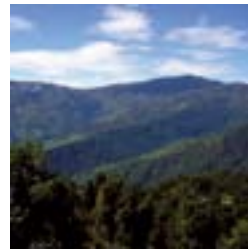
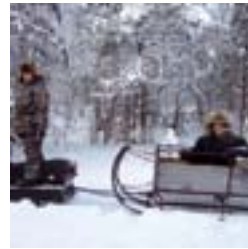




Celebrating success: Stories of FSC® certification



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Foreword

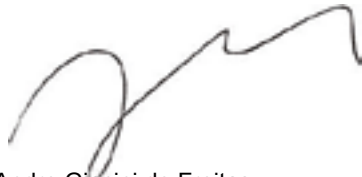
Forests cover 31 per cent of total global land area and provide livelihoods for over 1.6 billion people. They also protect most of the world's terrestrial biodiversity and supply an important trade in forest products.

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2011 to be the International Year of Forests. This year provides a unique global platform to celebrate people's efforts to sustainably manage forests around the world, and to showcase success stories that demonstrate both the essential roles that forests play in all our lives and the benefits that responsible management brings.

And 2011 is also the year of the 6th FSC General Assembly, an opportunity to celebrate close to 20 years of FSC certification that has brought widespread benefits to people and forests worldwide. Despite initial skepticism in many quarters that certification could bring about genuine benefits for people and forests, FSC has grown and matured with exceptional success.

The stories in this book showcase some examples of the benefits that FSC certification has brought to communities, companies and forests around the world. These range from social benefits, supporting communities' own abilities to organize and manage their forests, to economic incentives to manage forests better, to improved environmental outcomes for forests, natural ecosystems and wildlife.

These stories of success highlight some of the ways in which we are approaching our mission to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. They are also a wonderful celebration of the many ways in which our certificate holders are managing their forests for the benefit of current and future generations. I hope you enjoy them as much as I have.



Andre Giacini de Freitas
FSC Executive Director

Introduction

What does it mean to 'achieve FSC certification'? A reward for existing good management, or a sought-after prize that brings benefits in its own right? Certainly certification recognizes good practices and responsible forest management where it exists. But FSC certification is much more than this, acting as a catalyst for the often substantial changes in forest management needed to meet its stringent international standards.

These changes themselves bring social benefits to local communities, workers and indigenous people, and environmental benefits that push forward conservation objectives and improve forest management. And the certification itself also brings economic benefits, where producers and processors gain market access by selling certified products.

The stories in this book bring those benefits to life, highlighting the successes of both forest management and chain of custody certification. Stories from Latin America, Asia, Europe and Africa illustrate the diversity of ways in which FSC certification can bring social benefits. These include improved company–community consultation, better work conditions and greater community organization, participation and democracy. We hear about improved regional standards of environmental management, increased implementation of legal and best practices for controlling illegal hunting and the identification and protection of high conservation areas from countries as diverse as Argentina, Gabon, Russia and South Africa. And finally, several stories from Europe and Latin America highlight the economic benefits brought by engaging with markets for FSC certified products, especially for smallholders through group certification schemes.

These stories are hugely diverse in their geographical location and type of forest, product, ownership, processing and management objectives, but all the stories point to one conclusion: FSC certification brings clear, concrete and real benefits.

Making music sustainably

Responsible trade in African blackwood

In January 2011, the world's first FSC certified woodwind instrument was put on sale, sourced from certified forests in Tanzania.



Kikole community with African blackwood tree
(photo: Sound and Fair)

African blackwood is one of the world's most valuable timbers, with few parallels in terms of the qualities required for modern woodwind musical instruments. It was once widespread in dry areas of sub-Saharan Africa, but over-harvesting and illegal trade have seen a drastic decline in tree numbers. In Kenya, it is now commercially extinct, with the last remnant stocks being confined to remote forest areas in southeast Tanzania and northern Mozambique.

Thankfully, the Sound and Fair campaign is promoting responsible trade in African blackwood, with an FSC chain of custody that links forest-dependent people in Tanzania to woodwind instrument makers and musicians throughout the world.

The Sound and Fair campaign

In Tanzania, harvesting African blackwood provides a living for some of the country's poorest people. But without responsible management, the trees and the livelihoods of those who depend on them, are disappearing.

In March 2009, the first FSC certificate for community-managed natural forests in

Africa was granted to the Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative (MCDI), a Tanzanian non-governmental organization (NGO). Only nine months later, the first FSC certified African blackwood was harvested in Kikole. After this initial success, the certified area increased eight-fold in 2010, to more than 17,000 hectares – or 170 square kilometres!

The world's first FSC certified woodwind instrument was launched in January 2011 by Hanson, the UK's largest clarinet manufacturer – making the final link in the chain, from sustainably managed community woodlands to top quality musical instruments from responsibly-sourced timber.

FSC certification benefits the whole community

Before FSC certification, local people could not sell African blackwood or any other timber. Earning a living from wood harvesting was limited to piecemeal rates helping licensed loggers.

The community of Kikole saw the benefits immediately, as one villager, Mrs Mwanaisha Likoko, noted: "Changes have

“Through the Mpingo forests, community services such as water and health have improved, especially for expecting mothers.”

*Mrs Hamisi Mbega,
a Kikole villager*

come to our village through the forest we own and manage under our control. The money we have received will be used within our village to improve our social services.” Of the profit from their first harvest of African blackwood, half was spent on a new borehole and a facility for the local midwife. The other half went on patrolling and boundary clearance, to safeguard the forest for future harvests.

The village chairman, Mr Mwinyimkuu Awadhi, said: “The communities of Kikole Village have realized for the first time the benefits from selling our own timber. All the money was paid to the villages unlike in the past where this money would have gone to the government. We, the villagers, now have full control of our forest resources and we will benefit even more when we do more harvesting in the near future.”

A second harvest of FSC certified African blackwood in Liwiti and Nainokwe Village Land Forest Reserves in February 2011 yielded 69 cubic meters of logs. For this, SandaliWood Industries, Tanzania’s first FSC certified sawmill, paid the communities US\$7,300.



Kikole school children (photo: Sound and Fair)

Instrumental changes and challenges

Despite the progress, most woodwind instruments are still made from illegally sourced timber, and instrument makers need to be made more aware of the social and environmental benefits of demanding FSC certified wood. New measures in both Europe and North America are beginning to

change timber procurement policies, and Sound and Fair’s distribution partner, Klicksi, is receiving ever more requests for samples from woodwind manufacturers worldwide.

In the meantime, the certified forest area is increasing to meet the growing demand; and communities’ incomes are increasing, improving the lives of local people.

The African blackwood tree – bringing music to our ears

Also known as African ebony or ironwood, the tree is called mpingo in Tanzania. A slow growing tree, blackwood is found in dry savannah and miombo woodlands across Africa. On the outside, the tree looks quite ordinary, often spindly or shrubby. But when cut open, something extraordinary is revealed – the dark, lustrous heartwood. Resistant to splitting or cracking, it is so heavy it sinks in water. Creating the finest quality in musical tones, it is the perfect material for making clarinets and oboes, bagpipes and some flutes and recorders.

Cooperation and certification support livelihoods in the Amazon

A cooperative including more than 90 families in four communities in the heart of the Amazon benefits from selling FSC certified timber, while safeguarding their forest for the future.

In the Brazilian state of Acre, supporting local livelihoods while protecting the natural forest has been a challenge for decades. But FSC certification shows great promise, providing returns for responsible management, especially through the certification of community owned and managed forests.

In Acre, communities started by trading their forest products separately. However, several communities saw the benefits of working in partnership, and Cooperfloresta was born. Now managing 26,000 hectares of certified forest, the cooperative has designed a marketing strategy, negotiates

timber sales directly with buyers and commands higher prices.

Pioneering efforts

Since the 1980s, the Brazilian government has acknowledged the role of forest communities in protecting the



Community meeting in Acre (photo: Imaflorea)

“Buyers are looking for certified sawnwood and we at Cooperfloresta are the only ones that can supply it. We have recently delivered a lot of certified Ipê lumber in Rio Branco at R\$2,600 (US\$1,530) a cubic meter, while the same lumber from non-certified sources sells for about R\$1,800 (US\$1,060). We had a good profit. Market conditions are good and I really believe in certified forest management.”

***Evandro Araújo,
Cooperfloresta's Superintendent***

environment by creating conservation areas and agro-extraction settlement projects. Cooperfloresta began life as a wood processing cooperative, utilizing wood harvested upstream by certified communities, and achieved FSC chain of custody certification in 2006.

