

Protecting the World's Forests through Responsible Forestry: An FSC® Certification Guide.





**FORESTS
FOR ALL
FOREVER**

Introduction

Welcome to this digital guidebook! This guide aims to assist businesses, organisations and individuals preparing to obtain FSC certification for wood, rubber and all types of forest and forest products.



Why Get FSC Certification ?

Forests sustain life on earth. It's a fact. The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) – a non-profit membership organisation with over 165 million hectares of forests certified – is a sustainable forestry solution trusted by NGOs, consumers and business to maintain healthy and resilient forests, for all, forever.

Today, consumers all over the world are increasingly aware of and concerned about the origins of the products they purchase. At the same time, companies large and small are becoming increasingly committed to making their supply chains and manufacturing processes more environmentally friendly

FSC certification offers assurance that any products made with forest products – wood, pulp, rubber, and many more – are sustainably sourced from forests without harming the environment or forest communities. The FSC “check tree” label is a trusted mark that offers consumers exactly this kind of assurance.

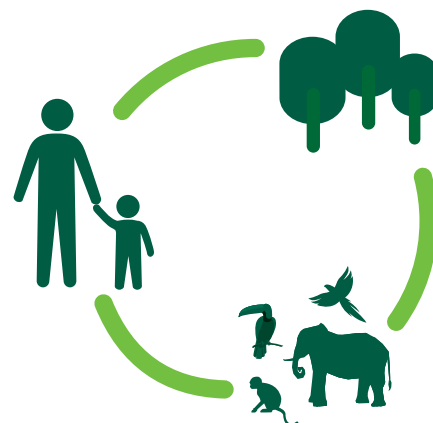
Research shows that businesses that become FSC certified benefit from better access to international markets, have higher revenues, see a positive change to their public image and even have improved management.

Find out more about business benefit.

FSC : BENEFITTING YOUR BUSINESS AND THE WORLD'S FORESTS

WHAT IS FSC?

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a global, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting responsible forest management worldwide. Founded in 1994, our certification scheme assures that forest products are responsibly managed and harvested. The FSC label enables businesses and consumers to make informed choices about the forest products they buy, and by engaging the market at scale, to create real impacts, such as conserving wildlife, alleviating climate change and improving the lives of workers and communities – so we can achieve **“Forests For All Forever”**.



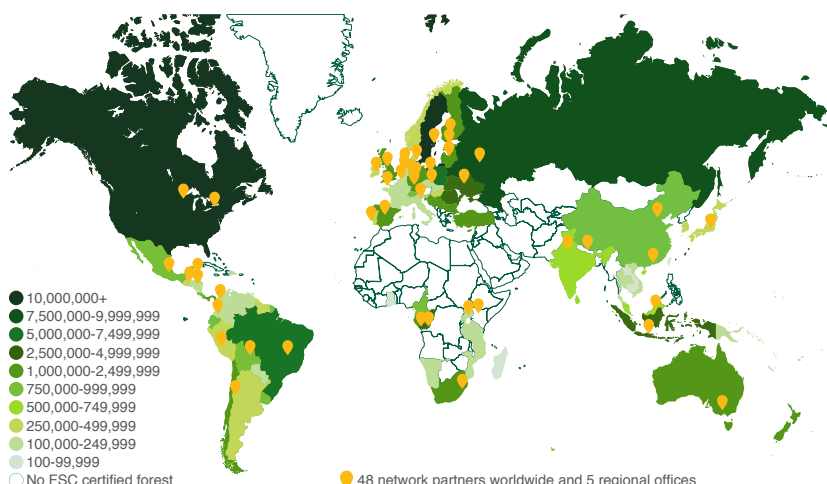
FSC GLOBAL IMPACT

165,794,000+

hectares of forests worldwide are managed to FSC standards

14.3 mil

hectares of FSC-certified SLIMF and community area



1,200+

FSC members from social, environmental and economic chambers to help govern the world's forest democratically



67,200+

FSC COC certificates >120 countries



FSC ASIA PACIFIC

13,189,000+

hectares of forests in Asia Pacific are managed to FSC standards

c.8% of total

37,800+

FSC COC certificates

c. 56% of total

HOW DO FSC CERTIFICATES BENEFIT **YOUR BUSINESS** ?



