



Forest Stewardship Council®



Diversity and Gender in FSC

V-1, March 2021



Diversity and Gender in FSC

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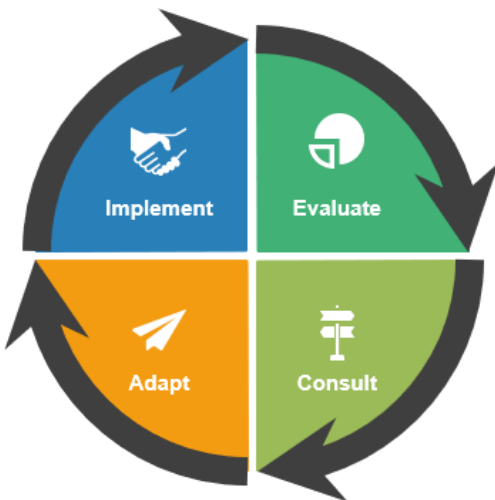
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Summary

Many international organisations¹ in the multilateral and development world have given priority to mainstreaming diversity and gender equality in their work since the late 90s. FSC's Global Strategy and the Forest Stewardship Standards reference diversity and gender equality, Goal 5 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals since 2012.

This paper takes stock of where FSC is in the development of diversity and gender equality and proposes some next steps. It has been developed by a staff Task Force on Diversity and Gender,² which assessed the existing diversity and gender initiatives in FSC to develop a baseline for further steps. The work was supported by Board liaisons Martha Nuñez and Linda Fienberg. A work plan for the Taskforce can be found in annex 1. The Task Force identified four main fields of work:

1. Monitoring (or assessment) of gender and diversity in FSC's standard setting and auditing systems.
2. Monitoring gender responsiveness and diversity in FSCs worldwide human resources.
3. Learning on gender and diversity.
4. Gender and diversity awareness and outreach.



The methodology used by the Task Force has 4 pillars:

1. Collecting information on the existing elements in the FSC certification scheme on diversity and gender equality, as well in FSC's global staff.
 2. Consult findings and collect additional findings, specifically of auditors and Certification Bodies (CB) (for the FSC scheme).
 3. Adapt where needed through learning processes.
 4. Implement adaptations and other suggestions.
- Pillar 1 is completed and reported upon here. For pillar 2, the Task Force was hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused CB meetings to be made virtual and meant that the meetings were much more focussed on solving priorities for CBs. A workshop on auditing the gender indicator could not be included.³ The pandemic also delayed the survey amongst the FSC global staff. This means that findings have not yet all been consulted, and the work is in different stages for different elements. Nevertheless, the Task Force presents in this report findings of the evaluation and consultation that took place.

In summary, the Task Force proposes as a next step to develop a framework including but not limited to the following highlights:

- Ensure appropriate attention and action to diversity and gender in standard development for national (NFSS), composition of working groups and technical working groups, and auditing and reporting.
- Maintain focus on striving towards and/or ensuring diversity and gender balance in FSC decision-making bodies.
- Focus capacity-building efforts for staff and Network Partners on enabling diversity and gender balance, including, and not limited to, leadership roles.
- Encourage inclusion of diversity and gender perspectives in the field activities⁴ of FSC.

¹ Links to resources: [FAO](#), [FAO-UNECE](#), [UNFCCC](#), [CBD](#), [UN Women Watch](#), [World Bank](#), [CIFOR](#), [IUCN](#) and many others

² The task force: Marion Karmann (engagement research), Joachim Meier-Dörnberg (PSU), Mathias Fecht and Bea Eimermacher (HR) and Gemma Boetekees (Stakeholder Solutions).

³ However, we believe there is very little experience so far with auditors on auditing the gender requirements, looking at the few CARs we have found. In addition, 2020 was a lost year for gender auditing due to COVID and audit derogation and desk audits.

⁴ Including regional and national offices.

- Develop communication with members and stakeholders showing FSC's diversity and gender approaches through storytelling, targeted messaging, etc., increasing levels of consciousness on diversity and gender issues in key FSC audiences.

Report of the Task Force

1. What is Diversity and Gender?

An inclusive organization means that all people in the organisation should feel represented and be heard. However, across the globe, minorities and marginalized groups are often structurally excluded, including in the world of forestry and forest products development. As a result, the representation, participation, knowledge-sharing, and leadership of women, young people, members of Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized groups remain low.

Diversity and gender equality are important focal points in FSC's work. Through our projects and certification scheme, we aim to contribute to the active participation of all groups in society and the equal distribution of power and influence between economic, social, and environmental interests, and also between women and men, regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnic background.

