

# Communication Guidelines for Standard Setting Processes

*Prepared by*

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**An Instrument of**



a series of instruments to support and empower multistakeholder working groups in developing forest certification standards

*Prepared and produced by*



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**The WWF and IKEA Co-operation on Forest Projects**  
**A Partnership to promote responsible forestry**

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The views expressed and adaptations used in these document are the sole responsibility of the author, who acknowledges the valuable contributions to specific parts and aspects of this work.

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# Communications Guidelines for Standard Setting Processes

## Executive Summary

Communication is a human act that is influenced by the way people live, the way people work, and the way they perceive the world around them. Culture and ideologies influence the way people communicate.

Communication is a lot more than the mere transmission of messages and the evocation of meanings – the sharing of thoughts and actions through communications builds networks of meanings that span the differences in cultural points-of-view.

To be effective, communication processes must generate community, and, in doing so, must contribute to the cultural processes that are part of social structures.

The brief introduction above defines the importance of the communication in human life and culture. Based on this approach, we can understand why effective communication is so valuable in the standard setting process, an environment in which a diverse range of stakeholders with different cultural values and interest participate to achieve the goal of defining the meaning of responsible forest management.

The following guidelines describe basic tools in communication that FSC National Initiatives (NIs) and evolving working groups (WG) can use to inform stakeholders about their activities, achievements and results during the process of setting an FSC standard.

### **You are creating a standard, how to communicate it?**

When a working group starts a standard setting process, two considerations need to be kept in mind:

- How we will interact within the working group? (Internal audience)
- How we will interact with stakeholders outside the working group? (External audience)

In the FSC system, it is very important to have processes that are open, transparent, participatory and assure a very comprehensive consultative process. This will lead to a standard that not only assures a very professional level of technical quality, but comes with broad level of support of the stakeholders related to the forest sector.

How can we get that kind of support and how can we really involve stakeholders? To a large extent, it will depend on the ability to communicate our messages effectively and precisely. We will have to exercise that ability when:

- Communicating to stakeholders that a standards-setting process has “begun” (or is about to begin)
- Communicating the context of the standard
- Involving stakeholders outside the working group
- Informing about the progress in our effort; and
- Marketing the standard

Is very important to realize that your standard setting strategy will be greatly improved and efficient if it includes a communication component.

We will review some basic concepts on how to develop and deliver our messages. It is important to realize that communication and messaging is related to culture and, therefore,

there is no universal or general recipe to communicate. Please keep in mind that every country has its own characteristics, which are sometimes very different from country to country and from region to region. No one better than you knows how to adequately address your audiences. This section aims at providing basic references to help improve your work's efficiency and impact, but of course they need to be adapted to your local public.

This material has been prepared based on a training course for FSC National Initiatives, developed by Carolina Hoyos and Peter Nowack, from the FSC Communications and Marketing Unit. We quite often will be referring to FSC National Initiatives and we hope that any group using this toolkit aims to become part of the network of FSC National Initiatives.

Our hope is that these materials can help your work, wherever you are, and can contribute to our mission of support an environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC will provide support to all groups committed to forming National Initiatives, as well as to those that are accredited. FSC is a network and wants to foster partnerships with all of you! Keep in mind the importance of building this relationship as early as possible, to mutually improve our work. If we want a stronger FSC and powerful FSC National Initiatives, we have to start working with you almost since the beginning!

Always remember that you can get in contact with the FSC Regional Offices and the FSC Communications Team for any support!

## **Content**

### **Part 1. Message Development**

Explains the basics for message development, the importance of knowing your audience, and how to prepare effective and consistent messages

### **Part 2. Writing A Business Letter**

Contains the basic instructions to write a business letter, which can be used to officially interact with all the stakeholders involved directly or indirectly in the standard setting process.