WE ENHANCE YOUR BRAND REPUTATION

FSC is respected and credible because we uphold the highest standards, so you can be assured that you are sourcing from responsibly-managed certified forests. 90% of FSC certificate holders agree that FSC certification helps create a positive corporate image.



WE ADD VALUE TO YOUR PRODUCTS

According to a Neilson's Global Sustainability Report, sales of consumer goods from brands with a demonstrated commitment to sustainability grew more than 4%, while those without grew less than 1%. 66% of consumers say they are willing to pay more for sustainable brands.



WE GIVE YOU GREATER MARKET ACCESS

FSC is the preferred certification scheme for Fortune 500 companies. We have supported many smallholders and local companies to cooperate with global corporates.

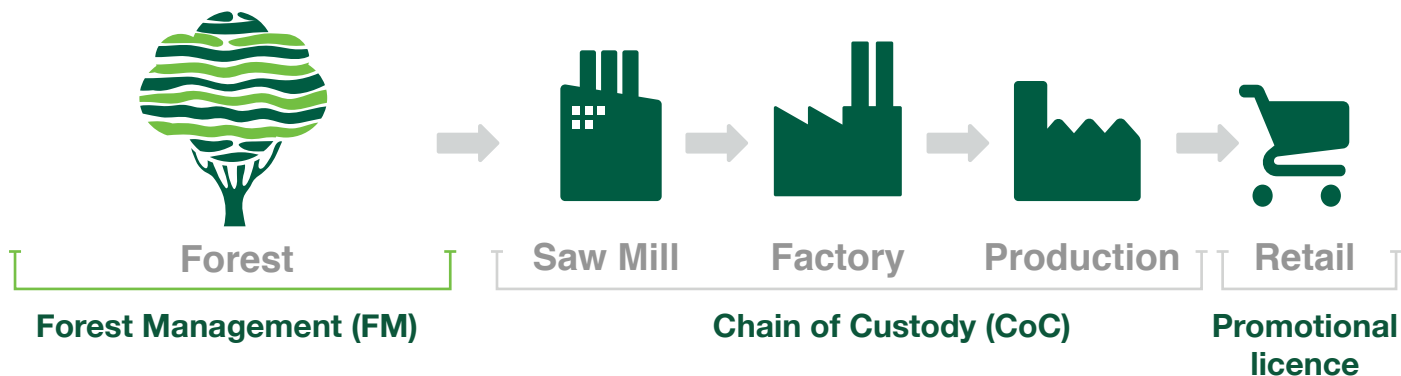


WE FOCUS ON PARTNERSHIP

FSC operates in more than 120 markets. We provide marketing toolkits and online databases to certificate holders, and our network partners and regional offices offer support, from internal training to bespoke campaigns.

Types of FSC Certification

FSC's responsible forestry standard is linked to strict certifications. There are two main types of certification as well as a promotional licence for retailers :



Forest Management (FM)

FM certification sets standards for responsible management of natural and plantation forests. FM certification confirms that a forest is being managed in a way that preserves biological diversity and benefits the lives of local people and workers, while ensuring the forest management unit is economically viable.

Chain of Custody (CoC)

CoC certification applies to entities - mainly companies - that process, trade or manufacture FSC - certified wood or derived materials. CoC certification verifies that FSC-certified material has been identified and separated from non-certified and non-controlled material along the supply chain. All sizes and types of organisations can get CoC certification, including industries, traders, processors, and distributors.

Managers of small, low-intensity, or community forests

Communities, families, and smallholders worldwide who manage small or low-intensity forests can benefit from the Forest Stewardship Council's (FSC's) commitment to sustainable ecosystems. FSC offers a portfolio of solutions and tools these managers can use to reduce the cost and complexity of certification and open the door to new market opportunities.

Group certification is a simpler, less expensive way for small-forest or community operations to become FSC certified. This approach lets forest managers join together to share the workload and cost associated with becoming FSC certified.

Forest owners can come together to form a new group or join an existing group in the area. A group administrator helps all members in the group conform with FSC standards and manages the process for certification and annual audits.

Who needs FSC certification?

Forest managers need to get **FM certification**.

Any company that takes ownership of a product at any point along the supply chain, between the origin to the end user, needs to obtain FSC certification to pass an FSC claim along to the next company on the supply chain. Companies that manufacture or trade in FSC certified products need **CoC certification**.