In 2009, the cooperative took on responsibility for the certification of the whole value chain, from producers to the final clients. As well as its main roles of facilitating harvesting, processing, logistics and licensing of forest products, the cooperative also adds value, identifies and meets the demand of different market



Looking towards the canopy (photo: Imaflora)

The Antimary Forest Conservation Area

Part of Cooperfloresta, the Antimary Forest Conservation Area was established in February 1997 and is a model of community certification for the whole region. It shows that forest management can successfully blend technical and operational quality, social responsibility and economic viability. Every year, more than 55 families in Bujari and Sena Madureira municipalities harvest some 3,000 cubic meters of timber, along with 14 tons of rubber, 140 tons of wild nuts and 1.5 tons of seeds.

niches, while allowing the communities to control production and management.

Recent successes

With all its acquired expertise, Cooperfloresta's production has increased significantly in recent years. In 2008, each of the 53 families then involved in the four certified communities had an average income of 4,000 Brazilian Reals (R\$) (about US\$2,500) from timber. In the 2009/10 season, the 88 families directly involved each made about R\$6,000 (US\$3,700) from timber alone.

FSC certification is also starting to bring higher prices for timber. "We do not enjoy premium market prices, but we are beginning to see some recognition from people that buy from us, both in the export and domestic markets," says Evandro Araújo, Cooperfloresta's Superintendent.

Almost half of the community families' total income is derived from timber sales, with the other half coming from livestock, sale of wild nuts and other agricultural production. Unusually for communities in Acre, all producers also received payment

for their timber promptly, generally less than 20 days after the end of the timber extraction period.

Positive changes in organization and attitudes

Evandro Araújo explains that certification has brought other benefits, in addition to higher prices:

"Certification brought a lot of positive changes to the community. We are now better organized; the community became more aware of the value of its products, its history and its work. When I think back to how things were before certification, I see that today there is a greater knowledge about the forest and about how much it is worth.... There has been a change in the way forest managers think: besides valuing the forest, they now also value their activities."

For organizations like Cooperfloresta, the recent development of Brazil's standards for 'Small and Low Intensity Managed Forests' (SLIMFs) is a very positive step forward and will facilitate the certification of community-based production. Cooperfloresta also aims to set up a pilot project to establish a special credit line for financing certified products.

An indigenous community in Bolivia shows the way

FSC certification strengthens social organization and forest management practices in an indigenous community in lowland Bolivia.



Tropical flower in Bolivia (photo: Carlos Ruiz-Garvia)

Cururú, a remote village in the Municipality of Urubichá celebrated a hard won achievement when it became the first indigenous community in Bolivia to attain FSC certification for their forest management. Setting the example for other communities in the region, this Guaraya indigenous community set itself on a course of long-term responsible management of their 26,000 hectare forest, achieving FSC certification in 2007.

Taking responsibility for the forest

The community started to formalize its forest management activities in 2000, and by 2002 had developed their first forest

management plan for approval. To put it into action, the community needed to establish an association, and so set up the Association of Indigenous Foresters of Cururú (AIMCU). Roger Macué – a qualified forestry technician and community leader – was chosen as the forest coordinator. He admits that the first steps of bringing the community up to certification standards were not easy, with many problems and difficulties.

“The problems could be surmounted by working with honesty, for the good of the whole community and the country,” he says. “Some of our Bolivian brothers say that the forests don’t produce anything. But for us,

Cururú: part of a larger forest jigsaw

The community of Cururú may be small in size, but its impact on forest certification in Bolivia could be large. With only 212 inhabitants, the community has rights to manage 26,000 hectares of lowland tropical forests. Cururú is part of the Tierra Comunitaria de Origen Guaraya (TCO, or Guaraya Community Lands), located in the Department of Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia. At the celebration marking the presentation of Cururú’s FSC certification, Doña Elida Urupaca, the Coordinator of the Organizations of Native Guaraya People (COPNAG) noted that activities like those in Cururú – with better community control over forest management – would effectively help combat the deforestation that until now has afflicted the forests of the Guaraya people.

this is our home, it is where we live, where we extract timber, fruit, medicines, where we hunt and fish.”

It was not until 2006 that the community decided to work for FSC certification, following a favorable evaluation of the market. Spurred on by market contacts, and supported by other partners that included WWF and Bolfor II, the community achieved FSC certification in May 2007.

Demonstrating benefits for the forest and the community

Forester Yurguen Soria, worked with the community on their path to certification. “I learned a lot from them, through their vision and respectful management of the natural world,” he says. After initially working with a local parquet manufacturing company, Cururú has recently built on-going links with the FSC certified Compañía Industrial Maderera Ltda (CIMAL).

Two types of benefit are generated by the project: the direct benefits that go to the people in the community who carry out the forest management activities; and other indirect benefits, which are felt by all



Roger Macué presents a management report (photo: WWF Bolivia)

“Cururú is the only indigenous organization [in Bolivia] with forest certification. The Guaraya communities have over a million hectares of forest under their control. Sustainable forest management is the only guarantee that the forests will not be eliminated, while they generate economic benefits for all.”

***Pablo Antelo,
President of the Cámara Forestal de Bolivia***

members of the community through health, education and water facilities.

Keeping the good work going

For Cururú, FSC certification was a challenge that allowed the community to strengthen its own social organization, as well as improving forestry production processes, optimizing

inventory methods to provide good quality data at low cost, ensuring better control over harvesting, and implementing a policy of integrating women into the technical activities. It has also allowed the community to value the forests better, and implement silvicultural practices that will improve the future value of the forest even more.

FSC® – a synonym for ‘doing things well’!

FSC certification drives the introduction of new work practices and improved living conditions in Ecuador.

Once a traditional family company in the Ecuadorian port of Guayaquil, Plantaciones de Balsa Plantabal S.A. has matured into an international company that is now part of Schweiter Technologies, producing balsa wood for the international market. Introducing new working practices as part

of its process to achieve FSC certification has helped Plantabal transform itself into a better place to work.

A way of doing things better

Plantabal aims to introduce innovative ideas among its employees and workers, giving all who work in the company a sense of belonging, encouraging them to identify with their work place, and aiming to ensure the company’s product is the best possible. Introducing ‘total quality’ systems, work commitment, and social and environmental responsibility are just part of that process, which culminated in the achievement of FSC certification in May 2009.

By incorporating the FSC Principles and Criteria into the daily working routine, employees have realized that FSC certification isn’t just one more type of certification, but a way of doing things better – a means of developing better internal and external relations and managing both social and environmental aspects better.

Better work conditions, better work achieved

As part of the process towards achieving FSC certification, Plantabal took a good

look at how best to utilize its staff’s skills. The company realized that it had no ability to monitor occupational health and safety among the workforce that was employed through an external contractor. In a determined effort to improve working conditions to a level that would meet the FSC standards, Plantabal carried out social and medical studies to guide changes to field workers’ conditions. The company undertook to provide them with personal protective equipment and improved camp infrastructure to bring them up to an adequate living standard.

Alberto Zambrano recalls that before working for Plantabal he worked as an informal laborer, chainsawing logs. “I like working at Plantabal,” he says, “because of the workplace safety, the stability, the work environment and the discipline. My family is also happy because, since I’ve been working in Plantabal, I’ve had a regular economic income.”

Wilfrido Vélez Cedeño concurs: “I like the safety policy that we have, which has made me realize the importance of working with the appropriate equipment for the type of work being done.”



Balsa plantation (photo: Diego Sarsoza)

“FSC differentiates us in the sophisticated markets that we supply: the value of being a company with high standards of forest management gives us a privileged position in the market.”

Ramón del Pino, General Manager, Plantaciones de Balsa Plantabal S.A



Training for technical staff (photo: Diego Sarzoza)

Diego Sarzoza, Environment, Health and Safety Specialist, describes how Plantabal ensures high work safety standards. “We have a series of procedures that guarantee the health and safety of our workers, covering all the risks to which they may be exposed, determining the equipment necessary for each job, and maintaining personal contact. We push ourselves to make our activities environmentally friendly and socially responsible, and ultimately profitable – which in itself requires us to search for new ways to constantly improve our processes.

We have implemented an Integrated Management System, which is now supported by the FSC certification, and which allows us to guarantee that our operations meet the requirements of the standard.”

Responsible forest management, respecting others’ rights.

As part of its commitment to improved working practices, Plantabal now runs constant training and capacity building courses for its employees, and it has become a principle for the company that

human capital is important and resources must be invested to ensure the workforce is well trained. For Plantabal, FSC certification has become synonymous with ‘doing things well’, carrying out responsible forest management while respecting the rights of others.

Producing quality responsibly

Established in 1860 by a French immigrant to Ecuador, Plantabal has grown solidly through the years, as the importance of balsa wood also grew. Now the company manages 8,400 hectares of balsa plantation distributed among 115 estates in six provinces of Ecuador. With some 1,500 employees in the plantations and a chain of custody certified processing plant, Plantabal can guarantee FSC certified products from tree to final consumer. The company exports structural endgrain balsa products to composites markets in the USA, Asia and Europe, for use as sandwich core materials, enabling the production of enhanced energy efficient products including boats, trains and windmill blades.

