



FSC Forest Management Group Certification Guidebook

February 21, 2005

TREES Program
Rebecca Butterfield, Director
65 Millet Street, Suite 201
Richmond, VT 05477 USA
Telephone: 802-434-5491
Fax: 802-434-3116
Website: www.rainforest-alliance.org

Acknowledgements

TREES would like to acknowledge the SmartWood certified operations and state agencies whose group entity and forest management systems were the basis for many of the sample documents. Additionally, many SmartWood and TREES staff along with consultants and SmartWood NGO partners participated in the Guidebook's development.

Primary Authors: Walter Smith: SmartWood Senior Technical Specialist; Amy Cimarolli: Consulting Forester; Marco Lowenstein: SmartWood Western Regional Manager

Contributors: Northwest Natural Resources Group; Daphne Hewitt: Projects Manager, TREES; Michael Thiemann: Training Manager, TREES; Jon Jickling: SmartWood Certification Quality and Systems Manager.

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1: Introduction

About this Guidebook

Purpose

The FSC Group Certification Guidebook is designed for forest management professionals, forest management companies, associations, cooperatives and others interested in learning about or participating in the Forest Stewardship Council's (FSC's) forest management group certification program.

The guidebook is designed to answer the following questions:

- What is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) forest certification?
- What is Group Certification?
- What are the benefits of group certification?
- What are the requirements of FSC certification?
- How does the assessment process work?

Contents

The guidebook provides background information, policies and requirements, practical guidance, and reference materials that help groups qualify for FSC group certification. The guidebook contains sample policies and management system documents, as well as forest management plan templates. Organizations can use these templates and examples as a foundation to build their own set of required documents or to evaluate the completeness of their existing documentation.

Provision

This guidebook is to be used for reference and guidance only. Using all of the provided examples and templates does not guarantee FSC certification. FSC standards are defined regionally and each certification body has different procedures. Contact the FSC or certification body for information. Certification assessments require field evaluations and stakeholder interviews as well as reviews of documents, policies, and procedures. A variety of certification decisions result when these different assessment elements are considered.

The Rainforest Alliance and Related Organizations

Rainforest Alliance

The Rainforest Alliance (RA) is a leading international conservation organization. The mission of the Rainforest Alliance is to protect ecosystems and the people and wildlife that depend on them by transforming land-use practices, business practices and consumer behavior.

The Rainforest Alliance has four program divisions, Forestry, Agriculture, Tourism, and Education. See www.rainforest-alliance.org for more information.

Forest Stewardship Council

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a non-governmental institution headquartered in Bonn, Germany. FSC was established to set standards for forestry certification programs worldwide and accredit certification organizations that comply with these standards. Certifiers, forest products businesses, social organizations, and environmental groups created the FSC to monitor certification and prevent a confusing proliferation of standards. In addition, a number of regional and national FSC initiatives have developed standards and policies, based on the FSC Principles and Criteria (P&C), to make the P&C more relevant to the region. See www.fsc.org for more information.

TREES

TREES is a program of the Rainforest Alliance's Forestry Division. Since 2001 the program has focused on (T)raining, (R)esearch, (E)xtension, (E)ducation and (S)ystems activities related to sustainable forest management certification. The purpose of TREES is to improve the effectiveness of FSC certification as a tool for protecting biodiversity, promoting sustainable communities, and enhancing the economic performance of forest operations managed by small forest enterprises, small forest landowners, indigenous groups, and rural communities.

2: FSC Forest Management Certification

Forest Certification vs. Group Certification

Forest Certification

FSC forest management certification is:

- The process of inspecting forestlands or woodlands to verify that they are being managed according to the FSC Principles and Criteria (P&C).
- Designed to ensure that timber harvesting is ecologically sound and socially and economically beneficial to local communities.
- A voluntary program that creates market incentives by providing consumers the power to positively "vote" for good forest stewardship: when they buy certified wood products they contribute to the conservation of forests and biodiversity worldwide.

Group Certification

Group certification:

- Is a process by which multiple landowners or forest managers are certified under one FSC certificate.
- Allows a group entity to be the certificate holder for a group of landowners or managers who agree to participate in the group.
- Requires the group entity to meet all FSC policy and procedural requirements and all landowners/managers to meet the FSC P&C.
- Differs from traditional forest management operation certification in that the group entity often has no legal title or use right to the forest resources.

Benefits of Group Certification

Overview

Group certification was designed to reduce costs and increase opportunities for forestland owners to participate in FSC certification by distributing the costs of certification among a larger number of forest landowners/managers.

Benefits

Benefits include:

- Reduced certification costs
- New landowners/managers can be added to the group at any time providing even greater economies of scale
- High quality forest management advice and services
- Access to markets and/or market advantages through cooperative or joint log marketing
- Cost savings from joint purchasing and management services
- Access to experienced professionals and lay people within the group
- Flexible program allows a variety of groups to participate

Group Entities and Group Members

About Group Entities

A group entity may be any of the following types of organizations:

- Individual forest management professional
- Forest management company
- Forest products company
- Cooperative
- Community forestry association
- Landowner association
- Land trust
- Governmental resource agency

The group entity's certified group can be comprised of any combination of private, public, or indigenous owned forestlands.

NOTE: FSC certification is voluntary. It is not required that all of an organization's members be included in the certified group.

About Group Members

A group member:

- May use the group entity's forester or its own forestry professional for the management of its forestland.
- Can be the owner, leaseholder, or use-right holder of private, public or indigenous forestlands.
- Can own natural forests and/or plantations with no limitation on size.
- Can be an individual, community, forest user group, collective or any other group that has ownership or long-term rights to manage a specified forestland.
- Can be added to the group entity's existing certified group at any time after certification.
- Does not hold an individual certificate.

Forest products from member lands are covered by the group's chain of custody certificate and can carry the FSC logo.

Group Entities and Group Members, continued

Considerations for Group Entities

Key considerations for an organization, company, or consulting forester developing the capacity to implement group certification:

- The number of interested landowners/managers within reasonable geographic proximity
- The number of interested landowners/managers that conform to the high standards of forest stewardship required by the FSC
- The level of philosophical/cultural match between the organization and the landowners/managers
- The level of agreement between landowners/managers and organization on forest management principles, systems, and oversight
- The level of internal philosophical agreement among the governing board or owners and staff about FSC certification and sustainable forest management
- Whether the cost of certification assessments and audits could be recovered by market demand or access to new markets
- Whether landowner fees, forest management services to landowners/managers, or profit sharing recover the cost of operating the group system
- Whether certification meets or enhances the mission of the organization

Considerations for Group Members

Key considerations for landowners/managers seeking an organization, company, or forester for the purpose of joining a group entity:

- The cost to participate in the group entity
- The competency of the group entity coordinator
- The proximity of the landowner to the group certificate holder
- The level of philosophical/cultural match between the landowner and the certificate holder
- The level of agreement between landowner and organization on forest management principles, systems, and oversight
- The certificate holder's access to certified markets
- The proximity of the landowner to the certificate holder's markets
- The access to and cost of forestry advice and technical assistance of the certificate holder

Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests (SLIMF)

Definition

In November of 2003, the FSC approved a new program for applying certification on Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests (SLIMF) and groups of SLIMFs. The SLIMF program makes certification more accessible and affordable through streamlined reporting and fewer audits.

Qualifications

A single forest or owner/manager must meet **EITHER** of the following criteria to be eligible for participation as a SLIMF:

- Forest area or ownership is no larger than 100 hectares (247 acres). FSC regional initiatives may increase this maximum threshold up to 1000 hectares (2,470 acres). Check with the certification body or FSC for the maximum area allowed in your region

OR

- The average annual harvest is no more than 20% of mean annual increment and no more than 5000 M³/yr (2.2 MMBF).

Checklist

This checklist helps determine whether a group entity's members qualify as a group of SLIMFs.

SLIMF Eligibility

Each individual member's property in the certified pool is no larger than 100 hectares (247 acres).

Yes

No

OR

Each member of the certified pool harvests no more than 20% of mean annual increment AND no more than 5000 M³/yr (2.2 MMBF).

Yes

No

Group Certification Models

Overview

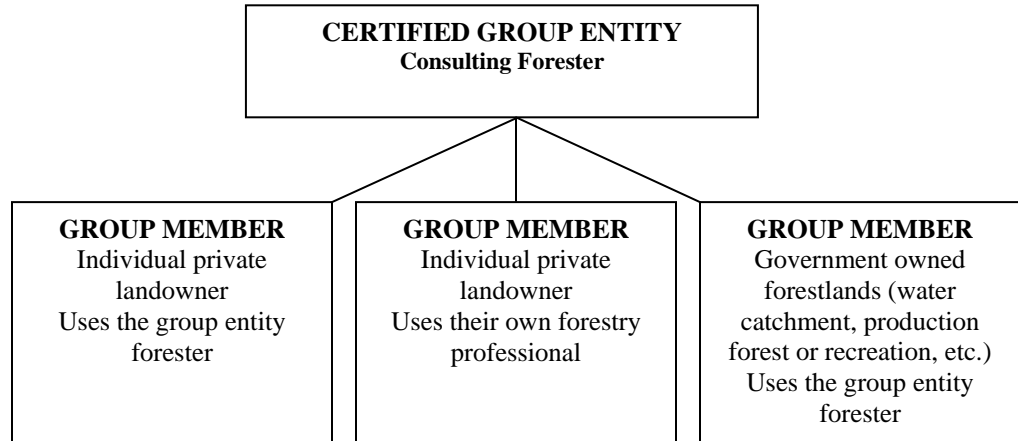
There are many possible organizational structures for group certification. This section describes three common structures:

- The Forestry Professional model
- The Association model
- The Forest Products Manufacturer model

While all fall under the heading “group certification”, each has slightly different organizational advantages and challenges.

Group Certification Models, continued

Forestry Professional Model



Description

In this model, a forester or group of foresters manages forestlands as part or all of their business. These businesses are typically consulting foresters, forest management companies, or primary manufacturers with forestry departments. They are primarily responsible for managing the forestlands for landowners/managers who may have no more in common than a commitment to the FSC P&C. The forest managers help the landowners/managers articulate their goals and objectives for the property and then develop a management plan, prescribe silvicultural treatments, supervise harvesting and road building, market logs, and pay taxes. In some cases group members will have their own forester. It is not obligatory for group members to use the group entity's forester as long as the member's forest management is compatible with the FSC P&C.

Advantages and Challenges

Advantages

Provides forestry expertise to landowners/managers

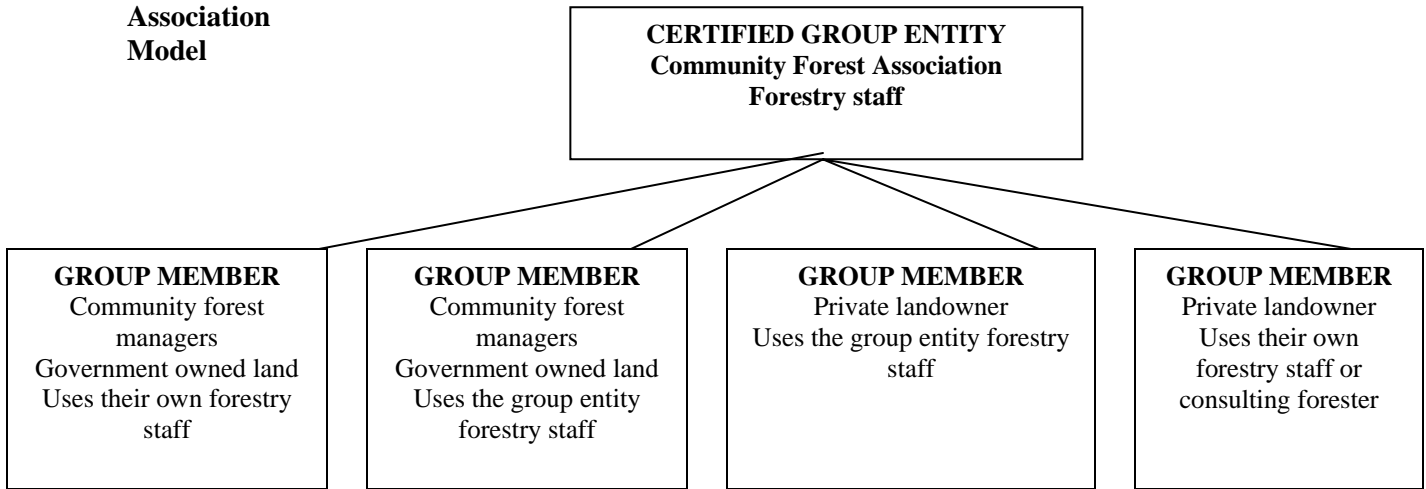
Easiest to administer
Most successful model to start a group entity for group certification
Not likely to need more staff

Challenges

Group certification can be costly for small consulting foresters if they do not charge their clients for a portion of the assessment and audit fees

Group Certification Models, continued

Association Model



Description

In this model, the association's purpose is to promote its members' businesses, advocate for beneficial government policies, and provide technical assistance to members. An existing association is already operating for the benefit of its members, has knowledgeable staff or access to competent consultants. The group entity provides certification education, monitoring and marketing services for members. Members generally provide their own forest management though these services may be available from the group entity. Certification could provide increased benefits to some association members.

Advantages and Challenges

Advantages

Easy to apply to an existing association

Provides the association with a marketing tool for gaining new membership and a diversified log market for their members.

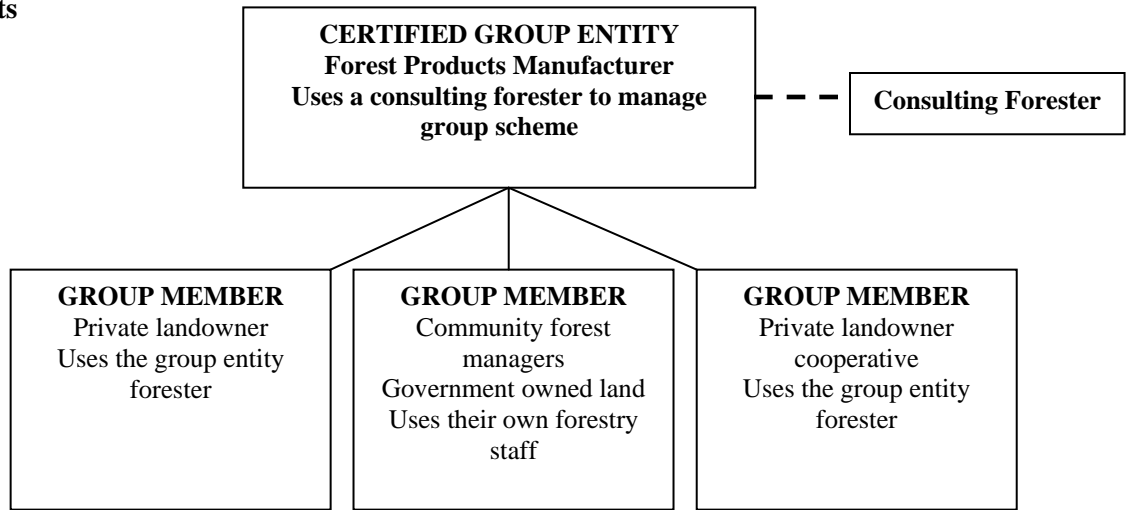
Challenges

Labor intensive and complex to create a new association for the sole purpose of group certification

Group must be able to monitor forestlands managed by a variety of professionals.

