



Forest Stewardship Council



Increasing Access to FSC Certification for Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests



Forest Stewardship Council

The Forest Stewardship Council provides an international labeling scheme for forest products, which provides a credible guarantee that the product comes from a well-managed forest. All forest products carrying our logo have been independently certified as coming from forests that meet the internationally recognized FSC Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship. In this way FSC provides an incentive in the market place for good forest stewardship. The forest inspections are carried out by a number of FSC accredited certification bodies, which are evaluated and monitored to ensure their competence and credibility.

FSC also supports the development of national and local standards that implement the international Principles and Criteria of Forest Stewardship at the local level. These standards are developed by national and regional working groups, which work to achieve consensus amongst the wide range of people and organizations involved in forest management and conservation in each part of the world. FSC has developed Guidelines for developing regional certification standards to guide working groups in this process.

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1 Introduction

Improving access to FSC certification for both small and low intensity forest operations has become a widely recognized issue within the FSC community in recent years.

At the start of 2002 the FSC launched a new initiative called “Increasing Access to Certification for **Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests**”. We call it the ‘SLIMFs Initiative’.

It is a response to the recognition that the realities and needs of small and low intensity managed forests differ greatly around the world, but that these operations share common challenges in accessing FSC certification.

This brochure is designed to explain what the FSC SLIMFs initiative is designed to do, what advances have been made to date, and what results are expected. It was prepared as information for the FSC network; certification bodies, national working groups, FSC members and people working in support of small and low intensity forest operations. It is intended as a progress report, to demonstrate what changes are likely to occur in the FSC systems, and to invite participation in shaping these changes.

2 FSC certification for small and low intensity managed forests

The goal of this FSC project is:

To find and implement practical solutions to the barriers faced by small and low intensity forest operations in accessing and retaining FSC forest certification.

This work responds to the need to support those who own, manage or use forests which are considered ‘small’ in relation to others in their region, and those who apply low intensity harvesting practices of timber and/or non-timber forest products (NTFPs)

In different parts of the world these types of forest operations are known by different names. Woodlot owners, farmers growing trees on farms, family forests, small non-industrial private forests (NIPF), small forest enterprises (SFE), some community forestry operations and non-timber forest product harvesters are all examples of the type of forestry that fall within the target group. We are calling this group ‘**Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests**’ (SLIMFs).

The SLIMFs initiative is lead by FSC Secretariat staff, but has been designed to maximize the input and feedback from FSC members, certification bodies, National Initiatives, and interested stakeholders. The work will be guided and supported by two committees: a technical drafting committee, which works closely with FSC to draft the proposed policy and procedural changes, and a review committee which gives feedback to FSC on the suggestions made and helps to refine the proposals. More information on these committees is given at the end of this report.

3 Background

Research has shown that larger operations - whether private landowners, concessionaires or public bodies - are often better equipped to gain access to information about certification, to implement the requirements of certification, and to respond quickly to market demands. Furthermore FSC forest management standards are frequently drawn up by groups anticipating the sort of major negative impacts which might arise if a large-scale operation carries out poor forest management. As a result these standards often incorporate indicators that may be inappropriate for smaller enterprises.

Strategies to facilitate equitable access to certification for forests of different types and sizes are not new within FSC. In fact,



the FSC system was designed with the idea that there should be flexibility – ‘according to size and scale’- in the way responsible forest management is measured against a standard. Some examples are:

- Guidance to National Initiatives on developing forest management standards requests that they develop cost-effective criteria and indicators that ‘can be scaled to match the size of the forest management unit’.
- The regulations for certification bodies explain that monitoring should be more frequent depending on the scale of operation, the scope and intensity of management and the ecological sensitivity of the resource base.

Nonetheless the implementation of these instructions, intended to support small and low intensity forest management, has been inconsistent. The need has therefore arisen for FSC to give clearer guidance for certification bodies, standards development groups and forest operations on the certification of small and low intensity forest management operations.

4 **Advances to date:: Group Certification**

By far the most successful additional mechanism developed to date for enabling small forest operations access to certification is **Group Certification**.

Introduced in 1998, group certification allows forest managers to organize collectively to achieve certification. By sharing administrative and reporting requirements achieving certification becomes more cost effective and less time consuming for group members.