Certification brings the market to the mountains

FSC certification of community forests improves access to international markets for non-timber forest products and leads to better forest management.



Certified forests in the Dolakha district of Nepal (photo: ANSAB)

High in the Himalayan foothills of Nepal, the Malika enterprise produced the first FSC certified hand-made paper in the world in 2005. Today, FSC certification continues to help improve the management of forests and the livelihoods of communities that depend on them, with 22 forest user groups managing 14,145 hectares of certified forests, and eight enterprises with chain of custody certification.

Beside paper, some 24 non-timber forest products are now harvested and transformed into essential oils, Ayurvedic medicines and health supplements, and a variety of other herbal medicines and beauty products for sale in international

markets. FSC certification has increased community incomes and brought environmental improvements.

A unique partnership for certification

The Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources (ANSAB) introduced FSC certification in Nepal to promote responsible forest management and help user groups develop economically viable and socially responsible forest enterprises. A unique blend of industry, government, NGOs, communities and forest certifiers created the Private Public Alliance (PPA) on the Certification and Sustainable Marketing of Non-timber Forest

High principles in Bitteri Pakha community forests

“Forests are an integral part of local people’s livelihoods as they have harvested fuelwood, fodder, medicinal plants, fruits and more since time immemorial,” says Dhana Lama, executive committee member of the local community forest group. “Introduction of certification made people aware of sustainable forest management. Now they understand that forests and their biodiversity are very important and they should use it in a sustainable manner.” He proudly adds: “Products of our community forests have been successfully marketed, good changes in environment and economy have been observed, and social changes have been felt. Participation of poor social groups in forest management has risen, and even boundary conflicts among groups were resolved,” says Mr Lama, concluding that: “We are proud that we are part of the certification pool that has helped to raise economic impacts on ground level.”

Products. This led to the development of interim FSC certification standards for timber and non-timber forest products, a group certification model, and huge awareness raising and capacity building efforts. The Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN) acts as resource manager for the groups and holds the FSC certification on their behalf.

Bringing in the benefits

The chair of FECOFUN, Ms Apsara Chapagain, is more than convinced of the value of FSC certification. “All certified community forests are better in terms of participation, benefit sharing, decision-making and fund utilization”, she says. Governance and transparency in the communities have been strengthened

and “issues of indigenous, disadvantaged people have been well addressed”. Ms Chapagain also highlights the positive environmental impacts, especially on water sources, biodiversity and soil conservation. Economically, she notes, certified products are sold at better prices than before.

Mr Kedar Dahal, District Forest Officer in Dolakha District is happy about the results of the certification. “With the commencement of certification, forests have been managed in more sustainable ways. Technical and scientific management were talked about in past, but we saw it in practice only after certification came into existence in this area. The results are clearly visible, productivity has been increasing, and forest-based industries are now well established in

this district.” He adds: “In addition, social harmony has also been achieved. Pro-poor groups are actively working and their participation in decision-making has increased.”

The only way is up

“Forest certification has brought all government and non-government organizations together,” says Mr Parbat Gurung, manager of the Sustainable Bio-trade Group. However, he concludes that: “It has opened up marketing opportunities in the international arena, but present production is low and we have not been able to meet the demand. So we need to think of increasing production and expanding markets, to make group certification in Nepal more alluring.”



Women cleaning Lokta bark, Dolakha, Nepal (photo: ANSAB)

“After certification, forests are better and changes are perceptible. Now communities are harvesting important non-timber forest products in a sustainable manner – an additional source of income to forest communities.”

***Mr Dhruva Basnet,
Director of Bhimeshwor Forest Product
Processing Enterprise***

Sustaining village life, protecting traditional forest values

Traditional uses of the forest by villagers in Tunguda, Russia, are protected through an agreement with logging companies, thanks to FSC certification.

While Russian law prohibits felling close to villages, small hamlets may be overlooked, and sometimes trees may be felled right up to the edge of the village. When the Northern Logging Company decided to log close to Tunguda village, they needed to consult with the village as part of their FSC certification requirements. And they found a group of villagers ready to organize themselves to protect their forest.

A slow start to consultation

In Russia all land is owned by the state. The area around Tunguda is leased to the Segezhsy Pulp and Paper Mill (PPM), which is a part of the FSC certified Investlesprom holding company. Logging around Tunguda is carried out by the Northern Logging Company, which is itself part of Investlesprom, and is also FSC certified.

Although Russian law prohibits felling within 1,000 meters of villages, when the forest around Tunguda was inventoried in 1999, the village was considered too small to warrant an exclusion zone. When Northern Logging Company decided to focus its logging close to Tunguda, internal reorganization in the company delayed public meetings to discuss the plans until much later – after logging sites had been allocated and roads built.



Local leader Chuburov, father of Alina Chubarova, showing the forest to Maria Tysiachniouk (photo: Oleg Koniushatov)

“Such a result is of great importance for the village and for its future, and I am sure that it will be appreciated by future generations of Tunguda people.”

Mikhail Lepyoshkin

Residents initially thought they had little power to affect decisions. “We here have the mentality that there is no sense in clashing with the firm. We’ll grumble, we’ll regret, and then we’ll just give up,” says Alina Chuburova. But Mikhail Lepyoshkin wasn’t prepared to give up. He realized that, as an FSC certified company, Northern Logging Company was required to consult with the local community on the identification of areas of high conservation value.

Better late than never!

Village activists wrote letters, signed by all, to the logging company, the certification body and the state agencies that supervise forest operations. Trias, an NGO based in Petrozavodsk, joined the campaign. Northern Logging Company said that they were willing to negotiate.

Rounds of consultation were held, facilitated by the Centre for Independent Sociological Research (CISR), which works with communities to help them understand their rights under FSC certification. Villagers identified five sites they considered important for gathering mushrooms and berries, for wild animals, recreation and tourism. The company immediately agreed to set aside two of the areas – and conflict had turned into constructive dialogue.

Recognizing the value of the forest

Following the consultation, the company recognized the remaining three plots as high conservation value forest, and in August 2010 agreed to preserve all forest areas requested by the villagers. In return,

the villagers undertook responsibility for monitoring these areas, keeping them clean, and protecting them from fire.

An agreement was signed between the Northern Logging Company and the local community. Writing to express the community’s gratitude, Mikhail Lepyoshkin said: “On behalf of all the residents of Tunguda village, my family and my friends, I wish to express my gratitude towards the Northern Logging Company, the leaseholder, and all of you for organizing, handling and completing work on the issues of allocation and preservation of the high conservation value forest of Tunguda village.”

The relationship between the company and the community has come a long way. Encouraged by the FSC requirement for community consultation, the future is now brighter for Tunguda.



Russian forest in winter (photo: Milan Reska)

Tunguda Village – a rich history, an uncertain future?

The village of Tunguda in the Karelian Republic of northwestern Russia might be considered a dying village. Most of the 30 permanent residents are elderly, and most lead a traditional life – hunting, gathering mushrooms and berries, fishing and farming. But in the summer the village really comes to life, as relatives return and families reunite. And some of these families are determined to see their 500-year old village revitalized.

Alina Chuburova and her husband Alexey Tzikarev hope to promote the revival of the village by revitalizing local traditions, drawing in tourists, painters and photographers. Together with Moscow artist, Mikhail Lepyoshkin, whose family spends the summers here, they want a vibrant future for the village. To do so, they must ensure the surrounding forest remains intact.

Improving organization and transparency in the Italian Alps

In the forests of Lombardy, northern Italy, FSC certification has helped improve efficiency and fostered better external relations.



Walkers in the woods of Campeì (photo: Alessandro Rapella (ERSAF))

Since 2009, the process of certification has helped to involve almost 600 stakeholders in shared agreements promoting profitable recreational activities. And at the Regional Organisation for Services to Agriculture and Forests (ERSAF) certification has helped make operations more efficient, by improving working processes and optimizing information flows for planning, implementing and monitoring activities.

Fostering forests for all

Certification of 23,000 hectares began in 2009 when the local government began to promote the public value of the forest and questioned how it could better meet the needs of local people. But the foundation for this was laid previously, in 2004, when the regional government and ERSAF adopted an ethical Charter of the Forests of Lombardy, to ensure sustainable and long-lasting management.

“The forests are public and collective assets which belong to the citizens of Lombardy,” says Enrico Calvo, Head of the Department of Services for Rural Regions and Forests. “So we felt that we ought to ensure that these forests are run in a transparent and

public way, in accordance with principles and criteria of sustainability.”