Group Certification Models, continued

Forest Products Manufacturer Model



Description

In the forest products manufacturer model, a processing company is the certificate holder for the group, but does not directly manage the forestlands. The company uses a consulting forester to manage the group scheme according to FSC P&C. The company may have “right of first refusal” or contractual rights to buy the landowners/managers’ logs and in return provide free services and/or defer direct FSC certification and audit costs to landowners/managers.

Advantages and Challenges

Advantages

Consulting forester may be less expensive to hire as the group manager than creating a forestry department.

Provides direct market outlet for group members’ forest products.

Provides supply base for the forest products company.

Challenges

Group must be sure that the consulting forester appropriately monitors the forestlands managed by a variety of other professionals. Cost-effective for company to take on administrative responsibilities of managing the group.

Group Certification Models, continued

Group Certification Considerations

Factors to be considered by those creating a group for certification or those applying certification to an existing group:

- The minimum group size required to make the FSC assessment and audit costs affordable for the group's members depends on the economy of the region and the group forests' production capabilities.
- In general, a larger group has lower assessment and audit costs per landowner than a smaller group.
- Often, the FSC assessment and audit costs can be covered in creative ways, such as through membership fees (association certification), government/foundation grants, or "right of first refusal" arrangements with certified resource managers.
- The logistical hurdles involved in creating a group for the sole purpose of certification are high; it is preferable to apply certification to an existing organization or pursue the Forestry Professional Model approach.

Costs of Group Certification

What are Direct Costs?

Direct costs are the costs of the certification assessment and audits.

Certified forestlands are assessed every five years and audited annually.

Assessment and Audit Costs

The cost of group certification depends on the size of the group and the size of the forest area to be assessed. Costs for certifications and audits are internationally comparable.

Group certification costs range from:

- \$5,000 - \$30,000 USD for assessments
- \$2,000- \$10,000 USD for annual audits

Direct Costs to Landowners/Managers

Depending on the procedures developed by each group, Group members may or may not be billed directly by the group entity for the certification assessment or audits. Associations have paid for the certification assessments from membership fees, organizational budgets or grants (from foundations or government). Individual forest managers and management companies have usually paid for the certification themselves and have not passed on the cost to their clients.

Single Landowner Cost

Certifying a single small landowner (who is not part of a group) with less than 1000 hectares would cost a minimum of \$5,000 USD, given that nearly the same energy is expended to certify one individual landowner as is required to certify multiple landowners/managers within a group.

Costs of Certification, continued

What are Indirect Costs?

Indirect costs are related to the forest management upgrades or additional resources required to meet certification standards or group management requirements. These costs are influenced by the landowner's current level of forestry practices, as well as fees charged for management services.

Indirect Costs to Landowners/ Managers

What and how the landowner actually pays for the indirect costs varies from group to group. Associations sometimes provide technical assistance and landowner education as part of their membership services. Some forestry professionals, particularly those who work primarily for processing companies, provide free services as an incentive for allowing the company "right of first refusal" or contractual rights to buy the landowners/managers' logs. Most consulting foresters charge a fee for their management services because that is their primary business.

3: Certification Requirements

Group Entities

Group Entity Responsibilities

A group entity seeking certification is responsible for:

- Documented policies that conform to the FSC group certification standards.
- Establishing a legal entity that provides monitoring of the group members to ensure that the forestland owners or managers meet FSC requirements.
- Monitoring every member’s forestland management.
- Being the primary contact with the certification body for communication, coordination of audits, and maintenance of group records.

Group Entity Requirements

There are requirements that must be fulfilled by all types of groups pursuing group certification.

See [Document #1: Group Entity Requirement Checklist](#).

Group Entity Requirements	See Document
1 The group entity is an independent legal entity or an individual acting as a legal entity	
2 The group entity has made a full disclosure of all forest areas over which they have some responsibility, whether as owner (including share or partial ownership), manager, consultant or other responsibility. Justification for exclusion of forestlands from certified pool has been provided.	
3 The group entity has sufficient legal and management authority and technical and human resources (e.g. qualified staff, equipment..) to implement their responsibilities	
4 There is a defined pool of members available for demonstrating compliance with the FSC P&C.	
5 The responsibilities of the group entity and group members are clearly defined and documented, e.g., with respect to management planning, monitoring, harvesting, quality control, marketing, processing, etc.	#3:Client/Member Acceptance Letter
6 Group membership requirements are documented and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Procedures and rules of entry and exit from the certified pool; and,▪ Procedures for the notification of SW of changes in membership within 30 days of changes.	#3: Client/Member Acceptance Letter
7 A 'consent form' or its equivalent has been signed by each group member The consent form at a minimum:	#3: Client/Member Acceptance Letter

- Acknowledges and agrees to the obligations and responsibilities of group membership;
 - Agrees to group membership for the full period of validity of the group certificate;
 - Authorizes the group manager to apply for certification on the member's behalf; and,
 - Acknowledges the certification body and FSC's right to access their forest for evaluation and monitoring.
- 8 Group entity has provided each group member with documentation including:
- The applicable forest stewardship standard;
 - An explanation of the certification process; and,
 - An explanation of group membership requirements.
- 9 Group entity has a policy and practice for monitoring of the properties in the certified pool to ensure that they are meeting the FSC P&C and group membership requirement?
- 10 The group entity has a system for maintaining the following records up to date at all times:
- List of names and addresses of group members, together with date of entry into group certification scheme;
 - Maps of all forest areas included in the group certification;
 - Records demonstrating tenure of group members;
 - Evidence of consent of all group members, preferably in the form of a signed 'consent form';
 - Relevant documentation and records regarding forest management of each group member (e.g. management plans, summary information regarding silvicultural system, management operations, volume production);
 - **Records demonstrating the implementation of any internal control or monitoring systems. Such records shall include records of internal inspections, non-compliance identified in such inspections, actions taken to correct any such non-compliance; and,**
 - Relevant documentation regarding production and sales.
- [#3: Client/Member Acceptance Letter](#)
- [#5: Group Member Monitoring Report](#)
- [#4 Group Member Roster](#)
- [#5: Group Member Monitoring Report](#)

Group Members

Group Member Responsibilities

The forestland owners or managers who are members of a group are responsible for:

- Meeting all group entity requirements for entry into the group.
- Complying with all P&C requirements on an individual basis, appropriate to the size and scale of the forest operation.

Note: Responsibilities for meeting the P&C may not be “traded” between different members or properties, e.g., where one member meets all P&C, while another does not meet any.

Group Member Requirements

There are requirements that must be fulfilled by members of a group. See [Document #2: Group Member Requirement Checklist](#).

Group Member Requirements	See Document
1 Clearly documented title, lease, or use rights to the forestland.	
2 Demonstrated compliance with all the requirements of the P&C on an individual basis, appropriate to the size and scale of the forest operation.	
3 A signed “consent form”: demonstrating a willingness to participate in the group, adhere to the group’s policies, and commit to the FSC P&C.	#3: Client/Member Acceptance letter
4 A management plan, appropriate to the size and scale of the forest operation, which meets FSC requirements.	#6: Management Plan Template

4: FSC Principles and Criteria (P&C)

Overview

FSC Principles and Criteria

The Forest Stewardship Council's Principles and Criteria are the foundation of standards used to assess group certification candidates. They may also be used as guidelines for those wishing to practice an internationally recognized version of "sustainable forestry." It is important to remember these are guidelines and not prescriptions—and that it is the responsibility of the group entity and group members to develop operating practices that meet the requirements.

Regional Standards

FSC forest management certification is based upon demonstrated compliance with regionally adapted FSC forest stewardship standards. Regional standards are created through the development of specific indicators for each of the 56 FSC criteria. There are two types of regionally adapted standards:

- **FSC-accredited national and regional forest stewardship standards:** a forest management standard with a defined scope (country or region) which has been approved by the FSC Board of Directors.
- **Certification Body locally adapted forest management certification standard:** a forest management standard developed by a certification body for use in a specific country or region that does not have an FSC- accredited national or regional standard. This standard is based upon the FSC-accredited CB generic standards but adapted at the indicator level to local conditions.

To prepare for certification, study the indicators in your region's standards to determine what evidence is needed to prove compliance and to see what the assessment team will be looking for. The assessment team must address every indicator during an assessment or audit.

Overview, continued

Avoiding “Non compliance”

Many non-compliances and associated corrective actions develop because the forest managers do not adequately understand the criteria and specific indicators. To avoid or reduce the number of non-compliances and obstacles to certification, a group entity should carefully review their regional standards, address each criterion and indicator, and seek guidance on confusing issues from an organization providing consulting services for FSC certification candidates or from a certified forest management operation or group entity.

Demonstrating Compliance

Ways to Demonstrate Compliance

Records - Many criteria are straightforward and it is clear what is required to meet them. It may be helpful, but not required, for the candidate operation to maintain records to show an assessment team as evidence of compliance (e.g., tax receipts, professional licenses, and training certificates). Often conversations between the team and the management staff provide the information and assurance the team needs regarding compliance for straightforward issues.

Documents - Other criteria relate to the candidate's forest management policies and procedures. Some documents are specifically called for, but often it is simply practical for the candidate to prepare documents in order to convey their policies and procedures. These documents are useful to the operation's personnel as well, defining goals, facilitating training of new staff, supporting consistent application of management practices, and ensuring that information is not lost if a key manager leaves.

Forest conditions - The forest itself often reveals the answer to whether a criterion is being met, and this is where the on-the-ground, field tours are important times for the candidate to "show off" their best and most challenging management sites, and for the assessment team to look for indications that what has been said is really being done.

Evidence of Compliance

The following table contains suggestions from experienced assessors, forestry professionals, and group entities on ways to show compliance with certain FSC P&C. It is in no way a definitive list of requirements to become certified, as it does not include a review of regional indicators.

Principles and Criteria

FSC Principles and Criteria

Principle 1

Forest management shall respect all applicable laws of the country in which they occur, and international treaties and agreements to which the country is a signatory, and comply with all FSC Principles and Criteria.

1.1 Forest management shall respect all national and local laws and administrative requirements.

1.2 All applicable and legally prescribed fees, royalties, taxes and other charges shall be paid.

1.3 In signatory countries, the provisions of all binding international agreements such as CITES, ILO Conventions, ITTA, and Convention on Biological Diversity, shall be respected.

1.4 Conflicts between laws, regulations and the FSC Principles and Criteria shall be evaluated for the purposes of certification, on a case by case basis, by the certifiers and the involved or affected parties.

1.5 Forest management areas should be protected from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities.

1.6 Forest managers shall demonstrate a long-term commitment to adhere to the FSC Principles and Criteria.

Principle 2

Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined documented and legally established.

2.1 Clear evidence of long-term forest use rights to the land (e.g. land title, customary rights, or lease agreements) shall be demonstrated.

2.2 Local communities with legal or customary tenure or use rights shall maintain control, to the extent necessary to protect their rights or resources, over forest operations unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.

Evidence of Compliance

- Have reference materials at your disposal and be informed about local, regional, and national laws that apply to forest management, which may include forestry, labor, employment laws, wildlife, water quality, endangered species, transportation, trespassing or other land use laws related to activities.
- Have reference materials at your disposal about international laws including CITES, ILO, ITTA, and Convention on Biological Diversity. (See www.cites.org, www.ilo.org, www.itto.or.jp)
- Assure that group entity and group members have a record of compliance with laws.
- Assure that group entity and group members have paid appropriate taxes and fees and have receipts available.
- Develop tangible evidence of support for the FSC P&C, e.g., membership in the FSC, documents produced by the group entity supporting FSC.
- Assure that group members have evidence of land title or use rights.
- Mark forestland boundaries on the ground.
- Create a written dispute resolution procedure. (See [Document #7: Dispute Resolution Policy](#))
- Address all land use rights issues for third parties (i.e., easements, rights of way, traditional uses, cultural resources, hunting, water rights)

2.3 Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed to resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights. The circumstances and status of any outstanding disputes will be explicitly considered in the certification evaluation. Disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify an operation from being certified.

Principle 3

The legal and customary rights of indigenous peoples to own, use, and manage their lands, territories, and resources shall be recognized and respected.

3.1 Indigenous peoples shall control forest management on their lands and territories unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.

3.2 Forest management shall not threaten or diminish, either directly or indirectly, the resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples.

3.3 Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples shall be clearly identified in cooperation with such peoples, and recognized and protected by forest managers.

3.4 Indigenous peoples shall be compensated for the application of their traditional knowledge regarding the use of forest species or management systems in forest operations. This compensation shall be formally agreed upon with their free and informed consent before forest operations commence.

Principle 4

Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well being of forest workers and local communities.

4.1 The communities within, or adjacent to, the forest management area should be given opportunities for employment, training, and other services.

4.2 Forest management should meet or exceed all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families.

4.3 The rights of workers to organize and voluntarily negotiate with their employers shall be guaranteed as outlined in Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

4.4 Management planning and operations shall incorporate the results of evaluations of social impact. Consultations shall be maintained with people and groups directly affected by management operations.

4.5 Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed for resolving grievances and for providing fair

- Verify status of traditional uses and legal claims of indigenous people on members' properties.
- Communicate and cooperate with indigenous people regarding the protection of their resource rights, intellectual property rights, and archaeological and cultural sites.
- Confirm that archaeology surveys are done before management activities begin. (See [Document #8: Historical, Cultural or Indigenous Site Survey Template](#))
- Archaeological or cultural sites are marked in the field to protect them from damage.