Diversity reflects the visible and invisible differences that exist among people, including, but not limited to, gender identity, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or identity, age, economic class, language, religion, location, nationality, education, and family/marital status. These visible and invisible differences among people can also lead to differences in experiences, values, attitudes, and ways of thinking, behaving, communicating, and working.

Gender refers to the roles, responsibilities, rights, relationships and identities of men and women that are defined or ascribed to them within a given society and context – and how these roles, responsibilities, rights, and identities affect and influence each other. The term 'gender' is often confused with 'sex.' However, 'sex' generally refers to male and female biology and anatomy, whereas 'gender' refers to a set of qualities and behaviours expected from men and women by society.⁵ 'Gender roles' are therefore socially determined and can change over time, since social values and norms are not static. These roles etc. are changeable over time, between places and within places.⁶

Note that 'gender' is not interchangeable with 'women' or 'sex' but refers to the simultaneous consideration of both men and women's roles and their interaction.

Equality refers to the goal we want to achieve, so that everyone can benefit from equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in their lives. It means that individuals are empowered to develop their interests, needs and priorities without the limitations set by stereotypes associated with their gender or characteristics.

Equity refers to fairness of treatment for women and men according to their respective needs. A gender equity goal often requires measures to rectify the imbalances between the sexes, in particular to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women. Equity can be understood as the means, where equality is the end. Equity leads to equality.⁷

⁵ [Gender and Organisational Change](#), Groverman and Gurung, 2001

⁶ [UNDP, Gender Mainstreaming in Environment and Energy Training Manual](#), 2015

⁷ [Source: IFAD, IUCN](#)

2. Diversity and gender in FSC.

In [FSC's Global Strategy](#) 2021-2026, diversity and gender is part of all three strategies, showing the inclusiveness of the approach.

Strategy 1 says:

- Inspire and be inspired by new and existing members and partners to co-create local and global forest stewardship solutions to current forest related challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, gender inequity and violation of the rights of workers, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, while responsibly delivering forest products and services to the world.

Strategy 2 says:

- FSC has created models for initiatives that increase access to markets or investments in forest products and services delivered by Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and smallholders, and promoting gender equity and diversity.
- Businesses deliver on their commitment to local and global sustainability agendas by adhering to FSC social values through certification, benefiting workers, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, including gender and diversity perspectives.

And Strategy 3 refers to:

- FSC has engaged in visible alliances and partnerships to create impact by promoting forest certification and forest landscape solutions that protect the environment and respect the rights and improve the livelihoods of people depending on them. Partners may include governmental and intergovernmental institutions, companies, environmental and social NGOs, trade unions, gender equity organizations, Indigenous Peoples' organizations, funders, investors, and others.

2.1 Diversity in FSC – a limited structured evaluation possible

FSC has quite some clear requirements in the certification scheme for diversity. A quantitative evaluation of standard development, certification processes, and certified forest management would require a systematic monitoring of data, which are being collected but not yet easily accessible in FSC. Diversity elements we would recommend to report are especially in the rights of workers, Indigenous Peoples, and communities, and in geographical representation. We have concentrated specifically on geographical origin as data is available for this.

2.1.1 Diversity in FSC's certification scheme

For FSC, **the work in diversity includes equality for workers, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and gender equality.** For many of these diversity elements, FSC has built approaches to promote equality **in the certification scheme**.



Workers' rights are the key component of Principle 2 in the [FSC Principles and Criteria](#) for forest stewardship and recently the [ILO core labour requirements were added to the FSC Chain of Custody requirements](#), including effective abolition of child labour, elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, respect of freedom of association, and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

Indigenous Peoples' traditional rights and engagement as well as community engagement are the key components of Principle 3 and 4 in the [FSC Principles and Criteria](#), which requires all FSC-certified forest owners and managers to identify and uphold Indigenous Peoples' rights of land ownership, use of land, and access to resources the land may provide. The FSC P&C requires FSC-certified businesses to uphold the principles of free prior and informed consent (FPIC), that a community has the right to give or withhold its consent to proposals that may affect the lands it legally or customarily owns, occupies, or otherwise uses. In 2015, the Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee (PIPC) was founded as an advisory group to the FSC Board of Directors to give Indigenous Peoples an active voice and a permanent representation within FSC. In 2020, [the FSC Indigenous Foundation](#) was established, to give a voice to Indigenous Peoples on the continued management and preservation of the world's forests.