Advantages of group certification have included:

- Reduced evaluation costs per member;
- Reduced planning, management and other implementation costs;
- Increased opportunities to access new markets by members pooling timber and increasing available volumes; and
- Increased training and educational opportunities for group members

The FSC Group Forest Management has been hailed as a success by independent reviewers. To date there are 88 FSC group Forest Management certificates, covering over 980,000 hectares of forest in 23 countries. In total these include over 7,500 individual forest operations.

A detailed analysis of two-thirds of these certificates revealed that the average land-holding per group member was 42 hectares. Approximately 30 % of all group members have forest holdings of less than 100 hectares. This is a positive

“The evidence from the review is that group schemes can make FSC certification affordable for small forest holdings”

Lindahl and Garforth 2001. The Effectiveness of FSC Group Certification.

indication that, even though there is no fixed limit on the size of landholding a group member can have, the scheme is benefiting the smaller landowners for whom it was conceived.

Nonetheless FSC believes that the group certification model can be improved. Based on 4 years of experience FSC is proposing to review the group certification policy as part of the SLIMFs work.



For more information on FSC Group Certification:

- Contact any one of the FSC accredited Certification bodies listed at the end of this document.
- Obtain the FSC Guidelines for Group Forest Management (in English and Spanish) from the FSC web page (www.fsc.org).
- See the list of resources at the end of this document.
- Contact your local National Initiative (see list at the end of this publication).

5. The priorities for action.

In 2002 FSC staff carried out a thorough review of the many recommendations that have been made in recent years about how to support small and low intensity managed forest operations to become certified.

FSC designed a questionnaire to seek more information about the range of stakeholders who experience difficulties in accessing certification. This was circulated to members of FSC's electronic discussion fora (for National Initiatives, certification bodies and social forum members).

The results of this questionnaire and the review of research found that the following forest users face the most challenges in accessing certification:

- Small forest operations with customary and communal land tenure
- Small privately owned forests (with secure tenure)
- Traditional and indigenous communities,
- NTFP collectors (including women and those who harvest on land which is not theirs)
- Cooperatives of small farmers,
- Communities with concessions or firm usufruct rights.

Subsequently FSC staff and technical committee members reviewed the challenges faced by these groups. These were organized into seven categories of challenges shown in Box 1. The SLIMFs initiative will concentrate on the first four of these, since the last three were considered to fall outside the scope of the current work. (See Appendix 1 for more information on these last three issues).

Box 1. The 7 principle constraints for Small and Low Intensity Forest Operations in obtaining FSC Certification.

1. Challenges to be addressed by the SLIMFs initiative:

- **The cost of certification**
- **The need for information about certification**
- **The need to interpret standards and clearly define what is required to become certified**
- **The need for a more flexible evaluation system**

2. Challenges currently outside of the scope of the SLIMFs initiative:

- **Constraints to realising the benefits of certification**
- **Lack of capacity and resources**
- **External constraints**



Box 2: Priority Tasks for the SLIMFs Project

Description of the issues	Solutions FSC is Currently Working on
<p>1. Reducing the cost of certification</p> <p>Auditing, scoping visits, monitoring, and reporting</p> <p>Meeting certification requirements</p>	<p>A flexible system for certification bodies to use to reduce costs for SLIMFs</p> <p>The endorsement of forest management standards which have requirements appropriate to size and scale of the operation</p>
<p>2. Making information available and accessible</p> <p>Lack of general Information: e.g. What is FSC and how does it work?</p> <p>Lack of specific information: e.g. What is required by the forest owner/manager?</p> <p>Difficulties in finding information about a certification body to work with.</p>	<p>Information from FSC about certification, about standards and about streamlined certification systems produced and made available for use worldwide.</p> <p>Guidelines and/or example standards to help standards groups interpret certification requirements for small and low intensity users.</p> <p>Support to National Initiatives to disseminate locally appropriate information via locally appropriate means.</p>
<p>3. Developing standards that are appropriate and accessible</p> <p>Format of standard may be difficult to understand (long, legalistic).</p> <p>Some current standards are a barrier. (They use indicators inappropriate for small operations)</p> <p>Small forest operations have limited possibilities to participate in national/regional standards development processes (and therefore limited opportunities to influence relevance of standard to them).</p>	<p>New guidance to standards setting groups on writing standards for small/low intensity forests.</p> <p>New guidelines for how to include these forest stakeholders in standards development processes.</p>
<p>4. Making certification systems more flexible</p> <p>The current systems are not responsive to the realities of forest management practiced by SLIMFs and inappropriate in some cases.</p> <p>E.g. Report writing, peer review and monitoring levels may be very high for small, low risk operations.</p>	<p>A flexible certification system to allow certification bodies to give a more appropriate service. E.g. Tailor the assessment process to the level of risk involved.</p>