“There were difficulties at first,” remembers Enrico Calvo, “to increase understanding among the 150 staff and regional workers. This involved a significant effort of raising awareness, involvement, training and discussion, lasting several years and certainly not yet completed...” The answer, says Calvo, “lies in training employees to adopt a new approach to work, based at all times on efficiency and a direct response to local problems.”

Alpine advantages look set to grow further

Two years after certification took place, Enrico Calvo has seen lots of clear benefits. Initially FSC certification brought the advantage of improved internal organization within ERSAF. But secondly, certification promoted much better external relations, which has allowed ERSAF to construct a network of continuous, structured relationships. These have led to the development of Forest Contracts – operational agreements for developing the forest area, with shared projects that

“An initial advantage was that of an organizational type: in a complex and divided organization like ours certification has certainly been able to improve working processes, for collecting and optimizing the use of information, planning, controlling and monitoring activities.”

Enrico Calvo, ERSAF

optimize resources for forestry, agriculture, tourism and cultural resources.

At least half a million tourists a year visit sites in the forests of Lombardy, and additional recreational facilities and events may see that number – and the returns to the local economy – increase even more. The ‘Living Forest’ project in which ERSAF has been involved for the past nine years, aims to optimize the profitable and recreational aspects of the forests, and brought in almost 50,000 people in 2010. There are also several forest springs supplying public drinking water and one that produces bottled mineral water. Enrico Calvo says; “We would like to concentrate our attention and our resources on these two aspects and eventually certify these services.”



Towards the forest of Monte Generoso, Como (photo: Alessandro Rapella (ERSAF))

The forests of Lombardy

Owned by the Region of Lombardy, the forests are managed by ERSAF, which promotes the development and optimal use of the Forests of Lombardy for environmental, recreational, educational and cultural purposes. The forests are also laboratories for scientific experimentation and technical discovery. “The region’s forestry assets are a resource for those currently living in Lombardy as well as future generations,” states the forest law. “They are to be used for sustainable and balanced development of society, to achieve a better quality of life and to allow the Lombardy region to benefit.”

Leading by example

FSC® certification drives up regional forestry standards

In the Yungas of northwest Argentina an FSC certified company is setting the standard for improved forest management regionally.

Home to several rare and endangered species, the Yungas sub-tropical montane forests extend across 5 million hectares of northwest Argentina. Small in relation to the country's vast grasslands, the area contains 50 per cent of the nation's biodiversity and is one of the most threatened ecosystems in the country.

Forest management in the region has not traditionally been of a high standard, and in 2007 the Argentine Supreme Court halted all forestry activity in the region to stem the tide of poor management, deforestation and conversion to soy, sugar cane and citrus fruits. As an FSC certified company, however, Forestal Santa Bárbara won support for its continued operation from even the vocal environmental NGOs that had pushed for the ban, and has become a reference point for responsible forest management in the region.

A first for Forestal Santa Bárbara and FSC certification

When the company initially decided to work towards FSC, there were no examples of other certified operations in natural forest in Argentina. "When we first started we had no

Forestal Santa Bárbara SRL

With 77,000 hectares located in the Provinces of Salta and Jujuy in northern Argentina, Forestal Santa Bárbara has been committed to FSC certification for over a decade. Starting in 1998, the company worked to achieve forest management certification for 24,500 hectares in two of its six forest management units (FMUs) in 2003.

Located in a highly important region for biodiversity, the forests of Santa Bárbara contain several species on the endangered lists of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, such as the jaguar, tapir and ocelot.



Yungas forest landscape in El Piquete FMU (photo: Ignacio Sosa)

“The presence of a certified company working in natural forest contributes to an improvement in forest management standards at the regional level. It also plays a role in the diffusion of better forestry practices and highlights the importance of conserving key species such as the tapir.”

***Silvia Chalukian,
Coordinator of the Proyecto Tapir NOA (Northwest Argentina)***

reference point for certification,” says Forest Manager, Ing. Ignacio Sosa.

Learning as they went, the company zoned its forest management units into production and protection areas, and identified the high conservation value forests. Improved planning and reduced impact logging techniques were introduced to minimize damage to soils and residual stands; impacts on roads, future harvest trees, flora and fauna and soils are constantly monitored and minimized. Constant and on-going training have raised the staff’s understanding of environmental, health, labor, security and hygiene issues, improving labor conditions in the company.

Driving up standards in the region – and the country

Since achieving its own certification in 2003, Forestal Santa Bárbara has continued to share its experience and knowledge throughout the region. “Until the certification of Forestal Santa Bárbara, purely extractive harvesting was the forestry ‘custom’, without any planning for the long term use of the forest,” says Dr Alejandro Brown, President of the Fundación ProYungas.

Forestry staff at Forestal Santa Bárbara have been actively involved in the development of criteria for forest management that are applicable beyond the scope of certification itself. And perhaps more importantly, the criteria originally used for the ecological zoning of Forestal Santa Bárbara properties, were later used to develop national criteria for land zoning covering all the native forests nationally.

“This clearly shows that the impact of certification of Forestal Santa Bárbara has gone far beyond the limits of its properties, and even the region,” says Alejandro Brown.

Providing the example

“Our company’s mission is to be a reference point for forest management, to offer our clients products from well managed forests, while maintaining or increasing the environmental services that the forests offer to neighboring communities,” says Ignacio Sosa.

“Forestal Santa Bárbara is the first example of a successful experience in the Province



Curucui Trogon in the Rio Seco FMU. Photo taken during evaluation of impact of harvesting on wildlife (photo: Fundación CEBIO)

of Salta,” says Dr Francisco Lopez Sastre, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development in the Provincial Government of Salta, “showing that it is possible to achieve compliance with the demands of international FSC forest certification, and providing a guiding star for the future companies that now show more interest in achieving the same objective – the sustainable management of our native forests.”

Working for wildlife

FSC certification brings better wildlife management in Gabon's forest concessions.

Part of the vast tropical moist forest of the Congo basin, the forests of Gabon support some of the largest populations of lowland gorillas, chimpanzees and elephants in the world. With 60 per cent of the country's national area allocated as logging concessions, compared with 11 per cent in protected areas, it is essential that wildlife is well managed within the productive forestry landscape.

A pilot study of the application of legal requirements and best practices for wildlife management and protection carried out by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Gabon shows that FSC certified forestry companies have significantly better wildlife management practices than uncertified companies. This brings direct benefits for the conservation of highly endangered wildlife species.

The threat from hunting

Hunting for bushmeat forms the major threat to wildlife living in and around the national parks. Employees of the forestry companies may have easy access to hunting areas through company roads and transport. Local people may also hunt extensively throughout the concessions. Most importantly, however, if the concession areas are not properly controlled, forestry roads can provide access for professional poachers who target threatened species like apes and elephants for the market value of their trophies.

“Commercial bushmeat hunting and ivory poaching (which often go together) are the biggest threats to Gabon's biodiversity heritage. A recent overflight of a reserve in Gabon found 30 fresh elephant carcasses,” says Tim Rayden, of WCS Gabon. “Anti-poaching efforts by the administration are scratching the surface of the problem. It is essential that forestry companies play their part in the fight against this illegal and unsustainable trade.”

Controlling road access, registering firearms among staff, monitoring vehicles for bushmeat, and providing domestic meat at a price competitive with bushmeat are just a few of the means of reducing the



Elephants in the Congo Basin (photo: Elie Hakizumwami)

“The FSC certification process is helping to raise the standard of wildlife protection in areas around Gabon’s national parks. The additional scrutiny on companies through the regular audits and the obligation to involve stakeholders help to ensure FSC certified companies make a positive contribution to managing the problem of illegal hunting.”

Tim Rayden, WCS Gabon

pressure of hunting. National legislation and international best practice offer many other methods.

FSC certified companies perform better

Using Gabonese legal requirements and international best practice guidelines, WCS compiled an assessment checklist with which to evaluate wildlife management practices among forest concessions surrounding the three national parks. Seven forest concessions with a total area of 1,606,024 hectares were evaluated. Two of these concessions, CEB Precious Woods and Rougier Gabon, have achieved FSC forest management certification. Some of the other companies had approved management plans but no certification and some were still in the process of management plan preparation.

The results showed a clear difference between FSC certified companies and those without certification. On average, the two certified companies complied with 94 per cent of the study’s indicators of legal compliance,

compared with 52 per cent for the non-certified companies. In addition, the certified companies applied an average of 86 per cent of the best practice elements for wildlife management in forestry concessions, such as providing domestic meat to employees at an affordable price. By contrast, the non-certified companies applied an average of 29 per cent of these elements.

