The following document summarizes the input received during and immediately following the 2018 Controlled Wood Regional Meetings and provides rationale for the resulting mitigation options for Conversion, along with definition of any identified gaps in the final set of options.

The input received on proposed mitigation options for Conversion at the Atlanta and Portland Regional Meetings did not reveal any significant regional differences that might affect implementation of mitigation. Therefore, to provide consistency for organizations across US regions, the final draft mitigation options that follow are proposed for both regions where specified risk from conversion was identified.

**Please note that any of the proposed mitigation options may be done individually or in collaboration with other certificate holders, or other entities that have similar desired outcomes. Collaboration is encouraged to scale up potential mitigation impact, and FSC US will seek to assist with that collaboration when feasible.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Education & Outreach**

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| Original Proposed Options  (Atlanta #1) Help landowners with tax relief programs, succession planning, etc. to reduce the incentives for them to view the forest as a financial burden, or to view conversion of their forest as a better financial alternative than maintaining it.  (Portland #1) Educate landowners about tax relief programs, succession planning, etc. to encourage keeping forests as forests.  (Portland #2) Support regional efforts to educate landowners as to the value-enhancing alternatives of maintaining forestland over conversion. | Topline Input   * Educate landowners to encourage keeping forests as forests, such as through tax-relief programs, succession planning, etc. * Educate decision makers and regional planners * Efforts should be coordinated and collaborative * Education needs to happen at the landscape level * Clarity needed on ‘support’, in-kind or financial support * Clarify who is responsible for developing and conducting landowner education and who will lead a collaborative effort * Consideration of different approaches to education and variation depending on where a company is in the supply chain * Clarity needed on the auditability of education as a mitigation option and what conformance looks like for companies. |

*Consultation Insights: Stakeholders from both Regional Meetings and from all perspectives supported landowner outreach and education as an important tool to reduce conversion. At the Portland Regional Meeting, there was clear support for merging the central theme of education that was proposed in the two options and expanding educational efforts not just to landowners but to decision makers and regional planners. However, engagement with decision makers and regional planners has been addressed through a separate mitigation option under the central theme of regional planning, and the final draft mitigation option below focuses on engagement with landowners. Stakeholders also frequently highlighted the importance of a coordinated and collaborative approach to the educational efforts across the region. Lastly, there is a need for the final mitigation options to clearly articulate what is required by the Organization and to consider the auditability of the final mitigation option.*

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Option**

**The following is offered as an option that could be scaled for any impact level:**

**Using materials (as described below), and with a desired outcome of engaging landowners within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area in the conservation of forests, communicate to audiences (as described below) the benefits of keeping forests as forests, and the value-enhancing alternatives to conversion and opportunities for the maintenance of forests (i.e., tax-relief programs, succession planning, etc.).**

* **Materials: Developed by, or developed in cooperation with, organizations/individuals with expertise in the maintenance of forests, or FSC US, and delivered in a manner that will be the most effective in achieving the desired outcome of engaging landowners in maintenance of forests through tax-relief programs, succession planning, etc., while reflecting the specific context and characteristics of the Organization.**
* **Audiences: Audiences will reflect the specific context and characteristics of the Organization, but communications should be directed toward those audiences where the communications will be most effective in helping to achieve the desired outcome of engaging landowners within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area in the maintenance of forests. Depending upon the Organization’s location in the supply chain, communications may be directly with landowners, through intermediaries such as community members, at community events or workshops, or in collaboration with organizations/individuals already working for the continued maintenance of forests.**

**The following is offered as an option for Organizations with suppliers that are land managers or that purchase directly from the source forest:**

**Develop/adapt a procurement policy that reflects the above communications themes and clearly states the expectation that suppliers will promote the maintenance of forests and will not provide materials from forests that were converted to a non-forest use.**

**NOTE: Actions to demonstrate policy enforcement and communicate policies on sourcing to suppliers should be audited under the Due Diligence system requirements within the 40-005V3-1 standard section 1.1**

**CENTRAL THEME: Growing healthy markets**

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| Original Proposed Options  (Atlanta #3) Grow healthy competitive markets that will motivate landowners to actively manage their forests and keep them healthy in ways that benefit the environment, wildlife, and the general public.  (Portland #3) Grow healthy and competitive markets that motivate landowners to manage their forests in ways that benefit the environment and maintain forestland (e.g., support economic development, sawmill expansion, pulpwood expansion) | Topline Input   * Healthy wood markets important for maintaining value and keeping forests as forests * Many involved in promoting markets (FSC, members, Certificate Holders) * Developing financial incentives for landowners as healthy and competitive markets on their own do not motivate landowners * Certificate holders do not have ability to offer financial incentives * Certificate holders already work on this by virtue of being a business * Multiple suggestions that growing healthy and competitive markets should be FSC US’s core function, and not the responsibility of certificate holders |

*Consultation insights:**Feedback from stakeholders at both Regional Meetings showed support for Option #3 and the idea that by growing healthy and competitive markets for forest products, we will help ensure that forests maintain their economic value to landowners and therefore remain as forests. However, while this theme was supported, there was also concern expressed about what a company could really accomplish this in order to be effective on this as a mitigation option, and also how a mitigation option could be developed to meet the shared criteria of feasibility and auditability. There were some suggestions of creating market incentives and premiums for landowners in the regions where conversion was identified as a specified risk to help motivate landowners to maintain their forests. However, while this approach could be effective for landowners, it is not practical for a mitigation option to require organizations to offer financial incentives, and therefore, does not align with the requirements outline in the shared criteria for mitigation options. Incentives and premiums for landowners might result from a healthier market, but it’s simply not feasible to expect this to happen as an outcome of the implementation of this mitigation option. Given the feedback received on this draft mitigation option, and taking the shared criteria into consideration, this will not be included in the revised set of mitigation options.*