A series of solutions have been proposed in response to the first four areas of constraint listed above. These solutions form the bulk of the current work of the SLIMFs initiative as described in this report. and range from introducing more streamlined certification evaluation procedures, to disseminating information about FSC certification and SLIMFs. A more detailed description of these solutions and the outcomes of the SLIMF Initiative work in shown in Box 2.



6. Results to date: New measures for SLIMF operations to access FSC Certification

This section describes the policy improvements FSC is working on in order to address the priority challenges identified in Box 2. These proposals are the result of the work of the SLIMFs Technical Committee and the FSC Secretariat. They are divided into four main areas:

- Determining eligible forests
- Reducing monitoring and evaluation costs
- Recognizing SLIMFs at a national level and interpreting standard requirements for SLIMFs
- Incorporating the needs of small and low intensity managed forests into group certification

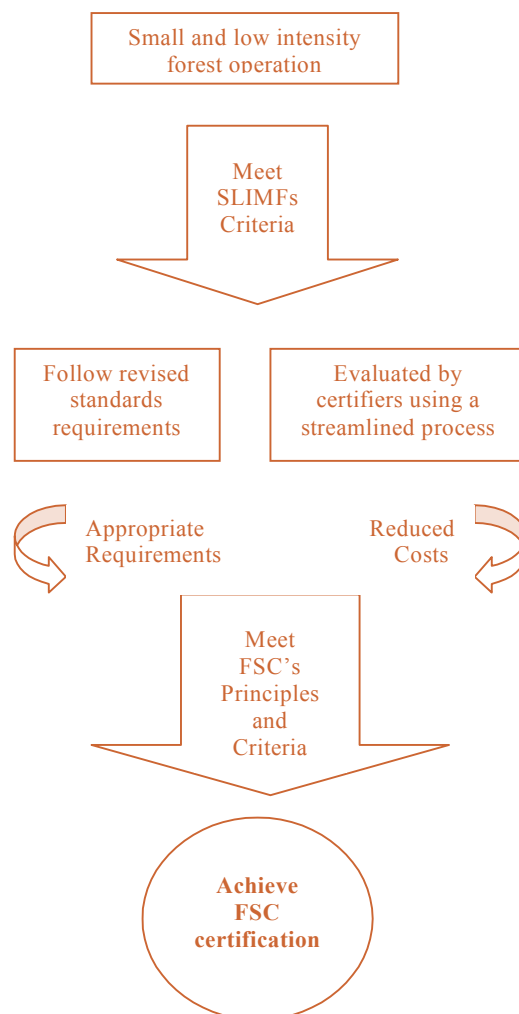
6.1 Determining eligible forests

FSC is in the process of developing simpler systems and standards available for SLIMFs. To do this we need to be able to clarify who will be eligible to use them.

FSC is developing international generic SLIMFs eligibility criteria. These criteria will be adapted by National Initiatives to reflect national forest management conditions in individual countries. In countries where National Initiatives have not yet been established, certifiers will use the generic SLIMFs eligibility criteria to define small and low intensity forest operations to reflect national forest management characteristics

The eligibility criteria will be in the form of a 'decision tree' or question-and-answer framework. In answering a series of questions about the size, and intensity of the operation and other risk factors, the operation will be classified as SLIMFs or not. Two categories may be created: one for 'small forests' and the other for 'low intensity managed forests'.

Box 3 The improved certification process for SLMF operations



Some examples of the criteria used in the system to determine eligibility are given in Box 3.

SLIMFs eligibility criteria will be used by:

- **standards working groups** to create forest management standards which take account of the needs of small and low intensity managed forest operations;
- **certification bodies** to identify small and low intensity forest operations eligible for a lower cost more streamlined assessment and monitoring process;

and

- **forest operations** to learn what is required in order for their forests to meet the standard.