Conserving endangered species

The objective assessment of wildlife management among these companies clearly shows the high value of FSC

Priority areas for conservation

Parts of Gabon have been identified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as priority areas for the conservation of the great apes. Three National Parks in central Gabon – Lopé, Waka and Ivindo – together cover 9,040 km² and hold high densities of large mammals, hundreds of species of birds, as well as cultural associations with the people living traditionally in the area.

Surrounding the three parks are ten forestry concessions, all of which could be considered part of a priority zone for wildlife conservation. While the Gabonese Code Forestier and its associated documents cover many aspects of wildlife management and control over hunting, its application is variable.



Technicians from WCS carried out field evaluations of seven companies (photo: P. Endazokou)

certification in promoting legal and responsible forest management in Gabon’s forestry concessions. The two certified companies performed better in all aspects of the evaluation than uncertified companies, demonstrating the important contribution of FSC certification to the conservation of endangered mammal species.

Maintaining a watchful eye in the Congo basin

FSC certification has proved to be a powerful tool that has advanced the application of strict monitoring standards for forest management in tropical Africa.

One company's experience in Cameroon

Becoming the first company to achieve FSC certification in the Congo Basin in 2006, Wijma Cameroun SA has operated in the country since 1968 and now employs 650 people, managing four certified concessions. Two chain of custody certified sawmills and factories process the local trees azobé, okan and tali into finished and semi-finished products, mostly for markets in the Netherlands. Wijma Cameroun has long experience in putting into practice principles and criteria of responsible forest management in Cameroon.



FSC certified products from Wijma Cameroun's sawmill (photo: Wijma Cameroun S.A.)

After five years of FSC forest management certification in Cameroon, the application of a holistic monitoring system, which is constantly applied and enforced, has yielded visible improvements for forest workers, local communities and the forests themselves. In the five years since Wijma Cameroun SA achieved FSC certification, positive impacts have become increasingly evident, and today are visible in all the different levels of activity of the company.

Constant monitoring yields environmental and social improvements

To meet the demanding standards of FSC certification, Wijma Cameroun has developed a unique monitoring system for its four forest concessions and timber processing plants. This allows the company to apply and continuously maintain responsible forest management, and to ensure it always complies with the requirements of its FSC forest management and chain of custody certification. The monitoring system covers all activities that could potentially have negative environmental or social impacts, and

“In tropical Africa, it is vital to minimize and control the environmental and social impacts of forest exploitation. FSC certification has allowed Wijma Cameroun to considerably reduce these negative impacts.”

**Mr Jacky Rivière,
Managing Director, Wijma Cameroun**

gathers vital information from the field to further improve control over forest management activities.

If a gap is identified between the requirements of the FSC principles and criteria and actual practice, it is analyzed and the relevant managers can respond with appropriate preventive or corrective measures. The surveillance system also includes mechanisms to ensure that the recommendations are actually applied, guaranteeing that the gaps identified are properly dealt with.

The Monitoring Officer at Wijma Cameroun SA, Mr Central Awe, explains: “Closely watching forest exploitation allows us to directly measure the impacts of the different activities, identify specific problems created, question them, and develop means to ensure that they are followed up.”

Benefits for all under the canopy

Improved living and working conditions are promoted, as well as better environmental

management, through good planning, alongside continuous monitoring, evaluation and feedback. Forest managers at Wijma Cameroun focus on the protection of water courses, future timber trees, rare and underrepresented species, and on responsible waste management. One important breakthrough has been the decline in poaching in the certified concessions, thanks to an open and sustained campaign of public awareness and enforcement. Random searches of vehicles for game animals or hunting weapons, and regular checks within the protected area for traps and other signs of poaching have proved particularly rewarding.

Equally, working and living conditions of employees and people living in the forest have improved. This is due to policies to promote healthy living and the enforcement of strict health and safety standards, but also voluntary social codes and the involvement of local people in forest management decision-making.



The company distributes school materials in local villages (photo: Wijma Cameroun S.A.)

The system of surveillance also helps to prevent conflicts between the company and local communities, due to the rigorous recording of all claims and counterclaims, as well as the social benefits that the company brings.

Looking forward, seeking synergies

Real advances have been made on the ground, but it is still difficult for an FSC certified company to maintain this high level of performance over time. One way of doing this is to seek synergies and coordination between internal monitoring and that undertaken by government bodies, as well as by using a range of internal and external audits.

By using a continuous improvement approach, the company aims to reduce negative social and environmental impacts even further and maintain them at an absolute minimum.

Rehabilitating natural communities

The HCV approach in action

Meeting FSC requirements to protect High Conservation Value areas means critical wetlands and grasslands on the western shores of Lake St. Lucia in South Africa have been restored.



Elephants browse the grasslands between forest blocks at SQF

When South Africa's state forests were privatized in 2000, a partnership between the international paper company, Mondi, the government, a black empowerment group and local communities established a unique company, SiyaQhubeka Forests (SQF) to manage forests on the shores of Lake St Lucia in Zululand. SiyaQhubeka – which means “we are going forward together” in Zulu – was awarded a government tender to operate 25,000 hectares of planted, prime commercial forestry land. Commercial state

plantation lands were also allocated to other forestry companies, including Mondi.

Responding to strong conservation concerns and to meet the FSC requirements for the identification and maintenance of High Conservation Values (HCVs), a 120km eco-boundary line was established between Mondi, SQF and the neighboring World Heritage Site, iSimangaliso Wetland Park, much of which has been rehabilitated to wetlands and grasslands.

Lake St. Lucia

Lake St. Lucia is one of the largest estuarine systems in Africa and is recognized for its historical background, significant wildlife resources, natural beauty, and as a popular tourist destination. Its associated wetland and marine environments cover an area of just under 290,000 hectares and have international significance for nature conservation and tourism. The area has gained international recognition through its inclusion in two Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention in 1975; iSimangaliso Wetland Park, which includes Lake St. Lucia, was included on the World Heritage List in 1999.

As the only remaining coastal wilderness in the country, the area is vulnerable to disturbances from several quarters, and particularly from development along the western periphery of the park. The western shores of the lake contain extensive HCV wetlands and have major potential for conservation and tourism. Historically, plantation forests on these shores were of particular concern as they reduced freshwater flow into the lake, which can cause salinity levels to escalate during the dry season, negatively affecting the lake's biodiversity.

Demarcating HCVs

As well as plantations, the land allocated to SQF included significant HCV wetland and grassland areas, some of which had previously been planted with commercial forests.

In 2000 a special working group was established, comprising representatives of the SiyaQhubeka Consortium, the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative, the KwaZulu Natal Nature Conservation Service and specialist consultants. The aim was to determine a boundary to separate those portions of the Western shores of Lake St. Lucia that were important for nature conservation, tourism and social purposes, from land for commercial plantations. The study proposed two primary zones: a 'commercial afforestation zone', and a 'natural zone' comprising conservation-worthy natural communities and incorrectly-sited plantations, which should be restored to their natural state.

This natural zone is now part of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

“Responding to intense national and local environmental concerns and by applying all the FSC principles throughout the iSimangaliso Wetland Park negotiations, business, NGOs and government have cooperated to find a sustainable win-win solution that has set new conservation norms for commercial forestry plantations,” says Peter Gardiner, Group Natural Resources Manager at Mondi.

Enhancing HCVs means rehabilitation

The agreement paved the way for the transfer to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park of 9,000 hectares of commercial state plantation land – including 4,500 hectares that had been allocated to Mondi – which had significant potential conservation value. A further 14,200 hectares of SQF's commercial landholdings and associated

natural ecosystems were also included in the Park.

To meet FSC requirements for protection of HCV areas, it was essential to ensure these important natural communities were maintained or enhanced. Over the past decade, the land transferred to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park has been rehabilitated to functioning wetlands and grasslands.

“Restoring high conservation value plantation areas back to wetlands, natural forests and key ecological networks at SQF has increased the conservation area of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, says Leonard Magagula, the SQF Business Unit Manager. “SQF provides a real life example of a World Heritage nature reserve and an intensively managed plantation forest flourishing side by side, setting new conservation standards for South Africa's commercial forestry plantations.”



Wetlands in SQF

“The ongoing maintenance of FSC certification strengthens our continuing commitment to protect these High Conservation Values, requiring us to maintain ecosystem integrity and protect these environmental values and services.”

Leonard Magagula, SQF Business Unit Manager

Protecting tigers in the taiga

FSC® provides the way

High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF), delineated as part of FSC certification, protect habitat for the endangered Amur tiger and other wildlife in the Russian Far East.



Korean pine-broadleaf forest at Primorskiy GOK
(photo: Evgeniy Lepeshkin)

The forests of the Russian Far East are some of the most diverse in the temperate zone, providing a habitat for a wide range of species, including one of the world's most magnificent predators – the Amur tiger. Yet this biodiversity hotspot is threatened: illegal logging is rampant and legal logging destructive, while logging roads allow poachers' access to the forests.