Organisations that are not required to become FSC-certified, but buy finished and FSC-labelled products, can use the FSC trademarks for promotion. In this case, they need a promotional licence. If a business buys finished, FSC-labelled products from an FSC-certified company and sells these products, they need a **promotional licence**, as do businesses that use, but do not sell, FSC-certified products and want to advertise this fact.

How to Get FSC Certification

FSC certification involves only five steps: [Click here for details](#)

Find A CB

1.

Contact nearby FSC-accredited certification bodies (CB), provide them with some basic information and request a quotation. A list of nearby certification bodies can be found using this search tool.

2.

Submit a certification application to your chosen CB.

3.

Ensure that an appropriate documented management system that meets FSC standards is in place.

4.

Schedule and undergo an on-site audit by your chosen certificate body. This will determine if your company is fully FSC compliant. Audit fees do apply, these vary by CB.

5.

Following a positive certification decision, you will receive an FSC certificate that is valid for 5 years. An annual audit must be conducted to check your certificate and your continued compliance with FSC requirements.



An FSC certificate code, e.g. CB-COC-#####, must be shown on sales documents, while a licence code, e.g. FSC-C#####, must be shown on FSC labels on FSC-certified products and promotional items.

FSC labels must be generated on the FSC Trademark Portal by certificate holders and approved by their CB.

For more information, please see FSC-STD-50-001 V2.0 Requirements for Use of the FSC Trademarks by Certificate Holders and refer to Module 3 of this document.

The Annual Administration Fee (AAF)

The AAF is an annual fee charged by FSC to accredited certification bodies. It is calculated on the basis of the respective certificate holder's portfolio. The purpose of the AAF is to support the core operations of the FSC system both at national and international level. Certification bodies then bill certificate holders, clearly identifying this fee on their invoices.

The AAF policy is reviewed annually and revised to remain consistent with any new FSC strategies or policies and accounting for global inflation rates. For more on the AAF, please see the full policy.

[Full Policy](#)

Any Questions or Concerns? Talk to Us!



<https://my.fsc.org/my-en>



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 info@my.fsc.org





MODULE 1

FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION

Disclaimer

This guidebook was published in 2021 for general use and may contain information that is no longer current. While it offers useful insights into FSC's principles and certification system, some policies, procedures, or figures may have since been updated.

For the most recent and authoritative information, please refer to the official FSC website at www.fsc.org.



THE 10 PRINCIPLES OF FSC

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The 10 Principles of FSC

The foundations of FSC certification are our Principles and Criteria. The ten principles – the “rules” of forest management – are divided into four sections: Legal, Environmental, Social and Management/Economic. These are briefly described below in plain English, along with the criteria required to fulfil each principle.



For a complete description of all Principles and Criteria, click the button

LEGAL ASPECT

Principle 1: Compliance with Laws

The certified organisation must comply with all applicable laws, regulations and nationally-ratified international treaties, conventions and agreements.

Criteria:

1.1

The Organisation must be a legally defined entity with clear, documented and unchallenged legal registration, with written authorisation from a legal authority to conduct specific activities.

1.2

The Organisation must show that the Management Unit's legal status is clearly defined, including tenure, use rights and boundaries.

Principle 1: Compliance with Laws (continued)

1.3

The Organisation must have legal rights to operate in the Management Unit. The legal rights must provide for harvest of products and/or the supply of ecosystem services from the Management Unit.

1.4

The Organisation must develop and implement measures, and/or engage with regulatory agencies to systematically protect the Management Unit from unauthorised or illegal resource use, settlement and other illegal activities.

1.5

The Organisation must comply with the applicable national laws, local laws, ratified international conventions and mandatory codes of practice relating to the transportation and trade of forest products from the Management Unit up to the point of first sale.

1.6

The Organisation must identify, prevent and resolve disputes over issues of statutory or customary law, preferably settling disputes out of court in a timely manner through engagement with affected stakeholders.

1.7

The Organisation must make a public commitment not to offer or receive bribes in money or any other form of corruption, and must comply with anti-corruption legislation and implement other anti-corruption measures.

1.8

The Organisation must demonstrate a long-term commitment to the FSC Principles and Criteria in the Management Unit and related FSC Policies and Standards. A statement of this commitment must be made in a publicly available document.



ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS

Principle 6: Environmental Values and Impacts

The certified organisation must maintain, conserve and/or restore ecosystem services and environmental values, and must avoid, repair or mitigate negative environmental impacts.

Criteria:

6.1

The Organisation must assess the environmental values in the Management Unit and values outside the Management Unit potentially affected by management activities.

6.2

Prior to the start of site-disturbing activities, the Organisation must identify and assess the scale, intensity and risk of potential impacts of management activities on the identified environmental values.

6.3

The Organisation must identify and implement effective actions to prevent negative impacts of management activities on the environmental values, and to mitigate and repair those that occur.

6.4

The Organisation must protect rare and threatened species and their habitats in the Management Unit through conservation zones, protection areas, connectivity and/or other direct measures for their survival and viability. These measures must be proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk of management activities and to the conservation status and ecological requirements of any rare and threatened species.



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Principle 6: Environmental Values and Impacts (continued)

6.5

The Organisation must identify and protect representative sample areas of native ecosystems and/or restore them to a natural condition. Where representative sample areas do not exist or are insufficient, the Organisation must restore a proportion of the Management Unit to a more natural condition.

6.6

The Organisation must effectively maintain the continued existence of naturally occurring native species and genotypes in the Management Unit and prevent losses of biological diversity through habitat management. The Organisation must demonstrate that effective measures are in place to manage and control hunting, fishing, trapping, and collecting.

6.7

The Organisation must protect or restore natural water courses, water bodies and riparian zones and their connectivity. The Organisation must avoid negative impacts on water quality and quantity and fix those that occur.

6.8

The Organisation must manage the landscape in the Management Unit to maintain and/or restore species, sizes, ages, spatial scales and regeneration cycles that match the regional landscape values and enhance environmental and economic resilience.

Principle 6: Environmental Values and Impacts (continued)

6.9

The Organisation cannot convert natural forest to plantations to non-forest land use, or convert natural forests or plantations on sites directly converted from natural forest, except when the conversion:

- Affects a very limited portion of the area of the Management Unit;
- Produces clear, substantial, additional, and secure long-term conservation benefits; and
- Does not damage or threaten High Conservation Values.

6.10

Management Units containing plantations that were established on areas converted from natural forest after November 1994 do not qualify for certification, except where:

- Clear evidence shows that the Organisation was not directly or indirectly responsible for the conversion, or
- The conversion affected a limited area of the Management Unit and is producing clear, substantial, additional, and secure long term conservation benefits.



ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS (CONTINUED)

Principle 8: Monitoring and Assessment (Environmental)

The certified organisation must demonstrate progress towards environmental management objectives and ensure that the impacts of management activities are monitored and evaluated.

Criteria:

8.1

The Organisation must monitor the implementation of its management plan, including the policies and objectives, progress and target achievement

8.2

The Organisation must monitor and evaluate the environmental impacts of the activities carried out in the Management Unit, and changes to the environmental condition.

8.3

The Organisation must analyse the monitoring and evaluation results and use these outcomes in the planning process.

8.4

The Organisation must summarise the monitoring results and make them available to the public free of charge (but exclude confidential information).

8.5

The Organisation must implement a tracking and tracing system. The system must show the source and volume of inputs in proportion to projected output for each year for all products from the Management Unit that are marketed as FSC certified.



ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS (CONTINUED)

Principle 9: High Conservation Values

The certified organisation must maintain and/or enhance high conservation values through applying the precautionary approach. These include species diversity, landscape-level ecosystems, habitats, community needs and cultural values.

Criteria:

9.1

The Organisation must, through engagement with stakeholders and other sources, assess and record the presence and status of the following High Conservation Values in the Management Unit:

HCV1

Species diversity – Biodiversity concentrations, including endemic species and rare, threatened or endangered species that are significant at the global, regional or national level.

HCV2

Landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics – Intact forest landscapes, large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at the global, regional or national level, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of naturally-occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.



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Principle 9: High Conservation Values



HCV3

Ecosystems and habitats – Rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia.



HCV4

Critical ecosystem services – Basic critical ecosystem services, including protection of water catchments and erosion control of vulnerable soils and slopes.



HCV5

Community needs – Sites and resources needed for the basic necessities of local communities or Indigenous Peoples. These include livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, and other measures.



