSC certificate holders should improved marketing capacities of smallholders lead to increased market share – and therefore awareness – of FSC generally.

Tip #5: Gathering Support before the GA.

Successful Motions have generally been discussed with the other Chambers before the GA. Get people talking about your Motion to increase interest and buy-in. You could do this by starting a discussion about your Motion on the Motions platform and on the FSC members' LinkedIn group.

Why? To be accepted at the GA, a Motion will have to be approved by an overall majority of two-thirds, including a majority (more than 50%) in *each* Chamber. Opening it up for discussion will draw attention to your Motion and ensure it stays in peoples' minds. It is also an opportunity to discover – and address – any potential areas of conflict up front.

Example: This post is from the FSC Members' area on LinkedIn. While it's not about a Motion, it does call Members to take action, and also gives Members the chance to comment:

Isabel GARCIA-DRIGO
Post-doc fellow chez Post-Graduation Program on Rural Development (...)
6mo

FSC VERY RELEVANT PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Few participation from Brazil until now! Send your comments!

 Documents under consultation
High Conservation Values (HCV) Manager's Guide and a set of intact forest landscape (IFL) indicators

Like Comment

Tip #6: Get Your View in the News.

Make use of the GA news system to lobby for support. The news system consists of a printed daily newsletter, and online news and opinion pieces (and we're always looking for content!)

Why? For the same reasons as above: Ensure it stays top of mind, and addresses any known conflicts.

Example: This is a snippet of an opinion piece from the website of the 2014 GA. It highlights some of the issues around the Conversion Rule (Motion 12)

Opinion & Analysis

Are we missing the forest for the trees? Opportunities in Sabah and the impact of the 1994 Conversion Rule

Andrew Ng (Executive Director) - FSC Malaysia

In 2010 the estimated forest cover for Sabah was approximately 37,600 km² or 50% of the entire state. The vast majority is under the management of Sabah Forestry Department (SFD) or Sabah Parks as protected areas.

Tip #7: Promote Your Motion.

Promote your motion with handouts and/or teaser material. You don't need a big budget to promote acceptance of your motion. Small things will do.

Why? For the same reason: Keep it at the top of everyone's' minds and on the tips of their tongues!

Examples:



Simple tent cards of all the tables at lunch time with a simple message, for example: "Vote motion 35 to keep workers safe".



Hand out wrist bracelets with a simple message, for example: "Vote motion 35 to keep workers safe".

WARNING: It's recommended you, as a Chamber, decide on one motion to promote with handouts and teasers. More than this will create a blur of multiple promotions that could become meaningless amongst the clutter

Tip #8: Use other Channels to Gather Support at the GA

There are many formal and informal opportunities to discuss motions during the few days of side meetings before the start of the Members' Assembly. These include Chamber and Cross-chamber meetings at which motions can be explained, discussed and amendments included for final submission to the GA.

Why? If your Motion is to be successful, you must discuss it with your colleagues and fellow FSC members. In this way will you be able to build the support that you need.

Where can you go for help?

The FSC Communications Unit is ready and willing to advise you on the messaging in your Motion submission, how to submit news to the GA news system, and how to promote your Motion in other ways. Please drop us a line through Viktoria Taterra (v.taterra@fsc.org) – Viktoria will then put you in touch with one of the FSC Communicators that best matches your field and your requirements.