2.1.2 Diversity in FSC's staff

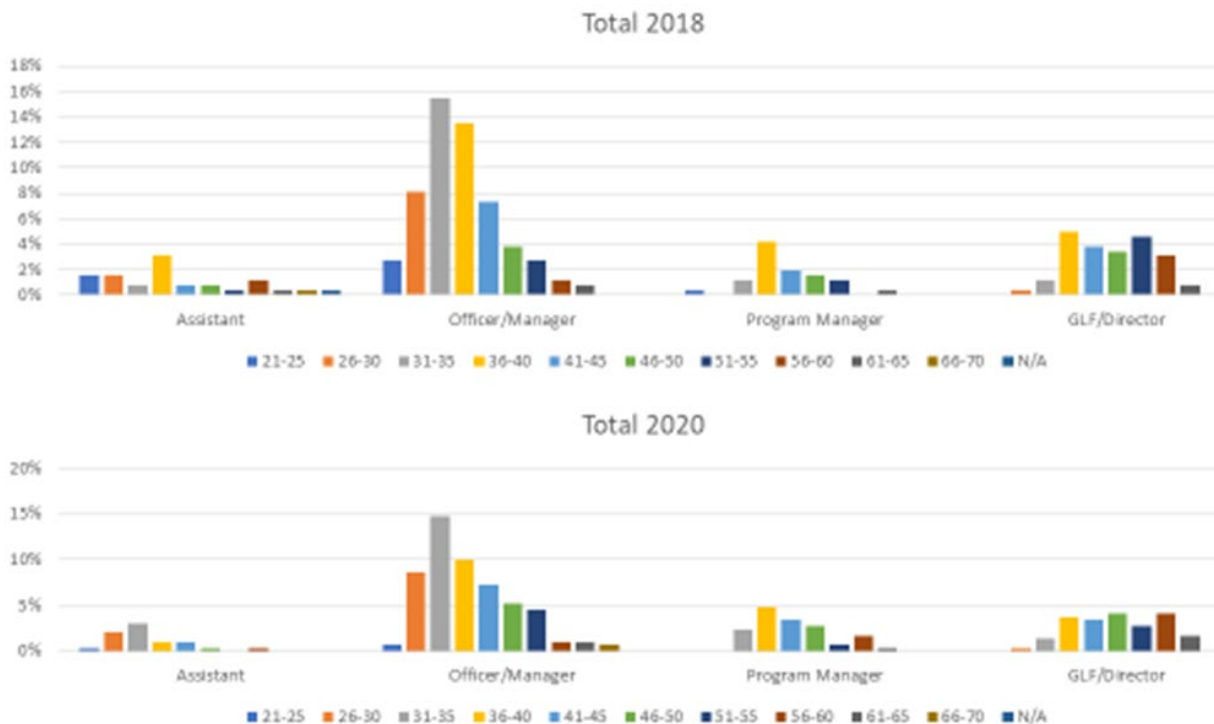
In 2020, FSC Human Resources analysed diversity in FSC's global staff. This was done through a survey, an extended repeat of the 2018 survey which focussed mainly on gender only. The 2020 analysis was wider and included gender data and other diversity elements such as geographic origin and age.

Two key comparisons of findings in diversity show that diversity in these two criteria – origin of staff and age diversity in position level – may require some targeted attention in FSC's recruitment.

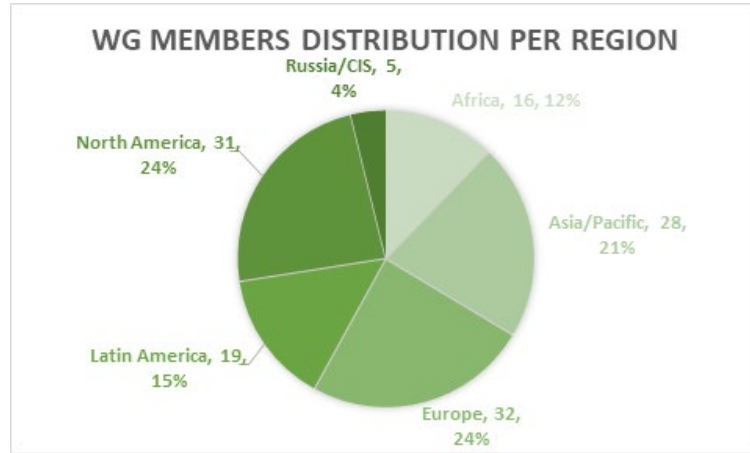
Origin of staff – total in 2018 and 2020