But FSC certification offers hope for the protection of large areas of HCVF, and responsible management of extensive production forests in the region. Certified companies have already agreed to permanently exclude 125,728 hectares from logging and road building, and to adapt logging practices on a further 92,314 hectares to protect key habitat areas.

The threat from illegal – and legal – logging

Despite their vast scale, these forests are under threat. Illegal logging is rife, driven by western demand for inexpensive furniture. Illegal loggers cut the healthiest pine and oak, diminishing the food supply for the tigers' prey species. Riparian forests

that tigers use as dispersal corridors are targeted for timber theft. And logging roads increase poaching access, leading to sharp population declines of both tigers and their prey.

Authorized timber harvesting by forest leaseholders is not always better. Large-scale industrial exploitation is fed by the continuous expansion into previously untouched old-growth forests. Protection of key habitats for native species is practically nonexistent.

FSC certified companies maintain tiger habitats

But forestry on the FSC model is providing an alternative to illegal logging and uncontrolled exploitation. Certified timber leases now cover 3,773,000 hectares in Primorye and Khabarovsk Provinces, and the region's largest leaseholder hopes to achieve certification in another 6.5 million hectares.

In this biodiversity hotspot, the delineation of HCVFs is a key benefit of FSC certification. Non-governmental organizations such as WWF Russia and Transparent World

“FSC certification has given us the leverage to convince forest leaseholders to forego logging in more than 100,000 hectares of old-growth forests. These massifs provide habitat for the full range of native species in our region, including the Amur tiger. There is still much work to be done, but this is already major progress for biodiversity conservation in the Russian Far East.”

***Denis Smirnov,
Head of Forest Program,
Amur Branch of WWF Russia***



The Amur tiger (photo: Igor Zhorov)

have used remote sensing and field verification to delineate large, roadless blocks of natural forests and help FSC certified companies develop management strategies. On the 49,000 hectare timber lease of Primorskiy GOK, 7.4 per cent of the territory was delineated as HCVF, where timber harvesting and road building will be fully excluded. Another 3.5 per cent was identified as smaller-scale Specially Protected Habitat Zones, which contain rare vegetation communities or key habitat features such as natural salt licks, forest cliffs and riparian forests with Himalayan bear den trees. The company is adapting logging practices on a further 23 per cent of their territory to maintain a more natural forest structure and is increasing the use of natural regeneration.

FSC provides the model

Other, larger forest leaseholders in the region are also following this model. When the FSC certified timber company Terneyles leased the vast, undeveloped territory of the Samarga Basin, a coalition of NGOs began field research to identify HCVPs. These organizations continue to negotiate and work with Terneyles to identify critical habitat areas and develop a precautionary

harvest strategy that will not threaten rare species.

FSC certification has brought major progress for conserving biodiversity in the forests of the Russian Far East. And while NGOs propose larger areas for protection than those yet established, most importantly, all actors have agreed on a way forward – forest management on the FSC model.

Russia's biodiversity hot spot in the Far East

The forests of Russia's Far East contain a rich blend of boreal, Manchurian and endemic species. The Amur tiger, among many others, finds a haven in the vast tracts of roadless forests. These huge areas of contiguous forests also support traditional resource use by taiga villages and the region's indigenous peoples, the Udegei and Nanai. Pine nuts, medicinal herbs, forest honey and sable pelts are the foundation of a centuries-old forest economy in this remote taiga.

Old traditions meet new standards

FSC certification provides assurance of responsible management, supporting traditional forestry values in Italy.



Coppice woodland (photo: Partecipanza dei Boschi di Trino)

The Partecipanza dei Bosch di Trino forest has been under management for over 800 years. With a highly varied forest composition and multifunctional objectives, management is complex. FSC certification has provided both an assurance that the forest is managed responsibly, and economic advantages from certified timber sales.

Multifunctional management offers a haven for biodiversity

The Partecipanza dei Bosch de Trino is managed for many different purposes, leading to a complex management challenge. Timber is harvested from the high forest for construction and wood working purposes. Wood is utilized locally for domestic heating, helping to replace the use of fossil fuels.

At the wider level, the forest provides important landscape diversity in an area of rice monocultures, offering a biodiversity haven from the surrounding agricultural fields. This function was highlighted by the establishment of the regional natural Park and Site within the European Network of Nature 2000, for which the Partecipanza acts as a managing authority. An area of forest is even managed specifically for the production of regional seeds, where material can be collected for the

propagation of ten indigenous species, maintaining the local gene pool.

FSC certification brings confidence in responsible management

Since 1990, the forest has been managed under a regime that emphasizes low-impact, 'natural' silviculture. As a means of ensuring – and demonstrating to others – that forest management met best practices, FSC certification was chosen. And certification has helped the administration demonstrate to all its stakeholders that the forest plan is being applied impartially, for the benefit of the members of the Partecipanza, private and public stakeholders alike.

While the regional development plan, jointly financed by the European Union, helped provide initial incentives for the certification process, there are also important economic opportunities from FSC certification. FSC certified construction timber is already sold from the Partecipanza forests, and in the future it is hoped that certified wood could be sold for energy use too.

In addition to the economic and reputational benefits, safety has improved

“The FSC certification was useful because it encouraged forest users to operate in compliance with the FSC requirements. This has brought important benefits to the preservation of our forest and improved forest management.”

***Bruno Ferrarotti,
First Forest Manager,
Partecipanza dei Boschi***



Log extraction with horses (photo: Partecipanza dei Boschi di Trino)

in forestry activities through better training and wide use of safety equipment. “In compliance with the FSC requirements, we have developed training courses for forest workers,” says Bruno Ferrarotti. “These courses have improved safety considerably.”

Taking tradition forward

The Partecipanza dei Boschi is managing the forest for the long term. With good management, as well as the confidence and support of their members and the public, ensured through FSC certification, the Partecipanza dei Boschi is proudly taking its tradition forward.

An ancient woodland with strong tradition

The “Partecipanza dei Bosch di Trino” first came into being in 1275 as a result of a donation from the Marchioness of Monferrato. The woods were governed by an autonomous authority consisting of seven members known as the “new managers”, with two “keepers” (Chairman and Vice Chairman) being elected. It still possesses its ancient statutes. There have been “soci partecipanti” or members of the Partecipanza since about 1400. Now spread all over the world these members are firmly bound to the tradition represented by the Partecipanza.

This is one of the last great woods of the Padano-Veneta plain, whose infrastructure and cultivation date back for centuries. Covering approximately 600 hectares altogether, the Bosco delle Sorti is managed as a high forest or high forest and copse. Thirty-two species of trees and bushes make for a varied forest composition, interspersed with boggy and humid areas supporting communities important for biodiversity.

Economy and biodiversity go hand-in-hand with FSC®

An FSC certified forestry company provides a long-term economic contribution and supports a unique indigenous conservation initiative in the Solomon Islands.



Mount Rano, seen from the Vila River Reserve
(photo: Andrew Cox, Technical Officer, KIBCA)

On Kolombangara Island – part of the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific Ocean – productive economic activities are limited by their small scale and distance to markets. Political unrest during the late 1990s and questions over land tenure contributed to a climate of uncertainty in the last decade.

Despite these complications, Kolombangara Forest Products Limited (KFPL) has successfully steered a course through the choppy waters of international markets, local tensions and environmental pitfalls. Enthusiastically implementing the

requirements of its FSC certification, KFPL has assisted in the creation of a unique conservation NGO in partnership with the indigenous landowners. At the same time, it has gained access to markets that bring significant economic returns to the Islands.

Building a market for FSC products

By international standards KFPL is a small-scale producer of small-sized logs. Lacking economies of scale and located far from major markets, KFPL faces high costs that make it difficult to compete with large scale producers of plantation timber in North and South America, New Zealand and Africa.

Land issues and responsible management

Situated on the south-western quarter of the circular volcanic island of Kolombangara, KFPL has inherited a complex history. The land, owned by the government, was expropriated by the colonial government under British rule. It was granted as a 75-year lease to KFPL in 1989 when the company was established as an independent enterprise between the Commonwealth Development Corporation and the Solomon Islands Government.

Continued management of KFPL relies on the company's ability to ensure the local community benefits from its activities. The company achieved FSC forest management certification in 1999 and chain of custody in 2010. KFPL's commitment to meeting FSC's requirements for community involvement and environmental excellence has given the communities confidence that they have a strong relationship with the company.

“The protection of the pristine montane regions of the island and their diverse biodiversity wouldn’t have been holistically achieved without the FSC certification status achieved by Kolombangara Forest Products Limited, which has attracted the attention of the people on Kolombangara, and hence the formation of KIBCA.”