### **Part 3. Publicity & Press Releases**

Is a brief glance to the press releases you would like to prepare and send to market your work. Also contains some tips to avoid problems when dealing with the media. Remember that these processes will be always subject to critics and controversies, so be prepared!

### **Part 4. Web Site DOs & DON'Ts**

Provides an introduction to Web Site DOs & DON'Ts.

# Communications Guidelines for Standard Setting Processes

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# Communications Guidelines for Standard Setting Processes

## 1. Message Development

### 1.1 What is a Message?

A message is not just a collection of words on a page. A message is a powerful communications tool designed to build understanding, evoke emotions, and incite actions.

Messages are words with a purpose. To tell complete, compelling stories that are intended to elicit predetermined responses.

Messages are evolutionary. They take time to develop. (Sometimes a long time and many iterations.) There is no such thing as “instant messaging.”

Messages are repetitive. You cannot expect that a single message, given only once, will change the world (or even one opinion). But the right message, told often enough in the right way to the right audience, can work miracles.

#### **Know your Audience**

A communicator needs to understand his or her audience in order to craft a message that will be accepted.

This is true whether you are giving a presentation, writing an article, or asking for grant funding. And it is true whether you are trying to educate your audience or move them to action. Knowing your audience is the key to getting your message through.

Ask yourself the following as you prepare your message:

- What is the nature of the group to whom I am addressing this message?
- What are their values?
- What is the knowledge level of the audience about my subject?
- Are they “insiders” or “outsiders”?
- Are they homogenous or diverse in opinion about the subject?
- Do they have any biases or special interests of which I should be aware?

If you don't have the answers to these questions, find out! The answers might be found in the library, on the Internet, in government publications, among your colleagues, or in other public and private sources of information. It may take some work, but the time spent researching your audience and crafting your message to that audience will be rewarded in receptivity to what you have to say.

Remember that a message is only a message if someone listens to it.

**Remember that it is crucial** to previously identify all the stakeholders you would like / need to involve in the standard setting process. Try to classify them in categories (by region, chamber, way of communication, language, etc.) to send particular messages to every category identified.

It could be useful to have a “master” message that can be adapted to all the different stakeholders categories (or audiences). Also, try to assure that all the members of your working group understand and learn the message. This way your working group will communicate the message to stakeholders in a consistent way.

## 1.2 The 5 “Cs” of Good Messaging

There are five characteristics that are common to all good messaging. To be truly effective, craft your messaging so that it is:

- Captivating;
- Concise;
- Compelling;
- Consistent; and
- Credible.

### Captivating

You have only a matter of seconds to capture your reader’s/listener’s attention. So make every second count! Good messaging **engages** the audience through powerful language and an active voice.

### Concise

**Good messaging values the audience’s time** by getting right to the point. You have something to say, so come right out and say it! Don’t beat around the bush! And when you’ve said what you have to say, stop!

### Compelling

The best messaging **resonates** with its intended audience. When your message appeals to the audience’s self interests, the audience listens longer and harder. This does not mean that you change your story from audience to audience, but rather that you tailor your message for maximum appeal to the people to whom you are speaking.

Knowing your audience — and their concerns — will help you craft messaging that will compel them to listen.

The most compelling messaging addresses a **single benefit** in a singular message. In general, singular messages are more compelling than complex messages covering multiple points.

If you must cover multiple points, consider splitting your complex message into a series of singular messages, each addressing one point. By breaking complex messages into “bite-sized” pieces, you make the total message more accessible — and more retainable — to your audience.

### Consistent

Craft your message so that it “rings true” with other messages offered by your organization, other National Initiatives, and the Secretariat. The FSC network is most powerful when it is speaking “with one voice in many languages.”

## Credible

Simply put, your message must make sense. If you “talk the talk,” you (or your organization) must be able to “walk the walk.” Don’t over promise, over estimate, or over state. Your audience will see right through it.

Also, keep your message focused within the mission of the organization.