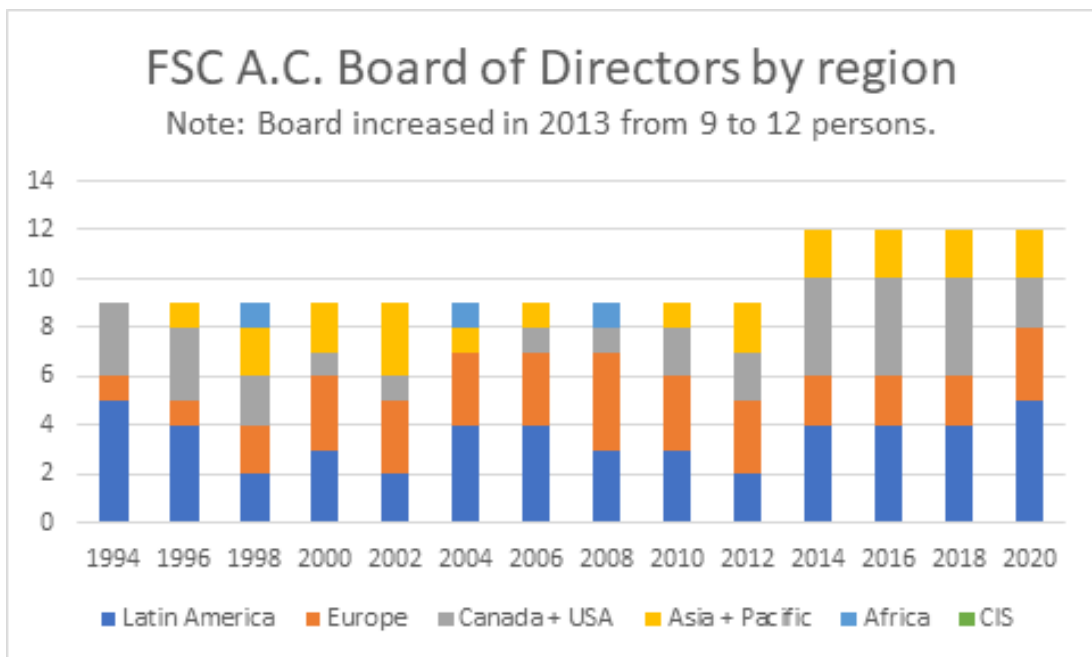
	2018	2020
Europe	47%	53%
Northern America	11%	9%
Australia + New Zealand	3%	3%
CIS-Countries	7%	6%
North	67%	70%
Africa	4%	5%
Arabic World	0%	0%
Latin America	16%	14%
Asia Pacific	12%	10%
South	33%	30%



Linked to scheme development, we evaluated the geographic origin of members of 20 FSC International working groups developing or revising FSC normative framework documents, such as policies, procedures, and standards. This shows the following:



We also assessed the geographic origin of FSC Board members from the period of 2015 to 2021.



These graphs show that geographical diversity is especially difficult for representation from CIS (in the FSC Board, this region has not yet been represented) and Africa. That is perhaps known to some, but still worth mentioning.



2.2 Gender equality in FSC

2.2.1 Gender equality in FSC's certification scheme

Gender equality indicators in forest stewardship standards were introduced in 2012.

- In 2012, FSC introduced a gender criterion C2.2⁸ in Version 5 of FSC-STD-01-001, the [Principles & Criteria](#) (P&C) for Forest Stewardship.
- In 2015, the [International Generic Indicators](#) (IGI) in FSC-STD-60-004 were launched, designed to address the Criteria of the P&C, and to be adaptable at national level for Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS). Especially the nine indicators⁹ for C2.2 and those for C7.6 support gender equality in certified forest operations.
- The Gender Mainstreaming Steering Group, set up in 2015, in consultation with external gender experts and auditors developed Guidance towards these indicators in [Promoting Gender Equality in National Forest Stewardship Standards \(FSC-GUI-60-005\)](#)
- Since the [revised IGIs](#) in 2015, National FSC Standard Development Groups (FSC SDG) can adopt or adapt the gender requirements in national indicators to their own national realities. The guidance is also used during forest management evaluations by auditors.

⁸ FSC P&C, Criterion 2.2 and FSC-GUI-60-005 'Promoting Gender Equality in National Forest Stewardship Standards' shall promote gender equality in employment practices, training opportunities and management activities.'

⁹ 2.2 The Organization* shall* promote gender equality* in employment practices, training opportunities, awarding of contracts, processes of engagement*and management activities.

- 2.2.1 Systems are implemented that promote gender equality* and prevent gender discrimination in employment practices, training opportunities, awarding of contracts, processes of engagement* and management activities.
- 2.2.2 Job opportunities are open to both women and men under the same conditions, and women are encouraged to participate actively in all levels of employment.
- 2.2.3 Work typically carried out by women (nurseries, silviculture, Non-Timber Forest Product harvesting, weighing, packing, etc.) is included in training and health & safety programs to the same extent as work typically carried out by men.
- 2.2.4 Women and men are paid the same wage when they do the same work.
- 2.2.5 Women are paid directly and using mutually agreed methods (e.g. direct bank transfer, direct payments for school fees, etc.) to ensure they safely receive and retain their wages.
- 2.2.6 Maternity leave is no less than a six-week period after childbirth.
- 2.2.7 Paternity leave is available and there is no penalty for taking it.
- 2.2.8 Meetings, management committees and decision-making forums are organized to include women and men, and to facilitate the active participation of both.
- 2.2.9 Confidential and effective mechanisms exist for reporting and eliminating cases of sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender, marital status, parenthood, or sexual orientation.

