

FSC® US FSS EXPLAINERS SERIES – NEW CLIMATE CHANGE REQUIREMENTS EXPLAINED



The role of climate change and related considerations in the FSC framework:

The revised U.S. Forest Stewardship Standard requires consideration of the potential future impacts of climate change when making and implementing various management decisions, aligned with commonly accepted conceptual frameworks for managing forests to adapt to climate change (see Figure 1 & Table 1 from Annex L below). Climate change-related requirements include:

- An assessment of the potential future impacts of climate change and catastrophic natural disturbances on identified environmental values
- An assessment of the climate change risks and vulnerabilities associated with the management unit, including an indication of the feasibility of meeting current management objectives and determination of any changes in management objectives and/or of any climate change adaptation strategies to be implemented based on this assessment
- Including specific procedures in the monitoring protocol to evaluate: a) ongoing changes in potential impacts of climate change related risks and vulnerabilities; b) how these changes might affect achievement of management objectives and desired future conditions, and c) the effectiveness of climate change adaptation strategies that have been implemented
- Proactive management to address the need for forest resilience in the face of climate change. This includes the adaptation strategies identified above but also expands to include the consideration of how to improve forest resilience in the face of natural disturbance events (such as wildfire, extreme wind, or ice storms) that are likely to increase in severity and/or frequency due to climate change

Importantly, though Certificate Holders are required to consider the impacts of climate change, they are not expected to develop scientific projections of climate change impacts, but instead use best available information to evaluate risks and vulnerabilities. The U.S. Forest Stewardship Standard is not explicit about the methods, format, or documentation of the evaluations or assessments required.

For More Information:

Annex L provides a detailed toolkit to assist Certificate Holders with conforming to the various climate change consideration requirements throughout the Standard, and to also support them with incorporating forest management for forest carbon. FSC US will be working to identify additional sources of best available information beyond those included in Annex L.

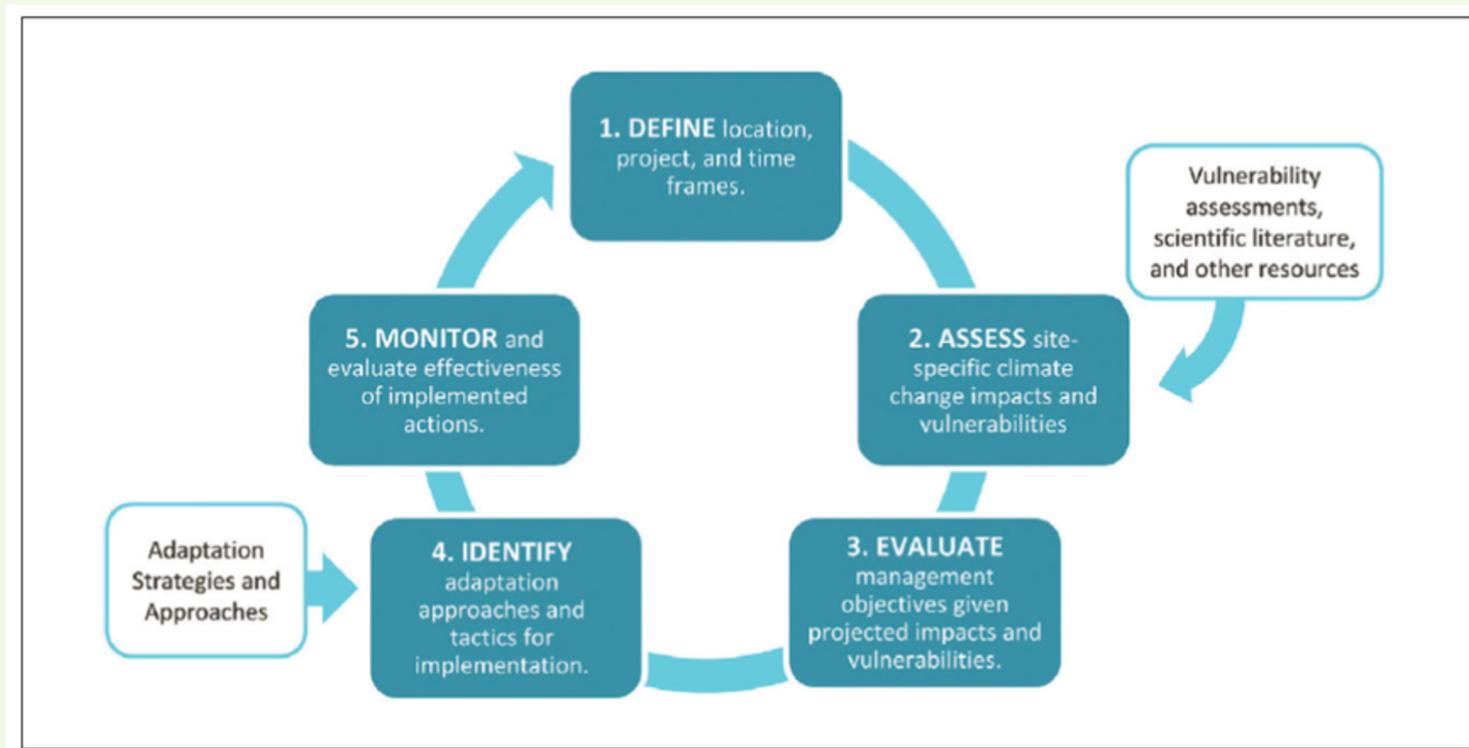


Figure 1. Adaptation Workbook Process. Source: Forest Adaptation Resources: Climate Change Tools and Approaches for Land Managers, 2nd Edition (Swanson et al. Ch. 5, page 75, 2016).

Below, FSS Indicators* are cross-walked to the steps in the Adaptation Workbook process.

Step 1: Define area of interest, goals, and objectives	Indicator 7.1.2
Step 2: Assess climate change impacts and vulnerabilities	Indicator 6.1.1 Indicator 7.2.4
Step 2: Evaluate <i>management objectives</i> * given impacts and vulnerabilities	Indicator 7.2.4
Step 3: Identify adaptation approaches and tactics for implementation	Indicator 7.2.4/FF Indicator 7.2.1 Indicator 10.2.2 Indicator 10.9.2
Step 4: Monitor and evaluate effectiveness	Indicator 8.1.2