Forest Stewardship Council®



FSC Monitoring & Evaluation Report

Context, figures, effects and impacts

Public Report 2014

Explanatory notes: This report highlights some of the contributions that FSC delivered in pursuit of its mission to "promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests." The scope of potential social, environmental, economic and political contributions to this mission is as broad as the types of forest ecosystems, types of forest management, forest users and their needs and interests in forests. FSC implemented a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) program to increase the understanding of the complex impacts of its programs, and to provide a systematic foundation for a transparent, impartial and consistent evaluation of FSC's effectiveness in delivering its mission. In 2013, the FSC Theory of Change was the subject of consultation and subsequently approved, and a set of intended impacts was identified. This document reports on some of these intended impacts and related indicators. It is a living document and will be updated periodically. Published in July 2015, this edition of the M&E report covers 2014 data.

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The FSC Vision
The world's forests meet the social, ecological and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.

The FSC Mission
FSC shall promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

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The FSC Vision and Mission are a Response to a Global Crisis

Since the 1980s, scientific researchers have pointed clearly and precisely to the dramatic stress placed on the world's forests. The complex relationship between the natural functioning of forest ecosystems, forest use, and the people involved is a challenging one. Research in forest areas and the biodiversity of forest-dependent flora and fauna indicates prevalent deterioration of forest ecosystems, their functions and structures, for multiple, complex reasons, and that the destruction of tropical forests is proceeding at a frightening rate. In many countries, political and economic conditions result in fragmentation of resources instead of favoring and supporting sustainable use of resources. Data collected on social and socioeconomic conditions demonstrate that in many cases traditionally forest dependent people (e.g. communities, Indigenous Peoples and marginalized populations) are facing serious challenges to their reliance on forests for their livelihoods, often because of a change of management of the forest areas.

The Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies (Cashore et al., 2006, p. 8) summarizes these alarming research findings:

> *In the face of this body of knowledge and the consensus that many problems are intensifying, domestic and international governmental responses have been strongly criticized as woefully inadequate and far too slow to address the myriad problems facing global forest management.*
>
> *As a result of this frustration, some of the world's leading environmental groups and their allies decided to sidestep governments and, in 1993, created the "Forest Stewardship Council" (FSC). The FSC turned to the marketplace to generate incentives for forest businesses to conform to environmentally and socially responsible forest practices. Their solution was relatively simple: develop a set of global principles and criteria of sustainable forestry, have national and sub-national multi-stakeholder committees develop regionally appropriate standards, have third parties [i.e. independent] audit forestry operations for compliance, and "certify" those who pass the test – providing a badge of honour that, the hope was, would allow certified operations to gain some type of market advantage vis-à-vis their competitors (such as market access, price premiums, and the more abstract notion of a "social license to operate").*

Unique among social and environmental initiatives, FSC developed a new kind of certification system that evaluates the practices by which timber and other products from forests are produced, rather than the environmental performance of the products themselves. This evaluation is based on standards developed jointly by a broad range of stakeholders that usually do not work on the basis of joint consensus. Since 1993, FSC has evolved and grown tremendously, in both scope and breadth.

Today, over 20 years later, FSC is actively promoting responsible forest stewardship in more than 110 countries worldwide through both forest management (FM) and chain of custody (CoC) certification. Through joint efforts of various FSC supporters and constituencies, more than 190 million hectares (Mha) of forest are managed and certified according to the high standards of FSC. Around the globe, 35 FSC-accredited certification bodies are working with committed forest managers and forest product purchasers (see Table 1). Consumers, often organized through powerful environmental and social nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), are pushing for products from responsibly managed forests.

FSC's Theory of Change

FSC produced its Theory of Change (FSC, 2015a), and then held a public consultation in October 2013 to gather suggestions for intended impacts and indicators to measure its impacts. The FM-related indicators cover the three areas addressed in the FSC mission (environmental, social and economic effects of FM), as well as overarching general aspects of FM. The auditors of FSC-accredited certification bodies continue to monitor elements of FSC's impacts and report on many of these indicators. This information is publicly accessible in the FSC certification reports on the FSC website. In the previous year's Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Report (FSC, 2014a), we reported that some of the suggested indicators are currently not assessed in FM audits, but might become reporting requirements for candidates in the modular approach program (MAP). In 2014, the MAP was still under development for FM certification. Another set of indicators focus on the tools that FSC uses to 'promote' responsible forest management politically: in engaging stakeholder groups to develop solutions for conflicting interests in FM, in contributing to meaningful forest certification (e.g. through participation in standard development processes and public consultations), and through market-linked activities. While the progress against some of these indicators will be measured regularly, a third set of indicators might be assessed on a sample basis by external researchers.

Table 1. FSC in figures

	End 2000	End 2006	Sep 2008	End 2013	End 2014
Forest area certified (million hectares)	**24.4**	**82.6**	**105.4**	**190.7**	**184.4**
FSC Global South*	6.1	41.4	52.6	94.4	83.6
FSC Global North*	18.3	41.2	52.8	96.3	100.8
No. forest management certificates	**284**	**860**	**944**	**1 257**	**1 309**
FSC Global South*	94	432	483	759	726
FSC Global North*	190	428	461	498	583
No. chain of custody certificates	**1 138**	**5 178**	**11 111**	**27 054**	**28 519**
FSC Global South*	323	1 554	2 582	10 198	8 782
FSC Global North*	815	3 624	8 529	16 868	19 898
No. countries where FSC certificates (FM, CoC) are issued	49	73	97	**118**	**112**
No. accredited certification bodies	5	16	19	**35**	**35**
No. countries with approved forest stewardship standards	5	26	29	**31**	**32**
No. FSC International (Asociación Civil) members	357	647	811	**831**	**842**
No. FSC network partners†	19	39	53	**43**	**44**
No. FSC regional offices and network managers‡	0	4	4	4 (6) + central coord.	4 + central coord.

Sources: FSC Database; FSC Literature Review 2009; FSC Certificate database, 2014.

* FSC Global North and Global South refer to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) categories: FSC Global South includes not only all the OECD developing countries, but also the countries in transition from the former Soviet Union, while countries like Australia and New Zealand, situated geographically in the south are economically part of the 'FSC Global North'.

† FSC network partners: before 2011 called 'national initiatives'.

‡ The roles and ownership of regional and subregional offices changed over time. In 2014, FSC had regional offices in Asia, Africa, Asia, Latin America, each with subregional offices and FSC-managed national offices. These subregional offices and country offices are now counted under FSC network partners.

The FSC Approach to Forest Management

Certification of forest management

The FSC concept is based on the underlying assumption that each additional hectare certified to FSC standards brings us closer to achieving the FSC mission to improve forest management worldwide. **The larger the forest area certified to FSC standards, the larger the forest area that brings evidence that it's management is socially beneficial, economically viable and environmentally responsible**.

By the end of December 2014, some 1309 FM operations were certified as managed according to FSC standards. These certified operations are spread over 81 countries on five continents, in different climate zones (see Table 2, p. 9). Of the total, 85 FM units received FSC certification for the first time in 2014. Another 80 were certified in 2014 for a second or later term (for more details see chapter 'Certificate holders' perspective'). Sixteen new FM entities in 12 countries received 'Controlled Wood' status in 2014.
Since the inception of FSC, the area of forest operations managed and certified according to FSC standards has grown. During the five years 2009–2013, the forested area certified by FSC grew at a relatively constant rate of 15.5 Mha per year. On 15 December 2014, however, the certified area dropped by 6.3 Mha (3 percent) from the previous year's 184.4 Mha. Over the five-year period 2010–2014 this was equivalent to an average annual growth rate of 9 percent (2008–2013 average 11 percent) (Figure 1).