HCV5

Cultural values – Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic or sacred importance to the traditional cultures of local communities or Indigenous Peoples.

9.2

The Organisation must develop effective strategies that maintain and enhance the identified High Conservation Values through engagement with stakeholders and experts.

Principle 9: High Conservation Values

9.3

The Organisation must implement strategies and actions that maintain and enhance the identified High Conservation Values. These must use the precautionary approach and be proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk of management activities.

9.4

The Organisation must demonstrate that periodic monitoring is carried out to assess changes in the status of High Conservation Values and that it adapts its management strategies to ensure effective protection. The monitoring must include engagement with stakeholders and experts.



SOCIAL ASPECTS

Principle 2: Workers' Rights and Employment Conditions

The certified organisation must maintain or enhance the social and economic well-being of workers through gender equality, health and safety practices, fair wage practices and other measures.

Criteria:

2.1

The Organisation must uphold the principles and rights of workers as defined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998).

2.2

The Organisation must promote gender equality in employment practices, training opportunities, the awarding of contracts, its processes of engagement, and management activities.



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Principle 2: Workers' Rights and Employment Conditions (Continued)

2.3

The Organisation must implement health and safety practices to protect workers. These practices must meet or exceed the recommendations of the ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Forestry Work.

2.4

The Organisation must pay wages that meet or exceed minimum forest industry standards or other recognised forest industry wage agreements or living wages, where these are higher than the legal minimum wages. When none of these exist, the Organisation must, through engagement with workers, find ways to determine living wages.

2.5

The Organisation must demonstrate that workers have job-specific training and supervision to safely and effectively implement the management plan and all management activities.

2.6

The Organisation must, through engagement with workers, have mechanisms to resolve grievances and provide fair compensation to workers for loss or damage to property, occupational diseases or occupational injuries sustained while working for the Organisation.



SOCIAL ASPECTS

Principle 3: Indigenous Peoples' Rights

The certified organisation shall identify and uphold Indigenous Peoples' legal and customary rights of ownership, use and management of land, territories and resources affected by management activities.

Criteria:

3.1

The Organisation must identify the Indigenous Peoples that exist within the Management Unit or that are affected by management activities. Through engagement, the Organisation will identify their rights of tenure, rights of access to and use of forest resources and ecosystem services, customary rights, and legal rights and obligations that apply within the Management Unit. The Organisation must also identify areas where these rights are contested.

3.2

The Organisation must recognise and uphold the legal and customary rights of Indigenous Peoples to maintain control over management activities within or related to the Management Unit to the extent necessary to protect their rights, resources and lands and territories. Importantly, delegation by Indigenous Peoples of control over management activities to third parties requires Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

3.3

If control over management activities is delegated, a binding agreement between the Organisation and Indigenous Peoples must be made through Free, Prior and Informed Consent. The agreement must define its duration, renegotiation provisions, renewal, termination, economic conditions and other terms and conditions.

Principle 3: Indigenous Peoples' Rights (Continued)

3.4

The Organisation must recognise and uphold the rights, customs and culture of Indigenous Peoples as defined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and ILO Convention 169 (1989).

3.5

The Organisation must, through engagement with Indigenous Peoples, identify sites of special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance for which these Indigenous Peoples hold legal or customary rights. These sites must be recognised by the Organisation and protection agreed through engagement with these Indigenous Peoples.

3.6

The Organisation must uphold the right of Indigenous Peoples to protect and utilise their traditional knowledge and must compensate Indigenous Peoples for the utilisation of this knowledge and their intellectual property. A binding agreement (as per Criterion 3.3) must be made between the Organisation and the Indigenous Peoples for this utilisation through Free, Prior and Informed Consent.



SOCIAL ASPECTS (CONTINUED)

Principle 4: Community Relations

The certified organisation must contribute to maintaining or enhancing the social and economic well-being of local communities through engagement, employment opportunities, and mitigation of negative impacts, among other measures.

Criteria:

4.1

The Organisation must identify the local communities that exist within the Management Unit and those affected by management activities. The Organisation must then, through engagement with these communities, identify their rights of tenure, access to and use of forest resources and ecosystem services; as well as their customary rights and legal rights and obligations that apply within the Management Unit.