- Develop written work safety guidelines and assure that workers follow those guidelines. The guidelines should include safety and first aid training, and periodic safety inspections.
- Require that contractors have safety guidelines.
- Make sure that safety equipment is used in the field – hard hats, protective gear, etc.
- Require that contractors or timber workers have workman's compensation insurance or some alternative way of protecting the financial stability of injured workers.
- Require that contractors or timber workers have liability insurance or some alternative way of protecting the financial stability of local people,

compensation in the case of loss or damage affecting the legal or customary rights, property, resources, or livelihoods of local peoples. Measures shall be taken to avoid such loss or damage.

Principle 5

Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.

5.1 Forest management should strive toward economic viability, while taking into account the full environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and ensuring the investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest.

5.2 Forest management and marketing operations should encourage the optimal use and local processing of the forest's diversity of products.

5.3 Forest management should minimize waste associated with harvesting and on-site processing operations and avoid damage to other forest resources.

5.4 Forest management should strive to strengthen and diversify the local economy, avoiding dependence on a single forest product.

5.5 Forest management operations shall recognize, maintain, and, where appropriate, enhance the value of forest services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries.

5.6 The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels which can be permanently sustained.

Principle 6

Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest.

6.1 Assessment of environmental impacts shall be completed -- appropriate to the scale, intensity

neighbors, and communities whose property or livelihood has been damaged by forest management activities.

- Create a written grievance procedure. (See [Document #7: Dispute Resolution Policy](#))
 - Consult with the local community, neighbors, and workers regarding the potential effects management activities. (See [Document #9: Stakeholder List](#))
 - Demonstrate financial returns from forest management are adequate to maintain the forest management infrastructure.
 - Develop a business plan.
 - Make sure that members are getting the best value for their products.
 - Document sale of products to local processors.
 - Document forest inventory methods and results.
 - Document that scientifically valid inventory methods have been used to estimate growth, yield, and allowable cut.
-
- Forest resources and environmental impacts are assessed before harvesting takes place. (See [Document #10: Environmental/Social Assessment of Operations](#) , [Document #11 Harvest Plan/Environmental Assessment](#))
 - Rare, threatened, or endangered species are

of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources -- and adequately integrated into management systems. Assessments shall include landscape level considerations as well as the impacts of on-site processing facilities. Environmental impacts shall be assessed prior to commencement of site-disturbing operations.

6.2 Safeguards shall exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (e.g., nesting and feeding areas). Conservation zones and protection areas shall be established, appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management and the uniqueness of the affected resources. Inappropriate hunting, fishing, trapping and collecting shall be controlled.

6.3 Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including:

- a) Forest regeneration and succession.
- b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity.
- c) Natural cycles that affect the productivity of the forest ecosystem.

6.4 Representative samples of existing ecosystems within the landscape shall be protected in their natural state and recorded on maps, appropriate to the scale and intensity of operations and the uniqueness of the affected resources.

6.5 Written guidelines shall be prepared and implemented to: control erosion; minimize forest damage during harvesting, road construction, and all other mechanical disturbances; and protect water resources.

6.6 Management systems shall promote the development and adoption of environmentally friendly non-chemical methods of pest management and strive to avoid the use of chemical pesticides. World Health Organization Type 1A and 1B and chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides; pesticides that are persistent, toxic or whose derivatives remain biologically active and accumulate in the food chain beyond their intended use; as well as any pesticides banned by international agreement, shall be prohibited. If chemicals are used, proper equipment and training shall be provided to minimize health and environmental risks.

6.7 Chemicals, containers, liquid and solid non-organic wastes including fuel and oil shall be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner at off-site locations.

6.8 Use of biological control agents shall be documented, minimized, monitored and strictly controlled in accordance with national laws and internationally accepted scientific protocols.

6.9 Use of genetically modified organisms shall be prohibited.

6.10 The use of exotic species shall be carefully controlled and actively monitored to avoid adverse ecological impacts.

6.11 Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur, except in

surveyed before harvesting activities take place.

- Resources such as government agencies, natural heritage programs or NGO web-based databases have been searched for records of endangered species sightings, habit features, and protection measures. (See International CITES- www.cites.org, IUCN- www.redlist.org, and other databases: <http://eelink.net/EndSpp/>, www.endangeredspecie.com, www.natureserve.org)
- Rare, threatened, or endangered species and their habitats are protected, and habitat enhancement measures are included in the management plan.
- Methods for enhancing biodiversity (e.g., old growth, legacy tree, snag, large woody debris retention) are considered in forest planning.
- Integrated pest management plans are developed to address pest problems. (See [Document #13: Pesticide Use Policy](#))
- Pesticide use policies are in place and pesticide use is documented. . (See [Document #13: Pesticide Use Policy](#), and [Document #14: Annual Pesticide Use Report](#))
- Invasive exotic plants are not used and those already on site are controlled.
- Mitigation measures are followed to prevent soil erosion, protect water quality, and minimize forest damage during management activities. (See [Document #12: Estimated Surface Soil Erosion Hazard Rating](#))
- Stream and riparian protection zones are marked and protected in the field.

circumstances where conversion:

- a) entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit; and
- b) does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and
- c) will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long term conservation benefits across the forest management unit.

Principle 7

A management plan -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of the operations -- shall be written, implemented, and kept up to date. The long-term objectives of management, and the means of achieving them, shall be clearly stated.

7.1 The management plan and supporting documents shall provide:

- a) Management objectives.
- b) Description of the forest resources to be managed, environmental limitations, land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, and a profile of adjacent lands.
- c) Description of silvicultural and/or other management system, based on the ecology of the forest in question and information gathered through resource inventories.
- d) Rationale for rate of annual harvest and species selection.
- e) Provisions for monitoring of forest growth and dynamics.
- f) Environmental safeguards based on environmental assessments.
- g) Plans for the identification and protection of rare, threatened and endangered species.
- h) Maps describing the forest resource base including protected areas, planned management activities and land ownership.
- i) Description and justification of harvesting techniques and equipment to be used.

7.2 The management plan shall be periodically revised to incorporate the results of monitoring or new scientific and technical information, as well as to respond to changing environmental, social and economic circumstances.

7.3 Forest workers shall receive adequate training and supervision to ensure proper implementation of the management plan.

7.4 While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the primary elements of the management plan, including those listed in Criterion 7.1.

Principle 8

Monitoring shall be conducted -- appropriate to the scale and intensity of forest management -- to assess the condition of the forest, yields of forest products, chain of

- Group members' management plans contain the essential elements of the FSC requirements. (See [Documents #6: Management Plan Template](#))
 - Provide adequate training or continuing education to workers, landowners/managers, and forestry professionals.
 - Supervise the performance of forest workers and harvesting contractors.
 - A summary of group members' management plans is made available to the public.
-
- Monitoring plan and data includes: growth and yield, forest composition, environmental, social, and economic elements, high conservation value

custody, management activities, and their social and environmental impacts.

8.1 The frequency and intensity of monitoring should be determined by the scale and intensity of forest management operations as well as the relative complexity and fragility of the affected environment. Monitoring procedures should be consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and assessment of change.

8.2 Forest management should include the research and data collection needed to monitor, at a minimum, the following indicators:

- a) Yield of all forest products harvested.
- b) Growth rates, regeneration and condition of the forest.
- c) Composition and observed changes in the flora and fauna.
- d) Environmental and social impacts of harvesting and other operations.
- e) Costs, productivity, and efficiency of forest management.

8.3 Documentation shall be provided by the forest manager to enable monitoring and certifying organizations to trace each forest product from its origin, a process known as the "chain of custody."

8.4 The results of monitoring shall be incorporated into the implementation and revision of the management plan.

8.5 While respecting the confidentiality of information, forest managers shall make publicly available a summary of the results of monitoring indicators, including those listed in Criterion 8.2.

Principle 9

Management activities in high conservation value forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes that define such forests. Decisions regarding high conservation value forests shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach.

9.1 Assessment to determine the presence of the attributes consistent with High Conservation Value Forests will be completed, appropriate to scale and intensity of forest management.

9.2 The consultative portion of the certification process must place emphasis on the identified conservation attributes, and options for the maintenance thereof.

9.3 The management plan shall include and implement specific measures that ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of the applicable conservation attributes consistent with the precautionary approach. These measures shall be specifically included in the publicly available management plan summary.

9.4 Annual monitoring shall be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the measures employed to

forest areas, and post harvest evaluation for each member property. (See [Document #15: Monitoring Plan Checklist](#))

- Maintain records of all forest products harvested on member's property or management area. (See [Document #16: Post-Harvest Monitoring Report](#), and [Document #17: Monitoring Report](#))
- Document sales and shipping documents information to allow for the tracking of products from forest to primary manufacture (chain of custody). (See [Document #18: Chain-of-Custody Standards](#), and [Document #19: Chain-of-Custody Shipping Ticket](#))
- A summary of the group members' monitoring results is made available to the public.

- Identify high conservation value forests and/or attributes potentially in the region by consulting appropriate databases, research papers and websites.
- Consult with stakeholders for help in identifying HCVF. (See [Document #9: Stakeholder List](#))
- Assess members' forests for attributes of HCVF as identified via the above research or stakeholder consultation. (See [Document #10: Environmental/Social Assessment of Operations](#))
- HCVF maintenance and enhancement plans are part of the forest management plan (See Principle 7).

maintain or enhance the applicable conservation attributes.

High Conservation Value Forests are those that possess one or more of the following attributes:

- a) Forest areas containing globally, regionally, or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g., endemism, endangered species, refugia); and/or large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance*
- b) Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems*
- c) Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g., watershed protection, erosion control)*
- d) Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g., subsistence, health) and/or critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic, or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities)*

Principle 10

Plantations shall be planned and managed in accordance with Principles and Criteria 1 - 9, and Principle 10 and its Criteria. While plantations can provide an array of social and economic benefits, and can contribute to satisfying the world's needs for forest products, they should complement the management of, reduce pressures on, and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

10.1 The management objectives of the plantation, including natural forest conservation and restoration objectives, shall be explicitly stated in the management plan, and clearly demonstrated in the implementation of the plan.

10.2 The design and layout of plantations should promote the protection, restoration and conservation of natural forests, and not increase pressures on natural forests. Wildlife corridors, streamside zones and a mosaic of stands of different ages and rotation periods, shall be used in the layout of the plantation, consistent with the scale of the operation. The scale and layout of plantation blocks shall be consistent with the patterns of forest stands found within the natural landscape.

10.3 Diversity in the composition of plantations is preferred, so as to enhance economic,

- The effects of management activities in HCVF are monitored (See Principle 8).

- Describe the objectives of plantation management.
- The species selected for the plantation should be clearly justified.
- Integrated pest management is used to address pest problems (See Principle 6).
- Measures are taken to maintain or improve soil health and productivity.
- Diversity of species, genetic stock, and age class are considered in the management of plantations.

ecological and social stability. Such diversity may include the size and spatial distribution of management units within the landscape, number and genetic composition of species, age classes and structures.

10.4 The selection of species for planting shall be based on their overall suitability for the site and their appropriateness to the management objectives. In order to enhance the conservation of biological diversity, native species are preferred over exotic species in the establishment of plantations and the restoration of degraded ecosystems. Exotic species, which shall be used only when their performance is greater than that of native species, shall be carefully monitored to detect unusual mortality, disease, or insect outbreaks and adverse ecological impacts.

10.5 A proportion of the overall forest management area, appropriate to the scale of the plantation and to be determined in regional standards, shall be managed so as to restore the site to a natural forest cover.

10.6 Measures shall be taken to maintain or improve soil structure, fertility, and biological activity. The techniques and rate of harvesting, road and trail construction and maintenance, and the choice of species shall not result in long term soil degradation or adverse impacts on water quality, quantity or substantial deviation from stream course drainage patterns.

10.7 Measures shall be taken to prevent and minimize outbreaks of pests, diseases, fire and invasive plant introductions. Integrated pest management shall form an essential part of the management plan, with primary reliance on prevention and biological control methods rather than chemical pesticides and fertilizers. Plantation management should make every effort to move away from chemical pesticides and fertilizers, including their use in nurseries. The use of chemicals is also covered in Criteria 6.6 and 6.7.

10.8 Appropriate to the scale and diversity of the operation, monitoring of plantations shall include regular assessment of potential on-site and off-site ecological and social impacts, (e.g. natural regeneration, effects on water resources and soil fertility, and impacts on local welfare and social well-being), in addition to those elements addressed in principles 8, 6 and 4. No species should be planted on a large scale until local trials and/or experience have shown that they are ecologically well-adapted to the site, are not invasive, and do not have significant negative ecological impacts on other ecosystems. Special attention will be paid to social issues of land acquisition for plantations, especially the protection of local rights of ownership, use or access.

10.9 Plantations established in areas converted from natural forests after November 1994 normally shall not qualify for certification. Certification may be allowed in circumstances where sufficient evidence is submitted to the certification body that the manager/owner is not responsible directly or indirectly of such conversion.

5: Certification Process

The Assessment Team

Overview

The certification assessment and audit process for groups is similar to regular forest management assessments. This section discusses assessment teams, stakeholders, how a candidate organization prepares for the team's visit, and what the organization can expect after the team arrives.

Team Members

A one to four member assessment team is assigned by the certifier to assess the candidate. Team members include a team leader, someone experienced in FSC certification assessments, and assessors typically with knowledge and experience in the forestry practices, ecology, and social issues of the region.

Prior to the Assessment

Group Entity Preparation

The group entity should prepare to host the assessment team and assist them in making a fair, thorough, and accurate evaluation.

Before an assessment team arrives, the group entity should:

- Sign an agreement with the certifier that stipulates the terms of the assessment
- Designate a contact person that will be the organization's liaison with the certifier and the team leader
- Provide assistance to the certifier in developing the assessment schedule and securing local accommodations and transportation for the team
- Provide the certifier with a list of stakeholders for both the group entity and the group members for private and public notification and interviews
- Collect all documents and maps requested by the assessment team and make them available to the team. Sometimes documents are forwarded to the team before the field assessment for their review to make the assessment period more efficient
- Inform relevant staff members and consultants about the assessment and make sure that they will be available for interviews and field tours during the assessment

Note: Proprietary group entity information and stakeholder comments are kept confidential.

Stakeholder Notification

Stakeholders are essential participants in any assessment. Stakeholders are notified that the assessment will take place at least 30 days prior to the fieldwork. The notice is put on the certifier's website. A list of local and regional FSC members and stakeholders are notified directly by postal mail or email.

Team Preparation

The team prepares for the assessment by reviewing the appropriate FSC P&C for the region, reading any materials sent by the group entity for review, and organizing their questions and concerns to be investigated during the assessment. Sometimes the team conducts preliminary interviews with the group entity staff and stakeholders.