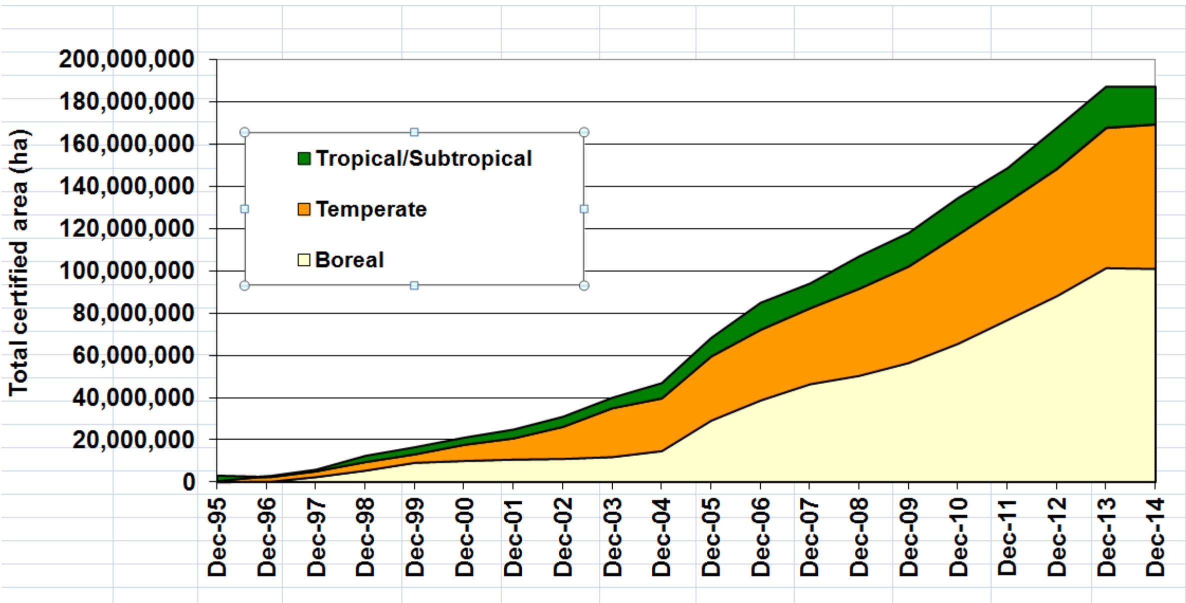


Figure 1. Total FSC-certified forest management area (1995–2014)

Source: FSC Certificate database, December 2014.

A more positive picture of the growth of certified area is seen when comparing data of the middle of each year (Figure 2). However, as FSC has historically reported on December figures, we will continue to use these for M&E reports.

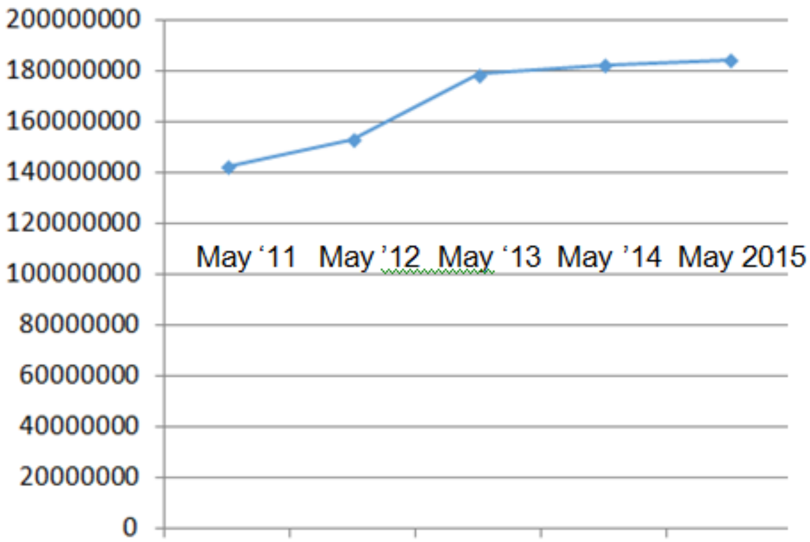


Figure 2. FSC-certified forest management area, May figures (2011–2015)

Source: FSC Certificate database, December 2014.

The decrease of certified area during 2014 (i.e. between the end of 2013 and the end of 2014) can partly be explained by the termination of a few large-scale operations, while in the same year the **number** of certificate holders continued to grow.

- Boreal zone: One large Canadian company (which used to be the world's biggest FSC-certified forest concession) with three FM operations with a total of almost 8 Mha. The certification body identified major nonconformances related to Indigenous Peoples' rights, environmental impact, forest benefits, monitoring and assessment, and High Conservation Value, which resulted in termination of one of the largest FSC-certified companies. While it is important to keep suppliers like this company in the system to provide stability in the marketplace, FSC's primary aim is to ensure that the implementation of its certification system results in credible environmental, social and economic benefits (for more information, see FSC, 2013).
- Two further large certificates were terminated in the boreal zone: a Canadian certificate covering 1.5 Mha, and one in Russia covering slightly more than 1 Mha.
- Tropical zone: A certificate of a Brazilian indigenous community with 1.6 Mha was terminated, due to the difficulty of preventing illegal logging activities of outsiders within the certified area, triggered by the strong demand for wood in the region. Only a relatively small number families from the indigenous community is managing and protecting the large certified area – insufficient people to guard the forest in a region with low law enforcement. Imaflora, an NGO also dealing with the certification, is supporting the community in developing a strategy to cooperate with various organizations to address the issue.

- Also due to social conflicts, a certificate in the Republic of Congo covering 0.7 Mha was suspended.
- In the temperate zone, the growth rate of previous years slowed due to termination of large state-owned operations in the United Kingdom (0.9 Mha) and Poland (0.6 Mha).

Because FSC is a market-linked instrument and its intention is to enable consumers to identify and choose products from responsibly managed forests, FSC reports both certified FM figures and the number of those operations certified to buy and sell FSC-certified products in the same overviews. As of mid-December 2014, some 28 519 (cf. 27 246 at the end of December 2013) chain of custody (CoC) certificates had been issued in 112 (cf. 114) countries.

These reports and more related information updated monthly in *FSC Facts & Figures*, and are publicly available on the FSC website (FSC, nd-b).

Table 2 shows the distribution of FSC-certified area and numbers of FM operations and of CoC certificates by region. The darker shaded boxes indicate the higher number for the continent; the light shaded boxes show where there is a slightly higher number.

Table 2: FSC certified area per continent (ha), number of certified operations

	North America	**Europe**	**Asia**	**South America & Caribbean**	**Africa**	**Oceania**
FSC-certified area						
15 Dec 2013	77 526 654	81 623 564	8 959 685	13 390 488	6 729 825	2 550 506
15 Dec 2014	67 871 110	85 420 144	9 027 363	12 686 538	6 832 756	2 580 791
No. forest management (FM) certificates (operations certified)						
15 Dec 2013	241 in 3 countries	507 in 32 countries	181 in 13 countries	246 in 17 countries	47 in 11 countries	38 in 5 countries
15 Dec 2014	242 in 3 countries	542 in 32 countries	192 in 13 countries	248 in 17 countries	46 in 10 countries	38 in 5 countries
No. chain of custody (CoC) certificates (operations certified)						
15 Dec 2013	4306 in 3 countries	14 104 in 39 countries	6796 in 27 countries	1407 in 20 countries	165 in 16 countries	468* in 7 countries
15 Dec 2014	4015 in 3 countries	14 950 n 41 countries	7483 in 27 countries	1445 in 19 countries	168 in 12 countries	458 in 7 countries

Source: FSC Certificate database, December 2014, December 2013.