FSC is seeking funding to carry out field trials in order to test the appropriateness of generic SLIMFs eligibility criteria system.

6.2 Reducing Monitoring and Evaluation costs

FSC is reviewing its current certification systems to identify monitoring and evaluation procedures that could be streamlined to lower certification costs for SLIMF operations.

Certification bodies each design their own certification systems to meet the FSC accreditation requirements for certifying well-managed forests. A forest operation can work with any of the 11 accredited certification bodies. Via the SLIMFs Initiative FSC will help its accredited certifiers to make their certification systems more responsive to the interests of small and low intensity forests.

FSC is considering streamlining some of the assessment and monitoring procedures

which certifiers would apply to SLIMF operations. The benefits SLIMFs would enjoy from applying streamlined procedures include direct and indirect cost reductions and a more practical evaluation process. Among the requirements for monitoring and assessment that may be modified are the following:

- **Public summaries and certification reports** e.g. Shorter, more concise public reports;
- **Forest management evaluations** e.g. Produce a generic checklist that could be used in forest management evaluations.
- **Duration of FSC certificate** e.g. Automatic renovation of five-year certificate if audits are satisfactory;
- **Audits** e.g. Fewer audits (e.g. biannually instead of annually);
- **Peer Reviews** eg. Fewer peer reviews or peer review by committee; (note: this list is not exhaustive)

Certifiers will be given guidelines from FSC that will regulate the implementation of the streamlined auditing approach for

Box 3: Eligibility Criteria that FSC is considering for use in identifying SLIMFs

Criteria	For example:
▪ Forest area	size of forest management unit
▪ Financial significance	annual turnover of management operation (cannot exceed \$ X/year).
▪ Harvesting rate	quantity of timber harvested over a given period of time relative to the total growing stock (e.g. percentage of timber harvested per year)
▪ Intervention frequency	time between harvesting interventions, specifically commercial timber harvests.
▪ People employed	Total number of people employed by forest management activities over a given period of time.
▪ Ownership type and tenure	to be defined
▪ Social significance of forest	to be defined
▪ Proportion of land in reserve	to be defined

Note: these criteria are examples only. This is work in progress.



SLIMF operations

6.3 Recognizing small and low intensity managed forests at a national level: interpreting standards requirements for SLIMFs

FSC is currently producing guidelines to help National Initiatives in interpreting standards requirements for SLIMFs.

FSC standards working groups develop national standards that interpret FSC's international Principles and Criteria at the local level. They are made up of local forest stakeholders representing social, economic, and environmental interests of the region or country.

Already eight FSC standards have been endorsed while 25 other regional and national standards are in preparation. FSC standards working groups have formed all over the world, from Sweden to Bolivia to Papua New Guinea to try to reach agreement on how to practice responsible forestry in their countries.

FSC already endorses the development of standards that deal with specific ecological regions, or management types. Examples of this are standards for plantations in Brazil and Columbia and for the Boreal forest in Canada (under development). However, it is not always clear to working groups how they should define specific requirements (criteria, indicators and/or verifiers) in the standards for different sizes and scales of forests. As a result the requirements are often aimed at large forests making it difficult for small forests to interpret and implement them.

Additionally national standards are often long documents that are written in a legalistic, complex language, not immediately understandable to many forest owners. While some requirements are difficult to interpret, others are simply not appropriate for SLIMF operations and implementing

them often does not significantly contribute to responsible forest management.

To support the development of SLIMF-specific standards interpretations, guidelines are being developed to provide guidance to National Initiative and standards writing groups on:

- how to adapt the SLIMFs Eligibility Criteria for national conditions;
- which criteria (from FSC's Principles and Criteria) are particularly problematic for SLIMF operations, and how these criteria should be interpreted;
- how to define SLIMF specific criteria and indicators; and
- how to encourage SLIMF operations to participate in standards development discussions.

This will ensure that standards developed with SLIMF interpretations can be endorsed by the FSC. It will also provide support for adapting standards that have already been endorsed.

6.4 Incorporating the needs of small and low intensity managed forests into group certification

FSC will reviewing the Group Certification policy in order to clarify the rules regarding SLIMF operations, and to make the system even-more cost effective.

