

New Approaches project

Smallholders Update - April 2021

New Approaches enters a new phase: Now Community and Family Forests Program (CFFP)

We are proud to announce that the New Approaches project is launching a new phase by calibrating years of work and history into a new program at FSC: Community and Family Forests Program (CFFP).

This program will continue doing what it does best, finding innovative solutions for smallholders and communities throughout the FSC system towards getting and remaining FSC certified.

Our work is manifold; we look at the FSC normative framework to find ways to make the FSC policies and standards more approachable and understandable by family and community forests, as well as finding market tools so these stakeholders can secure benefits from certification. We are working closely with regional and

national FSC offices around the world to continue social policy, forestry and national policy and standards, pilot testing, systemic approaches such as collective impact methodology, and market objectives work under the new Community and Family Forests Program.

In 2021, we will be rolling out our tried and tested policy solutions and market tools. Stay tuned on our updates through the website in the upcoming months, and read below to learn more about we have accomplished recently.



Forest Management (FM) Groups Standard launch

The revised FM Groups standard was approved by the FSC International Board of Directors in December 2020 and became effective 16 March 2021. The revision of the standard took less than two years since the working group was established, marking an effective process in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic. The second draft of the standard obtained huge support from stakeholders, something that was a great achievement and provides a good starting point to the roll-out of the revised standard.

The New Approaches team is supporting the uptake of the standard by providing guidance and materials in the form of webinars, trainings and workshops throughout the year 2021. The team already organized three webinars last March allowing any interested stakeholder to participate and ask questions related to the revised standard. Additionally, there are activities planned to support the Portuguese, Spanish, US, Japanese and East African FSC offices – including webinars, trainings and workshops that aim to provide nationally applicable examples and good practices to forest management group certification.

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Chinese National Forest Stewardship Standard (NFSS) pilot test

Several guidance sessions were held with the Performance and Standards Unit in July 2020, based on the complementary progress reports prepared by FSC China (Assessment report on indicator 6.5.5 alternatives for smallholders and Risk Assessment Report on implementation of Chinese NFSS for smallholder).

Additional training on Ecosystem Services Procedure was organized in September for both Chinese certificate holders and certification bodies, aiming to develop local capacity for this recent FSC tool.

Preliminary results were shared by FSC China in January 2021 and presented to the Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) in February.

Next steps will include another presentation to PSC at their June meeting, but this time requesting a recommendation on how to consider the results of the pilot test and eventually reflect them on the FSC system.

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Asia-Pacific Regional Forest Stewardship Standard (RFSS) for smallholders

The final draft, incorporating the results of the public consultation and all the interactions with Performance and Standards Unit (PSU) for approval of the procedural elements of this development process, was finally submitted for Policy and Standards Committee (PSC) for an approval in December 2020. The PSC approved Asia Pacific RFSS for smallholders with conditions. Twelve conditions were identified, as well as three recommendations. The standard will need to be re-submitted again but PSC has delegated the authority to the Chief Policy Officer, to determine when these conditions are met. The PSC is also recommending to the Board that the standard is to be tested as a pilot based on the FSC Policy for Pilot Tests (FSC-POL-01-001).

Next steps will involve a continuous interaction with PSU to close the identified conditions, while the submission of massive pilot test is being prepared, with the aim to be submitted to FSC Board meeting in June.

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Forestry Contractors certification

Forestry contractors have now been formally introduced to FSC forest management certification with the revised Forest Management (FM) Groups standard recently approved, by presenting the optional inclusion of forestry contractors into the FM group certificates. The option of including forestry contractors into the FM group certificates allows for the group managers to divide responsibilities between the various players affecting the group certification processes with more flexibility. The contractors are able to assume responsibility for ensuring conformance directly over their own areas of responsibility without the group manager having to bear the responsibility on behalf of the contractor. The contractors can also use the FM/Chain of Custody (CoC) group certificate to pass on the FSC CoC claim if they themselves take ownership of the timber they harvest as part of their responsibilities within the group. This allows the contractors to be able to sell FSC certified timber without having to have their own FSC Chain of Custody certificate.

FSC is also planning the revision of the standards guiding the development and revision of National Forest Stewardship Standards. This revision will allow the role of the forestry contractors with regards to national standards to be formalized. This development follows an extensive analysis of the potential role the forestry contractors could play in FSC certification and presents a possibility for national standard development groups to include provisions to ensure and rely on high performance of forestry contractors.

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Continuous Improvement procedure

The second half of 2020 continued to be a challenge due to not being able to meet in person. But the team could still hold regular calls with the Working Group to advance on different aspects. The Working Group is now used to working online and has a good dynamic. The criteria classification, as critical or continuous improvement, is now finished, and this is the basis of the procedure.

Different alternatives have been discussed to streamline the auditing process and adapt it to each specific certificate holder.

The Action Plan is also being advanced – a timeline that each certificate holder will have, indicating when each continuous improvement criterion has to be conformed with, through the first five years of the process.

The public consultation of draft 1 is planned for early Quarter 2.

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Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) guidelines

At the end of March 2021, the FSC-GUI-30-003 V2.0, FSC Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) have been approved by the FSC Board of Directors with kudos and high recognition of the Working Group's efforts to its development. Being categorized as a high priority topic, FSC is now starting the roll-out to implement the FPIC guidelines, starting in Canada in close collaboration with the National Office. In a second phase the learnings will be transferred to all other regions and countries, where Indigenous' and local communities'

rights are being put on stake by forest management.

Being available in English and Spanish, the guidelines also will be translated into further languages where seen applicable.

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Collective Impact methodology

The New Approaches team has been working on compiling a briefing note that describes the Collective Impact methodology. This new mechanism aims to increase FSC certified area in natural forests by facilitating access to markets for small-scale and community producers, as well as Indigenous People.

There are three case studies on going. In Brazil, FSC is applying the Collective Impact methodology by working with a local multi-stakeholder platform, pro Acai, and are developing additional efforts to expand a similar approach to the Brazil nut value chain. The focus on NTFP is related to potential to grow FSC certification - 198 million ha of Amazon forest has been made available for Indigenous Peoples. However, these areas can only be managed to extract or collect NTFP. In Chile, where FSC certification growth has stagnated, the biggest opportunity for growth is in small-scale and community certification. FSC Chile is using the Collective Impact methodology to design an inclusive small-scale forestry model, shifting the current perception (that FSC is only for the industrial plantations).

In Mesoamerica, FSC Honduras is leading an effort to overcome a recent significant drop in FSC certificates. The Collective Impact methodology will be employed to create a comprehensive stakeholder

mapping and training program to increase smallholder certification uptake. After being put on hold due to Covid-19, efforts will begin again in 2021 designing a replicable training program targeted for smallholders and communities in the Mesoamerica area.

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Smallholder Access Program pilot test

The Year 1 meeting took place in October 2020, where the team analysed all the results from the first year of the pilot. In general, the results are very good; landowners have been engaged, sustainable harvest is guaranteed, high-grading is avoided, FSC values are protected and the harvested tracts look like 'full' FSC certified tracts.

On the other hand, we managed to have less tracts than expected, mainly due to a bit of delay in the process, some market challenges, the Covid-19 pandemic and particularly wet weather in 2020.

The results were presented to the Policy Steering Group in December, and to the Board in March 2021 to ask for an extension of the pilot, which was granted.

The idea is to continue with the pilot until June 2022, to have more and better data, plus more input on the market side.

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