* In the previous, year we erroneously reported 1468 CoC certificates where it should have read 468 CoC certificates.

Canada, Russia, the United States and Sweden account for 63 percent (70 percent in 2013) of the total FSC-certified area. With the area certified in Poland and Brazil (the fifth and sixth largest certified areas), six countries cover 72 percent of the total FSC-certified area (132 Mha, cf. 133 Mha in Dec 2013). Canada alone (53 329 Mha in 2014) has about one third (29 percent) of the total FSC-certified area, while Russia (39 630 Mha) has about one fifth (21 percent).

Table 3 shows the forested area certified under FSC by continent or region.

Table 3. Percentage of FSC-certified forest area by continent and region, 2013 and 2014

Region	**2013**	**2014**
Europe (incl. Russia)	43	46
North America (incl. Mexico)	40	37
South America and Caribbean	7	7
Asia	5	5
Africa	4	4
Oceania	1	1
Total	**100**	**100**

Source: FSC Certificate database, 2014.

While FSC has achieved particular success in North American and European countries, FSC coverage is significantly less in tropical regions.

Nevertheless, FSC has succeeded in certifying 1 percent or more of total forested area in certain countries containing tropical forest, including Brazil, China, Gabon, Indonesia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Comparing 2013 and 2014 data, there was a shift of certified area from North America (Canada) to Europe (including Russia), while the proportions for the other continents remained stable at low levels (in sum 17 percent of the total FSC-certified area; see Table 3).

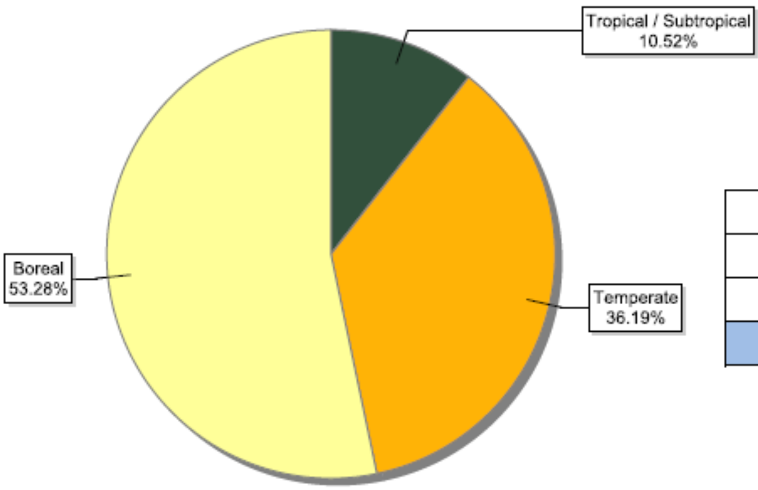
The concentration of certification in the temperate and boreal forests of North America and Europe is illustrated in Table 4 and Figure 2.

Table 4. Percentage of FSC-certified forest area by biome, 2008, 2013 and 2014

Biome	**Apr 2008**	**Dec 2013**	**Dec 2014**
Boreal forests	49	54.4	53.3
Temperate forests	38	35.0	36.2
Tropical / subtropical	13	10.6	10.5
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: FSC Certificate database, December 2014.

Table 4 breaks down the FSC-certified area by biome for the years 2008, 2013 and 2014, showing very similar figures for these years.



Information as of 15/12/2014	Forest area (million ha)
Boreal	98.27
Temperate	66.75
Tropical / Subtropical	19.40
Total	184.42

Figure 2. Global FSC-certified area, by biome, December 2014.

Source: FSC Certificate database, December 2014.

Table 5. Percentage of FSC-certified forest area by forest type, April 2008, 2013 and 2014

Forest type	**Apr 2008**	**Dec 2013**	**Dec 2014**
Natural forests	65	64	64.5
Semi-natural and/or mix of plantation and natural forests	27.5	27	27
Plantations	7.5	9	8.5
Total	100	100	100

Source: FSC Certificate database, December 2014.

Most of FSC’s total certified area is natural forests (Table 5 and Figure 3). As with the breakdown by biome, the figures for 2008, 2013 and 2014 are very similar.

Information as of 15/12/2014	Forest area (million ha)
Natural	119.02
Plantation	15.81
Semi-Natural and Mixed Plantation & Natural Forest	49.60
Total	184.42

Figure 3. Global FSC-certified area, by forest type

Source: FSC Certificate database, December 2014.

Forest-managing smallholders

Various stakeholder groups expect FSC to attract more forest-managing smallholders so that this group can benefit more from FSC certification. Data collected over the past three years by the FSC Smallholder Support program show that while only 11 percent of the FSC-certified area is in the tropics, more than 50 percent of the smallholders united in group certificates can be found there, with 46 percent of the group certified area. As a result, 25 percent of the tropical forest certificate area is under group certificates, whereas only 7 percent in temperate forests and 1 percent in boreal forests are under group certificates.

Access to finance often limits the quality of FM provided by smallholders, and also their ability to apply for certification. To overcome this challenge at least for some smallholders, FSC initiated the **FSC Smallholder Fund**. This is a small grant scheme that funds projects for 1–3 years with the objective of supporting small and community producer organizations to get certified or to maintain their certificate. So far, 29 projects have been (and are) supported by this fund. Project ideas range from acquisition of safety equipment to fulfill health and safety requirements of certification, though developing and monitoring procedures for high conservation value schemes, to investment in equipment and training followed by marketing activities to enhance the value chain. Evaluation results will be published in a future M&E report.

FSC works closely with the Finance Alliance for Sustainable Trade (FAST) to develop FM-related standards for the FAST Shared Impact Assessment Measurement Toolbox for monitoring the economic, social and environmental impact of investing in small and medium-sized operations that are actively engaged in sustainable value chains.

The FSC Train the Trainers program aims at building the capacity of trainees so that they can go on to deliver training to smallholders in their own regions and countries. In its third year of operation, the program implemented three regional-level training activities for around 24 trainers, and 8 local-level training activities in a variety of countries, in which around 170 people have been trained. M&E of these training activities are ongoing; evaluation results will be published in a future M&E report.

Quality of forest management

To evaluate FSC's impacts and outcomes on the ground, in 2008–2009 the FSC M&E program reviewed independent research from hundreds of references, including reports, academic journals and books, and screened analyses by various NGOs. The full report, *FSC Reflected in Scientific and Professional Literature – Literature study on the outcomes and impacts of FSC certification* (Karmann and Smith, 2009), is freely available.

In the 2013 M&E Report (FSC, 2014a), we gave detailed findings from the *WWF Living Forests Report* (WWF and IIASA, 2011), which found that FSC certification has a positive impact on the overall economic, environmental and social aspects of FM. In 2014, WWF published the findings of its Certification Assessment Tool (WWF, 2014) and came (as in previous years) to the conclusion that in the forest sector FSC is the best certification system to ensure environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable management of forests. WWF therefore recommends the FSC system to consumers, forest managers, policy-makers and businesses. These reports and other studies can be accessed via Karmann and Smith (2009). FSC will give public access to a more elaborated literature database with research findings about FSC-related effects and impacts, most likely in 2016.

FSC is starting detailed analyses of corrective action requests (CAR) given in certification assessments in different regions; for example, for the FM certificates granted in Asia. It is too early to report on results.

Today, different FSC entities work with a variety of research consortia to identify FSC strengths and weaknesses, and intended and unintended outcomes and impacts. For example, the FSC M&E manager has engaged with the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and WWF International at steering committee level, and as technical advisor on different studies of ecological and social impacts in Russia, Latin America, Africa and Asia. Other FSC programs cooperating with independent research organizations are the Forest Certification of Ecosystem Services (ForCES) project, the quality assurance program, and the business development unit.

