

## **FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CERTIFICATION: FOREST MANAGEMENT AND CONTROLLED WOOD**

Forest management operations that meet the principles and criteria for the environmental, economic and social standards of the [Forest Stewardship Council®](#) (FSC®) are awarded certification. Candidates for certification undergo a detailed on-the-ground assessment that includes input from all interested parties, species inventories, management plan reviews and forest inspections. Forest Management certification is valid for five years, subject to successful completion of annual audits.

### **A. Overview**

The Rainforest Alliance program offers many different forest management certification options:

#### **FSC Forest Management Certification**

Available to all operations involved in growing and harvesting trees, including forest companies, government forestry agencies, mid-sized forest managers, indigenous peoples and groups of small landowners. The following models of Forest Management certification are available:

#### **Group Certification**

Group certification enables multiple landowners, forest managers or processors to be certified under one certificate. A group manager may include a resource manager, cooperative, owner association, forest management company, governmental resource agency or other legal entity that can provide the appropriate management system and administrative oversight to a group of landowners and/or managers. Often, an individual landowner can join an existing group.

#### **Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests (SLIMF)**

The FSC has created a special program for small and low intensity (SLIMF) forestry operations, enabling FSC-accredited certifiers such as the Rainforest Alliance to use streamlined -- and therefore less costly -- assessment procedures for forestry operations that are less than 247 acres (100 hectares) in size (or, in some cases, less than 2,471 acres or 1,000 hectares) or have a low harvest level. SLIMF operations can be certified as a group. Non-timber forest products are also eligible for the SLIMF program.

#### **Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP)**

For operations that manage and harvest non-timber forest products.

#### **FSC Controlled Wood Certification**

Controlled Wood certification enables forest management companies to demonstrate that their wood products have been controlled to avoid sourcing wood that has been illegally harvested, harvested in violation of traditional and civil rights, harvested in forests where high conservation values are threatened by management activities, harvested in forests being converted to

plantations or non-forest use, and harvested from forests where genetically modified trees are planted. Controlled Wood certification involves a five-year contract with annual auditing.

### **Stepwise Approach to FSC Forest Management Certification**

[SmartStep](#), a phased approach to FSC Forest Management certification, is available for companies that may not be ready for FSC Forest Management certification. SmartStep helps companies identify and address gaps in their forest practices using a step-by-step approach and the development of an action plan (not to exceed five years) that can lead to FSC certification.

## **B. Process**

The Rainforest Alliance awards FSC certification based on audit results and issues certificates for five-year periods. The first audit,<sup>1</sup> called the assessment, is the most rigorous and determines the initial decision to certify. The assessment is followed by four annual audits. The entire process is efficient, thorough and transparent.

The assessment for FSC Forest Management certification includes the following steps:

1. The candidate operation [completes an application](#).
2. Based on information provided in the application, the Rainforest Alliance will determine if a formal pre-assessment is required prior to conducting the full evaluation.
3. We prepare a budget (the application is not binding until the budget is approved by the candidate operation), and a service agreement is signed by the candidate operation and the Rainforest Alliance.
4. A multi-disciplinary team (usually a forester, an ecologist and a community relations specialist) conducts fieldwork to assess the candidate operation's performance, using the FSC's regionally adapted standards as the "measuring stick." (In countries without approved FSC regional standards, the Rainforest Alliance's region-specific interim standards are used.)
5. Our team designs and implements a stakeholder consultation process that seeks outside input on the candidate operation's performance, including input from local communities, environmental groups, government representatives and scientific researchers.
6. After consultation and fieldwork, the Rainforest Alliance team produces an assessment report.
7. The assessment report is reviewed both by the candidate operation and independent peer reviewers (who are selected by the Rainforest Alliance).
8. Based on the fieldwork, stakeholder consultation and peer review inputs, a certification decision is made.<sup>2</sup>
9. Subsequent annual audits are conducted approximately one year after the original certificate is issued. Audits ensure that the certified operation continues to comply with FSC standards and that any weaknesses identified in the original assessment or previous audits have been addressed.

Before undertaking a full forest management assessment, the client may request or be required to undergo (depending on the size of forest) a pre-assessment or "scoping" conducted by the Rainforest Alliance to determine the candidate operation's eligibility for certification. Please [contact us](#) with any questions you may have.

## Footnotes

(1) FSC requires that operations that meet the following criteria must undergo a formal pre-assessment (gap analysis) prior to the main assessment:

- a) Plantations larger than 10,000 ha;
- b) All non-plantation forest types larger than 50,000 hectares, unless the whole area meets the requirements for classification as a "low intensity managed forest"
- c) FMUs containing high conservation value attributes, unless the whole area meets the requirements for classification as a "small forest"

(2) SmartStep does not result in certification. The SmartStep process culminates in the development and approval of a five-year action plan to address conformance gaps with FSC Forest Management standards. Annual audits are conducted to evaluate implementation of the action plan.

## C. Standard and Guidelines

### FSC Forest Management

The [ten FSC global principles](#) are universal. FSC regional standards assist with the application of the global standards in different forest types: tropical, temperate and boreal.

Regional standards are created in an open and participatory manner by working groups made up of scientists, foresters, landowners, environmentalists and other stakeholders. In countries and regions where FSC Regional Standards have been created, these are used by Rainforest Alliance staff during Forest Management certification assessments. Where FSC Regional Standards have not yet been finalized, the Rainforest Alliance develops region-specific [Interim Standards](#), which are based on our [Generic Standards](#).

### Standards

[FSC Forest Management Principles and Criteria: FSC-STD-01-001 V4-0](#) There are ten principles and 56 criteria that form the basis for all FSC Forest Management standards. These principle and criteria describe how the forests have to be managed to meet the strict social, economic, and ecological requirements related to FSC Forest Management certification.