Main Assessment

Length of Visit

The team will visit the candidate's office and field sites over a period of two to 10 days depending on the size and complexity of the operation.

Assessment Tasks

When performing a group certification assessment, the team:

- Reviews the group entity's and members' policy, management planning, and monitoring documents
- Reviews the group entity's capacity for managing the group system and monitoring group member practices
- Evaluates ongoing and completed management activities on group member lands (e.g., harvesting, road building, silviculture, habitat retention, biodiversity protection, and worker safety)
- Interviews stakeholders for a fourth-party view of the forest management operations, and group entity and group member policies and activities

Opening Meeting

At the outset of the assessment an organizational meeting will be held at the group entity's office. The goal of this meeting is to define and clarify the parameters of the assessment. Tasks for this meeting may include:

- Introduce assessment team and group entity staff involved in the assessment
- Review assessment process, requirements, and expectations
- Develop a tentative schedule for the assessment period, including office, field time, staff meetings, stakeholder meetings, and site selection
- Review documents, maps, and photos that will be needed during the review process
- Review the group entity's membership management system, including record keeping, member compliance monitoring schedule, and staff responsibilities
- An overview by the group entity staff of past, current, and projected future forestland management, and desires and expectations for forest management certification

Main Assessment, continued

Purpose of Field Visits

Field visits are required during the certification process. The field visit is a time for the group entity's forestry staff or consultants to explain their management activities to the team, and demonstrate that the work in the field follows the recommendations in the management plan.

How much is Audited?

During group certification assessments and audits, only a sample of the forestlands in the certified group is visited. For groups with less than 100 members at least 1/3 of the group members' properties are visited according to FSC requirements. Which properties are sampled depends on a variety of factors including size, and amount of activity occurring on them.

Field Inspection Sites

Field visit locations will be:

- Determined by the assessment team and the group entity staff to create a field inspection schedule that provides a representative sample of the company's management activities.
- Based upon a strategy that will sample across management variables such as:
 - Forest types
 - Silvicultural systems
 - Community issues
 - Individual landowner/management area size and management objectives

Office Meetings During Field Visits

Office meetings intermingled during field visits are necessary for interviewing key personnel engaged in management and record keeping activities. Records, maps, and documents are reviewed and some collected.

Main Assessment, continued

Stakeholder Input

The certifier gathers information from targeted stakeholders throughout the assessment process. Depending on the size and scale of the group entity being assessed, information may be gathered in:

- Public meetings
- Individual meetings
- Telephone interviews
- Written surveys

The information from stakeholders provides input about the group entity, and group members' compliance with the certification standards.

Team Meetings and Debriefing Meeting

During the evenings of the assessment and often for one day after the field and office visits are concluded, the assessment team meets to review their findings and produce preliminary scores and conclusions. The team presents their preliminary findings and conclusions to the group entity in a final meeting at the group entity offices before departing.

Post-Assessment

Report

The team writes a draft assessment report over a period of 4-6 weeks after the completion of the fieldwork. The report includes:

- **Findings** - a description of what the assessors found, and/or how the candidate meets the requirement of each indicator.
- **Evaluation of compliance** - based upon the team's analysis of each indicator. The entire assessment team provides input on scoring for all criteria through a consensus process.
- **Compliance** - depending on the assessment team's conclusion, the report *could* contain either or both of the following compliance mechanisms:
 - **Preconditions or Major Corrective Action Requests** (*certification bodies may use either term*)- identified critical gaps that *must* be resolved prior to receiving certification. An audit is required to confirm the satisfactory completion of preconditions/major Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and may result in additional charges to the candidate operation.
 - **Minor CAR**- identifies significant weaknesses that *must* be addressed within defined time periods subsequent to certification. Satisfaction of a minor CAR is evaluated during annual audits and is required for maintaining certification.
- **Observations** – A very minor problem or the early stages of a problem which does not of itself constitute a non-compliance, but which the auditor considers may lead to a future non-compliance if not addressed by the client.

Post-Assessment, continued

Evaluating Compliance with FSC standards

According to the FSC, compliance with certification standards is determined by evaluating the observed performance of each group member in meeting all indicators in the standard. Non-compliance with any indicator is classified as either major or minor based on whether there is a fundamental failure to meet the objective of the associated condition.

Minor Non Compliance

Is a temporary lapse, or

- Is unusual and non-systematic, or
- Impacts of NC are limited in temporal and spatial scale, and

Prompt corrective action has been taken to ensure that it will not be repeated, and

Does not result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the FSC criterion.

Major Non Compliance

Continues over a long period of time, or

- Is repeated or systematic, or
- Affects a wide area, or
- Is not corrected or adequately responded to by the forest managers once it has been identified.

Group Entity Review

The certifier reviews the draft report, and then submits it to the group entity for review and comment on the factual contents. The group entity is generally given 7 to 10 working days to review the report.

Peer Review

After the group entity's comment period, the certifier submits the report for confidential peer review. Peer reviews strengthen the integrity of the assessment process by adding an objective and independent evaluation of the certification process and conclusions. Peer reviewers are selected by the certifier and are bound to confidentiality. Peer reviewer comments are considered by the assessment team and summarized in the report. The assessment team submits the final document to the certifier for a final certification decision.

Post-Assessment, continued

Certification Decision

Once the certifier makes a positive decision, a contract stipulating the terms of certification is sent to the group entity for signature. A certificate is issued when both the certifier and the group entity sign the contract.

Annual or Surveillance Audit

Audit Process

On the yearly anniversary of the certificate issuance the certifier conducts an audit. The primary objective of annual audits is to verify that management practices continue to meet the FSC P&C and that corrective action requests (CARs) required as a result of the initial assessment or an annual audit are being met. The process for doing the audit is similar to the assessment process, but is typically shorter in duration. Costs are much less, about one-third the assessment costs.

Audit Team

The audit team is generally smaller than the assessment team and is usually made up of only one or two auditors, depending on the size and complexity of the group entity's operation.

Team Tasks

The audit involves interviews with key group entity personnel and often, stakeholders, a review of pertinent group entity, public, and stakeholder documents and a field performance review of forest management practices.

6: Getting Started

Choosing a Certification Body

The group entity needs to find a suitable FSC-accredited certification body to do the certification assessment. Choosing a certification body can be based on the reputation of the certifier, the philosophical compatibility between the group entity and the certifier, and/or cost. Generally, it is most cost effective to choose a certification body that is closest to where the assessment will take place. However, many certification bodies, no matter where their home office is, have representatives, offices, or auditors in most regions of the world. If there is more than one certifier that has certified operations in your area, it is best to contact all of them to get an idea of what each can offer. The group entity should review certifications done in their area by reading the public summaries and calling the certified operations. The public summaries are on the website of each certifier. This will give some indication of quality and thoroughness. Of course, a personal interview with the regional staff of the certifier is also recommended. Certification bodies can be found at www.fsc.org or the in-country regional FSC office (if there is one).

Application

To start the certification process, a group entity should request and fill out an application for each of the certification bodies being considered. This gives the certifier information on which to base their cost estimate. The certifier will also be interested in an interview with the group entity to understand the assessment scope.

Ready or Not?

After choosing a certifier, the group entity will have to decide whether it is ready for a full assessment or a pre-assessment (scoping). Candidate operations generally choose to do a scoping if they are not sure they meet the FSC P&C and want to know what areas of their management need improvement. A scoping is an abbreviated assessment aimed at finding gaps in compliance that pose potential barriers to certification. Some candidate operations hire consultants that specialize in FSC assessment preparation before they contact a certifier. The group entity could also contact currently certified group entities for information and guidance.

Preparing for the Assessment

Group entity preparations for the assessment team are discussed above on page 36.

Preparing for the assessment internally includes making sure that all of the staff and landowners/managers are on board with the certification. Certification is a big step for some staff members. Experience has shown that if some staff members are not in favor of the certification, it can disrupt the cohesiveness and preparedness of the candidate operation. Moreover all of the landowners/managers in the pool must be notified of the impending assessment because their land could be chosen for the assessment sample. It is sometimes helpful as well if the landowner/manager is present during the field visit.

7: Sample Documents for Managing the Group Entity

Overview

This section contains sample documents that address the requirements outlined in the group entity and group member requirement checklists. How these documents are used will depend on the group entity's organizational structure and unique regional and/or cultural circumstances in which they are applied. Some documents were developed for large operations while others are aimed at smaller operations. It is important that the level of documentation be balanced with the size, scale, and intensity of the operation.

Remember:

These sample documents are to be used for reference and guidance only.

Using all of the provided examples and templates does not guarantee FSC certification.

Certification assessments require field evaluations and stakeholder interviews as well as reviews of documents, policies, and procedures.

Document #1: Group Entity Requirement Checklist

This checklist may be used by an organization to assess its eligibility as a group entity.

Note: For requirements marked with a ✓, this fatal flaw definition is pretty subjective it will depend on the certifier an answer of No or Partial will result in a **precondition/major CAR** that the group entity must meet before the certifier will issue an FSC certificate. For other requirements, an answer of No or Partial will result in a **minor CAR** that the group entity needs to meet in a given time frame.

Group Entity Requirements	Complete	See Document
✓ The group manager is an independent legal entity or an individual acting as a legal entity	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	
The group manager has made a full disclosure of all forest areas over which the GM has some responsibility, whether as owner (including share or partial ownership), manager, consultant or other responsibility. Justification for exclusion of forestlands from certified pool has been provided.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	
The group manager has sufficient legal and management authority and technical and human resources (e.g. qualified staff, equipment..) to implement their responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	
✓ There is a defined pool of members available for demonstrating compliance with the FSC P&C.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	
✓ The responsibilities of the group manager and group members are clearly defined and documented, e.g., with respect to management planning, monitoring, harvesting, quality control, marketing, processing, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	
✓ Group membership requirements are documented and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures and rules of entry and exit from the certified pool; and, • Procedures for the notification of SW of changes in membership within 30 days of changes. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	
✓ A 'consent form' or its equivalent has been signed by each group member The consent form at a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledges and agrees to the obligations and responsibilities of group membership; • agrees to group membership for the full period of validity of the group certificate; • authorizes the group manager to apply for certification on the member's behalf; and, acknowledges the certification body and FSC's right to access	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	#3:Client/Member Acceptance letter

their forest for evaluation and monitoring.

Group manager has provided each group member with documentation including:

- The applicable forest stewardship standard;
- An explanation of the certification process; and,

- Yes
- No
- Partial

An explanation of group membership requirements

- ✓ Group manager has a policy and practice for monitoring of the properties in the certified pool to ensure that they are meeting the FSC P&C and group membership requirement?

- Yes
- No
- Partial

[#3:Client/Member Acceptance letter](#)

The group manager has a system for maintaining the following records up to date at all times:

- Yes
- No
- Partial

[#3:Client/Member Acceptance letter](#)

- List of names and addresses of group members, together with date of entry into group certification scheme;
- Maps of all forest areas included in the group certification;
- Records demonstrating tenure of group members;
- Evidence of consent of all group members, preferably in the form of a signed 'consent form';
- Relevant documentation and records regarding forest management of each group member (e.g. management plans, summary information regarding silvicultural system, management operations, volume production);
- Records demonstrating the implementation of any internal control or monitoring systems. Such records shall include records of internal inspections, non-compliance identified in such inspections, actions taken to correct any such non-compliance; and,

Relevant documentation regarding production and sales.

- ✓ A management plan for each group member

- Yes
- No
- Partial

[#6: Management Plan Template](#)

Document #2: Group Member Requirement Checklist

An organization or landowner may use this checklist to assess the landowner’s eligibility as a group member.

Note: For requirements marked with a ✓, an answer of No or Partial will result in a **precondition** that the group entity must meet before the certifier will issue an FSC certificate. For other requirements, an answer of No or Partial will result in a **condition** that the group entity needs to meet in a given time frame.

Group Member Requirements	Complete	See Document
✓ Clearly documented title, lease, or use rights to the forestland	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	
Demonstrated intent to comply with all the requirements of the P&C on an individual basis, appropriate to the size and scale of the forest operation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	
✓ A signed consent demonstrating a willingness to participate in the group, adhere to the group’s policies, and commit to the FSC P&C.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	#3: Client/Member Acceptance letter
✓ A management plan, appropriate to the size and scale of the forest operation. Compliant with the FSC regional standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	#6: Management Plan Templates

Document #3: Client/Member Acceptance Letter

Overview

This letter can be used to:

- Acknowledge and accept group members into the group
- State the entry and exit requirements of members from the group
- Define the group entity and group member responsibilities and group member monitoring

Modifications

Remember that this sample document needs to be modified to fit the organizational structure of the candidate group entity and the group members' specific ownership or user-rights circumstances. For example, the group entity may not be managing the group members' forestland, so any reference to managing lands would be deleted. The group entity may not be charging a fee; therefore that element may be removed. Even the word "company" may not describe the group entity's legal status.

There may also be differences in the use of language, terms and vocabulary depending on the culture and/or language(s) spoken in the region where the certification is taking place.

Date

Logo
Group Entity
Address
City, State, Zip

Client/Member, Title
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Client:

This letter is to inform you that our company is (applying for or participating in) FSC (or certification body) certification, and to invite you to join our certified group of landowners/managers. FSC certification is a voluntary program whereby our company submits to a third party assessment of the environmental, economic, and social performance of our forest management system and practices against a set of international forestry standards. Our company is (getting) certified to: improve the value of our forest management services to you, verify the quality of our management, provide the consuming public with certified wood products and, acknowledge our commitment to the environment and community.

Our Company underwent an assessment and (undergoes) annual audits of our forest management practices under the (FSC certification body) program. A team of regional professionals with expertise in fields of forestry, ecology, and sociology conducts the certification assessment and audits. During the audits and assessments, the team selects clients in our certified group to review. They review a sample of landowner management documents and/or visit a number of properties. If you participate in the group your documents and property may be selected. We are asking our clients/members who may be interested in participating in this program to review the following terms and conditions and sign this document if you wish to be included in our certified group of landowners/managers.

Sincerely yours,

Name, Title

Our Organization

REQUIREMENTS TO BE PART OF OUR COMPANY'S GROUP OF CERTIFIED LANDOWNERS/MANAGERS

Entry into the certified group

To enter the certified group of landowners/managers we ask that you:

- Acknowledge your acceptance of these terms and conditions of being a member of the certified group by signing this document.
- Manage your forest in accordance with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Principles and Criteria (Applicable FSC regional guidelines are enclosed).
- Adhere to the management plan prepared by or approved by our company.
- Allow our company and/or the certification auditors to review forestry practices on your land and review documents pertaining to the management of your land anytime during the certification period with due notice.
- Notify our company if there are any changes in the ownership or management of your land during the certification period.
- Pay a membership fee of \$_____ annually.