These impact evaluations are conducted by multidisciplinary research teams and take long-term perspectives. They include, where possible, firsthand data and counterfactual control groups. The Helmholtz Alliance conducts other research projects with other research organizations focusing on earth observation tools to identify options to better evaluate changes in forest cover and use. This evaluation identifies the status, dynamics and disturbance of certified forest areas and the neighboring landscapes. It is run in parallel with on-the-ground monitoring activities in FM certification to increase transparency in strengthening the reliability of monitoring activities of foresters, auditors, Accreditation Services International (ASI)/FSC and other stakeholders, like environmental NGOs.

Examples for research projects and outcomes

(For research outcomes from the FSC business development unit see chapter 'Certificate holders' perspective', p. 27; FSC, 2014a, nd-c.)

Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR): CIFOR assessed the social performance of nine FSC-certified forest operations in Cameroon, the Republic of Congo and Gabon, and compared it with those of nine similar uncertified companies.

> *Results showed that the longer one company remained in one place, the deeper social relations with the neighbouring population became. This in itself is conducive to an environment in which there is less conflict between the local population and logging companies. However, it is usually only after companies decided to pursue certification that several practical social improvements occurred. In particular, in certified FMUs [forest management units], [CIFOR] found better working and living conditions for workers and their families; more inclusive and better governed institutions for negotiations between the local population and logging companies, except with regard to conflict-resolution mechanisms; better managed and more effective benefit-sharing mechanisms; and innovative ways of dealing with problems related to infringement of customary uses.* …
>
> *The complex historical and political-economic reality in which certification has developed in the Congo basin might well make issues of attribution and causality difficult to clarify. Yet results help establish a clear boundary that currently exists between certified and noncertified timber: The former is sourced in FMUs that implement not only legally mandated social standards but also voluntarily adopted ones that are superior and more effective.* (Cerutti et al., 2014, p. 51).

The researchers explain the challenges of attributing change in a forest operation to certification requirements, nevertheless they do find evidence indicating that FSC certification in the Congo basin has been able to push companies toward remarkable social progress.

Forest Certification for Ecosystem Services (ForCES): The ForCES project was established to increase the relevance of FSC certification for FM activities focusing on the provision of ecosystem services. 'Conservation' of forest areas is one of these services, and FM certificates can include this ecosystem service provision.

Together with IUCN, FSC commissioned a study, conducted by an independent researcher in 2014, to understand the motivations of and challenges for certificate holders that currently use FSC as the guide for management and for promotion of the conservation purposes, as well as the benefits, opportunities and drawbacks of the FSC certification system in the context of a protected area. Based on Rainforest Alliance's report on FSC-certified protected areas (Newsom and Hughell, 2011), 19 certificate holders from five continents were identified, 8 of which participated in the survey, for the 11 remaining protected areas further research was conducted using the FSC Certificate database.

The main findings of the research are as follows (FSC and IUCN, 2014):

- The majority of those interviewed (6) sold timber products. Some also sold non-timber forest products such as meat, bird seed and farm products.
- **All participants agreed** that FSC certification is relevant for protected areas, mainly because:
  - It is necessary to have an international standard
  - Certification enables long-term conservation, regardless of government, staff and stakeholder changes
  - It requires an independent audit and assures the public that the area is well managed.
- **None of the participants** stated that FSC certification had improved conservation management practices on the ground. Most of them were motivated by external communication and reputation-related reasons. Two of the certificate holders, however, observed that their certification had had positive impacts on overall protected area management standards in their countries (South Africa and the UK).
- Main recommendations of the participants and the evaluator are that the FSC FM standards should be adapted to fit with conservation management goals, allowing for:
  - The provision of guidelines for conservation management, covering the diversity of biomes and recreational values
  - The exclusion of harvesting and sale of timber products
  - A reduction of the frequency of audits, and to offer two types of standards for (a) (large-scale) park systems and (b) individual conservation sites.
- Such adapted standards are expected to deliver the following benefits for certified conservation areas:
  - Greater credibility, reputation and international recognition
  - Enhanced landscapes and ecosystem services
  - Networking opportunities to share best practices
  - Improved ability to certify 'wildlife friendly' products (i.e. products that come from protected areas).

The findings of the studies are used to inform the decision-making processes of ForCES in the Policy and Standards Unit. Other research commissioned by the ForCES project is conducted through CIFOR and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) – for example, the support of the ForCES project countries in the development of a monitoring protocol to track the project's impact on environmental and social aspects in the pilot sites.

Other independent researchers' findings: An example of a summary of independent research outcomes focusing on 'Biodiversity and forest management certification' was presented at the FAO World Forestry Congress 2009 in Argentina (Karmann, 2009). Research papers from a number of organizations including Greenpeace and WWF about FSC's impacts can be found on the FSC M&E web page (FSC, nd-f).

Promoting Responsible Forest Management Politically

The FSC governance structure and stakeholder engagement

In standard development and FM certification processes, stakeholder engagement at national and international levels is important for the acceptance and the improvement of the FSC system. The FSC stakeholder systems that balance economic, environmental and social aspects encourage interaction and allow solutions to be developed for FM requirements of standards and policies acceptable for all parties.

FSC membership at global level

FSC is governed by its members. FSC Asociación Civil (FSC AC) is the international membership body. The FSC AC membership nominates and elects the FSC Board of Directors annually. The general assembly is FSC's highest decision-making body. Every three years members of the social, environmental and economic chambers, further split into sub-chambers of global North and global South, come together to discuss the political direction of FSC. These members may be organizational – representing organizations (e.g. environmental NGOs, furniture companies, labor unions) – or individuals, such as researchers. Within one chamber, all individual members are allotted a total of 10 percent of the voting power of the respective chamber. The number of members per chamber does not influence the voting power of the chambers: each chamber has the same weight. Those applying for FSC membership require supportive letters from existing FSC members, and members pay an annual fee. Individual members pay less than organizational members, and members in the economic South less than members from the North. This could be a reason for the relatively high number of individual members in the South social sub-chamber.

The number of FSC AC members is growing, in line with the number of participants (members and observers) in the general assemblies. FSC takes this as an indication that it is able to interest people at global level, that members find their financial and time investment is meaningful, and that the system is trusted.

There is some undulating growth in the membership. For example, for various reasons members may not pay their membership fees for a while, thereby losing their voting rights for that time. After three years of reminders, membership is suspended. In preparation for the general assemblies, many of these members pay the outstanding fees, so that they get their full voting rights back. A deeper analysis of the composition and dynamics of the FSC membership will be conducted in the coming years. Some independent researchers have requested related information from FSC. In advance of the general assembly, we usually see more applications for membership.

Figure 4 shows the variation in membership in relation to the triennial general assembly.

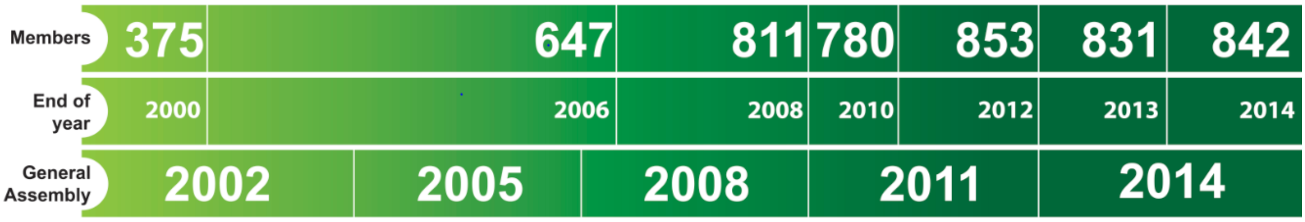


Figure 4. Development of FSC AC membership

Source: FSC Membership Program, 2014.