## 2. Writing A Business Letter

### 2.1 Parts of a Business Letter

#### Heading

The heading contains the writer’s address and the date of the letter. The writer’s name is not included. If letterhead stationery is used, only a date is needed in the heading.

#### Address Block

The address block shows the name and address of the recipient of the letter. In the address block, include the appropriate title of respect for the recipient. Make sure the name if the recipient’s company appears exactly as that company writes it. Be certain to address individuals appropriately, using Mrs., Ms., Mr., Dr., and so on.

#### Salutation

The salutation directly addresses the recipient of the letter and is followed by a colon: If you don’t know whether the recipient is a man or woman, the best solution is to make a quick, anonymous phone call to the organization and find out (asking for the correct spelling of a name is a good tactic).

#### Opening Sentence

The very first sentence should let the reader know what your letter is about. Business people need to know what the purpose of the letter is, and why they should spend their time reading further.

If you are responding to a letter, identify that letter by its subject and date in the first sentence or paragraph. Busy recipients who write many letters themselves may not remember their letters to you.

#### Body of the Letter

The body of the letter contains the bulk of your message. Following are some general guidelines:

**Keep the paragraphs of business letters short.** The paragraphs of business letters need to be short. Some may be only a sentence long. Long, dense paragraphs of over ten lines may not be read carefully - or may not be read at all.

**“Compartmentalize” the contents of your letter.** Put each different topic of the letter - or each segment of the discussion - into its own paragraph.

**Organize content strategically.** Information in the first and last lines of a paragraph tends

to be read and better remembered. Information buried in the middle of long paragraphs is easily overlooked or forgotten. Therefore, place important information at high-visibility points.

**Make your content relevant to the recipient.** Avoid a self-centered focus. Your message will be better remembered if it resonates with the reader.

**Close the body of the letter with a call to action (if appropriate).** The last sentence of the body of your letter should make clear what you expect the recipient to do and when. Weak, noncommittal statements such as “Hoping to hear from you soon” or “Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance,” are relatively ineffective in business communication. Instead, or in addition, specify the action the recipient should take and the schedule for that action.

### Formal Close

Close your business letter with a formal phrase such as, “Sincerely yours,” “Cordially,” “Respectfully,” or “Respectfully yours.” Avoid phrases that are informal or overly familiar in tone

### Signature Block

This section includes your handwritten signature and your name and title typed out.

### End Notations

You also may need to use certain end notations to communicate with your recipient:

**Initials of writer/typist.** If you don’t type your own letter, it is customary to indicate this with initials beneath the signature block. Put the writer’s initials in capital letters, then a slash (/) or colon (:), and then the typist’s initials in lower case.

**Enclosures.** If you are including other documents with your letter, you will want to let the recipient know this at the bottom of the letter. Use such indications as “Enclosure,” “Encl.,” or “Enclosures (2).”

**Copies.** If you are sending copies of the letter to others, you should indicate this to your recipient as an end notation, using “cc:” followed by the name(s) of the additional recipient(s). A copy sent to the FSC Secretariat would be indicated as “cc: FSC Secretariat” while a copy sent to a lawyer could be indicated with “cc: Donald A Duck, Attorney-at-Law.”

### The first impression counts! ... The others too.

In many cases a formal letter will be your first introduction to stakeholders that you want to engage in the standard setting process. Therefore, it is important to communicate in a “professional” way the professional effort you are undertaking.

Do not underestimate the power of formal communication with all your range of stakeholders (big forestry companies, small forest owners, government representatives, labor unions, etc.). They will be more willing to respond and work with you if you address them properly.



# FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Secretariat

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ADDRESS BLOCK

November 15, 2002

Dear Dr. Duck, SALUTATION

As you requested, and following up on our phone conversation from November 11, 2002, I'm sending you detailed information about The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) OPENING SENTENCE

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) was formed in 1993 by a diverse group of environmental, commercial, and social stakeholders seeking to address the plight of the world's forests from a new perspective— one that would leverage the power of the marketplace to drive improvement in forest management.