The Group Forest Management Guidelines were designed specifically to make it easier for smaller forests to access FSC certification. In practice it has proved to be a flexible tool, which has opened the door to certification for many small forest enterprises. However, over the past four years of applying group certification it is clear that with a number of modifications, this system could be made more responsive to the needs of small forest owners. Some of



the issues that will be considered include:

- **The frequency of auditing by certifiers:** This may involve moving away from a percentage base system for sampling and implementing a system that will focus on high risk areas of group schemes instead of auditing a random sample of group members.
- **The duration of the certification period:** This could be increased, or automatic reallocation introduced if all annual audits were problem-free.

The overall aim is to reduce the cost of the certification procedure for groups, without reducing the rigor of the assessment and monitoring procedures.

7. Next Steps

During the period September-November 2002 FSC will refine and revise these proposals in response to feedback received from the SLIMFs Review Committee, certification bodies and National Initiatives. Table 1 shows the timeline for the next stages of the SLIMF Initiative.

8. Questions and Answers

Q. The tasks mentioned here are all proposals. When will the definitive schemes be in place?

We are anticipating that by the spring of 2003 the final proposals will be adopted as official FSC policy. Note: the information in this document relates to current thinking. Proposals are not yet finalized.

Q. My main contact is with a certification body. Have the FSC certification bodies been involved in this work?

Over the past three years a number of certifiers have been very involved in conducting research and developing policy proposals to ease the FSC certification process for SLIMFs. Their findings and recommendations have been very valuable in guiding the SLIMFs Technical Committee policy recommendations.

Many of the certification bodies are members of the SLIMFs Review Committee and will therefore be providing guidance on

Box 4 Timeline showing the stages of the SLIMFs Initiative

Task	3rd quarter 2002	1 st quarter 2003	2 nd quarter 2003
6.1 Reduced Monitoring and Evaluation costs	System designed and modified	Field trials of System	System refined and approved
6.2 Determining Eligible forests	Eligibility system drafted	Field trials of system	System refined and approved
6.3 Developing Appropriate Standards	Draft guidelines developed	Guidelines approved and issued	Implementation and monitoring
6.4 Modifying the Group Forest Management Policy	Draft modifications	Consultation on draft	Changes approved



FSC policy recommendations for SLIMFs over the next few months. Several certification bodies have also offered to help manage field trials of the revised standards, streamlined assessment process and eligibility criteria. FSC will be working with them more closely as the SLIMFs Initiative progresses.

Feel free to contact your certification body for more information.

Q. Does this mean that FSC will have two standards?

No. We are proposing that requirements in national standards be adapted to acknowledge the resources, experiences, size, and harvesting intensity of small and low intensity forests without lowering the rigor of FSC's standards for well-managed forests. In this way SLIMF adapted standards will have clearer requirements for SLIMF operations but they will still be in accordance with the FSC International Principles and Criteria. Therefore small and low intensity forests will still have to meet the stringent social, environmental, and economic requirements that FSC has defined for well managed forests.

Presently some of the requirements specified in national forest management standards are inappropriate for SLIMF operations. Attempting to implement such requirements for SLIMF operations significantly raises the cost of certification yet often does not significantly contribute to sustainable forest management. FSC's goal is to identify these inappropriate requirements and allow National Initiatives and certifiers to develop standards without such requirements.

Q. What will national working groups have to do to include small forests in their standards, if their standards are already endorsed?

National working groups that want their standards to be more relevant for small and low intensity managed forests will need to do the following things:

- A. Define what a small and low intensity managed forest is in that country by applying the FSC Generic Eligibility Criteria.
- B. Adapt existing standards to incorporate requirements for SLIMF operations.
- C. Submit the adapted version of the national standards to the FSC Secretariat to receive endorsement.

Q. How will small and low intensity managed forests access the adapted standards.

Adapted standards will be available from the National Initiatives, once developed. Additionally SLIMF operations could contact certification bodies to get information about certification requirements in their region or country. To be eligible to use the SLIMF adapted standards, the forest operation must meet the eligibility criteria defined by the either the National Initiative, or a certification body.

Q. Is this work designed to help community managed forests?

The SLIMF Initiative is being developed with community forests in mind as one of the main target groups eligible to use SLIMF adapted certification procedures. However not all community forests will be automatically eligible. Only those community forests that meet the eligibility requirements will be considered a SLIMF operation.