In **2006**, of the 647 members, economic and environmental chambers had roughly the same number of members (278, i.e. 43 percent in the economic chamber cf. 254 or 40 percent in the environmental chamber), and the social chamber had 111 members (17 percent). Fifty-one percent of the members represented countries in the economic North, while 49 percent were from the South. Details for 2010, 2012 and 2014 are given in Table 6.

Between 2012 and 2014, the numbers of individual members decreased in all chambers (353), while the number of organizational members increased (489). Highest increases of organizational members have been in the economic chamber, while the environmental North and South sub-chambers lost the highest proportions of individual members. At least two factors contribute to this development: between 2012 and 2014 the results of the consultation (revised FSC statutes) were implemented, with the consequence that some current FSC staff members in FSC International and national offices lost their status as FSC members, to comply with FSC regulations to form FSC national offices. Second, it is expected that FSC members with economic activities in the forestry and timber sector are committed to get their businesses FSC certified were applicable, and vice versa, certificate holders see the power they have as FSC members, and they are eligible for the economic chamber.

In **2014,** the economic chamber has more than half of all FSC members, and the social chamber has the fewest though most stable membership (152 in 2014 cf. 155 in 2012). The ratio of the number of members from northern countries compared to southern countries is also stable, almost the same as in 2012: some 434 members (438 in 2012) are in northern sub-chambers and 408 (415 in 2012) are representing southern countries (Table 6).

Nevertheless, FSC generally strives for decision-making based on consent and, as explained above, the chamber-balanced voting system helps to avoid that: simple majority voting could result in one chamber overruling other chambers' interests.

Table 6. FSC AC membership in 2010 and 2012, by type and sub-chamber

FSC AC membership		2010			2012			2014		
Chamber	Type	Sub-chamber North	Sub-chamber South	Total 2010	Sub-chamber North	Sub-chamber South	Total 2012	Sub-chamber North	Sub-chamber South	Total 2014
Environmental	Individual	32	159	191	41	127	168	28	95	123
	Organiz.	89	30	119	90	28	118	89	32	121
	Subtotal	*121*	*189*	*310*	*131*	*155*	*286*	*117*	*127*	*244*
Economic	Individual	56	95	151	64	94	158	57	81	138
	Organiz.	120	58	178	172	82	254	194	114	308
	Subtotal	*176*	*153*	*329*	*236*	*176*	*412*	*251*	*195*	*446*
Social	Individual	23	68	91	34	67	101	30	62	92
	Organiz.	30	20	50	37	17	54	36	24	60
	Subtotal	*53*	*88*	*141*	*71*	*84*	*155*	*66*	*86*	*152*
	Total	350	430	**780**	438	415	**853**	434	408	**842**

Source: FSC Membership Program database, 2014.

FSC provides subsidies to assist in facilitating a balance between North and South within the membership, especially for the southern social and environmental sub-chambers. The subsidies also help to facilitate a quorum at the general assembly. FSC allows observers to attend and to contribute to discussions at the general assembly.

Compared with the sixth general assembly (2011), the 2014 general assembly had more participants, but fewer countries represented. At least two factors might have contributed to this development: for people from many countries worldwide it is relatively easier to get a visa for Malaysia than for Spain, which is a Schengen Agreement member country; and Kota Kinabalu is perhaps a relatively more attractive destination than Spain for participants living in or close to Europe. Nevertheless this observation might deserve more detailed analysis as part of the preparation for the eighth general assembly in 2017. Table 7 gives an overview of the development of participation at the general assemblies.

Table 7. FSC general assembly participation of voting members and other stakeholders (observers)

FSC general assembly	**No. participants** (members + observers)	**No. countries**	**Location**
1996, June			Oaxaca, Mexico
1999, 24–25 June	170	32	Oaxaca, Mexico
2002, 24–26 Nov	200	44	Oaxaca, Mexico
2005, 7–9 Dec	282	56	Manaus, Brazil
2008, 3–7 Nov	300	65	Cape Town, South Africa
2011, 25 June to 1 July	500	80	Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia
2014, 7–14 Sep	587	63	Seville, Spain

Source: FSC Membership Program, 2014.

FSC network and membership at national levels

Since the establishment of FSC in 1993, many individuals and organizations have been interested in liaising with FSC in its development and this has resulted in a one of FSC's strongest assets: a group of FSC network partners around the world. Network partners are defined as: "FSC partners on a national level with a cooperation agreement with FSC. This comprises FSC national offices,[1] FSC national representatives[2] and FSC national focal points[3]" (FSC, 2014a). The level of interdependence between FSC and its network partners contributes to FSC's global aims because network partners, among others, agree to the national or regional forest management standards, which help to position FSC as the benchmark in forest certification. Network partners also have a crucial role in advocacy on behalf of FSC, maintaining good relations with local social and environmental groups, and in introducing companies to the FSC system at every level of the supply chain. As of December 2013, FSC had 30 national offices, 7 national representatives and 6 national focal points. In addition, service provision by regional offices in Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Russia, China and Latin America is coordinated through FSC International. Network procedures have been developed to ensure that all partners adhere to the FSC requirements for network partners.

In the M&E Report 2013, we provided an overview of the FSC national offices and the number and chamber affiliation of the national members in these countries in 2013 (FSC, 2014a, Table 8); an update will be presented in the FSC M&E Report 2015.

1 FSC national office: a legally established and independent FSC partner organization promoting responsible management of the world's forests on behalf of FSC at the national level on the basis of a formal contract (cooperation agreement).
2 FSC national representative: an individual working on behalf of FSC in their country to serve as a national point for information and to promote responsible management of the forests under a formal contract (cooperation and service agreement).
3 FSC national focal point: an individual with a specified and agreed task for their country accomplished on a voluntary basis and under a formal contract (agreement). National focal points do not represent FSC.

Table 8: Number of members of National Offices, as of Dec. 2013 Network Partner / National Office	Region	Environ-mental	Economic	Social	Total members
Australia	Asia Pacific	21	73	16	110
Belgium	Europe	7	17	6	30
Bolivia	Latin America	41	15	14	70
Brazil	Latin America	20	90	17	127
Canada	North America	15	31	14	60
Chile	Latin America	11	23	17	51
Czech Rep.*	Europe	5	9	3	17
Denmark	Europe	5	70	2	77
Ecuador*	Latin America	8	6	6	20
Estonia	Europe	3	3	6	12
Finland	Europe	4	4	3	12
France	Europe	7	53	5	65
Germany	Europe	29	116	23	168
Guatemala*	Latin America	5	8	4	17
Honduras	Latin America	30	26	10	76
Ireland*	Europe	5	10	3	18
Japan*	Asia Pacific	7	15	5	27
Latvia	Europe	5	12	4	21
Luxembourg	Europe	14	20	3	37
Netherlands**	Europe	n/a	n/a.	n/a	304
Nicaragua*	Latin America	23	24	10	57
Peru*	Latin America	10	8	6	24
Poland	Europe	25	21	5	41
Portugal	Europe	5	14	5	24
Russia*	CIS	23	25	7	45
Spain*	Europe	12	15	7	34
Sweden	Europe	2	40	5	47
Switzerland	Europe	5	37	6	58
United Kingdom	Europe	9	18	5	32
United States	North America	25	66	21	112

*: older figures than Dec. 2013
** FSC Netherland membership is not organized in chambers.
Source: FSC Network Unit, 2013

Consultation processes

FSC brings people together to jointly develop solutions

FSC engages with stakeholders on different levels: in FM certification, for standard development and revision, for long-term strategies through general assemblies, and for many other issues. FSC has standards and guidelines for such stakeholder engagement processes, in line with, or stronger than, ISEAL Alliance and International Standards Organization (ISO) requirements. Consultations are processes that enable the public and relevant organizations to help develop acceptable strategies and solve problems. The aim is to involve everyone who is affected by the issue to help find the best solution – for FSC this relates to the multiple interests in FM and the technical challenges of tracing certified materials. Sometimes a consultation will not address a specific problem, but will simply seek feedback and opinions on a topic. In addition, more political documents (statutes, theory of change, global strategies, etc.) are subject to consultation.