GENDER & NTFPS

A substantial amount of research has been done on gender and forestry.¹ In many parts of the world, and especially in the informal sector, men and women collect and use timber and NTFP. Gender differences in the use of forest products depend on the level of commercialization, e.g., women mostly collect products for subsistence use, and men deal with forest products with commercial value. Some activities like charcoal making, tree nurseries, and wood processing involve both women and men, and hunting is more often seen as men's business, with local exceptions. This noted gender-based division of work is based on both cultural traditions and socio-economic differences. Gender roles can change over time and in response to changing circumstances. Although women's uses of forest resources often differ from those of men, many programs tend to overlook women's specific needs regarding forestry and NTFPs, which could include mapping of HCVs, the choice of plantation/ monoculture designs, and preferences for access to Ecosystem Services. This is mainly due to the lack of adequate data, information, and methodologies to address this issue.



Implementation of Gender requirements in FSC's certification scheme and auditing systems

The Task Force monitored whether FSC Criterion C2.2 and its related IGIs (see footnote) and national indicators are implemented in certified forests and findings of the implementation are considered in the regular reviews of the NFSS and FSC P&C. This needs to be done for 80+ countries. For gender equality, it is important to keep in mind that certified forest managers and auditors conduct stakeholder mapping and consultations, which are probably more meaningful when they are gender inclusive and gender sensitive. As an example, specific attention in the context of gender equality should be given to the role of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs). Please note the text box¹⁰ for an explanation why this is an important element for gender equality.

To better understand what the implementation of FSC's gender requirements means in different countries, and whether impacts could be influenced by the gender awareness, the Task Force analyzed

- the composition of the members of diverse FSC Working Groups (WG) including the SDGs.
- the National Forest standard (NFSS) developed by these FSC WGs.
- the certification reports based on the new NFSS.
- interviews with auditors, ASI Staff and coordinators of FSC SDGs and other experts.

The gender indicator in the NFSS

In the process of developing an NFSS, IGIs of the FSC-STD-60-004 can be adopted as they are, adapted to the national context, or dropped. By the end of 2019, 25 NFSSs were based on the P&C Version 5 with the new Gender Criterion. Within these 25 NFSS, some of the nine C2.2 IGIs were more often adapted or dropped than others:

- Mostly **adopted** was the IGI 2.2.6, regulating maternity leave to underline the relevance of this right to childcare after birth, with a minimum time for leave throughout all countries and regions.
- Mostly **dropped** was IGI 2.2.5, ensuring payment of salaries to female employees, for instance in countries in the global north, understanding that this is already covered under P 1. The relatively low drop in Global South countries (22%) could be due to lack of respective laws or lack of trust in law application.
- Mostly **adapted** was the IGI 2.2.1, asking for a system to ensure gender equality as an overall concept, outlined as a procedure in the Organization's internal framework. Several different descriptions on how to implement this requirement with additional information were developed, some also referring to national legislation to follow.

Findings from certification report analysis

In January 2020, 195 forest operations (12 per cent of all certificates globally) were audited against the earlier mentioned 25 NFSS. In every fifth audit (in 36 of the 195), non-conformances of forest management with the gender requirements were detected and raised as Corrective Action Requests (CARs). The CARs need to be addressed by the next audit to make positive change to the status quo.

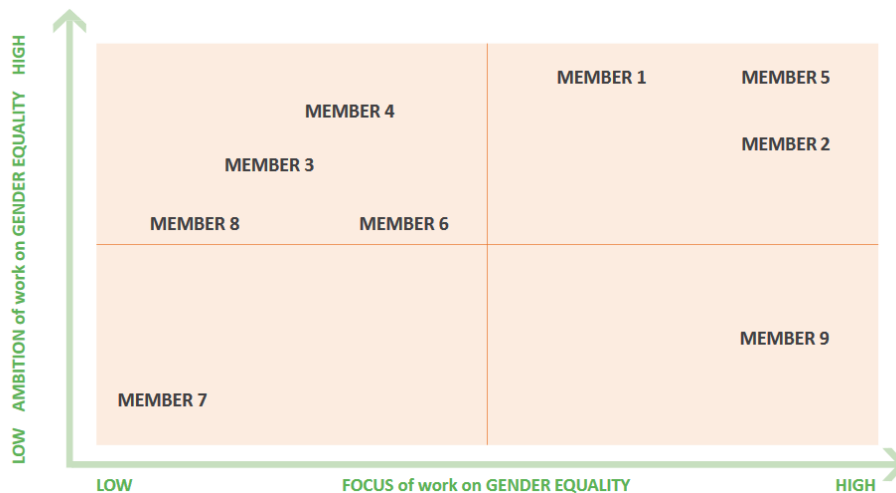
Reporting on the "number of men and of women of people working" in certified FM operations has been a requirement since 2009, when the FSC Std 20-007 was introduced. This data is available in the public FM reports but is difficult to access and not for generalization because the reporting format requirements (FSC-STD-20-007 b) are not standardized and it is not traceable who was counted (e.g. people working in the certified operations with permanent contracts, or also day laborers and contractors; only "workers" or also people in high positions; only forest workers or also administrative staff).

