**OCP Update: Using the OCP to significantly reduce the administrative burden of CoC certification**

The FSC Online Claims Platform has now begun its public testing phase, and currently more than 150 organizations are taking part in the testing. We thank all businesses participating in the test for their feedback and suggestions. This input is greatly valued and extremely helpful. We encourage those that have not tested the OCP to do so.

We recognize that concerns are being voiced by different industries regarding the implementation of the OCP, and we take those concerns very seriously. We would like to take this opportunity to underline that FSC does not wish to force a system on its certificate holders, particularly if significant numbers of our certificate holders do not believe the system will have benefit for their business.

At the same time, it is clear that the current FSC system is vulnerable to the passage of inaccurate claims through supply chains and that our future integrity is at risk if we do not develop the FSC system as it evolves and grows. There is an inherent threat that must be mitigated, or there is the risk of significant negative impact to our integrity, potentially harming the business of all certificate holders worldwide.

**Reducing administrative burdens**

The OCP is being designed and developed to address the issue of inaccurate claims in the FSC system. While developing the OCP, it has become apparent that for many companies being CoC certified already carries a significant administrative burden, and that introducing the OCP could be regarded as going even further in that direction.

It is not at all our intention with the OCP to increase the administrative burden of CoC for certified companies. We are committed to bringing that administrative burden down and we are currently exploring options for how the Online Claims Platform could do just that, while also strengthening the integrity of the FSC system.

We are identifying the possible ways larger parts of the CoC standard can be automatically met for companies that fully integrate the OCP. These changes would lead to saving time on administration and auditing processes, while building a more robust FSC system. We welcome any suggestions and ideas in the process, and will - in the coming months - develop a structured means for gathering such input and feedback.

**Exploring options for a voluntary OCP**

With this update we underline that we are committed to listen very carefully to stakeholder concerns about the OCP. This includes stakeholders’ views about the originally proposed mandatory nature of the platform. We are therefore currently exploring all options possible for the introduction of OCP, including options where the entire system remains voluntary, or certain parts remain voluntary, including entering claims. We are also exploring the feasibility of a risk based introduction of the OCP. It is not in our interest to introduce a mandatory system that goes against the wishes of our stakeholders, if we can block inaccurate claims through other means.

As an alternative solution to the problem of inaccurate claims, we are currently investigating the possibilities of transactional auditing. Here transactions made between certified businesses will be reconciled under an auditing process through a direct comparison of output and input records of transactions at each of the two trading parties. This would mean that certificate holders would be faced with additional audits for each of their certified customers that carried forward the FSC claim but would lift the requirement for mandatory use of the OCP system.

**Reaching out to stakeholders**

FSC has expanded our consultation process during which we will be reaching out to diverse stakeholder groups to get a deeper understanding of concerns and identify possible solutions. The process was mandated by the FSC International Board of directors.

The first in a series of meetings was held on Tuesday, April 8th with a group of industry representatives from Europe and North America. The group agreed that the current FSC CoC system lacked oversight of transactions made between certified companies***,*** that this allowed inaccuracies to enter the system and needed to be corrected. There was also general agreement, that the OCP could be a possible solution to do so. However, there are significant issues that need to be resolved before the industry accepts the OCP system. The group will work together to find solutions to these problem areas.

A statement from the meeting will be made available on the FSC International webpage.

During the coming months, FSC will expand this consultation to include economic, social and environmental interests to ensure the full range of opinions are heard.

We look forward to having a constructive dialogue with our stakeholders about the options that lie ahead.