Exiting the group of certified landowners/managers

Leaving the group of certified landowners/managers will be precipitated if you:

- Request that you be removed from the group giving 30 days notice (it is a voluntary program).
- Hire another forester to manage your land without notification and our approval.
- Do not adhere to your management plan and the FSC P&C.
- Refuse to allow us and/or our Certifier access to your land for auditing, monitoring, or land management purposes.
- Sell your property.
- Do not pay your membership fee.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR COMPANY AND LANDOWNERS/MANAGERS
IN THE CERTIFIED GROUP**

Landowner certification responsibilities

- Work with us to develop long-term goals and objectives that are compatible with your needs and the FSC P&C. Adhere to the long-term goals and objectives in your management plan.
- Communicate any issues with loggers, neighbors, and regulators to us regarding the management of your property.
- Communicate any changes in the management or ownership of your property.

Our company’s certification responsibilities

- Manage your land according to the FSC P&C.
- Monitor the management of your land for compliance with the FSC P&C at least annually
- Monitor harvest operations on your land at least weekly during active harvesting.
- Represent your interests in communications with the certifier.
- Communicate changes in FSC requirements.
- Notify you of any changes in our or your certification status.

Yes, I agree to the above requirements and want to include my property in the Company certified group of landowners/managers.

No, I do not want to be included.

I have questions and want you to call me.

Phone: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____

Signed: _____
Landowner/Manager Date

Signed: _____
Our Company Representative Date

Document #4: Group Member Roster

The group entity is required to notify the certifier within one month of when a member enters the certified group. The information can be put into the entry table and sent to the certifier. The entry can be added to the Current Group Members list, kept in the records, and shown to the auditor at the annual audit. The member list must be made available to the assessors for the initial certification assessment. There must be a declared group of landowners/managers that have a history of management to be field reviewed to be eligible to receive a certificate.

GROUP MEMBER ENTRY

Name of Landowner/Manager	Property Location (Municipality, County)	Acceptance letter	Date of Entry	Hectares or Acres	AAC M ³ or MBF % of MAI	Period between harvests
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				

CURRENT GROUP MEMBERS

Name of Landowner/Manager	Property Location (Municipality, County)	Acceptance letter	Date of Entry	Hectares or Acres	AAC M ³ or MBF % of MAI	Period between harvests
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				

Total Landowners/Managers:

Total Area:

The group entity is required to notify the certifier and provide a reason within one month of when a member leaves the certified group. The information can be put into the exit table and sent to the certifier. A running total can be maintained, kept in the records, and shown to the auditor at the annual audit.

MEMBERS WHO HAVE LEFT THE GROUP

Name of member	Location	Hectares or Acres	Date of Exit	Reason for Exit
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Document #5: Group Member Monitoring Report

The Group Manager is required to regularly monitor the group members to ensure that group members adhere to the rules of the group and maintain compliance with the FSC standards. Intensity of monitoring depends on the level of activity on the land. For example, one would expect at least an annual field visit to forestlands that are being harvested, or where road building or any other major land development inputs are taking place. It would also be expected that the Group Manager would communicate with every landowner annually to monitor whether any activity has taken place.

A form similar to this one can be used to summarize monitoring visits what was reviewed in the field or over the phone, indicate whether the member continues to meet the FSC P&C and, if not, what actions were taken to correct the problem. This form can also be used to report harvest volumes and the purchasers to satisfy the chain of custody reporting requirement. This information should be given to the certification auditors annually. A more detailed report may be needed to document and communicate issues to group members particularly when there is an identified noncompliance that will require follow-up by the group member and/or group entity.

Name of member	Date of Visit	Observations	Meets FSC P&C	Corrective Action Taken	Harvest M ³ or MBF	Purchaser & FSC Code (if applicable)
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes			
			<input type="checkbox"/> No			
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes			
			<input type="checkbox"/> No			
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes			
			<input type="checkbox"/> No			
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes			
			<input type="checkbox"/> No			
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes			
			<input type="checkbox"/> No			
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes			
			<input type="checkbox"/> No			
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes			
			<input type="checkbox"/> No			

Document #6: Management Plan Template

Overview

This management plan template should be modified to address the requirements described in criterion 7.1 of the regional standard.

The plan for each landowner/manager should be scaled to the size and/or intensity and type of operation. Some of the management plan elements may not be applicable and there may be elements in this template that are missing. The amount of detailed information required for an FSC compatible plan is dependent on the amount of potential social and environmental impacts that could be produced by the operation. For example, a 300,000 ha operation that spans several major watersheds, uses earthmoving equipment and removes 500,000 m³/yr. of timber will certainly have more potential impacts, than a 50,000 ha operation that removes 2,000 m³/yr using animal power or a 1,000 ha operation removing 100 m³/yr using human power. Planning issues will also be different for community-based forestry operations verses private companies or natural forest management verses plantation management or timber management verses NTFP (Non-Timber Forest Product) management. Use the template for guidance and remember to review FSC criterion 7.1 and associate indicators for the local region.

MANAGEMENT PLAN TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Landowner/Manager**
- 2. Forestland location and size**
- 3. Goals and objectives**
- 4. Forestland description**
- 5. Forest Management**
- 6. Biological Resources**
- 7. Financial**
- 8. Social**
- 9. Monitoring**
- 10. Maps**

1. LANDOWNER/MANAGER

- Owner
- Use Rights Holder
- Manager

2. FORESTLAND LOCATION AND SIZE

- Location description
- Location Map
- Size (Ha or Acres)

3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Financial
- Silvicultural
- Ecological
- Social

4. FORESTLAND DESCRIPTION

- History of forestland
- Current land uses (e.g. forestry, agriculture, agroforestry, mining, aquaculture, indigenous/local culture, recreation, etc.)
- Forest type(s)
- Physical features (topography)
- Landscape

5. FOREST MANAGEMENT

- Timber Inventory (volume, species, diameter/age class distribution, genetic diversity, etc.)
- Annual Allowable Cut (growth and yield data)
- Commercial Non-Timber Forest Products (volume, species, growth and yield, etc.)
- Stand (unit/compartments) descriptions
- Silvicultural Systems
- Harvesting Systems
- Road Construction/Maintenance
- Resource Protection (fire, pests, encroachment, etc.)
- Chemical Use
- Potential environmental/social impacts and mitigations

6. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- Terrestrial and Aquatic Wildlife (habitat, species, rare, threatened and endangered (RTE) species)
- Vegetation type(s) (plants, RTE species)
- Soil types
- Forest Structure (Large Woody Debris, Snags, non-commercial trees, plant species and Non-Timber Forest Products)
- Water resources (Rivers, streams, water bodies, etc.)
- Unique or Rare habitats (old growth, unmanaged areas, set-asides)

- Landscape/Watershed (features, impacts, neighboring management /projects)
- Invasive and/or exotic species
- Biological Resource Protection Measures
- Maps

7. FINANCIAL

- Asset Value
- Income (timber, NTFP, recreation, fuelwood, government programs, etc)
- Forest management costs (forestry services, harvesting, road building, restoration, etc.)

8. SOCIAL

- Stakeholders & Neighbors
- Historical, cultural, or indigenous resources
- Socio-economic (workers, contractors, services)
- Recreation
- Aesthetics
- Protection Measures

9. MONITORING

- Forest management
- Biological Resources
- Financial Resources
- Socio-economic

10. MAPS

- Topographic
- Forest types/Vegetation type
- Streams/waterbodies
- Habitat types
- RTE species
- HCVF/unique habitats
- Units/Compartments
- Roads/logging infrastructure
- Harvesting units
- Landscape

8: Sample Documents to Help Meet FSC P&C

Overview

This section contains sample documents that help the organization meet the FSC P&C. *These documents are meant as a guide. How these documents are used will depend on the group entity's organizational structure and unique regional and/or cultural circumstances in which they are applied.* Some documents were developed for large operations while others are aimed at smaller operations. It is important that the level of documentation be balanced with the size, scale, and intensity of the operation.

Document #7: Dispute Resolution Policy

Policy and Procedures: [Our] process for responding to complaints about our operations, labor practices and employment decisions, community relationships, user right decisions, [other] is as follows:

A. Complaint Reception and Documentation: [We] may receive either a written or verbal complaint. As a general policy, we will encourage the complainant to put the complaint in writing. If they choose not to do so, the person they have contacted at [our organization] may put the complaint in writing and distribute to the:

- Group entity's senior manager
- Field forester, unit manager, or supervisor where the complaint has been lodged (if applicable)
- Group member where the complaint has been lodged (if applicable)
- Complaint file

B. Written Response to All Complaints: [Our] staff will document and respond in writing to all written complaints within XX days. [Our] staff will review verbal complaints and request that the complainant put the complaint in writing. If the complainant fails to put the complaint in writing, we may or may not respond.

C. Notification of the Group Member or Staff Person who the Complaint is Being Filed Against (if applicable): As per the above, upon receiving and/or documenting a complaint, the [group entity] will send this written complaint, or documentation of said complaint, to the member or staff person to which it has been lodged.

D. Opportunity for Response (if applicable): [Group entity] will always give an opportunity to the member or staff person to give a perspective on the complaint (e.g., their own version of the incident, historical background). This may be done in either verbal or written fashion, preferably in writing.

E. Initial Group Entity Response: [Group entity] will provide a written response to the complainant within a 15-day period. Group entity will deal with such situations expeditiously and professionally with a priority on fairness to both parties.

F. Dispute Resolution: If the complainant is not satisfied with the [group entity's] response, we will ask that a third party, agreed upon by both us and the complainant, help to clarify and, if possible, resolve the complaint. This third party must be independent (i.e., not have been involved with either us or the complainant in the past in any way). The complainant and we will pay for the costs of the third party's time equally. If, after input and actions by the third party, there is no resolution, we will ask that the complainant accept binding arbitration. Failing that, the courts will have to decide.

G. Resolution: If resolution is reached during any of the steps outlined above, memorandums for the record are distributed to the contact persons of [our group entity] and the complainant, providing final documentation and/or closure on the complaint and follow-up.

Document #8: Historical, Cultural or Indigenous Site Survey Template

Overview

Protection of archaeological, indigenous, and cultural sites is an important requirement of the FSC P&C. These sites include more than those with historical significance, but could also include current religious sites or areas that contain traditional food or ceremonial plant species.

This survey template provides some guidance on how to conduct a survey. Some local, regional, or national governments keep records of historical, cultural, or archaeological sites. Minimally, those records should be consulted. If there are indigenous people that border or have had any past relationship with the forest management area, they should be directly consulted for their knowledge of possible sites. Some forest management groups, like indigenous people or community-based managers, already know about sites on their forestlands and have developed protection measures. This survey template may have little utility for those managers.

A Historical, Cultural, Archaeological Survey Report for the Property of:

General Information

Name of Landowner/Manager:

Location of Survey:

Unit Size (Hectares/Acres):

Survey Preparer:

Date of Report:

Records Check Information

A local, regional, or national database search has been conducted for historical or indigenous sites recorded in the area.

Summary of records check results:

Pre-Field Research

Literature Reviewed:

Persons Contacted:

Summary of Results of Pre-Field Research:

Indigenous People Consultation Information

List of Indigenous individuals or groups consulted about archaeological or cultural sites in the survey area:

Summary of the results of the consultation with Indigenous groups (list of sites, sensitivity, confidentiality, comments by the group/individual, etc.):

Field Survey Methods and Procedures

Survey strategy:

Time spent conducting field survey:

Date or Dates the survey was conducted:

Survey coverage intensity:

Ground visibility/other limitations:

Other relevant information:

Survey Results

List and description of all sites found (if applicable):

Post Protection Measures

Specific protection measures:

Implementation of Protection Measures

Discuss actions taken to carry out protection measures:

Document #9: Stakeholder List

Overview

Consultation with stakeholders like neighbors, interest groups, indigenous groups, government and peers is a central theme in FSC certification. The certification body's assessment will require stakeholder notification and stakeholder consultation. They will ask the candidate operation, prior to the assessment, for a list of local/regional stakeholders. Moreover, the FSC standards require that the candidate operation consult with stakeholders on a number of issues, including legal issues, tenure issues, indigenous peoples' issues, forest management operations, management planning and monitoring and high conservation value forests. It is therefore advantageous for the candidate operation to keep a record of stakeholders

List of people contacted by our company during stakeholder consultation for *(Project Name)*

Name	Address	Phone/ Fax number	Email	Affiliation (neighbor, worker, interested party, etc.)	Date and type of Contact (Phone, fax, email, visit)	Stakeholder comments/concerns
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Document #10: Environmental/Social Assessment of Operations

Overview

This document is for assessing the environmental and social impact of a specific operation. Environmental and social assessments are required by the FSC during management planning and before site disturbing activities. This document provides some guidance for preparing an assessment. Remember that the size, scale, and intensity of the operation will determine the extent of the assessment, given that impacts increase with scale and intensity. Every forest, plantation, or NTFP operation has its own set of complex issues to consider. This template should be modified to fit the situation. Some regions of the world have their own formats provided by government or industry.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Unit name and location

Unit/Compartment Name:
Unit size:
Harvest area size:
Municipality/County/Ward:
District/State/Prov/Pref:

2. Name of operators

Expected date of commencement of operations:

Expected date of completion of operations:

3. Environmental/Social Assessment Team/Plan preparer

Name(s) and Title:

Date of Assessment:

ASSESSMENT/PLAN OF OPERATIONS

1. Silviculture and Regeneration

Clear cutting ____ ha.
Shelter wood ____ ha.
Seed Tree Removal ____ ha.
Selection ____ ha.
Group Selection ____ ha.
Commercial Thinning ____ ha.
Sanitation Salvage ____ ha
Special Treatment Area ____ ha.

Rehabilitation of Under stocked Area ____ ha.

Fire break ____ ha.

Other _____ ha.

Description of operation:

Rationale for method chosen:

Will artificial regeneration be used? If yes describe

Species

Planting method

Seed/Seedling source

Clones/Genetics

Will any part of the forestland be converted from natural forest to plantation? If yes, describe the rationale, plantation species and provide acreage.

If the unit is a plantation will it be converted to another species? If yes, describe the rationale, plantation species and provide acreage.