4.2

The Organisation must recognise and uphold the legal and customary rights of local communities to maintain control over management activities within or related to the Management Unit to the extent necessary to protect their rights, resources, lands and territories. Delegation by local communities of control over management activities to third parties requires Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

4.3

The Organisation must provide reasonable opportunities for employment, training and other services to local communities, contractors and suppliers.

4.4

The Organisation must implement additional activities, through engagement with local communities, that contribute to their social and economic development.

Principle 4: Community Relations

4.5

The Organisation must, through engagement with local communities, take action to identify, avoid and mitigate significant negative social, environmental and economic impacts of its management activities on affected communities.

4.6

The Organisation must, through engagement with local communities, set up mechanisms to resolve grievances and provide fair compensation to local communities and individuals regarding the impacts of management activities.

4.7

The Organisation must, through engagement with local communities, identify sites which are of special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance, and for which these local communities hold legal or customary rights. These sites must be recognised by the Organisation and protection must be agreed through engagement with these local communities.

4.8

The Organisation must uphold the right of local communities to protect and utilise their traditional knowledge. It must compensate local communities for the utilisation of this knowledge and their intellectual property. A binding agreement (as per Criterion 3.3) must be made between the Organisation and the Indigenous Peoples for this utilisation through Free, Prior and Informed Consent.



SOCIAL ASPECTS (CONTINUED)

Principle 8: Monitoring and Assessment (Social

The certified organisation must monitor and evaluate the social impacts of its activities, and make a summary of the results of this monitoring publicly available.

Criteria:

8.1

The Organisation must monitor the implementation of its management plan, including the policies and objectives, progress and target achievement.

8.2

The Organisation must monitor and evaluate the social impacts of the activities carried out in the Management Unit, and changes to the environmental condition.

8.3

The Organisation must analyse the monitoring and evaluation results and use these outcomes in the planning process.

8.4

The Organisation must summarise the monitoring results and make them available to the public free of charge (but excluding confidential information).

8.5

The Organisation must implement a tracking and tracing system proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk of its management activities. The system must show the source and volume of inputs in proportion to projected output for each year for all products from the Management Unit that are marketed as FSC certified.



MANAGEMENT/ECONOMIC ASPECTS

Principle 5: Benefits from the Forest

The certified organisation shall efficiently manage the products and services produced in order to maintain or enhance long-term economic viability and environmental and social benefits, and harvest products and services at or below a level which can be permanently sustained.

Criteria:

5.1

The Organisation must identify, produce, or enable the production of diversified benefits and/or products, based on the range of resources and ecosystem services existing in the Management Unit to strengthen and diversify the local economy proportionate to the scale and intensity of management activities.

5.2

The Organisation must normally harvest products and services from the Management Unit at or below a level which can be permanently sustained.

5.3

The Organisation must demonstrate that the positive and negative externalities (effects or consequences) of its operations are included in the management plan.

5.4

The Organisation must use local processing, local services, and local value adding to meet the requirements of the Organisation wherever these are available. If these are not locally available, the Organisation must make reasonable attempts to help establish these services.

Principle 5: Benefits from the Forest

5.5

The Organisation must demonstrate its commitment to long-term economic viability through its planning and expenditures.



MANAGEMENT/ECONOMIC ASPECTS (CONTINUED)

Principle 7: Management Planning

The certified organisation must have a management plan consistent with its policies and objectives, which is kept up to date and promotes adaptive management. The plan must be sufficient to guide staff, inform stakeholders and justify management decisions.

Criteria:

7.1

The Organisation must, proportionate to scale, intensity and risk of its management activities, set policies (i.e. visions and values) and objectives for its management. These must be environmentally sound, socially beneficial and economically viable. Summaries of these policies and objectives must be incorporated into the management plan and publicised.

7.2

The Organisation must implement a management plan for the Management Unit which is fully consistent with the policies and objectives established according to Criterion 7.1. The management plan must describe the natural resources that exist in the Management Unit and explain how the plan will meet FSC certification requirements.

Principle 7: Management Planning (Continued)

7.3

The management plan must include verifiable targets that allow the progress towards each of the prescribed management objectives to be assessed.

7.4

The Organisation must periodically update and revise the management planning and procedural documentation to incorporate the results of monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement or new scientific and technical information, and respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.

7.5

The Organisation must make a summary of the management plan publicly available free of charge. Excluding confidential information, other relevant components of the management plan must be made available to affected stakeholders on request.