The FSC has evolved steadily since its creation, and grown in both stature and reach. Today, some 25 million hectares of forest land in 46 countries have been certified as meeting the stringent management standards of the FSC. FSC-certified forests range in scale from small community forests in the Solomon Islands to the lands of the largest commercial timber and paper company in Europe, and the entire forest holdings of the State of Pennsylvania in the U.S.

FSC has earned the endorsement of mainstream environmental organizations the world over, including World Wide Fund for Nature, World Resources Institute, Greenpeace, Natural Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club, and the Wilderness Society. And market leaders including The Home Depot, Lowe's, IKEA, B&Q, Intergamma, and OBI have publicly expressed preference for wood and wood products originating in FSC certified well-managed forests.

Not content to rest on its past successes, the FSC is constantly working to improve and grow. Goals for the next five years include establishing regional offices in Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa, stepping up activities in critical forested areas such as the Congo Basin of Africa, China, Russia and Southeast Asia, and expanding its impact on international trade in timber and manufactured forest products.

We invite you to learn more about the FSC and its activities. Please find enclosed our Year 2000 Annual Report containing information about the challenges that the FSC has experienced and the progress we have recently made. Also enclosed for your review is a brochure with general information about the FSC and its plans for growth in the coming months and years and the new membership application kit. If you have any questions or wish to learn more about the FSC, please contact us at your earliest convenience.

Regards, FORMAL CLOSE

Carolina Hoyos  
Communications Officer  
Forest Stewardship Council

SIGNATURE BLOCK

Annexes: Annual Report, Membership Application Kit and General Brochure

**Community Forestry Congress**

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December 20, 2002

Dear Ms. Hoyos, SALUTATION

We are glad to send you the final report of the Community Forestry Congress held in Mexico City on November 2002. OPENING SENTENCE

The report includes presentations of the different speakers and the final results of the workshops.

We are sure that this document will be very useful for the future of the community forestry discussion around the world and we are very grateful that you, in representation of your organization, attended to the event.

The next meeting about Community Forestry will be held in Toronto, Canada at the end of January 2003. We hope to see you again in Toronto. We will be sending more information about this event on January 10, 2003.

Kind Regards, FORMAL CLOSE

*Donald Duck*

Dr. Donald Duck  
President  
Duck Foundation SIGNATURE BLOCK

Annex: Community Forestry Congress Report

Body

### 3. Publicity & Press Releases

There is nothing wrong with a little “Shameless Self-Promotion.”

- Nobody knows your story better than you.
- Nobody cares about your story as much as you.
- Nobody will hear your story unless you tell it.

It is **NOT** enough to tell your story... You must tell it well.

#### 3.1 How to Write a Press Release That Will be Picked Up

**Your chances of getting your news published diminish in proportion to the amount of work an editor has to do to find “the story.”** So make the journalist’s job easy! Ask yourself, “What can I do that will make this more useful to a journalist?”

**Editors are:**

- Underpaid (just ask one)
- Overworked
- Always on a deadline
- Besieged by publicity-seekers
- Interested in giving their readers relevant news
- Not as interested in your story as you are

So how do you catch their interest?

**Give it an “angle.”**

Step away from your perspective. View it as a reporter looking for an interesting story. Remember, he or she is looking for a story that will satisfy his or her readers. The journalist is not interested in promoting you, only in crafting a story that will make readers stop and say “Hmmm, I never knew that. Now, there’s something I can use!” Find something in your story that is truly unique – or find a tie-in to other news.

**Use the Inverted Pyramid writing structure.**

- Start with the big story and layer with details.
- Keep the story brief.