Expert interviews

The Task force organized two surveys, one to **auditors** and one to the **FSC Network**, to assess perspectives on the relevance and auditability of the gender requirements in FSC. Response rates were low, also due to COVID-19, and a planned workshop at the 2020 CB meeting on auditing gender and diversity was impossible.

ASI Social experts strongly recommend that FSC require gender training of auditors and Social Lead auditors for forest management audits.

ISEAL and BSR presented findings from key literature and from interviews with 9 ISEAL members ‘over the last 3 years’ in “[End-line Report: Mainstreaming gender equality](#) considerations within multi-stakeholder initiatives” (June 2020). In the below overview, FSC is identified as Member 6 and the assessment is: *Basic efforts (are) made to incorporate gender aware language across the system and standard but no further thinking or strategizing around gender issues. Staff awareness of gender issues is low and no dedicated resourcing to this. No gendered monitoring in place.* ISEAL confirmed that FSC’s Guidance document Promoting Gender Equality in NFSS provides good examples for other ISEAL members schemes.



2.2.2 Gender equality in FSC’s staff

In 2018, FSC for the first time collected data on gender of world-wide staff. These baseline data are collected to identify possible gaps and trends in the gender balance of FSC staff, enabling management to identify whether the composition of teams reflects gender and diversity balance or needs further considerations. We repeated this exercise in 2020, complementing it with extended data.

	Headcount		FTE *
	2018	2020	2020
Staff in Bonn	82	92	88
External Staff	22	40	36
Network Partner	155	158	137
Total	259	290	261

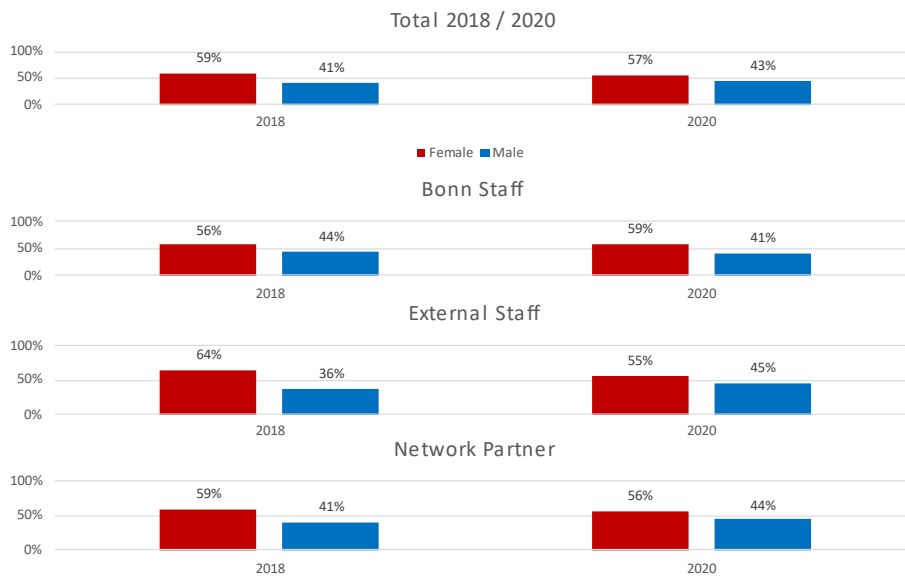
The 2020 survey was responded to by most of the network partners and included external staff (incl. regional staff) and staff in the Bonn office.

The survey included for all three categories in the table an assessment by age, position level tenure, geographic origin towards gender (men/women). The complete report sits in a power point overview.