**Ferguson Vaghi,
KIBCA Coordinator**

Instead KFPL aims at niche markets, and here FSC certification provides a strong selling point. Currently demand outstrips KFPL’s ability to supply FSC certified logs and timber. Although the market is still relatively small and seasonal, demand is growing for higher value FSC certified wood, and is starting to attract investment from major European manufacturers and furniture dealers. And large building works within the Solomon Islands, such as the reconstruction work in Choiseul and Western Provinces following the 2007 earthquake and tsunami, used entirely FSC certified timber.

All this is good news for Kolombangara Island where KFPL is the largest permanent business, operating year round and providing stable, continuous employment to 160 full-time employees and a consistent contract workforce of 600 people.

Building local capacity, conserving local resources

Faced with an influx of logging companies seeking access to Kolombangara’s forest

resources, and at the same time aiming to increase indigenous control over land management, the indigenous landowners established the Kolombangara Island Biodiversity Conservation Association (KIBCA) in 2009. The move was prompted and assisted by KFPL’s management.

KIBCA provides the landowners with a clear voice in the conservation and management of 19,400 hectares located above the 400m contour line of the whole island, which includes 11,650 hectares managed in partnership with KFPL on the company’s lease-holding.

“For the first time since about 1900, KIBCA provided a realistic way for Kolombangara indigenous people, long alienated from their land, to be involved in managing a large part of their island,” says Ferguson Vaghi, KIBCA Coordinator. He is straightforward about KFPL’s rationale for supporting KIBCA.



Endemic Kolombangaran White Eye, held by a KIBCA ranger (photo: Andrew Cox, Technical Officer, KIBCA)

“The most obvious benefit [for KFPL] is that KIBCA provides a clear way to demonstrate to FSC how KFPL is meeting many of the environmental requirements of certification.”

It’s a partnership that is beginning to pay dividends. KIBCA has started to attract funding from donors, and has begun to manage tourists in the area. It is increasingly involved in conservation across the island, beyond the forest landscapes of the interior.

The future is bright for Kolombangara

As a means of meeting KFPL’s commitments to its FSC certification, KIBCA provides a win-win solution. And with markets for KFPL’s FSC certified products growing, the company’s contribution to the local economy, society and environment look set to continue.

From thinning to winning

A model of responsible forest management

FSC certification brings economic benefits and recognition to the City of Bamberg's forestry management.



Klaus Schultz in the hospital foundation forest in Bamberg (photo: Bamberg City Forests)

Bamberg's old city may be a UNESCO world heritage site but visitors do not come only for the urban experience. The surrounding woodlands have long been an attraction too, increasingly seen by experts as a model of successful responsible forest management.

After 15 years of implementing low impact forestry methods, Bamberg city's forest became FSC certified in 2001. Individual trees are selected and harvested, avoiding the clear felling of large areas. Such 'continuous cover' forestry has been shown to be win-win-win, increasing economic revenues and social and environmental benefits.

From thinning to winning

In 1985, a young forest engineer, Klaus Schulz, took over as manager of Bamberg city's forests. On his recommendation, the council decided to implement low impact forestry methods, but the new system involved some major challenges. "The municipal forestry workers had to retrain," Schulz recalls, "they had to learn new thinning and management operations." New methods of deer control adopted from nearby Ebrach also brought success

and allowed the natural regeneration of site-appropriate woodland types that are sensitive to browsing.

And the forest ecosystem was not the only beneficiary. The forest owners, city authorities and citizens' hospital foundation were also happy about the increasing revenue from the forest. Switching to natural regeneration saved money, as it was no longer necessary to buy young trees from nurseries.

In the 1990s, the Bamberg forest management agency increasingly recognized the need to be even more receptive to society's demands for responsible forest management, which prompted the move towards certification. Bamberg achieved FSC certification in September 2001. "In silvicultural terms, the requirements were easy to meet," says Klaus Schulz, "but the audits also led to new insights." Ten years ago, some might have had reservations about FSC certification and concerns about its influence on operational decisions. After all, nobody wanted to give up their independence. "But we have managed to highlight again and again that new insights and development are indispensable for sustainable forestry," says Schulz.

“Our main customer for spruce and pine logs is FSC certified. As well as providing us with a reliable buyer of our wood, we also get 1 to 2 Euros more per cubic meter. And FSC pulpwood can also be sold at significantly higher prices.”

*Klaus Schulz,
Bamberg City Forests*

The importance of education

“We managed to explain the different aspects of what was happening in the forest through extensive public relations work and numerous guided forest walks,” says Schulz. In the beginning no-one understood the need to leave fallen deadwood and that all vehicle access was restricted to the extraction tracks. “Today, however, even the firewood collectors know that rotting wood enhances biodiversity, nourishes fungi and insects, and thus also benefits birds and mammals.”

Economic advantages from sustainability and certification

The results of the last 25 years have shown that the forest’s natural processes can be harnessed for economic benefit. Although the certification process never focused primarily on the financial aspect, there has been a considerable economic benefit as a result of the marked increase in demand for FSC timber.



Beech, pine and oak forest with naturally regenerating beech (photo: Bamberg City Forests)

What next for FSC in Bamberg?

Bamberg’s forest agency was instrumental in the FSC Franconia Group joining a much more cost-effective group certification scheme in 2010. “Besides exchanging experiences, one of our main aims is also to market rare and valuable timbers,” Schulz

says in conclusion. “We have been visited by a large number of interested foresters and forest owners wanting to find out about the consequences of certification.” He looks forward confidently to even more ‘FSC tourism’, as people come to learn and follow Bamberg’s model for success.

FSC certified ‘city’ forests of Bamberg

Bamberg city council independently manages 350 hectares of municipal forest, as well as 980 hectares owned by the citizens’ hospital foundation. The municipal forest was purchased from the Free State of Bavaria in 1915, but origins of the citizens’ hospital forest estate date back to 1278. The municipal forest supplies water for the city, recreation, and revenues from timber and hunting. Income from the hospital foundation forest supports the old people’s home in Michelsberg.

The simplest benefit

A price premium for certified wood

Small forest owners in Portugal are directly gaining from FSC certification through a price premium for their products.



Typical landscape of northern Portugal with scattered eucalyptus plantations (photo: Portucel Soporcel Group's Image Bank)

Portugal is a country of many small forest owners – over 400,000 – and the vast majority of them own less than 3 hectares of forest each. For these very small forest owners, who often rely on forestry for a large part of their income, turning a profit from timber can be tricky.

To help their small suppliers—and supplement the production of FSC certified wood from their own forests – Portucel Soporcel group decided to offer a price premium to growers for FSC certified timber. The policy has proved so popular it has spread from the center-north of Portugal across to Spain, been emulated by competitors and spurred the establishment of several group forest certification initiatives.

Supplying the mills

Most of the forests under Portucel Soporcel group's direct management, covering

some 120,000 hectares, are FSC certified, but the company depends heavily on the market to guarantee the totality of its wood supply needs. This means buying wood from the many small forest owners who grow eucalyptus in the center-north of the country.

But purchasing large quantities of wood from many small forest owners, while maintaining a certified operation brings many complications. Over 85 per cent of forest owners have less than 3 hectares of land. The certification process is relatively complex for such small forest owners and setting up and maintaining a group certification scheme has its costs.

Building certified supply

To overcome these constraints Portucel Soporcel group has pioneered the introduction of a price premium for FSC

The Portucel Soporcel group

The Portucel Soporcel group is one of Portugal's strongest players on the international stage. It is the leading European producer of UWF printing and writing paper, and the largest producer in Europe – and one of the largest in the world – of bleached eucalyptus kraft pulp (BEKP), with an annual turnover of approximately 1,400 million Euros.

certified wood. Any supplier who delivers certified wood receives a premium that helps cover the costs of certification and provides an enhanced profit for the producer. Introduced in 2006 at a level of 2.5 Euros per cubic meter, by 2008 the premium was raised to 4.0 Euros per cubic meter. For smallholders managing fragmented and dispersed areas of forest this can make all the difference. A forest owner with 3 hectares of forest who delivers 430 cubic meters of wood can receive a total price premium of more than 1,700 Euros, after a rotation period of twelve years.

“This premium, launched by Portucel Soporcel group, has been decisive to encourage the forest producers to associate and take up a certification process, allowing them to have access to a more demanding market and obtain an additional income of 40–60 Euros per hectare per year,” says José Joaquim Raposo, Forest Manager at Herdade dos Fidalgos, and member of the certified group APFCertifica.

To help small forest owners become FSC certified, Portucel Soporcel group promotes training, awareness raising and demonstrations for owners and forest association staff, as well as regular training for contractors. The company has also established protocols with the main organizations working in the sector, to support their certification efforts.