**Use a short, active, and “punchy” headline.**

- Grab your editor’s attention and focus it immediately on the news.  
“Forest Operators and Indigenous Peoples End 100-Year Quarrel  
*FSC process yields consensus, jobs, and responsible forestry standards*”

**Use a strong lead paragraph.**

- Two sentences, max.
- Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?
- Write lead paragraphs as an abstract for the whole story

**Add detail in the Body of the story.**

- Each successive layer contains information of lesser importance

**Use quotations to add depth & meaning.**

- Quotations should advance the story, not reiterate what has already been told
- Quotes should read like people talk, not like sales pitches

**Keep it SHORT!**

- Two pages, max. (One is better)
- Include a short, standardized paragraph about your organization at the end
- Include phone and email contact information

### 3.2 Tips for Placing Your Story in the Press

**Identify the appropriate editor at each target publication.**

There may be reference books in the library that list editor's names (in the U.S., *Bacon's Directories* are the definitive guides). Contact the publication to verify that the name you have is correct – editors change from time to time. (The publication's telephone receptionist should be able to give you this information or will transfer you to someone who can. You might also look on the publication's web site.) With the editor's name in hand, you're now ready to proceed.

Here are some tips that can help you effectively work with journalists in generating free press.....

- **Pitch your story.** If you really want to get a story in a given publication, call first to pitch your story and then follow up with your release, photos, etc. **DO NOT** mass mail a press release and then call editors to ask, "Did you get our release?" Editors HATE this!
- **Plan your call to avoid interfering with the editor's deadlines.** Most papers are morning editions. Journalists' deadlines typically range from 2 p.m. local time and on. Don't call during this time! The best time to reach a newspaper journalist is generally 10 a.m. to noon local time.
- **Don't start pitching right away!** If you get the editor on the phone, don't just dive into your pitch. The editor may be on the other line, working on a story, entertaining guests or who knows what else. Instead, start by introducing yourself, and ask the editor if he or she has time to hear a story suggestion that might be of interest to his/her readers. If the editor says, "Yes" – start your pitch. If the answer is, "No," ask, "When would be a good time to call you back?" This type of courtesy is appreciated by busy journalists and can only increase your chances of getting your story published.
- **Pitch to the voice mail.** It's fine to pitch your story to the reporter's voice mail. Keep it very short and end the message with your phone number. If you don't hear back, try again until you get the actual reporter or editor on the phone.
- **Don't read from a script!** Don't read your pitch off a sheet of paper. Practice so that it seems natural and spontaneous. Know the main points of the story, and be prepared to answer the journalist's questions.
- **Give them a story, not an advertisement.** Newspapers do not exist to give you publicity. They exist to provide readers with interesting stories. Your job is to give the journalist what he or she wants, while getting the free exposure. Make your pitch newsworthy, exciting and relevant.
- **Follow through immediately.** If the editor is interested, he or she will ask for more information. Be sure you have a press kit (including a news release and photos, if

appropriate) ready to send. Send it out via priority mail, and write "Requested Information" below the address.

- **Follow up.** It is now appropriate to call and ask if the editor has received the materials. Ask if the editor has had a chance to review the materials, what his/her reaction is, and if there might be anything else you could supply (more information, access to spokespersons, etc.)

**You can use your communication skills:**

- To announce the WG decision to start a standard setting process;
- To identify stakeholders for inclusion in the consultative process and/or standard setting committee;
- To develop and distribute information about certification and regional forest stewardship standards;
- To promote and initiate the formation of a standard setting committee;
- To raise the funds necessary to support the work of developing the standard;
- To communicate about progress and problems during the standard setting process; and
- To communicate with other National Initiatives to facilitate harmonization of standards within and among regions.