FSC is currently circulating a document about its Social Strategy that proposes a number of objectives and activities to fur-



ther strengthen FSC’s responsiveness to the needs of its social stakeholders such as communities managing forests and communities affected by forestry concessions. Within this document there are many proposals to support community forests to achieve and benefit from FSC certification. After comments have been compiled and integrated into the document the revised Social Strategy will be implemented over the next five years.

Q. Is this work designed to help Indigenous Peoples’ forestry?

Similar to community forests, many types of forest operations managed by Indigenous Peoples will be eligible to use the SLIMF adjusted procedures. Indigenous Peoples’ forest management operations that are based on low intensity harvesting (e.g. NTFP collection) are more likely to be eligible.

FSC’s Social Strategy includes a number of proposals to improve communication between Indigenous Peoples and the FSC, improve the implementation of FSC’s Principle 3 (Indigenous Peoples’ Rights), and offer more support to Indigenous Peoples seeking FSC certification. These proposals will be prioritized and incorporated into a revised Social Strategy document that will guide FSC initiatives over the next five years.

9. Opportunities for participation in this work:

The following section shows how to participate in this work.

9.1 Contact the SLIMFs Technical Committee

A Technical Committee has been established to work cooperatively with FSC Se-

Box 5 Members of the FSC SLIMFs Technical Committee

Name	Organization	Country	Contact details
David Raing’o Maingi	UNESCO People and Plants Programme (consultant)	Kenya	goodwood@africaonline.co.ke
Fernando Aguilar Nuñez-Vela	Amazon Centre for Forestry Development (CADEFOR)	Bolivia	cadefor@cotas.net
Peter Dam	PNG-EFF (Consultant)	Papua New Guinea	pc_dam@hotmail.com
Vivian Peachey	FSC Canada	Canada	vpfsc@web.ca
Sophie Higman	ProForest Ltd.	UK	sophie@proforest.net
Hector Martínez Higuera	SGS (Certifier)	Costa Rica	hamartinezh@rntsa.com
Phil Guillery	Community Forestry Resource Center	USA	pguillery@iatp.org
Tasso Rezende de Azevedo	Imaflora (NGO / Certifier)	Brazil	tasso@imaflora.org
Eric Palola	National Wildlife Federation (NGO/ Certifier)	USA	palola@nwf.org

Note Organizations are listed for information only. Technical Committee members are invited as individuals.

Box 6 FSC National Initiatives (September 2002)

For National Initiative contact information visit the FSC website at <http://www.fscoax.org/principal.htm>

– Argentina	– Finland	– Papua New Guinea
– Bolivia	– Germany	– Peru
– Brazil	– Ghana	– Poland
– Cameroon	– Guyana	– Romania
– Canada	– Hungary	– Russia
– Colombia	– Ireland	– Spain
– Czech Republic	– Italy	– Sweden
– Denmark	– Latvia	– The Netherlands
– Ecuador	– Mexico	– United Kingdom
– Estonia	– Nicaragua	– United States

Note: Countries where work to promote FSC, or start developing FSC compatible standards has been undertaken, but no endorsed group yet exists include Malaysia, Kenya, and Guatemala.

cretariat staff to develop improved FSC certification systems for SLIMF operations. This is composed of nine individuals from the FSC network who have exceptional experience working with small and low intensity managed forests and FSC certification. They come from 8 different countries and include experienced certifiers, staff members of National Initiatives, and community forestry consultants.

As the core group of individuals supporting FSC in developing SLIMF adjusted certification procedures, the Technical Committee invites individuals and organizations to provide feedback on this work. Their contact details are given in Box 5.

9.2 Participate in the SLIMFs Review committee

A review committee has been established to provide a forum for all those who wish to contribute to the development of improved FSC standards and guidance for small and low intensity managed forest operations. Composed of forest stake-

holders ranging from small woodlot owners to certification body representatives, Review Committee members provide feedback on draft policy proposals and other work done by the Technical Committee and FSC staff. To date this committee has over 60 members from 16 countries. To join the Review Committee send an email to Dawn Robinson or Larianna Brown at slimfs@fscoax.org

9.3 Contact your nearest FSC National Initiative

Contact the FSC National Initiative in your country and ask about the FSC standards applicable in your region. See Box 4 for a list of current FSC-recognized National Initiatives.