7.6

The Organisation must proactively and transparently engage affected stakeholders in its management planning and monitoring processes, and engage interested stakeholders on request.



MANAGEMENT/ECONOMIC ASPECTS (CONTINUED)

Principle 10: Implementation of Management Activities

All management activities must be consistent with the certified organisation's economic, environmental and social policies and in compliance with FSC's Principles and Criteria.

10.1

After harvest or in accordance with the management plan, the Organisation must, by natural or artificial regeneration methods, regenerate vegetation cover in a timely fashion to pre-harvesting or more natural conditions.

Principle 10: Implementation of Management Activities (Continued)

10.2

The Organisation must use species for regeneration that are ecologically well adapted to the site and to the management objectives. The Organisation must use native species and local genotypes for regeneration, unless there is clear and convincing justification for using other species and genotypes.

10.3

The Organisation must only use alien species when knowledge and experience show that any invasive impacts can be controlled and that effective mitigation measures are in place.

10.4

The Organisation must not use genetically modified organisms in the Management Unit.

10.5

The Organisation must use silvicultural practices that are ecologically appropriate for the vegetation, species, sites and management objectives.

10.6

The Organisation must minimise or avoid the use of fertilisers. When fertilisers are used, the Organisation must demonstrate that the use is equally or more ecologically and economically beneficial than the use of silvicultural systems that do not require fertilisers. The Organisation must also prevent, mitigate, and/or repair any damage to environmental values, including soils.

10.7

The Organisation must use integrated pest management and silviculture systems which avoid, or aim to eliminate, the use of chemical pesticides. The Organisation must not use any chemical pesticides prohibited by FSC policies. When pesticides are used, the Organisation must prevent, mitigate, and/or repair any damage to environmental values and human health.



Principle 10: Implementation of Management Activities (Continued)

10.8

The Organisation must minimise, monitor and strictly control the use of biological control agents in accordance with internationally accepted scientific protocols. When biological control agents are used, The Organisation must prevent, mitigate, and/or repair any damage to environmental values.

10.9

The Organisation must assess risks and implement activities that reduce potential negative impacts from natural hazards.

10.10

The Organisation must manage infrastructural development, transport activities and silviculture so that water resources and soils are protected, and any disturbance or damage to rare and threatened species, habitats, ecosystems and landscape values is prevented, mitigated and/or repaired.

10.11

The Organisation must manage activities associated with the harvesting and extraction of timber and non-timber forest products so that environmental values are conserved, merchantable waste is reduced and damage to other products and services is avoided.

10.12

The Organisation must dispose of waste materials in an environmentally appropriate manner.

IMPORTANT FSC FORESTRY POLICIES AND STANDARDS

National and Regional Forest Stewardship Standards

FSC's Principles and Criteria are an internationally recognised global standard for responsible forest management. But to properly reflect the diverse legal, social, geographical and environmental conditions in forests around the world, this standard needs to be adapted at the regional or national level.

FSC national standards exist in most countries that we operate within, and there are several regional standards – including a new regional standard for smallholders in Asia Pacific. These are developed through International Generic Indicators, which allow our Principles and Criteria to be implemented consistently around the world.

Policy to Address Conversion

Policy to Address Conversion

Since our establishment in 1994, FSC has restricted the conversion of natural forests to plantations using various standards and procedures. Growing consumption of natural resources is creating increasing pressure to convert the last remaining forest-related ecosystems to other land uses. There is also an increasing need to promote the restoration of degraded ecosystems to fight climate change and preserve biodiversity.

FSC's Policy to Address Conversion provides a framework for FSC to partner with other entities to halt deforestation and conversion and promote conservation, restoration and restitution, as well as ensure the consistent application of the definition and interpretation of "conversion" and provide permanent, equitable and effective remedies for the social and ecological damage caused by conversion.

Following the publication of this Guidebook, FSC had published the FSC Remedy Framework.

Further details here: <https://connect.fsc.org/system-integrity/fsc-remedy-framework>

Policy for Association

Policy for Association

FSC is dedicated to promoting the environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. FSC has a policy to not associate with organisations that are involved in unacceptable forest-related activities. This Policy for Association allows FSC to identify organisations that do not stick to the basic fundamentals of responsible forest management and prevents them from misusing their association with FSC. The policy also protects the FSC brand from the reputational risks that come from organisations associated with FSC being involved in activities that contradict our core values.

Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests (SLIMF)

Small and low intensity managed forests, called SLIMFs, are an important part of the FSC universe, and critically important in forests around Asia. SLIMFs are either small forest management units (below *100 ha in size) or areas that are managed as low intensity forest management units.

FSC recognises that the cost of certification can be relatively high for small enterprises, and that the environmental and social impacts of small enterprises are relatively low. In order to reduce the cost of certification for SLIMFs, FSC permits certification bodies to evaluate and report on these forests using streamlined certification procedures.

**Under the FSC National Forest Stewardship Standards of Malaysia, this threshold has been locally adapted to 40.46 hectares*

Group certification

In some cases, the administration and economic aspects of FSC certification can be challenging for small-scale operations. To help these entities access and maintain FSC certification, it is possible to group together different management units from different forest owners which are then managed by a group entity which holds an FSC certificate for the whole group.

Group certification can reduce costs and create economies of scale for getting services and accessing markets. Groups also reduce the administrative tasks for members, as the group entity can allocate different tasks to different parts of the group – providing flexibility for each group to find the right structure and division of responsibilities. Resource Management Units can also be created, with a resource manager given responsibility for management units.

Bamboo textiles and non-timber forest products

Forests produce much more than “standard” forest products like furniture, construction materials, pulp and paper. Technology is now allowing new forest products to replace less sustainable ones. FSC certification adds an additional guarantee that the forests where these products are sourced are managed responsibly.

Examples of non-timber forest products include forest-based fabrics, such as rayon, viscose, modal or lyocell, which often come from bamboo and are increasing being used by the fashion industry; and rubber, which comes from the sap of the rubber tree. Most natural rubber now comes from plantations in South and Southeast Asia. While these trees mostly are grown for latex, they also produce high quality wood. There is a growing market for rubberwood – used for everything from furniture and construction to biomass.

Preparing for smallholder and group certification for non-timber forest products

FSC- STD-01-003

If an organisation already has FSC certification, it can request to include non-timber forest products in its certification scope. If the organisation does not have FSC certification, please refer to the SLIMF eligibility criteria here in [**FSC-STD-01-003**](#)

Note that when smallholder use the FSC FM standard, they can use the criteria that apply to both the smallholder and to general organisation, which is marked with an “S.” Criteria that are marked with an “L” are only for large organisations.

FSC- STD-30-005

Organisations wishing to apply for group certification for non-timber forest products can refer to the information on group certification above in [**FSC-STD-30-005**](#)







For countries that already have an National Forest Certification Standard (NFSS) in place, please use the criteria for smallholders in your NFSS.

Other Important Certification Considerations

FSC Controlled Wood

Controlled wood is not FSC certified. However, Controlled Wood standards allow forest management enterprises to demonstrate to a company or certification body that the wood they supply has been controlled and avoids the categories of wood considered unacceptable to be mixed with FSC-certified wood in products that carry the FSC MIX label.

These standards show that an enterprise does not use wood that is:

-  **Illegally harvested**
-  **Harvested in violation of traditional and civil rights**
-  **Harvested in forest management units in which high conservation values are threatened by management activities**
-  **Harvested in areas in which forests are being converted to plantations or non-forest use**
-  **Harvested from forests in which genetically modified trees are planted**
-  **Harvested from forests in which genetically modified trees are planted**

**FSC-
STD-30-010**

For more on the FSC Controlled Wood, see the standard [**FSC-STD-30-010**](#)

FSC-
PRO-30-006

FSC Ecosystem Services Framework

This framework is used by forest managers to verify impacts and approve FSC ecosystem services claims, including **biodiversity, carbon, water, soil, recreation, cultural practices** and **air quality**, that can be used to access ecosystem services markets and increase revenue. This commitment is part of a broader strategy to increase the market value of FSC.

Market research, study and pilot testing carried out by FSC and its partners has confirmed that many forest managers are interested in telling people about the site-level impacts of FSC certification, and that companies are willing to pay for the verification of the impacts on ecosystem services, beyond confirmation of compliance with forest management standards.

For more on ecosystem services, see the FSC Standard [FSC-PRO-30-006](#)



The mark of
responsible forestry