### 3.3 DOs and DON'Ts for Dealing with the Media

Excerpted from the US Department of State Website Article

"A responsible press office" <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/pressoffice/>

**DO:**

- Do tell the truth — **ALWAYS**.
- Do be honest and accurate. Your credibility and reputation depend on it.
- Do admit it if you don't know the answer to a question. Offer to get the answer, and do so as quickly as you can.
- Do correct mistakes immediately. State that you didn't give an adequate answer, and you would like to clear up the confusion.
- Do avoid using jargon. Speak in plain language.
- Do assume that everything you say is on the record.
- Do be as open with the media as possible.
- Do call reporters if a story appears that is inaccurate. Politely point out what was wrong and substantiate it.
- Do always return phone calls in time for reporters to meet deadlines.
- Do try to get the information reporters want even if it means an extra effort, such as staying at work late or hand-delivering material.

**DON'T:**

- Don't lie — **EVER**.
- Don't say "No Comment" — **EVER**.
- Don't improvise, don't speculate, and don't guess. Good reporters check facts. If you are wrong, your credibility will be destroyed.
- Don't try to put a comment "off the record" after you have said it.
- Don't be unresponsive.
- Don't make news until you have in hand the information to go with it. Don't make an announcement and then later prepare a press release and fact sheets. If you have the material prepared before a press conference, you can spend your time after an announcement explaining it to the press.



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**Press Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Oaxaca, January 28, 2002

**FSC Executive Director encourages participation in Forest Leadership Forum**

Heiko Liedeker, Executive Director of the Forest Stewardship Council today encouraged FSC members, FSC-certified companies, and other stakeholders worldwide to participate in the Forest Leadership Forum. The conference, organized by WWF, the Certified Forest Products Council, and the Global Forest & Trade Network, is scheduled for April 25-27, 2002 in Atlanta, Georgia. [LEAD PARAGRAPH](#)

"The Forest Leadership Forum, with its open product showcase, is a unique opportunity for the FSC and FSC-certified companies to demonstrate their leadership in driving the improvement of forest management practices worldwide through democratic, open, inclusive processes and the power of the marketplace.

The proposed conference agenda provides the FSC with an opportunity to showcase its unique value in advancing high-level forest stewardship on a global scale. There is no doubt that FSC has set the global standard of reference for responsible forest management certification, and continues to be the example followed by competing systems in addressing illegal logging, protecting high-conservation-value forests, and empowering indigenous peoples.

The far-reaching agenda, multiple tracks, and prominent speakers promise to provide a distinctive forum in which many important forest issues will be examined in detail and FSC's leadership will be highlighted. The planned participation of a broad spectrum of representatives from industry, science, academia, social and environmental organizations makes the Forest Leadership Forum an event of worldwide significance to the FSC network and to others committed to advancing responsible forest practices.

We look forward to an exciting program with balanced international participation and relevance to economic, environmental and social interests in the global North and South alike."QUOTE

For Further information contact:

Carolina Hoyos at [choyos@fscoax.org](mailto:choyos@fscoax.org) or ++52 951 5146905  
Forest Stewardship Council

**CONTACT DETAILS**

**Notes to the editor:**

The Forest Stewardship Council is an international non-profit organization founded in 1993 to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests. It is an association of Members consisting of a diverse group of representatives from environmental and social groups, the timber trade and the forestry profession, indigenous people's organizations, community forestry groups and forest product certification organizations from around the world. Membership is open to all who are involved in forestry or forest products and share its aims and objectives.**ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION**



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Lisa Swann 202 342-1388

**ROGER DOWER NAMED NEW FSC -U.S. PRESIDENT**  
*Brings Business and Environmental Experience To FSC -U.S.*

(October 23, 2002) The Board of Directors of the Forest Stewardship Council – U.S. (FSC-U.S.) is pleased to announce the appointment of Roger C. Dower as President of FSC -U.S., effective October 31, 2002. The FSC is the global and national leader in the independent certification of forests managed to exemplary standards covering environmental, social and economic issues. Forest certification enables consumers to make informed choices when selecting wood and other forest products. The FSC -U.S. is responsible for establishing independent forest certification standards and promoting FSC certification in the U.S.