9.4 Contact FSC

For general information about the SLIMFs initiative: slimfs@fscoax.org

FSC Staff working on the SLIMFs initiative:

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10. Useful Resources

The FSC SLIMFs initiative has benefited enormously from the work done by different organizations in the FSC network over the past few years. Below are some of the principle reports that have contributed to this work:

Research reports

Higman, S. & R. Nussbaum, (2002) How standards constrain the certification of small forest enterprises. Report for UK DFID Forestry Research Programme.

Nussbaum, R; M. Garforth, H. Scrase, M. J. Wenban-Smith,. (2000). *An analysis of current FSC accreditation, certification, and standard-setting procedures identifying elements which create constraints for small forest owners*. Report for UK DFID Forestry Research Programme.

ETFRN (1999) Proceedings of a workshop on Constraints of Certification to Small Businesses with particular relevance to developing countries. Held 30th September 1999, Hamburg, Germany. <http://www.etfrn.org/etfrn/workshop/certification/index.html>

Wenban-Smith, M, r. Nussbaum, M. Garforth, H. Scrase, (2000). *An analysis of the barriers faced by small-scale farmers and communities producing timber outside a conventional forest matrix, and recommendations for progress*. Report for UK DFID Forestry Research Program.

Scrase, H, M.J. Wenban-Smith, N. Judd, S. Higman, R. Nelson, J. Jickling, (1999). *Certification of Forest Products for Small Businesses: Improving Access – Issues and Options*. Report for UK DFID Forestry Research Programme.

Group Certification:

Lindahl, K. & L. Garforth, (2001) The effectiveness of Group Certification. A Study of the accessibility of the Forest Stewardship Council Group Certification Scheme to small forest holdings in Western Europe. A report for the WWF European Policy Office.

Group Certification: A Practical Users Guide. (2001) Available from the ProForest web page (www.proforest.net). In English and Spanish

Communication material for Small forest enterprises and/or low intensity forest operations:

A number of National Initiatives and certification bodies have produced support material aimed at small and low intensity forest managers. Other National Initiatives have prepared user-friendly guides to FSC regional standards aimed particularly at small forest

Peachey, Vivian (2002) A User Friendly guide to the Great Lakes –St. Lawrence (GLSL) Standards, for Small Forest Operations. Draft for review Fall 2001. Forest Stewardship Canada Working Group



Appendix 1: Challenges that fall outside the scope of FSC's current work in support of Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests

The information in the table below is an output of the first SLIMFs technical committee meeting in May 2002. FSC and the SLIMFs Technical Committee recognized the following issues as posing significant challenges for communities, Indigenous Peoples, low intensity harvesting operations, and small forests, particularly in the developing world, in accessing FSC certification. However, they decided that they would not form the focus of the current SLIMFs initiative, which will mainly address changes within the current FSC systems and policies.

The 3 issues described below may be better resolved by future FSC projects, or by forming partnerships with other organizations –local and global. See the FSC's draft Social Strategy Document for further information.

▪ Lack of capacity and resources

NGOs, National Initiatives and researchers indicate that the communities, forest owners and users with whom they work commonly lack access to technical support to carry out territorial mapping and boundary marking, forest inventories, and management plan preparations. These are often necessary steps to obtain government harvesting permits.

Lack of organizational capacity is often a hindrance to seeking group certification.

▪ Potential impacts and benefits

Some producers of lower volumes of timber and forest products find accessing markets difficult as they may have irregular quantities and qualities of timber. This is true for both certified and non-certified products.

Studies have shown that the benefits of forest certification for communities small forest operations include improved forest management practices, access to national and international funding for organizational, commercial or technical support, access to forest policy, and strengthened land tenure. However, owing to communication problems many communities and small forest enterprises are not aware of the potential non-economic benefits of FSC certification.

▪ External constraints

Some small and low intensity forest operations may face challenges in obtaining certification due to political or cultural constraints that are beyond their capacity to change. Governments that demonstrate little political good will toward voluntary third-party certification can undermine the process, particularly for community forestry operations. This is particularly true where governments are subject to constant changes in views and in forest harvesting requirements, or where land tenure of forested lands remains unresolved or disputed.