A comparison of gender distribution in FSC’s global staff:¹¹



Gender Distribution

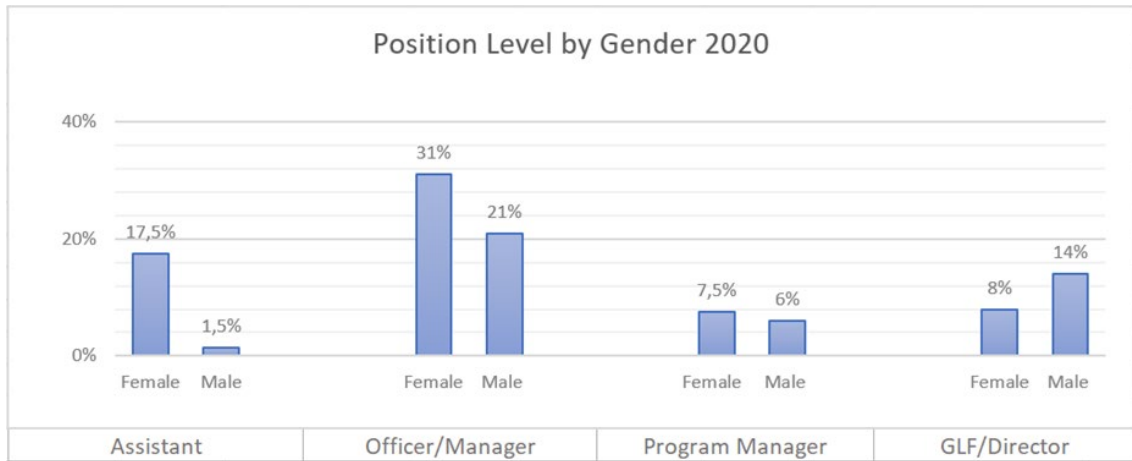


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- With staff in the Bonn office, female staff increased in the Bonn office, with the percentage of female staff decreased among external staff and network partners. All changes are below 10 per cent and mostly in the range of 3 per cent.

The task force also looked at the position level versus gender.

¹¹ The data for 2020 were systematically collected and are more comprehensible than those of 2018, which doesn’t always allow for full comparison.



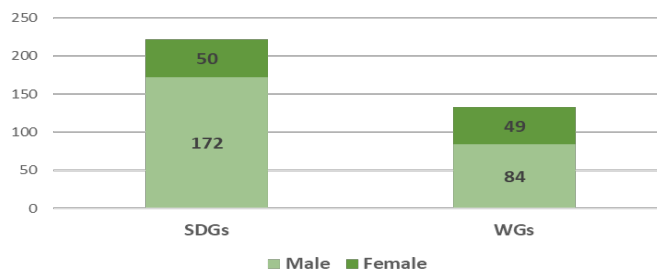
This overview shows that in leadership positions in FSC (Global Leadership Forum members and Directors), men are better represented. In manager, officer and assistant ranks, women have a higher share. This is the case for all three categories of staff¹² (Bonn, external and NP).

2.2.3 Gender equality in FSC working groups and decision bodies

Composition of FSC Working Groups

The composition of 23 SDGs and 20 other FSC WGs was assessed. Altogether, 222 SDG members and 133 WG members were counted. While at SDGs, the overall participation of women is 23 per cent, while at the WG level, it reaches 37%.

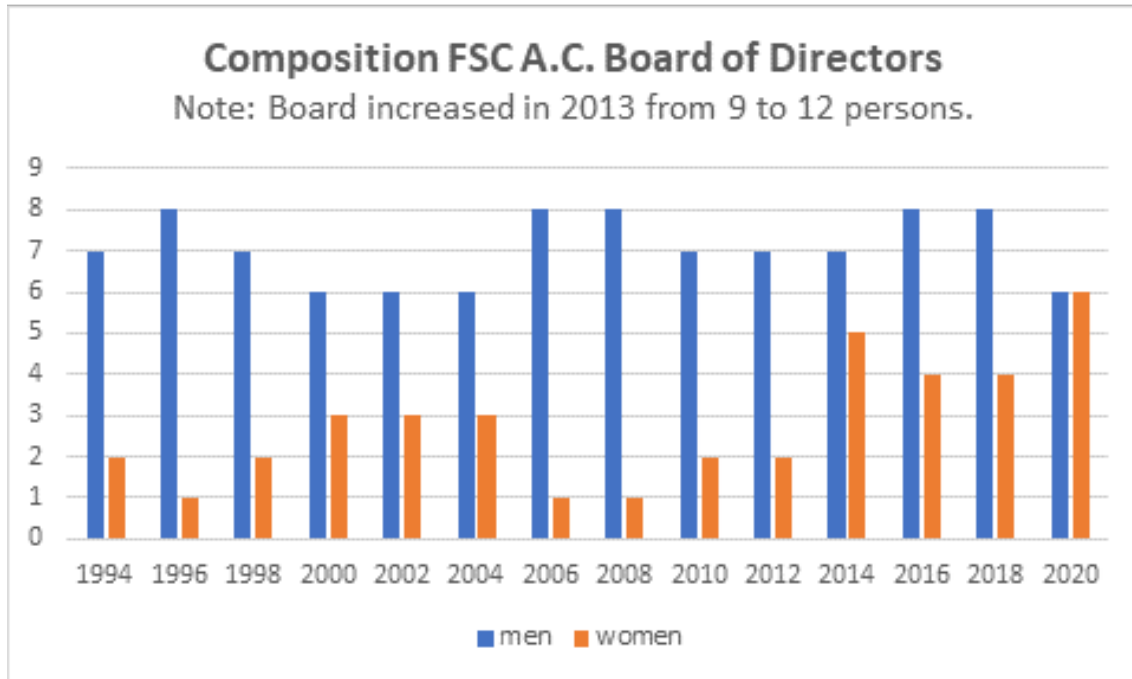
In other words: on average, more men than women participated in FSC WGs. In SDGs (those who develop the NFSS), fewer than every fourth person is a woman.