Dower's selection is the culmination of a national search process started by FSC -U.S. Dower brings with him a proven track record with both for-profit business management and environmental non-governmental organizations. Dower's career-long passion for creating market-based solutions to environmental and resource management issues, and his expertise in business, economics, and the environment make him an excellent choice to lead and expand the FSC-U.S. as a market-based initiative that recognizes exceptional and responsible forestry.

The FSC is a dynamic and growing force for responsible forest management with 13 million acres certified in North America and 72.3 million acres certified internationally.

"The FSC is already a name consumers can trust. Our next goal is to raise the FSC's profile with consumers and other wood purchasers. Roger is the logical choice to lead FSC into the future," said Paul Harlan, FSC -U.S. Board Chair and Vice President of Resources for the Collins Companies.

Dower's previous work includes serving as President of the eNERGYSolve Corporation, where he dealt with the management and marketing of energy services to industrial, commercial and institutional clients, and as Director of the World Resources Institute's Climate, Energy, and Pollution Program. He has a proven track record in the delivery of services and technologies, strategic planning, fundraising, and implementing environmental policies.

Dower will be an excellent complement to the FSC -U.S.'s staff, expert standards committees, multi-stakeholder board, and to the FSC's two highly qualified certifiers in the U.S., Scientific Certification Systems and SmartWood. "I am honored to be part of an organization that has played such an important role in promoting sustainable forestry practices in the U.S. and around the world," said Dower. "I look forward to building on that tradition and leading FSC -U.S. as the premier force for forest certification in this country."

The FSC supports environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. FSC promotes responsible forest management by evaluating and accrediting certifiers, by encouraging the development of national and regional forest management standards, and by providing public education and information about independent, third-party certification as a tool for ensuring that the world's forests are protected for future generations.

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[www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)

The U.S. organization is part of the worldwide Forest Stewardship Council.  
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## 4. Web Site DOs & DON'Ts

Your website does a lot more than just convey information. It communicates your image — your “personality” — to the public. If your website is cluttered, chaotic and poorly organized, your audience will see you as poorly organized. If your site is too “cute,” your audience may not take you seriously.

Remember that your audience’s time is valuable — and give them something of value on every page. Your audience also is impatient — so make important information accessible with a minimum of clicks.

### Do

- Organize your information logically into thematic sections
- Provide an easy means of navigation through your site
- “Back” links
- Site Map with Links
- Search Feature
- Keep your site up-to-date — old information is bad information
- Keep your site fresh — give the reader a reason to return again and again
- Use “metatags” to provide information to search engines
- Check your spelling and grammar
- Use a limited number of typefaces and sizes
- Publish a privacy policy if you collect information from visitors to your site
- Publish an English version of your site, if possible.
- Many FSC stakeholders are interested in what your NI is doing, and many do not speak Spanish, German, Portuguese, Cantonese, etc...

### Don't

- Allow advertising to appear on your site
- FSC is not a commercial enterprise
- Advertising detracts from YOUR message
- Advertising may be offensive or inappropriate to your audience
- Make your site dependent on technology that not everyone may have
- Not everyone has broadband or the latest browsers
- Use white type on dark backgrounds for text (OK in navigation buttons)
- Text should be easy to read
- Use “centered” type — it is frequently difficult to read
- Overuse animated graphics, video, or audio
- Link to other sites without their permission

**A website is a very important tool** that offers general access to information. The costs related to build and maintain a website are now reasonable, and any WG should have one as its frontline of information and contact with stakeholders. The website should contain at least the following information related to the standard setting process:-

- Background information-
- Summary of the standard process and status so far-
- Important dates (meetings, field tests, public review period)-

- Participants of the standard setting process, contact details.
- Drafts of the standard.
- Comments received.
- Report on field tests.
- Any relevant discussion and request for comments

In countries where internet access is limited, additional attention should be paid to other communication tools that can complement the website (radio, newspapers, specialized magazines, etc.).