**CENTRAL THEME: Regional Planning**

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| Original Proposed Options  (Atlanta #4) Actively participate in regional planning processes to support policies aimed at limiting conversion.  (Portland #4) Actively participate in regional planning processes (land use and/or sustainable forestry) to support policies aimed at limiting conversion. | Topline Input   * Overall support across all perspectives for participation in regional planning * A key element of the conversion mitigation options developed * Specific suggestions for support and lobbying for farm bill providing incentives to landowners to keep forests as forests, and grant planning to support communities * Clarity needed on terminology for determining participation and the policies which are deemed viable to support * Clarify how ‘active participation’ will be audited |

*Consultation insights:**There is broad support from stakeholders for participation in regional planning as a mitigation action to decrease the threat of conversion in areas of specified risk, and very little opposition from those providing feedback. However, while this mitigation option has received support from all perspectives, there are concerns with what will be required of certificate holders to show conformance with this mitigation option. Therefore, to ensure the mitigation option is auditable, the specific action will need to be clearly stated.*

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Option**

**The following is offered as an option that could be scaled for any impact level:**

**Engage in on-going regional landscape level planning processes\* (land use and/or sustainable forestry) to support viable policies and regulations that are intended to achieve maintenance of forests within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area.**

**Engagement may include, but is not limited to: direct communication with federal, state and/or local resource policy makers and planners; participation on regional planning groups/committees; and collaboration with, or support for, organizations/individuals advocating for viable policies and regulations with the goal of maintaining forests.**

**The following is offered as an option for ‘High Impact’ organizations:**

**\* Where regional landscape level planning processes are not currently occurring, the Organization should collaborate and develop an engagement strategy with 1) federal, state and/or local resource policy makers and planners, and 2) organizations/individuals advocating for policies and regulations aimed at maintaining forests, with a goal to establish a regional landscape level planning process (land use and/or sustainable forestry) to support the development of viable policies and regulations that are intended to achieve maintenance of forests within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Conservation Initiatives**

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| Original Proposed Options  (Atlanta #5) Support organizations which address conversion but who do not permanently lock up conservation easements, rather promise to maintain and manage the forest as working forests.  (Portland #5) Support organizations which address conversion but who do not permanently lock up forests in conservation easements. | Topline Input   * Overall endorsement for a mitigation option related to supporting organizations working to maintain forests as forests * Some concerns expressed regarding land trusts and conservation easements, others supporting these endeavors to maintain forestland * Emphasis on land trusts that work on maintaining working forests as opposed to full preservation * Clarity needed on the audit parameters related to ‘support’ and how to define ‘support’ or ‘address’ in the context of the mitigation option * Establish flexibility in regards to which organizations are supported, but provide examples as opposed to prescription. * Proposed option #5 make conservation easements sound negative, but these are an important tool |

*Consultation insights:* *Based on stakeholder feedback, there is overall support for a mitigation option related to supporting organizations working to maintain forests as forests. However, there were varying perspectives regarding which organizations would receive support, and concern around the implied negative connotation in Option #5 with conservation easements. While there was an emphasis on supporting organizations that maintain working forestland, others also stressed that there should be a space in the mitigation option to work with organizations utilizing conservation easements. Stakeholders also expressed the need for the mitigation option to include clear the action required of certificate holders to ensure auditability, and more guidance on what types organizations would be acceptable.*

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Option**

**The following is offered as an option that could be scaled for any impact level:**

**Engage with and/or provide monetary or in-kind resources to regional and national organizations that provide incentives that result in the maintenance of forests, including working forest easements and other conservation easements.**

**This may include, but is not limited to: land trusts, community forest programs, landowner cooperatives, programs offering technical forest management assistance to landowners, and conservation organizations (public or private).**

**CENTRAL THEME: Urban Growth Modeling & Mapping**

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| Original Proposed Options  None | Topline Input   * Stakeholder suggestion to consider how urban growth modeling could be used to predict future growth patterns. |

*Consultation insights:* *A stakeholder at the Atlanta meeting identified the potential to research and utilize urban growth modeling to better predict future growth. This could be a tactic used to identify forests and landowners that may be at a higher risk of converting their forests to non-forests in the future. Findings of modeling and mapping efforts could assist in the improvement in implementation in the other mitigation options, such as through targeted educational outreach to identified landowners or enhanced engagement with conservation initiatives.*

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Option**

**The following is offered as a two-part option for ‘High Impact’ organizations:**

1. **Engage with and/or provide monetary or in-kind resources to an organization or alliance that is working to better predict future urban growth through modeling and mapping in areas that overlap with the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area, using remote sensing or other techniques that do not require landowner declarations regarding their ownerships; and**
2. **Use the results of the mapping work to improve implementation of another mitigation option.**

**GAPS IN THE SET OF MITIGATON OPTIONS**

FSC US Staff evaluation of this set of mitigation options, through the lens of the shared criteria, did not identify any significant gaps, with the possible exception of the requirement for 'auditability.' We will be looking to your comments for suggestions on how to address this potential gap, as well as for identification of any other gaps and suggestions for their resolution. Additionally, we will be meeting with Certification Bodies during the consultation and expect that they will also provide input on improvements in auditability.