FSC Board of Directors

The below graph shows the composition of the FSC Board of Directors.

¹² Note that these are figures of 2020 and staff composition may have changed in 2021.
Gender and Diversity in FSC – Baseline Report



Other FSC activities related to gender

- Since 8th March 2015, FSC has a ‘Board Special Representative on Gender;’ since 2016, FSC dedicates staff time to support work on research in gender and diversity issues, and to disseminate findings. This includes being part of ISEALs gender working group.
- General Assemblies (GAs) historically host “women in forestry” sessions to raise awareness in addressing gender issues; at the 2014 GA, the development of a Gender Equality Strategy was discussed and ultimately adopted in the Global Strategic Plan 2015-2020.
- Since 2018, FSC has evaluated staff engagement from a gender and diversity perspective. This includes the establishment in 2019 of the Diversity and Gender Task Force, responsible for this report.

3. Communication and learning on Diversity and Gender.

Communication and learning on diversity and gender in FSC are not yet very much developed in this stage. There are two reasons for that: firstly, we needed to identify where we are, to be able to understand the need for learning and what we could communicate. This is now done. Secondly, the learning was very much hindered by the pandemic, which made all global meetings virtual meetings and reduced the time for these meetings considerably. Most of what is described in this chapter is either in the process of being prepared (website) or planned to be implemented as soon as possible under the conditions of pandemic and meeting schedules.

3.1 Learning on diversity and gender

Two main target groups have been identified: FSC global staff / FSC network and NFSS standard development groups, and certification bodies. We had hoped to be able to present findings and learnings to the General Assembly, identifying next steps. However, many of the meetings we planned for these learning workshops didn’t happen due to the pandemic and work in learning is therefore considerably delayed.



3.1.1 FSC global staff, incl. FSC network and standard development groups

The plan as we developed it included:

- Global staff at the FSC Global staff meeting (GSM) 2020: presentation of findings of the survey – this was not done as the survey responses weren't yet available and the meeting was virtual.
- With the global network at GSM 2020: discussion session on diversity and gender in standard development groups – if we find that SDGs do not have gender equity as a key deliverable in the standard, how can we improve that, and what kind of awareness training would work? This too has not yet not happened.

3.1.2 Certification bodies, auditing gender requirements

- CB meeting 2020: we planned to present an analysis of CARs on gender (see above), and a discussion on how we could improve this implementation. This was not taken up during the prioritized agenda of the CB meeting. For the upcoming CB meeting in 2021 the agenda is not yet set, and as the agenda is set by the CBs themselves and the meeting will be virtual again, we need to see if this can fit.

3.1.3 FSC General Assembly

A workshop with members, identifying findings and learnings coming from the different parts of the evaluation of diversity and gender work in FSC, was planned for 2020, and is now postponed to the 2021 General Assembly.

3.2 Communicating FSCs diversity and gender requirements.

The FSC Board asked to include communication on diversity and gender in the work of the Task Force. The following is prepared:

- In FSC's communication team, [a video on the UN-SDG5 on gender](#) s developed and released, available at the FSC public website.
- Network partners have published articles on International Women's Day and Memorial days. See here an example from [FSC UK](#) and an example on [FSC Facebook](#).
- The [website page on workers' rights](#) was developed and includes references to gender requirements.
- A [website page on diversity and gender](#) was developed and released. .
- A presentation on diversity and gender among FSC's staff was developed and can potentially be made available at the website once launched, in the form of an article or slide deck.
- A presentation on diversity and gender in a policy context was prepared and discussed in the FSC Policy and Standards Group of FSC staff.
- An FSC staff meeting for staff in Bonn provided a presentation of diversity and gender work in FSC.