At the international level, the FSC normative framework currently comprises 52 documents: 28 standards (cf. 25 in 2013) of which 3 will shortly be phased out, 13 policies (13 in 2013) and 15 policy documents (14 in 2013). A number of additional normative directives and advice notes and guidance documents are related to these documents. The full catalog with, for example, information about document ownership, approval and effective dates, is publicly available on the FSC website (FSC, nd-h). While FSC is working to reduce the number of documents by merging and streamlining them, the number of such documents is not currently decreasing as each political and technical document requires updating from time to time in line with new regulations.

FSC develops, reviews and revises its policies, standards and procedures via stakeholder consultation on a regular basis. In view of the sheer number of consultations, it should not come as a surprise that members and other stakeholders choose to focus on certain topical areas related to their interests (e.g. FM issues, trademarks and governance). Therefore, some topics receive attention from a broad spectrum of stakeholders (e.g. the International Generic Indicators for FM that address social, environmental and economic aspects), while other more technical standards (e.g. CoC) are debated by smaller groups of experts. An example of such a consultation process and related documents is available on the FSC International Generic Indicators (IGIs) website (FSC, nd-d). One of the documents is a stakeholder outreach survey report (FSC, 2012) summarizing findings from interviews conducted to determine stakeholders' major outstanding concerns regarding the FSC principles and criteria and how these should be addressed to their satisfaction in the IGIs.

The large volume of work involved in preparing documents for consultation and reflecting the feedback from consultations in the revised documents is in many cases conducted by FSC in cooperation with regional and chamber-balanced expert working groups of FSC members and technical advisors. The members of these committees are experienced in social and environmental standard-setting processes and nominated by the FSC membership.

Various FSC units run these consultations as appropriate. In the 2013 M&E report (FSC, 2014a), we noted that the high number of consultations, surveys and invitations of FSC can be a burden for members and other stakeholders who are in principle very interested in actively participating in standard development. FSC is working to better coordinate the timing of the consultations to avoid stakeholder fatigue: internally coordinating the timing of consultations by different FSC entities, and has developed a streamlined way to keep members and stakeholders informed of what processes are currently open, and to issue monthly alerts about those coming up.

Also in the 2013 M&E report (FSC, 2014a), we explained the process and participation of the controlled wood standard. Table 8 gives an example of the numbers of stakeholders engaged in the consultations of the FM consultations in the Policy and Standard Unit of FSC.

Table 8. Number of forest management–related consultation and participants

Standard	**Period of consulta-tion**	**No. rounds**	**Stakeholder groups**	**No. stakeholder comments**			
				Total	Econ	Env	Soc
IGIs (FSC-STD-60-004)	Jan–March 2014	2 (this was the 2nd)	FSC network, FSC membership, FSC CBs, FSC standard development groups, IGIs consultative forum, IGI ambassadors	**281**	86	32	7
IGIs (FSC-STD-60-004)	Dec 2014 to Jan 2015	Final review (not a formal public consulta -tion)	FSC network, FSC membership, FSC CBs, FSC standard development groups, IGIs consultative forum, IGI ambassadors	**130**	48	30	9
FSC-STD-30-001 V1-0 EN Indicators and thresholds for identification of 'highly hazardous' pesticides	28 Feb – 30 Apr 2014	2 (this was the 2nd)	FSC network, FSC membership, FSC CBs, FSC website	**68**	67 (and one national office)		
FSC-PRO-30-001 Pesticides derogation procedure	28 Feb to 30 Apr 2014	2 (this was the 2nd)	FSC network, FSC membership, FSC CBs, FSC website	**72**	68 (and four from national offices or CBs)		

CB, certification body.
Source: Policy and Standards Unit, 2014.

Stakeholder identification

For the IGI development process, stakeholders were identified and contacted through:

- FSC mailing lists
- A dedicated consultative forum with representatives from all chambers and certification bodies. A call for participants in the consultative forum was made at the beginning of the process, and candidates who wanted to be in the working group were also asked to participate in the consultative forum
- A group of IGI ambassadors was set up for the second consultation. A call was made among FSC stakeholders, and all those who volunteered were chosen. This was a strategy to have appropriately trained people from different countries to respond in the local language to stakeholders' questions
- National consultations were supported through the creation of tools and through regional workshops in all regions. The aim was to improve the capacity of national partners to identify relevant stakeholders from all the chambers, engage them and carry out national consultations with as many stakeholders as possible (the final aim was to have national meetings with chamber-balanced representation, during which feedback on the drafts would be agreed upon)
- Members of the IGI group were continually reminded to consult their constituents. They brought input from their constituents and kept them informed throughout the process.

To complement the IGIs, the 'scale, intensity and risk' (SIR) guideline was developed in 2014. Guidelines do not need formal public consultations. Nevertheless, targeted consultations were conducted with members of the IGI group, the transfer procedure working group and the smallholders network advisory group (SHNAG) in early 2015.

For most consultations, the FSC network, certification bodies, FSC members and external expert groups are invited to comment. Ongoing consultation processes are promoted on the FSC consultations website (FSC, nd-a).

It is important for FSC to continue to engage stakeholders in consultations, to maintain and enhance its transparent, democratic and inclusive standard-setting processes, which result in FSC's authority, and to maintain its good reputation as an important and recognized forum where innovative solutions have become possible through dialog. Equally important is the aspect that the FSC system learns from stakeholders' expertise through feedback. The FSC M&E system now monitors participation in these consultation processes in cooperation with the relevant FSC entities.

National forest stewardship standards

The development of indicators for FM at national level within the framework of the FSC Principles and Criteria for forest stewardship is – politically – a special case of standard development, although the requirements for working group composition and consultation processes are the same. National FM standards are at the heart of the FSC philosophy of forest stewardship. These processes usually take years of negotiation within the countries. In addition, many national standards have to go through harmonization processes with neighboring countries. One of the countries that engaged very early in this process was Sweden, where WWF Sweden convened a chamber-balanced group to negotiate the standard in 1993. In 1997, Sweden was the first country to have its national forest stewardship standard approved by FSC.

Researchers say that these national processes facilitate participatory forest policy processes and better policy definition, and that they have strong impacts on the ability of civil society and stakeholders to bring issues to the table around workers' rights, tenure, and health and safety standards in FM (see Karmann and Smith, 2009).

In 2014, three national standards were subjected to consultation for final approval: the small or low-intensity managed forest standards (SLIMFs) for Honduras and for Nicaragua, and the Brazil harmonized certification bodies standard. Three other countries launched the process of consultation on standards. A number of national offices started consultations on the gap analysis reports related to their current forest standard requirements and the draft IGIs. The time needed to revise current national FM standards to align them with the IGIs will be challenging for some participants.
In the majority of cases, the membership of the FSC national offices approves (at their general assemblies) the indicators for FM which have been negotiated among a three-chamber standard development groups (SDG) and an open consultative forum in the country. A number of countries have already 'registered SDGs', but so far have no formal national membership system, and no national FM standards.