Describe any potential environmental or social impacts of the silvicultural prescription and/or conversion and regeneration:

Describe the proposed measures for reducing/eliminating the potential impacts:

2. **Harvesting and Site Preparation Practices**

What climatic conditions will harvest or site preparation activities take place? Describe.

Dry Season

Rainy Season

Snow/Frozen

Soil Moisture content

Harvesting equipment to be used. Describe.

Tractor/Skidder

Cable

Skyline

Helicopter

Animal

Human

Felling Equipment. Describe.

Feller/buncher

Chainsaw

Handsaw/Ax

Will there be pre marked/designated skid trails and roads? Describe.

Will trees/plants be marked for harvest? Describe.

Will harvesting take place near streams, lakes springs, and/or domestic water supplies? Describe.

Describe topography (including gradient), soil stability and erosion potential:

Will site preparation be used? If yes, describe.

- Plowing/disking/ripping
- Tractor piling
- Hand or animal piling
- Burning
- Lopping
- Other

Will there be post harvest slash treatments? Describe.

Describe any potential resource, environmental or social impacts of the harvesting and/or site preparation:

Describe the proposed measures for reducing/eliminating the potential impacts:

3. Roads, skid trails and landings

Will any roads skid trails or landings be constructed or reconstructed?

If yes, describe.

Width

Length

Topography

Gradient

Erosion potential

Soil stability

Stream crossings (culverts, fords, bridges)

Stream, lake, springs

Will roads, skid trails or landings be maintained? Describe.

Will roads, skid trails or landings be abandoned after use? Describe.

Describe any potential resource, environmental or social impacts of road, skid trail and/or landing construction:

Describe the proposed measures for reducing/eliminating the potential impacts:

4. Chemical Pesticides and Fertilizers

Are Chemical pesticides used? Describe.

- Pesticides
- Herbicides
- Fungicides
- Rodenticides

Describe Chemical ingredients

Describe application methods

Are chemical fertilizers used? Describe.

Describe Chemical ingredients.

Describe application methods.

What will be the climatic conditions during activities? Describe.

- Dry Season
- Rainy Season
- Snow/Frozen
- Soil Moisture content
- Wind

Describe any potential resource, environmental or social impacts chemical pesticide or fertilizer use:

Describe the proposed measures for reducing/eliminating the potential impacts:

ASSESSMENT OF BIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. Plant and Wildlife

General description of terrestrial and aquatic habitat:

Describe the plant and wildlife species in the operation area:

Are any plant or animal species, including their habitat, which are listed as rare, threatened or endangered by national or International authorities, in or near the operation area? If yes, identify the species and habitat:

What are the potential impacts to the species and habitat in the operation area?

Describe protection measures for species and habitat in the operation area.

2. High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF)

Are there HCVF in or near the operation area? Describe.

Are any harvest proposed in HCVF?

What are the potential impacts to the HCVF in the operation area?

Describe the measures to be implemented that will maintain the attributes of the HCVF:

3. Cultural Resources

Are there historical, cultural or archaeological sites in the operation area? Describe.

What are the potential impacts to these sites in the operation area?

Describe protection measures for the sites in the operation area.

ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL FACTORS

1. Stakeholders

Does the operation area border neighboring landowners/manager? Describe.

Are there other landowners/managers within the water catchment? Describe.

Describe any potential impacts the operation may have on stakeholders:

Describe the proposed measures for reducing/eliminating the potential impacts:

2. Workers and Contractors

Describe working conditions.

Safety/protective equipment

Harvesting/application equipment

Hours/days of work

Housing

Compensation

Describe potential impacts on health, safety and compensation of workers.

Describe measures to protect workers.

3. Local economy

Describe affect on local economy

Local Worker/Contractors

Local suppliers

Local mills

4. Financial

Forest product produced:

Volume

Buyers

Price per unit

Document #11: Harvest Plan/Environmental Assessment

Overview

This template is a more user friendly format than the assessment tool above for planning harvest and assessing and describing mitigations of environmental impacts. Environmental assessments are really predictions of what could happen and then planning to eliminate or mitigate potential environmental impacts. Information and detail is dependent on the size of the operation and the potential for impacts.

Timber Harvest Plan/Environmental Assessment

Harvest Unit Name	Size	Location	Dates of Harvest	Logger/Harvester
Silvicultural System (explain, e.g. Clearcutting, Selection, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Even aged	<input type="checkbox"/> Uneven aged	<input type="checkbox"/> Diameter Limit	Volume Removal:
Harvesting equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical	<input type="checkbox"/> Tractor/skidder	<input type="checkbox"/> Cable/Aerial	<input type="checkbox"/> Animal <input type="checkbox"/> Human

Road/Skidtrail/Landing Construction or Reconstruction	Length	Width	Gradient	Soil stability	Builder:

Chemical Pesticides or Fertilizers	Volume	List of Chemicals	Applicator:

Threatened or Endangered Species/Habitat	Survey Date	Protection Measure	Biologist
(Species)			

High Conservation Value Forests	Size	Protection Measures
(Description)		

Streams, Lake, Wetlands, Riparian, Domestic Water Supply	Harvest Buffer size	Road/skid trail/landing construction buffer size	Road Crossing Culverts, Bridge, Ford
(Description)			

Historical, Cultural, Archeological Resources	Survey Date	Location	Protection Measures
(Description)			

Document #12: Estimated Surface Soil Erosion Hazard Rating

Overview

This surface soil erosion hazard rating is an interesting tool for measuring potential impacts to water quality, erodability of road or skid trail surfaces, and the potential for landslides. This tool is used as part of an environmental assessment to provide guidance on potential environmental impacts pertaining to soil. Investigate other like tools in your specific region to help provide insight for your environmental impact analysis.

(California State Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Estimated Surface Soil Erosion Hazard Rating)

Soil Factors

A. Soil Texture	Fine	Medium	Course	Factor Rating
1. Detachability Rating	Low 1-9	Moderate 10-18	High 19-30	
2. Permeability Rating	Slow 5-4	Moderate 3-2	Rapid 1	
B. Depth to Bedrock	Shallow	Moderate	Deep	Factor Rating
Depth Rating	1''-19'' 15-9	20''-39'' 8-4	40''60'' 4-1	
C. Percent Surface Coarse Fragments >2mm	Low	Moderate	High	Factor Rating
Rating	10-39% 10-6	40-70% 5-3	71-100% 2-1	
			SUBTOTAL	

Slope Factor

Slope	5-15%	16-30%	31-40%	41-50%	51-70%	71-80% (+)	Rating Factor
Rating	1-3	4-6	7-10	11-15	16-25	26-35	

Protective Vegetative Cover Remaining After Disturbance

	Low	Moderate	High	Rating Factor
	0-40%	41-80%	81-100%	
Rating	15-8	7-4	3-1	

Two-Year, One hour Rainfall Intensity (hundredths of an inch)

	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme	Rating Factor
	(-) 30-39	40-59	60-69	70-80	
Rating	1-3	4-7	8-11	12-15	

Total Sum of Factors (I – IV)

EROSION HAZARD RATING

Low	Moderate	High	Extreme	
<50	50-65	66-75	>75	The overall rating is

Document #13: Pesticide Use Policy

Overview

The use of chemical pesticides is controversial in many parts of the world. Serious health effects from pesticides have been documented. Those operations that use chemical pesticides and fertilizers must have policies in place to justify their use and protect neighbors, workers, and down stream stakeholders from contamination.

Pesticide Policies Pesticide refers to all forms of “pest” controls (e.g., pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides)

1. Pesticides are only used to address an ecological imbalance on the forestlands with the goal of reducing and minimizing (goal of reducing and eliminating = optional language) their use over time.
2. Pesticides are applied by fully trained applicators.
3. Our Company actively works with public agencies to control invasive exotics.
4. Our Company does not apply pesticides within XX distance of either side of fish bearing streams or domestic water sources, XX distance of streams with non- fish aquatic life and within XX distance of either side of an intermittent stream.
5. To ensure that there are no pesticides present in the watercourses, Our Company works in partnership with the public agencies to test stream water downstream from pesticide applications.
6. Our Company notifies neighboring landowners before pesticide application if within XX distance of their property line.
7. Warning signs are posted around areas treated.
8. Our Company works with the public agencies to ensure contractor operations are in compliance with all federal and state rules, regulations and worker safety requirements.
9. Our Company supervises application at least once a week.
10. Our Company insures that personnel have proper training in application and handling of pesticides.

Decision Criteria for Pesticide Use

1. Pesticides will not be applied if there is any chance that it will:
 - Endanger public health (including workers)
 - Get into watercourses
 - Drift onto neighboring properties or public lands
 - Create undesirable visual effects on public view sheds
2. Pesticides will be used when:
 - A pest outbreak is considered to be at epidemic levels (define) and/or
 - The productivity of a forest unit is being compromised, AND
 - Other alternatives are not feasible (mechanical or hand have been proven ineffective or exorbitantly expensive).
3. Pesticides chosen for use will not be:

- A chemical listed on the World Health Organization Type 1A or Type 1B list
 - A chemical banned for use in any country
4. Pesticides chosen for use will be:
- Proven effective for eradicating the pest
 - The least damaging to the environment and public health
5. The method of pesticide application will be:
- The least invasive alternative
 - Done during appropriate weather conditions

Document #14: Annual Pesticide Use Report

Pesticide Used (Brand Name)	Active Ingredient(s)	Date of use	Amount Used	Application method	Forest unit	Acres/Hectares	Target Pest
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Decision Matrix for Evaluating Alternatives

Pesticide considered	Alternative pesticide considered	Non-pesticide method considered	Toxicity Data	Environmental concerns	Cost/acre	Determining factor for use/nonuse
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Document #15: Monitoring Plan Checklist

Overview

These monitoring templates and tools, and Chain of Custody guidance documents may be modified to address requirements described in Principle 8 (and in additional specific criterion under other Principles). Monitoring procedures and protocols for each landowner/manager should be scaled to the size and/or intensity and type of operations. Some of the monitoring elements will not be applicable and there may be elements in these examples that are missing. The amount of detailed information required for an FSC compatible monitoring program is dependent on the amount of potential social and environmental impact that could be produced by the operation. What is monitored will be different for community-based forestry operations verses private companies; or natural forest management verses plantation management; or timber management verses NTFP management. Review the FSC P&C with regards to monitoring and, if applicable, the indicators for the local FSC endorsed regional standards.

Components of a Monitoring plan

- Goals and objectives for monitoring—rationale for monitoring, intensity of monitoring
- Indicators to be monitored
- Incorporating monitoring results into the management plan
- Monitoring summary for public review

Indicators to be monitored in the field

Document monitoring by keeping appropriate records (e.g., inventory results), forms (e.g., harvest inspection), or notes (e.g., field observations, discussions with neighbors)

Yield of forest products harvested—*records are maintained* of the following:

- ❑ Standing timber and timber harvest volumes by species, volume, and grade
- ❑ Yield of harvested non-timber forest products by species, volume and grade
- ❑ Unanticipated removals (e.g., theft and poaching) of forest products

Growth rates, regeneration, and condition of the forest (this may be qualitative on small and medium sized forests—keep inventory records or notes to document)

- ❑ Growth rates, regeneration, and condition of the forest are assessed at least every 10 years
- ❑ The monitoring system assesses:
 - ❑ Timber growth, mortality, stocking, and regeneration
 - ❑ Stand composition and structure

- ❑ Effects of disturbance to the resources (e.g., management activities, disease, wind, flood, fire, and damage by insects and/or mammals)
- ❑ Abundance, regeneration, and habitat conditions of NTFP
- ❑ Quality and quantity of water
- ❑ Terrestrial and aquatic habitat
- ❑ Ecosystem composition, structures, and functions
- ❑ Soil characteristics
- ❑ Vulnerability to fire and pests

Composition and observed changes in flora and fauna—assess, at least every 5 years, changes in the following resources (*keep inventory records or notes on observations to document*):

- ❑ Major forest habitat elements
- ❑ Occurrence of rare, threatened, and endangered species and their habitats

Environmental impacts of harvesting and other operations—the Preharvest Plan and Harvest Inspection form are good ways to document environmental impacts monitoring:

- ❑ Environmental impacts of site-disturbing activities (e.g., road construction and repair, harvesting, site preparation) are assessed after their completion
- ❑ Condition and environmental impacts of road system

Social impacts of harvesting and other operations—*keep notes* and an ear and eye open for the concerns of the neighbors and community and be responsive as a “good neighbor” about:

- ❑ Local job creation and maintenance
- ❑ Public responses to management activities
- ❑ Protection of sites of special significance (e.g. cemeteries, grave sites) addressed with appropriate representative for the site

Document #16: Post-Harvest Monitoring Report

Landowner/Manager

Compartment Name and Location:

Harvest Unit Name

Harvest Unit Size

Date harvest completed:

Date of post harvest monitoring:

Species	Volume harvested	Volume residual
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% basal area harvested:

% basal area residual:

Residual stocking level:

Effectiveness of silvicultural prescription:

Condition of residual stand:

Aesthetic affects of harvest if concern of
landowners:

Stakeholder inputs:

Document #17: Monitoring Report

Overview

This monitoring report provides some insights on how to structure monitoring protocols. Monitoring is region and forestland specific. What is monitored is entirely dependent upon the operation’s needs and objectives.

Our Company						
Element Monitored	Scale/Location	Method	Frequency	Success/Utility	Objective/Purpose	Results
	1 = Property Wide	Ocular	1 = Daily	1 = High	Why?	
	2 = District	Instrument	2 = Weekly	2 = Medium	What will be accomplished?	
	3 = Compartment/unit	Measurements	3 = Monthly	3 = Low		
	4 = sub-compartment	Plots	4 = Annually			
	5 = Water catchment	Transect	5 = Multiple Year			
	6 = Ecotype	(Be Specific)				
Inventory						
Growth and Yield						
Harvest impacts						
Pesticide use						
Road surface erosion						
Compaction						
Wildlife (species) Habitat						
Aquatic Habitat						
RTE Species						
Water quality						
Community benefits						

Document #18: Chain-of-Custody Standards

Overview

The standards below outline what a chain-of-custody assessor evaluates during an on site visit to the facilities of a company under evaluation.

Documented Control System

Company shall have a documented control system that details the:

- Company's procedures for the tracking and handling of certified material from ordering through final product sales and shipping
- Responsible personnel for the control system
- Forms and records used for certified tracking and handling and how they will be used
- Procedures for labeling and logo use
- Protocol for keeping records that pertain to certification

Note: Companies can request a control system outline and examples from their certifier that provides guidance.