[FSC-Endorsed Regional Forest Management Standards](#) A number of regional-or-country-specific FSC Forest Management standards have been developed and endorsed by the FSC International Center. These FSC-endorsed standards serve as the basis for evaluation of Forest Management Enterprises in these

countries. Please contact the applicable FSC National Initiative or regional Rainforest Alliance or Partner Office for a copy of FSC-accredited regional forest stewardship standards.

[Rainforest Alliance Generic Forest Management Standard](#) [En Español] This standard shall be the basis for Rainforest Alliance FSC certification of Forest Management Enterprises in countries for which FSC has not endorsed or Rainforest Alliance has not developed a regional standard.

[Rainforest Alliance Global Nontimber Forest Product Certification Addendum](#) [En Español] In the absence of FSC-endorsed or Rainforest Alliance-adapted product specific standard requirements, this standard shall be the basis for Rainforest Alliance certification of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) included in the scope of FSC Forest Management Certificates.

[Rainforest Alliance Regional Forest Management Standards](#) [En Español] In countries and regions where there is not yet a Forest Stewardship Council-accredited forest stewardship standard, the Rainforest Alliance carries out forest management certifications using "interim" standards based on our generic standards but adapted to account for local conditions and consultation with stakeholders. We actively solicit comments on all certification standards.

[Rainforest Alliance CoC Standard for Forest Management Enterprises \(FMEs\)](#) [En Español] This standard details the requirements for Forest Management Enterprises with joint FSC Forest Management and Chain-of-Custody certificates for controlling FSC-certified products from the tree stump to the forest gate, including requirements for the use of FSC and Rainforest Alliance trademarks for on product labeling or promotional materials.

### **Advice Notes and Guidance**

[SLIMF Eligibility Criteria: FSC-STD-01-003 V1-0](#) FSC definition and certification requirements for Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests (SLIMFs).

[FSC Pesticides Policy: FSC-POL-30-001 2005](#) FSC Policy regarding the identification and avoidance of "highly hazardous" chemicals, the promotion of non-chemical pesticides, and appropriate use of pesticides.

[FSC Pesticides Policy: Guidance on Implementation: FSC-GUI-30-001.](#) FSC guidance on implanting the FSC Pesticides Policy, FSC-POL-30-001.

## [30-001 V2-0](#)

[Partial Certification of Large Landowners: FSC-POL-20-001 2000](#) Policy detailing FSC position regarding partial certification and compliance with the requirements of Criterion 1.6 as they apply to FSC members and non-members.

[Excision of Areas from the Scope of the Certification: FSC-POL-20-003 2004](#) This Policy was developed to provide a clear, internationally consistent approach to the conditions which excision may be permitted. The Policy details under what circumstances excision is permissible and under what conditions, and provides criteria to be used by certification bodies to evaluate compliance.

[FSC Certification and ILO Conventions: FSC-POL-30-401 2002](#) FSC's policy detailing mandatory compliance with all ILO conventions that have an impact on forestry operations and practices.

## **FSC Controlled Wood**

### **Standards**

[FSC Controlled Wood Standard for Forest Management Enterprises: FSC-STD-30-010 V2-0](#) This standard is for forestry operations that are pursuing certification only against the FSC Controlled Wood requirements. FSC Controlled Wood can only be sold to other FSC Certified Companies. [\[En Español\]](#)

## **D. Trademark use**

### **How do I use the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or Rainforest Alliance trademarks?**

Prior to any use of the trademarks, companies must be FSC-certified and issued a certificate and license code. The Rainforest Alliance Certified seal may only be used in conjunction with the FSC label on FSC-certified forest products and/or with FSC promotional artwork on off-product materials. Please see the [Requirements for Use of the FSC Trademarks Standard](#) (FSC-STD-50-001) as well as the [Rainforest Alliance Use of Seal Guidelines](#) for rules governing their use. All clients must submit their proposed design for approval prior to trademark use. To generate an FSC label and/or submit artwork bearing the FSC logo and the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal, please visit our [Submit a Trademark Request page](#). For additional information or to acquire a login, please [contact the Rainforest Alliance representative for your geographic location](#).

### **How long does it take to get trademark approval?**

Generally, it takes one business day, however the process can be shorter or longer, depending on the specific request.

**What is FSC 100%?**

The FSC 100% claim and FSC 100% label apply to products made exclusively from virgin materials originating in FSC-certified forests. (Previously, the FSC 100% claim was indicated by the designation "FSC Pure.")

**What is FSC Mix?**

The FSC Mix claim and FSC Mix label apply to products made from FSC-certified inputs combined with Controlled Wood and/or reclaimed materials. Products sold with the FSC Mix label are required to include a percentage or credit designation such as "FSC Mix X%" or "FSC Mix Credit" on the invoice. Only under certain exceptional circumstances may the percentage/credit part of the claim be omitted when the product is sold to end-users.

**What is FSC Recycled?**

The FSC Recycled claim and FSC Recycled label apply to products made exclusively from reclaimed materials. FSC Recycled 100% and the corresponding FSC label are reserved for products containing 100 percent reclaimed inputs (which may be a combination of post- and pre-consumer materials). The Percentage System requires 85 percent post-consumer reclaimed inputs in order for a version of the FSC Recycled label to be used on-product. The Credit System is also an option as well using a combination of post- and pre-consumer inputs. Once virgin inputs are used, the product is no longer eligible to carry the FSC Recycled label, even if the inputs are FSC-certified and/or Controlled Wood (see FSC Mix option above).