By the end of 2014, there were 26 countries with endorsed national standards, with a total certified area of 141.2 Mha held by 748 certified forest operations. These figures represent 77 percent of the total 184.4 Mha FSC-certified forest area and 57 percent of the 1309 certified operations. In the second quarter of 2013, these figures were very similar: also 77 percent of the total FSC-certified area and 58 percent of the certified operations were in countries with endorsed national standards. The loss of certificates with large areas (as explained on page 8) has, with the exception of Poland, all been in countries with endorsed national standards. The list of all countries with their status – endorsed working group and/or endorsed national standards – is available on the FSC national standards web page (FSC, nd-g).

Effects on community relations and forest work: Dispute resolution through FSC

Many conflicts related to FM are addressed and settled during certification processes. Before conflicts are brought to the attention of FSC International, they can be addressed between the complainant and the certificate holder or the certification body, using the dispute-resolution strategies required by FSC. If needed, FSC national representatives can be asked to moderate. Only a few cases related to the approximately 3000 certificates granted by FSC cannot be solved locally or at national level. The FSC dispute resolution system at the highest level of FSC International contributed to driving positive change on the ground during 2014 – for example, through the re-association with the Danzer Group.

As part of this process, the independent NGO Forest Peoples Program verified Danzer's fulfillment of the following conditions:

A. It had performed its contractual obligations toward the Yalisika community in the Democratic Republic of Congo

B. It had developed and implemented a comprehensive conflict prevention and mitigation framework to prevent conflicts of the sort that occurred in and around Yalisika.

The most relevant positive impacts resulting from FSC's re-association with Danzer are:

- The construction of more than eight buildings, completed in 2014: a medical center and a school for the community of Yalisika, and five additional buildings (medical centers and schools) in neighboring villages. The buildings have been inaugurated and are being used by villagers.
- A *Conflict Sensitivity Due Diligence Manual* (CSDD; Swisspeace, 2013) was developed and implemented by Danzer in collaboration with Swiss Peace. This manual aimed to improve the timber companies' understanding of the links between conflicts and timber operations.
- Danzer strengthened its social team at Industrie Forestière d'Ouesso (IFO), a subsidiary in the Republic of Congo and one of the largest concessions in the region.
- Danzer staff working in high-risk regions received training in the areas of human rights, public security, anti-corruption and bribery.
- Communities and workers have been periodically trained by Danzer on dispute-resolution mechanisms.
- IFO has developed, published and implemented on the ground a procedure on free prior and informed consent (FPIC) and field testing.
- Environmental and social projects have been funded by the company. It is, for example, a donor to the Wildlife Protection Project, providing equipment to the project's eco-guards.

- An Impact Mitigation Plan was developed and implemented, after a risk analysis was conducted in the Republic of Congo.
- Conciliation, mediation and arbitration techniques have been strengthened as part of Danzer's conflict management mechanisms.
- All company policies (such as its 'Code of Conduct', 'ABC Policy' and 'Risk Analysis for the Rights of People') have been amended taking the CSDD into consideration.

Certificate Holders' Perspective

Forest management recertification

The benefits of being certified are sometimes questioned, and the direct and indirect financial investments to comply with FSC requirements and for audit costs are reported to be challenging. Both benefits and challenges depend on many factors, including quality of FM, experience of foresters, size and location of operations, market demand and market access. After a successful main evaluation, and subject to annual audits, in most cases an FM certificate is issued for a five-year period. After this period, the certificate holder can apply for recertification for another five years. It is assumed that those forest managers who decide to reinvest in recertification at the end of the first term of certification do perceive benefits from being certified, which are at least equal to or higher than the costs of certification.

FSC FM certification was tested before 1993, and the first FM certificate was issued in 1993 in Mexico, while the first CoC certificate was issued in the USA. Since 1996, independent certification bodies have been accredited to use the FSC standards, and the first certified and labeled FSC product (a wooden spatula, in the UK) went on sale that year.

During January and December 2014, some 85 FM operations received the FSC certificate for the first time. In the same year, 80 certificates were re-issued:

- 36 were issued for the first time in 2009/10; in other words, the certificate was re-issued after its first five-year term of being certified.
- 6 were certified the first time between summer 2008 and summer 2005.
- 15 were issued for the first time in 2004 – they are now in their third term of certification.
- 7 were certified for the first time between 2003 and 2001.
- 17 were initially certified in 1999 or earlier – they reapplied for the fourth or fifth time.

By the end of 2013, 1310 certified FM entities (forest manager, forest manager/CoC and forest manager/controlled wood) held a valid FSC certificate. Of these, at least 572 were certified for at least a second term (if the certificate had been terminated for any reason, the same FM entity applied for a new term of certification under a new name, or if they changed certification body, the older certificates do not show up in the figures below). Of the 572 recertified operations, more than half (367) were certified for a second term, a third (171) have been certified since at least 2003, and 34 have held their certificate since the early days of FSC (see Figure 5).

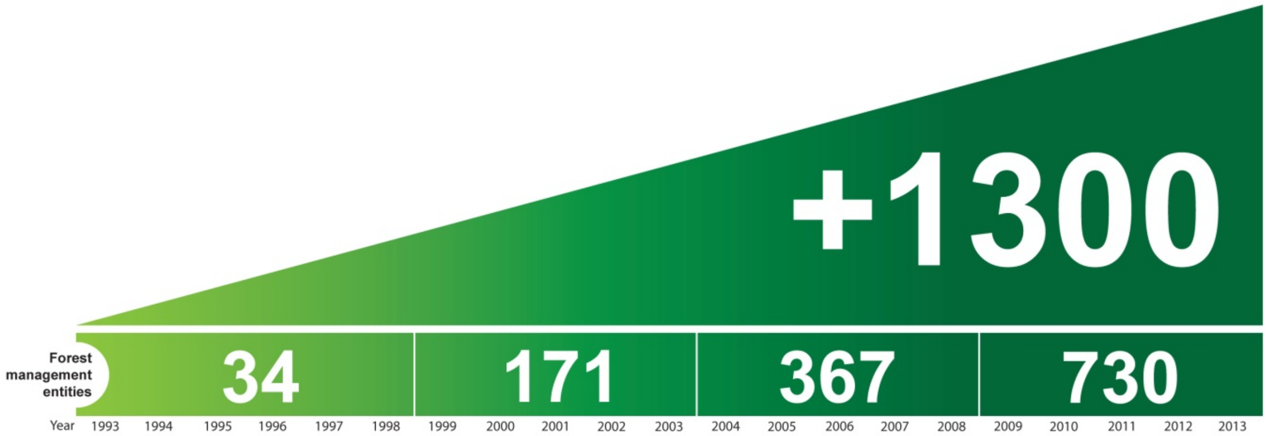


Figure 5. Duration / renewal of forest management certification until 2013

Figure 5 will be updated for the M&E report 2015.

In the M&E Report 2013 (FSC, 2014a), we explained the reasons for termination of FM and CoC certificates, as indicated in exit interviews conducted by certification bodies. An updated analysis of reasons for termination will be given in a future M&E report. More information on why people decide not to continue or to re-apply for certification can be found in the FSC global market survey (see FSC, nd-c).

FSC global market survey

Since 2009, FSC has regularly surveyed all certificate holders (both FM and CoC), including a question on the motivation to apply for certification. Results from the 2012 FSC global market survey are summarized in the 2013 M&E Report. In 2014, FSC conducted a survey in 14 languages of all 27 893 certificate holders with valid addresses, to seek their views and obtain market information from them to guide FSC's strategic development. The surveys were conducted on-line by the independent research institute UZBonn, based at the University of Bonn, Germany. The 2014 survey report refers to the results of the 2012 report where applicable.
A total of 3656 (13 percent of all) certificate holders, coming from 95 countries, completed the survey: 3462 (95 percent) of the respondents hold a CoC certificate; and 194 (5 percent) a certificate for forest management (FM, FM/CoC or controlled wood/FM certificate). Overall, there have been no great changes in distribution across certificate types since 2012. The response rate reflects the broad scope of FSC certificate holders well, and allows us to draw conclusions that support our decision-making. (See more about the statistics and results of the FSC global market surveys reports 2014, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009 via FSC, nd-c).