Certified Product Sales and Shipping

Company shall:

- Store final certified products as separate, secure units
- Use distinguishing marks/logos and/or the Company FSC certification number on certified product packages
- Have a system for recording quantities of certified product sales
- Include the following information on sales invoices:
 - Certified description
 - Percentage-based claim, if applicable
 - Quantity/volume for each item
 - FSC certification number
- Include certification information on shipping documentation as well

Personnel Training

Company shall:

- Provide training/orientation on the handling and representation of certified products
- Provide its documented control system as well as any additional materials developed on CoC handling procedures and policies for certified products

Certified Product Records

Company shall:

- Provide annual auditing information including summary records of certified purchasing/receiving quantities, applicable conversion factors, and certified sales and shipping quantities
- Maintain records of all purchases, processing, and sales of certified products, as well as marketing, advertising, and any other public information pertaining to certification for a minimum of 5 years

Marketing, Advertising, and Public Information

Company shall:

- Submit all public information referencing their certifier or the FSC to their certification body for review and approval prior to use to ensure consistency with the Certification Body's Program guidelines. This includes products labels, web pages, catalogues, brochures, mailings, letters, manifestations to investors, etc.
- Have a secure system for the production and application of labels for certified product
- Accept responsibility for the certification body and FSC logo materials provided upon certification and ensure the logos are only used on its own FSC-certified products

Document #19: Chain-of-Custody Shipping Ticket

This example illustrates how to document chain-of-custody shipping. It shows the breadth of information that is needed to have a good Chain-of-Custody control system.

TIMBER

Organization Name:	Date:
FSC Code Number:	Forestland owner/manager
Trucker:	Logger:
Destination/Purchaser:	FSC Code of Purchaser:
Species	Number of logs/Volume

NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS

Organization Name:	Date:
FSC Code Number:	Forestland owner manager:
Shipper:	Harvester:
Destination/Purchaser:	FSC Code of Purchaser:
Species	Amount

Group Certification Resources

Helpful Web Sites

Forest Stewardship Council

Forest Stewardship Council, international site - <http://www.fsc.org/en/>

Forest Stewardship Council, US site - www.fscus.org

Forming Group/Cooperative

Community Forestry Resource Center - <http://www.forestrycenter.org/>

ProForest - <http://www.proforest.net/index3.htm>

Center for Cooperatives at the University of Wisconsin- www.wisc.edu/uwcc

Cooperative Life – www.cooplife.com

Cooperative Development Services – www.co-opdevelopmentservices.com

Certified Markets and Trade Groups

Certified Forest Products Council – www.certifiedwood.org

ForestWorld.com – www.forestworld.com

Global Forest and Trade Network –

http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/forests/our_solutions/responsible_forestry/certification/gftn/

Great Lakes FSC Resource Center - <http://www.greatlakescertifiedwood.com/>

Principle 1: Compliance with Laws

Convention on Biological Diversity - <http://www.biodiv.org/>

CITES - <http://www.cites.org/>

International Labor Organization - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/>

Montreal Process (Working Group) - <http://www.mpci.org/>

International Tropical Timber Organization - <http://www.itto.or.jp/live/index.jsp>

Principle 2: Tenure and Use Rights

Land Tenure Center – <http://www.ies.wisc.edu/ltc/>

International Land Coalition - <http://www.landcoalition.org>

Principle 3: Indigenous People's Rights

World Wide Web Virtual Library: Indigenous Studies -

<http://www.cwis.org/wwwvl/indig-vl.html>

Chief Kerry's Moose: A Guidebook to land use and occupancy mapping, research design and data collection – www.Nativemaps.org or www.ubcic.bc.ca

State Archaeologists Directory - <http://www.uiowa.edu/~osa/nasa/>

Principle 4: Community Relations and Workers Rights

International Labor Organization - <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/>
US Dept. of Labor, OSHA Logging Advisor – <http://www.osha-slc.gov/SLTC/etools/logging/mainpage.html>

Principle 6: Environmental Impact

Information on pesticide products registered in the US - <http://www.epa.gov/opppmsd1/PPISdata/>
IUCN Red List of Endangered Species - <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>
Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, Threatened and Endangered Species Lists – <http://endangered.fws.gov/wildlife.html#Species>

Principle 8: Monitoring

Participatory Biodiversity Inventory and Monitoring Handbook and Training Curriculum (coming July 2005) - <http://www.ifcae.org/projects/ncssf3/>

Principle 9: Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests

ProForest High Conservation Value Forest Toolkit - http://www.proforest.net/Publication/HCVF_pub.htm

References

ProForest. Group Certification for Forests: A Practical Guide, 2002.

Forest Stewards Guild. Resource Manager Certification Handbook, 2002.

SmartWood Group Certification Policy.

Rainforest Alliance Group Certification Options: Costs and Benefits

FSC Group Certification Policy.

Acronyms

List of Acronyms

The following is a list of acronyms and abbreviations used in this document.

Acronym	Meaning
CAR	Corrective Action Request
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
HCVF	High Conservation Value Forest
ILO	International Labor Organization
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (The World Conservation Union)
MAI	Mean Annual Increment
M³	Cubic meter (M ³ /year = cubic meters per year)
MBF	Thousand Board Feet
MMBF	Million Board Feet
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
NGO	Non Governmental Organization (Nonprofits)
P&C	Principles and Criteria
SLIMF	Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests
WHO	World Health Organization

Glossary

Overview

Words in this document that are not found in the glossary are used as defined in standard English language dictionaries. Forest managers and certifiers should decide in the local context the precise meaning and interpretation of certain phrases. In this document, the words below are understood as follows.

Assessment	The initial certification evaluation of a forest management operation or group entity for compliance with the FSC P&C
Audit	The surveillance of a forest management operation and group entity for the purpose of determining compliance with preconditions or conditions and the FSC P&C after they have received a determination of certified status from the certification body.
Biological Diversity	The variability among living organisms from all sources including interalia, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems. (see Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992)
Biological Diversity Values	The intrinsic, ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational, and aesthetic values of biological diversity and its components (see Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992)
Biological Control Agents	Living organisms used to eliminate or regulate the population of other living organisms.
Certification Body or Certifier	An organization accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council to assess a forest management and/or a chain of custody operation and grant an FSC certificate.
Certification Team	The professional assessors assigned by the certifier to assess a forest management operation against the FSC P&C.
Certified Pool	The aggregate of landowners or managers in a certified group
Certified	When a forest management operation or group entity has received a certificate by an accredited certification body.

Chain of Custody	The channel through which products are distributed from their origin in the forest to their end use.
Chemicals	The range of fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides, and hormones that are used in forest management.
Convention on Biological Diversity	One of the key agreements adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro was the Convention on Biological Diversity. This agreement has been signed by a vast majority of the world's governments. It outlines the commitment for maintaining the world's ecological composition in the face of economic development. The Convention establishes three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources. www.biodiv.org
Convention on International Trade In Endangered Species (CITES)	An international agreement to regulate the trade in listed endangered wild animals and plants. Forestry concerns are primarily in the trade of endangered plants, both timber and non-timber. www.cites.org
Criterion (pl. Criteria)	A means of judging whether or not a Principle (of forest stewardship) has been fulfilled.
Customary Rights	Rights that result from a long series of habitual or customary actions, constantly repeated, which have, by such repetition and by uninterrupted acquiescence, acquired the force of a law within a geographical or sociological unit.
Ecosystem	A system of plants and animals and their physical environment, which function as an interdependent unit.
Endangered Species	Any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
Exotic Species	An introduced species not native or endemic to the area in question.
Forest Integrity	The composition, dynamics, functions, and structural attributes of a natural forest.
Forest Management/ Manager	The people responsible for the operational management of the forest resource, the enterprise, as well as the management system and structure, and the planning and field operations.

Forestland Owner	An individual, community, company, etc. that has title to the land.
Forestland Manager	A leaseholder or use-right holder (individual, community, company, etc.) that has the right to manage land that they do not own.
Genetically Modified Organisms	Biological organisms that have been induced by various means to consist of genetic structural changes.
Group Entity	The individual or organization that applies for group certification, and holds any group certificate that is issued. The group entity is responsible to the certification body for ensuring that the requirements of all relevant FSC guidelines are met by the forestland owners/managers covered by the certificate.
Group Member	The landowners or managers affiliated with the group entity applying for certification. Members are responsible for implementing any requirements of group membership at the level of their own procedures, and for implementing the procedures necessary for compliance with the FSC Principles and Criteria. Members of a group do not hold individual certificates, but so long as they comply with all the requirements of group membership, the group certificate covers them.
Group Policies	The group entity's written rules that provide guidance to the group members for maintaining certifiable management practices and that provide assurances to the certifier that the group entity is maintaining proper oversight of the group members.
High Conservation Value Forests	High Conservation Value Forests are those that possess one or more of the following attributes:

- a) Forest areas containing globally, regionally, or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g., endemism, endangered species, refuge); and/or large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance
- b) Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems
- c) Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g., watershed protection, erosion control)
- d) Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g., subsistence, health) and/or critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic, or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

<p>International Labor Organization</p>	<p>A United Nations' specialized agency, which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labor rights. The ILO formulates international labor standards in the form of Conventions and Recommendations setting minimum standards of basic labor rights: freedom of association, the right to organize, collective bargaining, abolition of forced labor, equality of opportunity and treatment, and other standards regulating conditions across the entire spectrum of work related issues. www.ilo.org</p>
<p>Indigenous Lands and Territories</p>	<p>The total environment of the lands, air, water, sea, sea-ice, flora and fauna, and other resources that indigenous peoples have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used. (Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Part VI)</p>
<p>Indigenous Peoples</p>	<p>"The existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them and, by conquest, settlement, or other means reduced them to a non-dominant or colonial situation; who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of the country of which they now form a part, under State structure which incorporates mainly the national, social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant." (Working definition adopted by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples).</p>
<p>Landscape</p>	<p>A geographical mosaic composed of interacting ecosystems resulting from the influence of geological, topographical, soil, climatic, biotic, and human interactions in a given area.</p>

Legal Entity	Any entity that has a right, recognized by law, to do business and sign agreements.
Local Laws	Includes all legal norms given by organisms of government whose jurisdiction is less than the national level, such as departmental, municipal, and customary norms.
Long Term	The time-scale of the forest owner or manager as manifested by the objectives of the management plan, the rate of harvesting, and the commitment to maintain permanent forest cover. The length of time involved will vary according to the context and ecological conditions, and will be a function of how long it takes a given ecosystem to recover its natural structure and composition following harvesting or disturbance, or to produce mature or primary conditions.
Mean Annual Increment	The potential or actual yield of a forest, calculated as the total volume of wood produced divided by the age (Volume of stand [m ³ /ha or MBF/ac]/Age of stand [yrs])
Native Species	A species that occurs naturally in the region.
Natural Cycles	Nutrient and mineral cycling as a result of interactions between soils, water, plants, and animals in forest environments that affect the ecological productivity of a given site.
Natural Forest	Forest areas where many of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems such as complexity, structure, and diversity are present, as defined by FSC approved national and regional standards of forest management.
Non-timber Forest Products	All forest products except timber, including other materials obtained from trees such as resins and leaves, as well as any other plant and animal products.
Other Forest Types	Forest areas that do not fit the criteria for plantation or natural forests and that are defined more specifically by FSC-approved national and regional standards of forest stewardship.
Plantation	Forest areas lacking most of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems as defined by FSC-approved national and regional standards of forest stewardship, which result from the human activities of either planting, sowing, or intensive silvicultural treatments.

Pool Member	Same as group member
Principle	An essential rule or element; in FSC's case, of forest stewardship.
Silviculture	The art of producing and tending a forest by manipulating its establishment, composition, and growth to best fulfill the objectives of the owner. This may, or may not, include timber production.
Stakeholder	Any individual or organization that has a social, environmental, or economic interest in a forest management operation, group entity, or certified pool. They can be neighbors, workers, businesses, government, community members, advocacy groups, recreation groups, etc.
Succession	Changes in species composition and forest community structures caused by natural processes (non-human) over time.
Team Leader	The supervisor, spokesperson, and liaison for a certification team.
Tenure	Socially defined agreements held by individuals or groups, recognized by legal statutes or customary practice, regarding the "bundle of rights and duties" of ownership, holding, access and/or usage of a particular land unit or the associated resources there within (e.g., individual trees, plant species, water, minerals).
Threatened Species	Any species that is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
Use Rights	Rights for the use of forest resources that can be defined by local custom, mutual agreements, or prescribed by other entities holding access rights. These rights may restrict the use of particular resources to specific levels of consumption or particular harvesting techniques.

CASE STUDIES

Consulting Forester, USA

The consulting forester has been in business since 1981. He has two employees who are both registered foresters. All of the consulting forester’s clients under their management are in the certified pool. The firm offers forestland owners a full range of services: management planning, wildlife surveys, silviculture, timber sales and administration, harvesting layout and supervision, harvest road and skid trail monitoring, afforestation and reforestation. Other services include management plan implementation, pre-commercial thinning and release, creation and maintenance of fuelbreaks, installation and maintenance of erosion control measures, timber cruises and appraisals, and field trips. The forester encourages landowners to accept full responsibility for long-term stewardship by continuing landowner education, and allowing implementation and/or monitoring of all of the above services.

The consulting forester manages approximately 4,858 hectares of forestland some 30 private landowners. On the average, the forestland owners annually harvest nearly 12,000 m³ of timber, more in good market years, less in poor market years. The annual harvest also fluctuates because of the periodic nature of small landowner harvest patterns. The annual allowable cut for the certified pool is nearly double the actual harvest rate. Typically, the harvests involve 6 operations per season utilizing 3 small contract loggers. The timber is sold to local sawmills for the highest bid.

The approximate costs of the certification for the consulting forester over the five-year period of the certification is \$400 USD per landowner or about \$80 USD a year each, \$2.50USD per hectare and \$0.20 USD per cubic meter¹. The initial assessment cost was about \$267 USD/landowner, \$1.55 USD per hectare and \$0.63 USD per cubic meter. The landowner base and land base stayed constant and the volume harvested over the five-year period was 60,000 m³. Annual audit costs are normally significantly lower than assessment costs. Therefore, over the life of the certificate the cost per landowner per year and per cubic meter harvested dropped.