“The additional value received for certified wood has prompted a great number of forest



Eucalyptus stand interspersed with areas of cork oak (*Quercus suber*) (photo: Portucel Soporcel Group's Image Bank)

“With this premium the small producers feel that effort pays and that it’s worthwhile to certify – both the producers and the environment end up winning!”

José Francisco Silva, Forest Producer and Vice-President of the Forestry Association of Baixo Vouga

producers to join – especially the small owners – and stimulated the expansion of a ‘forest mentality’, based on the principle of good forestry practices and sustainability,” says António Loureiro, President of Unimadeiras, a certified forest production and trade association. “A few years after this project started, the improvement of silvicultural practices and forest management are remarkable, with special emphasis on the introduction of management methods that focus, amongst others, on cost

monitoring, accident prevention, elaboration of forest management plans and continuous training.”

Spreading outwards

The scheme has turned out to be very successful. The simple act of offering a premium for FSC certified wood has provided the incentive for several forest certification group initiatives in the region, providing access to markets and greater income to an increasing number of forest owners.

Building markets, sharing knowledge with group chain of custody

FSC group chain of custody certification brings opportunities for new markets, increased organizational ability and environmental consciousness among small wood processors in Honduras.



Craftsman at work (photo: COPADE)

The Honduran city of Choluteca is dominated by the huge multinationals where the majority of its 235,000 inhabitants find work. Most – but not all. Small scale carpentry workshops also operate here, using the abundant wood resources of northern Honduras. But this timber is often illegally harvested, with few concerns for environmental or social safeguards.

With the support of the Fundación COPADE–España (Comercio para el

Desarrollo, or Trade for Development), in 2004 the Honduran Association of Wood Processors and Artisans (APROMAH) was established, comprising a group of 15 artisanal workshops and employing about 90 people in total. Group FSC chain of custody certification has helped four of these workshops to access new markets, brought better organization and processing techniques to the artisanal workers, and improved equipment and safety for its members.

Fundación COPADE – Comercio para el Desarrollo

Established in 1998, COPADE aims to promote sustainable structures for socio-economic development and respect for the environment, through trade in products from disadvantaged groups in Latin America. With offices in Spain, Honduras and Bolivia, the organization was formally registered in Honduras in 2000.

Assisted by funding from the Fundación Biodiversidad, a project was established through the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center (CATIE), the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), the Multilateral Investment Fund (FOMIN), and supported by the Fundación Iberoamericana para el Desarrollo, which provided training on FSC certification, administration, design and improvement of production equipment for members of APROMAH. In 2007, four APROMAH member workshops achieved FSC chain of custody certification under a group scheme managed by COPADE Honduras. Through a strategic alliance with the FSC certified Cooperativa Regional Agroforestal Colón, Atlántida Honduras Limitada (COATLAHL) the APROMAH workshops have access to FSC certified, community-produced timber.

Certification brings opportunities for development

Working towards FSC certification has brought a number of benefits, noticed by both processors and local authorities alike. Better installation and equipment, increased production efficiency, better organization of the work process and much better technical knowledge have all been gained through the years of joint work between COPADE Honduras and APROMAH. Using the requirements of chain of custody certification as a guide to good business management practice has improved efficiency; the carpenters have a good knowledge of safe work practices and professional equipment is available.

Miguel Mejía Castro has been a carpenter since he established a workshop with his brother at the age of 21. Now President of APROMAH, he has been central to the move towards certification. “In terms of improvements, we can talk about the expansion of the work area, machinery, better processes for wood transformation, a reduction in losses, better administrative control – these are just some of the benefits that a company, of any size, gains through chain of custody certification,” he says.

A challenging market

The members of APROMAH’s FSC group certification scheme sell their products in part through the COPADE Honduras shop, as well as on the local market. A further portion of production is sold through the COPADE-España shop in Madrid, a market

that is helped by their double certification – FSC plus Fair Trade.

“In Honduras, few people know the value represented by FSC certified wood, everyone chooses their furniture primarily on the basis of price,” says Miguel Mejía. This can create a problem, as the workshops have to pay a 30 per cent higher price for the certified wood that they use. “If we’re not able to sell the final furniture with a premium, it raises the costs of production,” he adds. “Nonetheless, buying certified raw

material also has indirect benefits: the logs and sawn wood, as well as being legal, arrive already dried, which is easier to work and gives a better finish.”

Miguel Mejía hopes that over time, the local market will become more discerning about the sources of wood products. “My objective is to be able to maintain my workshop in the local market using only FSC certified products.” With organizations like COPADE Honduras and APROMAH, the road to increased consumer consciousness in Honduras has begun.

“One of the benefits of the group chain of custody is that it gives you the opportunity to share the experience with other workshop owners who don’t belong to a chain of custody. It gives better access to information too, and the possibility of entering the export market.”

*Miguel Mejía,
President of APROMAH*



FSC certified furniture in the Comercio Justo shop (photo: COPADE)

Association and certification make small forests profitable

FSC certification brings economic advantages and market access to thousands of small forest owners in Sweden.



For many forest owners, forestry is a lifestyle (photo: Jesper Andersson)

It wasn't always forest: until the 20th century the land where the forests of southern Sweden now stand were a mosaic of agricultural land, pasture and forests. Now they are mostly mixed stands of spruce, pine and birch. Old broadleaf trees provide continuity with the trees left from the pastures, and add biodiversity value to the forest.

The 51,000 forest owners who make up the membership of Södra mostly own relatively small areas of forest. Södra provides support and services for forest

management, processing and marketing. With FSC group certification achieved in 2009, Södra offers its members access to large European and global markets.

Access to markets with FSC certification

With strongly growing demand for FSC certified products, in February 2009 Södra's board took the decision to work towards FSC certification. The group certification system within Södra achieved FSC forest management certification in July 2009,

“As a co-owner of Södra’s industries, I believe my decision to choose FSC certification strengthens our common global competitiveness.”

***Bodil Gunnarsson,
Södra member and forest owner***

opening markets to its members for both timber and pulp products, and offering members enhanced earning capability.

President of Södra Cell International, Ulf Edman, sees a growing interest in FSC certified pulpwood. “Demand is strong and as we are now receiving the volumes of FSC pulpwood we need, we can also deliver in line with customer demand,” he says. “Demand for FSC pulp was previously strongest in England. Now its growing in the rest of Europe also,” he adds.

Those members with certification receive a premium per cubic meter on delivering logs to the processing plants. For small forest owners, association and certification together bring important economic benefits. But equally important for some is the confirmation of their responsible forest management.

“The criteria for certification are very consistent with how I want to manage my forests,” says forest owner, Bodil Gunnarsson. “To get paid extra to do as one wants is a big advantage. Certification also helps ensure that contractors take responsibility in all respects.”

Small forest ownership – a lifestyle choice

For many forest owners forestry is a lifestyle, and recreational activities and nature conservation are often primary objectives alongside economic aims. Owners themselves decide how their forests are managed. The Green Forest Management plan – prepared for each forest property – is

an important tool for combining production and environmental considerations and also forms the basis for FSC certification.

“The FSC certification shows that we meet the ambitions of nature conservation and environment required by customers. I am a biologist and have taught biology at Lund University. For me, as a forest owner it is natural to live what I preach as a biologist,” says Södra member and forest owner, Ingvar Nilsson.

Growing membership, growing influence

The FSC group certification scheme has been popular among members, and the number of certified holdings has risen rapidly in the two years since 2009. “We have had a tremendous response from our members since we started offering FSC certification in 2009,” says Klara Helstad, Environmental and Quality Manager for Södra Skog. “We now have more than 15,000 certified forest holdings and 1.3 million hectares. It’s great that it has worked out so well.”

Södra – a large group of small owners

The 51,000 forest owners that make up Södra’s membership own just over half of all privately owned forest in southern Sweden, as well as a group of companies that are successful in both the Swedish and international markets. Production centers mainly on paper pulp, sawn timber goods, interior products, biofuel and bioenergy. With average forest holdings of 50 hectares each, the association permits these small forest owners to market their raw materials profitably.

As well as being an economic association for its members, Södra is also a large employer. Some 4,000 people work for the Group, in areas that range from forest management and environmental conservation to accounting, sales and product development.

Södra’s FSC certification, of course, brings the association the ability to play an active role in the FSC, and it is now represented on the board and committees of FSC Sweden. Ensuring the needs of small forest owners are well represented in forest certification schemes, Södra brings ample strength for its members through association.



Deciduous forest, managed for conservation (photo: Andreas Lindholm)

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The simplest benefit: A price premium for certified wood Paula Guimaraes, Forest Certification Officer, Portucel Soporcel group

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Association and certification make small forests profitable Klara Helstad, Environmental and Quality Manager, Södra Skog



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