Some key findings

The FSC *Global Market Survey Report 2014* (FSC, 2015b) reveals that the perceived relevance of FSC certification is still increasing in many industries. Nearly half of certificate holders (49.2 percent or respondents) find FSC increasingly relevant in their industry, while 36.5 percent say that its relevance remains steady.

Some 81.5 percent of respondents continue to agree that the FSC label adds value to their products, with client demand being the number one reason for becoming FSC certified (52.5 percent of respondents), followed by improved market access. Between 2012 and 2014, the number of respondents who considered FSC-certified products easy to source increased by almost 10 percent, indicating that in all categories the supply of FSC-certified products and materials in the market is growing.

Table 9. Improvement of supply, 2012–2014*

FSC product category	Ease of sourcing	2012	2014
FSC 100%	Easy to source†	51%	59%
FSC Mix	Easy to source	76%	86%
FSC Recycled	Easy to source	69%	76%
Controlled wood	Easy to source	63%	75%

* Percentage of those who buy products with the claim.
† Subtract from 100 to give percentage of those who found the category of product "Difficult to source".
Source: FSC (2015b).

Credibility is at the core of FSC. Close to 90 percent of FSC certificate holders who responded agreed that FSC is a credible organization (in Asia over 94 percent): 45.9 percent totally agreed with the statement that FSC is a credible organization, 43.3 percent "somewhat agree[d]" with the statement, 2.4 percent totally disagreed and 8.3 percent "somewhat disagree[d]".

We also asked whether respondents agreed with some general statements about certification impacts.

- FSC certification helps create a positive corporate image – agreed with by 90 percent of certificate holder respondents (n = 3394).
- FSC helps certificate holders communicate their corporate social responsibility strategy – agreed with by 84.9 percent of certificate holder respondents.
- The FSC label adds value to the products of FSC certificate holders – agreed with by 81.5 percent of responding certificate holders.
- Clients see FSC certification as proof of timber legality clients – agreed with by 79 percent of certificate holder respondents.

In the view of 67.8 percent of the responding certificate holders (3210) consumer awareness of the FSC label is increasing. And, 78.9 percent of FSC certificate holders are satisfied with their FSC certification. (See more in the FSC global market survey reports; FSC, nd-c.)

Recognition of FSC logo

Consumer awareness is a critical success factor for FSC. When consumers recognize and express a preference for FSC-certified products, it is an important pull factor for companies to adopt certification. Surveys on public recognition of the FSC logo have been carried out in the past in various countries by FSC national offices and by third parties (see results from previous surveys in the M&E Report 2013 and in the FSC *Market Info Pack* 2013).

The FSC Business Development Unit commissioned 'FSC Global Brand Positioning research', conducted in September 2013 by the independent market research institute GfK, published in the

FSC Market Info Pack in July 2014. Data for the study were collected in 11 countries/markets and from over 9000 participants via on-line interviews sourced from opt-in on-line panels. Respondents were screened to meet the following qualifications: pre-determined age group (21–64), gender mix (male 35 percent, female 65 percent), income threshold and their (categorized) 'point-of-view', such as green behavior. Key findings of the FSC–GfK Global Consumer Brand Positioning study are that among the 11 markets, the UK presented the highest level of awareness of the FSC brand, followed closely by Germany, India and China (FSC, 2014b).

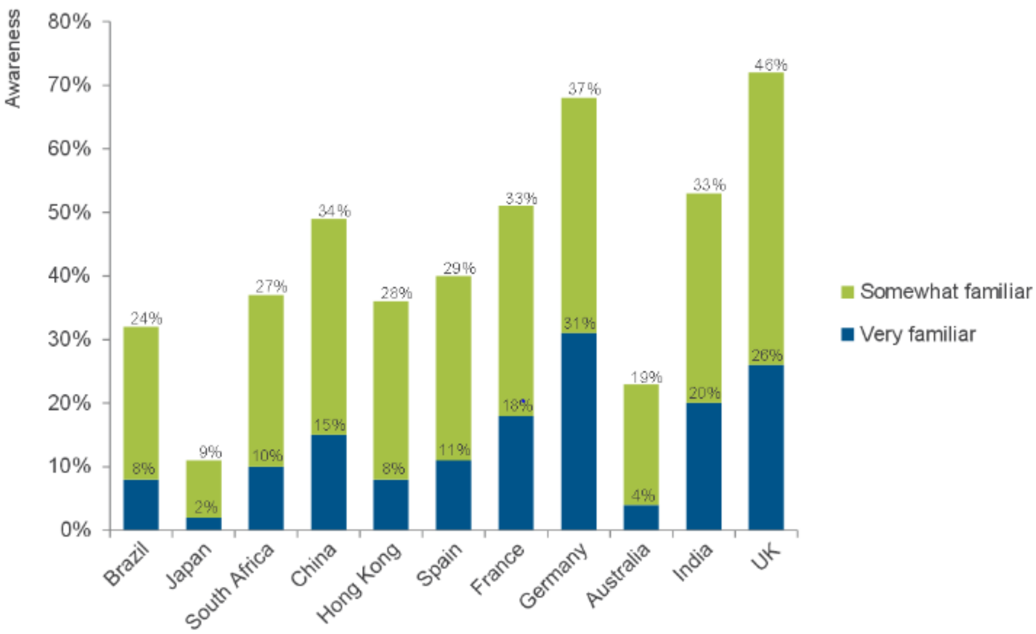


Figure 6. Consumer awareness of FSC

Source: FSC–GfK Global Consumer Brand Positioning, 2013.

The *Market Info Pack* 2014 also describes FSC's increasing presence in the media with high positive coverage, as evident from media clipping analysis. In summary, the regularly updated *Market Info Pack* gives a sound overview about FSC certification growth, market share, and indicators of the growth in supply and demand for FSC products, in the context of emerging trends within FSC and across various sectors. The next *Market Info Pack* will be released in summer 2015 (for more information, see FSC, 2014b).

Call for Research

A large amount of information about FSC's impacts is generated within the FSC system through certification assessments of forests. Each FSC-certified forest management operation must have an annual assessment, resulting in a report that describes the actions the manager or owner has taken to gain, or maintain, their FSC certification. This information for the more than 1300 (in 2014) certified operations is publicly accessible via the FSC Certificate database (FSC, nd-h) in summary reports.
FSC both promotes and follows independent research and case studies carried out by universities, research institutions and other organizations. These studies include a wide variety of information

types: analyses of certification reports and corrective action requests; ecological field studies; socio-political case studies; and economic analyses of timber markets.

There are a number of specific areas in which FSC would welcome external research inputs and collaboration. Together with the FSC Social Policy Program, the M&E Program has identified the following priority areas for research:

- Direct and indirect cost-savings experienced by operations that switch from normal to SLIMF (small and low-intensity management forests) certification
- Potential synergies between FSC certification for smallholders and REDD+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation)
- Costs and benefits of dual-certification schemes (e.g. FSC and Fairtrade) and their success in the marketplace
- Costs and benefits of contractor certification and its potential impact on the certification system.

We also encourage case studies on:

- Impacts of certification on the safety of forest workers
- Impacts of certification on Indigenous Peoples' land rights
- Impacts of certification on economic diversification (e.g. incorporating other revenue streams from forests, e.g. non-timber forest products)
- Social, financial, environmental and institutional impacts of certification on SLIMFs and communities.

The FSC's M&E Manager welcomes the submission of any research papers related to FSC certification and processes. Please contact m.karmann@fsc.org.

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