Table II. Certification Costs

Years Certified	Total Cost/Landowner	Cost/ha	Cost/m ³	Landowners	Hectares	Cubic Meters
5	\$400	\$2.50	\$0.20	30	4,858	60,000

The very consistent management system employed, the comprehensive records kept and the long-term client base, most with at least a decade of excellent forest management history under the forester’s control, made the certification assessment

¹ All cost figures are approximations used for illustration purposes only

process relatively easy. Adding to the efficiency of the assessment and audits is that the lands are all in relative close geographic proximity to one another. There were four assessors on the initial assessment and one auditor on each annual audit. The landowners chosen for field visits were primarily based on recent or current harvesting activities, a variety of management practices and silvicultural prescription, topography, size of parcel, and rare, threatened and endangered species habitat. The size of the forester's landowners' forestland parcels ranges from 8 hectares to 1200 hectares.

Consulting Forest Management Company, New Zealand

The company is a professional forest management and consulting firm, managing plantation forests of primarily exotic species for forest owners, landowners, and trusts based on agreements for management services. The company was founded in 1971 as a privately owned forest management company. The company has maintained incremental growth over 30 years. Some clients are still with the company since the early 1970s.

The company focus on sustainable forest management led to the development of the company group scheme with the purpose of providing small-scale forest owners with a cost effective environmental management system appropriate for FSC certification. The company designed a group certification scheme that is consistent with FSC policies and procedures for group certification. The company full management clients and casual clients that have agreed to undertake FSC certification via the company FSC group scheme make up the certified pool. Members of the scheme are either "Resource Members" or "Group Members"; the former are those clients for whom the group manager is directly responsible for managing the forest plantation on the owner's behalf as well as providing a management scheme, group administration, coordination and compliance monitoring; the latter are those clients who manage their own forest plantation with the group manager undertaking the administration and monitoring roles only. This scheme allows both types of company clients to access FSC certification.

While the company manages approximately 51,000 ha of plantation forest, a little over 4,526 ha of managed forest was within the certified pool assessed for FSC certification. This pool is made up of 11 resource members and 3 group members. Actual harvest is estimated to be about 21,000 m³ in 2002. The exotic forests managed by the company are predominantly *Pinus radiata*, but also include Redwood, Lusitanica, Douglas fir, and *Eucalyptus spp.* The land type prior to planting was mainly farmland, which included some land covered in regenerating scrub. These plantations range from new plantings through to harvesting mature stands.

The approximate costs of the initial certification assessment are \$1,200 USD per landowner, \$3.71 USD per hectare and \$0.80 USD per cubic meter¹. The company has a large land base, therefore if more clients join the pool and with decreasing annual audit costs the total cost per landowner, hectare and cubic meter should drop significantly over the life of the five-year certificate.

Table III. Certification Costs

Years Certified	Total Cost/Landowner	Cost/ha	Cost/m ³	Landowners	Hectares	Cubic Meters
1	\$1,200	\$3.71	\$0.80	14	4,526	21,000

The three person assessment team made a stratification of the forests currently within the certified pool and under the company management, and chose sites both randomly and based upon information regarding the location, history, treatment, forest type, harvesting activity, etc., that could be observed through field visit during the assessment. The selection of sites emphasized where most certified pool member forests were located and where most management activity has taken place. The largest forest areas within the pool were chosen, as were those that had the most active management, especially with respect to harvesting, thinning, pruning, and road construction operations occurring. It was equally important to visit some sites that were recently established, with a long time horizon before harvest, those with reserve areas, culturally significant sites, or other forest uses. Landownership size ranged from 25 hectares to 2200 hectares.

Manufacturing Company, Indonesia

The company plants and harvests pulai (*Alstonia scholaris* and *Alstonia angustoloba*) for its factory in Indonesia. The company works with two small private landowner groups to procure its raw material. The first group is smallholder rubber plantations and forest garden plots where pulai grows as a secondary species. This group is the current supply of wood for the factory. The second group is the result of an ambitious project started four years ago, where the company is establishing community agroforestry plantations with small private landowners. The company plans to jointly manage these plantations and, in the future, source the majority of its wood from them. Under joint management agreements, The company finances site preparation, establishment and maintenance costs and have management control over the tree production until the trees are harvested in ten years time. With this sharecropping system, when the trees are harvested the net revenues, minus the harvest and transport costs, are divided equally between the landowner and the company. Landowners are not obligated to sell their logs to the company, and some may opt not to. Upon completion of the rotation, the company intends to negotiate another ten-year management agreement with the farmer landowners and keep them within the certified pool, although each owner is free to adopt alternative land uses if they so choose, which will be monitored by the company.

¹ All cost figures are approximations used for illustration purposes only

In 1996 the company entered into agreements with the government that allowed the company to harvest 30,000 m³ of pulai annually and to undertake a 10-year program to eventually establish 10,000 hectares of pulai plantations on degraded and unutilized private land involving 3,500 different farmers. The company began reforestation on 4,181 hectares with approximately 1400 different agroforestry landowners. At that time the company was also harvesting from approximately 200 smallholder rubber plots and forest gardens with 2,000 hectares of land. The agroforestry smallholders has grown to over 1500 in number, covering 5,041 hectares; the smallholder rubber plots and forest gardens has grown to 1,065 in number, covering 11,011 hectares.

The approximate costs of the certification for the company over the three-year period of their certification is \$11.85 USD per landowner or about \$3.95 USD a year each, \$1.90 USD per hectare and \$0.34 USD per cubic meter¹. The initial assessment cost was about \$10.44 USD/landowner, \$2.69 USD per hectare and \$0.56 USD per cubic meter. With the audit costs significantly lower than assessment costs and the certified pool of landowners growing, over the life of the certificate the cost per landowner per year, per hectare and per cubic meter will drop significantly more.

Table IV. Certification Costs

Years Certified	Total Cost/Landowner	Cost/ha	Cost/m ³	Landowners	Hectares	Cubic Meters
3	\$11.85	\$1.90	\$0.34	2,565	16,052	90,000

A four-person assessment team assessed the company for group. The certification was complex given the sheer number of landowners and the two distinct landowning groups: the smallholder rubber plantation and forest gardens, and the agroforestry landowners. The forest certification assessment process evaluated performance as it relates to both past and current practices, and how these apply to the production systems. However, it was important that the certification assessment give due consideration to the management system and practices of the agroforestry plantation system that would not be harvest until 10 years hence.

Based on the assessment, certification conditions and pre-conditions were identified, and the company began implementation of management system improvements to meet FSC group entity standards. For the company it was a challenge to develop mechanisms to administer a group that would grow into the thousands of landowners and that would cover both the present harvesting of pulai and the future crop just now being planted. Over the next year, the company organized a staff whose sole job is to manage the systems required to operate the group certification. To guide management, the company developed an overall strategic management plan and operational guidelines. In

¹ All cost figures are approximations used for illustration purposes only

assembling the planting blocks, the company attempts to consolidate the land of a number of farmers (10-30) into one block of 20-50 hectares in size, in order to facilitate establishment and future management. The establishment of a continuous forest inventory system follows harvesting. Each participating landowner signs a joint management agreement with the company and the company maintains an agreement register and corresponding maps showing the location and size of each plot planted in pulai.

Private Forestland Owner Cooperative, Japan

The cooperative is locally owned by its members. The cooperative comprises 1220 forestland-owning members and 75 worker members. There are 200 elected representatives (3 year terms), 6 Board of Director members (elected from the representatives and elected for 3 year terms), and 3 supervisory board members (advisors). These representatives and Board members approve policy and dividends. There are committees that oversee reforestation, thinning, harvesting and milling. The cooperative hires the cooperative management staff, which, in turn, hires the employees. In the case of the cooperative forest management, foresters and logging crew participate with the certified pool of landowners in making forest management planning, silviculture and harvesting decisions.

The cooperative is a vertically integrated forest products business. It began in 1956 selling poles harvested from their members' plantations during thinning operations. Most plantations of Japanese cedar (sugi) and cypress (hinoki) were planted after World War Two. In 1980 the Coop built their first sawmill and molding plant, and in 1996 they built a new facility with greater capacity and efficiency. The sawmill is chain of custody certified.

There are 1220 forestland owners in the cooperative. They own a combined 15,984 ha, which includes almost all of the private forestland in the township. There are 193 cooperative members and 3 public landowners that have signed agreements to participate in the group certification scheme. Collectively, the certified pool owns 3,336 hectares. Their annual allowable cut (AAC) is 26,000 m³, however, their actual AAC is approximately 5000 m³.

The approximate annual cost of certification for the cooperative to this point is \$203 USD per landowner, \$11.75 per hectare, \$4.90 per cubic meter¹. The initial cost was about \$310 per landowner, \$13.40/hectare and \$10/ cubic meter. The initial cost was higher per landowner, obviously, because there were only 97 landowners signed up. As the certified pool grows, the costs will be reduced. One can imagine how low the cost would be per owner if all 1220 owners were in the pool.

¹ All cost figures are approximations used for illustration purposes only.

Table V. Cooperative Certification Costs

Years Certified	Cost/Landowner	Cost/ha	Cost/m ³	Landowners	Hectares	Harvest m ³
2	\$203	\$11.75	\$4.90	196	3,336	8,200

The certification assessment of the cooperative was easily accomplished as a group entity. The cooperative is a legal entity in Japan, and therefore able to sign the certification contract. In anticipation of the certification assessment the cooperative developed a contract for those signing up for the certified pool, a management plan that provides a framework of forest management planning for the members of the certified pool, certified pool monitoring policy and a forest management team to work with the certified pool. The cooperative had no conditions on their certification related to the management of the group scheme.

The size of the ownerships represented in the sample ran from 0.5 ha to 660 ha. Both public and private ownership were visited. In addition, multiple sites were visited on some of the larger landowners. The sites and landowners were chosen based on a stratification of management practices and history, protected areas, topography, aquatic and terrestrial habitat, and age class distribution. The cooperative has considerable advantage in that the forest type and management scheme is nearly the same for all of the forest owners. The cedar and cypress plantations are the primary commercial forest species, with an intermixing of broadleaf patches. Although the ages of the plantations vary to some degree, the estimation of inventory, growth and yield, the silvicultural methods and the harvesting methods are consistently applied.

Cooperative of Private Forestland Owners, Canada

The cooperative is owned by a membership of forestland owners and workers. The ownership of the cooperative is regulated in order to ensure an equal number of shares at a fixed price for eligible persons. Eligibility for shares of the cooperative is conditional on the ownership of forest or farmland within 6 municipalities and by signing a land use agreement. Alternatively, any person can become a "worker-member" through a loan to the cooperative that will be reimbursed under agreed conditions.

The cooperative's board of administrators includes 13 members whose election is regulated in order to ensure representation of landowners (6 seats) and of worker-members (6 seats). The board selection is also balanced by having representation of each of the 6 municipalities. One seat is available for a landowner without a land use agreement (non-member) but who is using the cooperative's forest management services.

The cooperative has a staff of resource professionals that provide logging, forest management and ecological assessment services to members and non-members

owning private forestlands and of crown lands (public land concessions). The cooperative staff also administers the certification responsibilities. They have all of the necessary policies to meet the group certification guidelines. Private forestland planning is highly regulated by the Province. Regional guidelines are established for management planning, silvicultural treatments and monitoring. Baseline information on ecological attributes, wildlife habitat and timber resources is available from the provincial government. That information allows the cooperative foresters to develop an AAC and multi-resource projections for their area. The cooperative accredited forest engineers (recognized by the Regional Agency) sign all forest plans, prescriptions and monitoring and harvesting reports. There is, therefore, a built-in consistent management system that benefited the cooperative in the development and implementation of their group certification scheme.

The cooperative covers 675 owners, totaling 35,000 hectares. 436 landowners, covering 27,064 hectares, signed agreements to become FSC certified. The size of the ownerships ranges from 4 hectares to 940 hectares. The cooperative harvested 39,123 m³ from its certified pool. The AAC is about one and one-half times that.

The approximate costs of the certification for GFELT for the initial assessment is \$50 USD per landowner, \$0.81USD per hectare and \$0.56 USD per cubic meter¹. GFELT can still attract more landowners; therefore these costs could drop significantly over the five-year life of the certificate.

GFELT

Years Certified	Total Cost/Landowner	Cost/ha	Cost/m3	Landowners	Hectares	Cubic Meters
1	\$50	\$0.81	\$0.56	436	27,064	39,123

The three-person assessment team considered the annual monitoring that the Bas-St-Laurent Regional Agency conducts on the cooperatives management of its woodlot clients. This monitoring to assess conformance to regional guidelines includes field visits on a sample of 8% of the operations. The last two annual monitoring reports were made available to the assessment team, permitting the team to complete a compliance overview of the operation. The selection of sites also prioritized ownerships that had seen management activities in the past 5 years. The team visited all of the 6 municipalities. This permitted the team to review the consistency between the different cooperative forest management staff. Visits were planned in order to sample a full range of silvicultural treatment for different forest structures (even-aged and uneven-aged), forest types, age groups, ownership size (<100ha and >100ha) and ownership type (individual and corporate). Assessors also viewed harvesting operations that included both landowner's operation and its contractors.

¹ All cost figures are approximations used for illustration purposes only

Landowner Association, USA

The non-profit landowner association was formed in 1990, with the objective of supporting and protecting natural resources, resource-based local economies and communities through outreach, education, research, and advocacy activities. The association has a current membership of 3,000 households.

The association initiated The Sustainable Forestry Project (SFP) to advise landowners and provide technical assistance for achieving and maintaining forest certification among members. They hired a forester to manage the SFP, administer the certified pool and provide forestry services. The forester and association directors have developed an association management plan template, forest management policies and group monitoring policies. SFP is offering the group certification scheme to both members and non-members. SFP is also offering both a resource manager type certification group (where the association forester provides all of the forestry services) and a second group where the participating landowners have their own forester but follow the SFP forest management policies and are monitored for compliance by the association forester.

The Sustainable Forestry Project has currently 11 members enrolled in the certified pool covering 2,471 hectares. Parcel sizes ranged from 25 hectares to 1,390 hectares. Although the properties submitted for certification appear to have all their forested acreage scheduled for active forest management, they have not harvested recently.

The approximate costs of the certification for the association for the initial assessment is \$580 USD per landowner, or \$2.60USD per hectare¹. The association will undoubtedly attract more landowners, therefore these cost could drop significantly over the five-year life of the certificate.

Table VI. Association Certification Costs

Years Certified	Total Cost/Landowner	Cost/ha	Landowners	Hectares
1	\$580	\$2.60	11	2,471

A three-person team assessed the associations. The assessment sites visited in the field were selected using a stratified sampling method. Variables used to stratify included size, harvesting history, management type (consultant forester managed lands vs. association forester managed lands), and landowner residency (landowners that could be present during the assessment for interview with the team vs. non-resident landowners).

¹ All cost figures are approximations used for illustration purposes only