Summary of Changes

Operational Guidance on Applying the Definitions Related to Deforestation and Conversion

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Overview

In April 2023, the Accountability Framework initiative (AFi) was pleased to release an updated version of the Accountability Framework's Operational Guidance on Applying the Definitions Related to Deforestation and Conversion. This guidance document contributes to the Framework's overall purpose of providing a practical roadmap for achieving agricultural and forestry supply chains that are free of deforestation and conversion, and that fully respect human rights. It does so by explaining how the Accountability Framework's definitions on deforestation and conversion relate to other definitions on these issues and how these definitions may be applied in different contexts to help achieve ethical supply chains.

The updated document maintains the Accountability Framework's pre-existing scope and positions while incorporating adjustments to improve clarity and to bring the guidance up to date relative to other definitions and policies pertaining to deforestation- and conversion-free supply chains. More specifically, the updates include:

- Removing out-of-date references and adding current ones
- Explaining the relationship between a no-deforestation approach and a no-conversion approach
- Providing minor edits to improve clarity and precision

Update process

The update was conducted in accordance with the [AFi Policy on Revisions to the Accountability Framework](#). It was led by the AFi secretariat with input from the full AFi Coalition and approval of the AFi Steering Group in accordance with the [AFi's governance](#).

Summary of changes

The following table summarises the changes made to this Operational Guidance document and the rationale for these changes.

Document Reference	Changes	Rationale
Title	Changed the title from the previous, 'Operational Guidance on Applying the Definitions Related to Deforestation, Conversion, and Protection of Ecosystems.'	This change simplifies the title for easier communication without changing the document's scope or content.
Section 1	Added a reference to the AFi website and a link to the list of monitoring tools available from this website.	This responds to user feedback to provide resources for monitoring deforestation and conversion aligned with the Accountability Framework definitions.
Section 3	Updated to include information on current policy instruments and other references that relate to the Accountability Framework definitions on deforestation and conversion. This includes references to the Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi), Science-Based Targets Network (SBTN), and the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. It also includes an explanation of how the Accountability Framework definitions relate to the definitions in the EU deforestation regulation (EUDR) and other similar legislation.

This set of revisions also incorporated relevant information on other reference definitions that was in the previous Table 3 into a more user-friendly question-and-answer format. | Many of the references in the previous version are now obsolete or were out-of-date, while other key references have emerged since the prior version was published in June 2019. Presenting the material as a Q&A improves usability. |
| Section 4 | Edited to better explain the relationship between a no-deforestation policy and a no-conversion policy, as well as the rationale for companies to adopt policies that address the conversion of all types | These edits serve to align the explanation of the relationship between a no-deforestation policy and a no-conversion policy between this |

	of natural ecosystems. As part of this explanation, also added references to current climate and nature target-setting instruments (SBTi-FLAG and SBTN, respectively), which call for companies to address conversion of both natural forests and other types of natural ecosystems.	document and the Core Principles. They also provide a clearer, up-to-date rationale for why companies should take a no-conversion approach.
Table 1	Removed the reference to 'low-intensity agroforestry systems under forest canopy' as an example of non-permanent/low-intensity cultivation within a natural forest.	The variability associated with this type of land use means that it was not appropriate to present it as a standard example of human use that is compatible with a natural forest classification. The first bullet in this row of the table was retained and provides a more generalised concept of human uses that are compatible with a natural forest classification.
Table 3	Removed, with the relevant content moved to Section 3.	See the preceding rationale for the changes made to Section 3.