



## FSC® General Assembly 2017

Vancouver, Canada, 8–13 October

September 2017

# Governance Review

## Background

On September 10th 2014, FSC's membership approved Motion 42 requiring FSC to conduct a review of its governance through the mechanism of a chamber balanced working group and with input from external governance experts. The aim of the comprehensive review was to present recommendations to the membership for consideration at the 2017 General Assembly, to ensure that the appropriate governance structures are in place to support the achievement of the FSC mission and strategy, and that FSC is fit for purpose to meet the governance challenges of the next 20 years. The review was expected to address the capacity for participation by the social and environmental chambers; and work to define clear roles, responsibilities, effectiveness and efficiency of:

- The FSC Network and FSC IC.
- The FSC Board, Board elections, and the membership's current voting processes.
- The General Assembly, and the process, number, quality and implementation of motions brought to the GA.
- Expert panels, policy committees and working groups.

It was decided to explicitly include in the review consideration of issues raised by the membership including though not limited to:

- Board nomination criteria and election procedures.
- Review of the FSC voting system including balance between individual and organizational votes.
- Review of chamber allocation process and membership criteria.
- Improvement in process to create Working Groups and Expert Panels

The chamber-balanced governance working group was established in May 2016 to address these concerns and fulfill the mandate of Motion 42. Independent experts in governance (Ben Cashore and Kate McDonald) were brought in to provide an objective, external perspective from the governance literature and the experience of other international organizations. They also adapted an evaluation framework based on the governance principles developed by the WG, in order to help adjudicate the governance legitimacy of the reforms being proposed.



During the process, support from external facilitation experts was also secured to assist and guide the Working Group in its intensive deliberative process, understanding the viewpoints held by the different sub-chambers and reaching agreements on the final recommendations and motions to be the outcome of this far-reaching complex process.

## **Current Status**

The Governance Review Working Group has just prepared its Final Report on recommendations for FSC Governance, which include several consensus-based statutory and policy motions that will be put before the GA. The complexity and comprehensive nature of the review and the potentially far-reaching changes being proposed has demonstrated the need for an extended period of analysis and debate within the membership, wider stakeholders, Board and Secretariat. This is one of the recommendations being put forward by the WG.

Three consultations have taken place to provide inputs into the governance review:

- i) Early in 2016, a first consultation was run even before the working group had been constituted to get a general impression about which governance questions seemed to be most relevant for members to be discussed by the working group. In this first consultation there were a total of 87 valid responses to the survey of which 24% were from the Economic chamber, 46% were from the Environment chamber, and 30% were from the Social chamber.
- ii) In late 2016, a second consultation included an online survey with the participation of 129 members of which 46% were from the economic chamber; 28% from the environmental chamber and 26% from the social chamber.
- iii) In July-August 2017, a third consultation included a survey through the FSC online consultation platform with the participation of 187 members (with a higher percentage of South participation than previously, with over 50% South across all sub chambers) with 1473 written comments, providing feedback on a comprehensive series of proposed governance reforms developed by the Working Group, based on analysis of the problems identified. Prior to, and during the online consultation, a series of webinars were organised in different regional time zones where WG members provided further explanation of the proposed reforms. WG members also engaged their constituencies through sub-chamber consultations.

In late August, the WG members held a final meeting in Bristol, UK, to reflect on the feedback received through the online survey and the sub-chamber consultations. The governance experts provided a framework for analysing the coherence of the proposed reforms and their implications for the current governance system as a whole, as well as a framework for evaluating the governance legitimacy of the proposed reforms.

## **Motions and Recommendations to the GA**

The GRWG has developed consensus-based recommendations for governance reform grouped under the following four pillars for consideration of the general assembly:

1. Basic representative structure of FSC
2. FSC's global network
3. Consultation and policy development
4. Oversight and accountability

Given the comprehensive and far-reaching nature of the review and the limited time that was available for complex cross-chamber agreements, and the requests from parts of some of the membership for data and evidence-based decision-making for the more structural governance reforms, the GRWG also proposes a Phase II Governance Review.

**Timeline:** In preparation for the General Assembly, the GRWG has submitted 9 consensus-based motions to the Motions Committee. Drafting and Submission of the Final Report of the GRWG to the Board of Directors by 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

## **GA 2017 Activities**

Plenary Session on FSC Governance on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October.

Side Event on specific governance issues that require further debate (tbc)