



Forest Stewardship Council®



FSC New Approaches Project: 2018 Report & 2019 Plans

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www.ic.fsc.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New Approaches project seeks to improve access to, and uptake of, the FSC system by small forest owners and communities. Currently, only 4% of small and/or low intensity forest areas are FSC certified. FSC seeks to increase the percentage of certified forests by 2020 through innovative solutions that depend on active local stakeholder participation and elevate the unique experiences of smallholders and communities.

FSC's New Approaches project is developing specific tactics for smallholders and communities to engage with the FSC system and to maintain FSC certification. The effort ensures FSC remains internationally recognized and locally relevant. The project takes the form of multiple work streams (see box, inset) implemented by a global team of FSC experts.

The New Approaches team reflects the different regional needs of smallholders and communities, while also representing the depth of expertise within the international FSC system. The FSC team meets via monthly webinars and quarterly in-person meetings to provide project updates, describe emerging challenges and opportunities for enhanced collaboration, and identify new solutions. The team provides regular updates to the Board of Directors, FSC Policy and Standards Unit, global FSC staff meetings, and FSC national offices. The team is integrated with their respective FSC regional or national offices maintaining fidelity, transparency, and accountability with FSC stakeholders.

In 2018, the New Approaches project made significant progress to advance its goals. The global team of experts launched eight projects globally, and established a framework to test, evaluate, and scale up successful solutions for smallholders and communities. The project also launched the development of value chains for smallholders and communities through partnerships with entities such as the Forests and Climate Change Fund (FCCF) and the Eco-Innovation Foundation (EIF). These partnerships will create innovative supply chain models focused on forests managed by smallholders and communities and link them to markets. Additionally, the New Approaches project invested in a range of enablers to inform and engage stakeholders. This included increased communication across the FSC network, engagement events, and the development of international and national working groups, consultative forums, and workshops.

In 2019, the New Approaches project is guided by an expert-informed framework, an optimized workplan, and multi-faceted work streams in place. Efforts this year will focus on deploying locally-relevant solutions for smallholders and communities in specific geographic regions, aligned with FSC's global priorities and geographies. These efforts will result in a range of validated new approaches and tools to responsible forest management for smallholders and communities. By 2020, the New Approaches program will deploy these tools globally.

WORK STREAMS

Normative Framework
Build on existing FSC forest management standards, improve international standards, and explore new concepts.

Market Development
Grow market access and raise market share.

Enablers
Increase communication, training, and fundraising.

NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

The New Approaches project is exploring the flexibility of the FSC system, improving relevant standards, and developing new solutions. Each of the concepts under consideration seek to increase accessibility to the FSC system and remove barriers for smallholders and communities. Below is an overview of activities completed in 2018 for each project and an outline of activities planned for 2019.

Improving Forest Management Standards

The New Approaches project is working closely with FSC China to evaluate alternative approaches for smallholders and communities within the Chinese National Forest Stewardship Standard (NFSS). One International Generic Indicator in particular – Indicator 6.5.5. – is under evaluation. This indicator requires certificate holders to set aside 10% of the forest unit as a designated conservation area.

FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

Chinese NFSS (6.5.5.)
Pilot Test

For many smallholders and communities in China who manage plantations over small and scattered patches of land or manage land where natural vegetation is sparse, segmented, or highly degraded, the requirement is a barrier to access and to maintain FSC certification. The New Approaches project seeks to test alternative ways of conforming with Indicator 6.5.5. This effort will ensure compliance with FSC's requirements while addressing the specific challenges and providing better support to smallholders and communities.

In 2018, the New Approaches project in China achieved the following:

- Recruited and launched a **Working Group** of three members, including IKEA, WWF, and the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF).
- Developed a **Standard Operating Procedure** to guide the pilot testing, establish selection criteria for the pilot sites and a scoring system for potential participants, and develop a technical assistance framework and templates for the identified alternatives.
- Selected **six pilot sites** based on existing Certificate Holders in the Guangdong, Guangxi, and Shandong provinces.
- **Trained** smallholder and community certificate holders and certification bodies.

In 2019, the project will pilot test four possible alternatives to meet compliance with Indicator 6.5.5. The project will also compare the implications of these alternative approaches with other areas in China where compliance with the indicator is not a challenge. Simultaneously, the project is developing a risk assessment methodology and templates to align with this effort. The results will provide input on the implementation of the China NFSS for smallholders and communities. Ultimately, the project will inform wider implementation across the FSC network, including regional applications in Asia Pacific and with other smallholders and communities throughout the world.

Improving International Standards to be More Accessible

Group Certification Standard Revision Process

The New Approaches project is leading the revision of the FSC-STD-30-005-V1-1 *Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups*, known as the 'Group Standard.' The effort is designed to call special attention to smallholders and communities through stakeholder perspectives and to integrate new elements to the standard that will be adapted into national and regional forest management standards. The effort will explore the inclusion of additional models to better reflect and distinguish the needs of smallholders and communities.¹

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARDS

Group Certification
Standard
Revision Process

It will also address concerns expressed by stakeholders, certificate holders, and certification bodies. For example, the effort will evaluate if existing FSC group models or a new model better reflect the needs of smallholders and communities through traditional decision-making processes, communally shared benefits, and/or governance structures.

In 2018, the New Approaches project achieved the following as it moved the revision process forward, aligned with FSC policies and procedures:

- Conducted a **global survey** to guide the standard revision.
- Co-organized a **workshop** (with FSC US) for group managers, producers, market partners, and smallholder representatives to collect feedback from one of the most experience FSC regions.
- Established a **Technical Working Group** consisting of seven technical experts, supported by a project coordinator, a dedicated technical writer, and a technical coordinator. The Technical Working Group will provide content-related input to the revision, participate in stakeholder outreach, evaluate results from field and pilot tests, and review input from Consultative Forums.

The Group Standard revision will be completed in 2020, following regular FSC policies and standards procedures. The Technical Working Group will streamline the revision of the Group Standard to incorporate all relevant and related issues into one, simply built standard to support smallholder and community certificate holders.

Testing New Concepts

The New Approaches project is exploring new concepts to achieve its goal to increase the number of smallholders and communities in the FSC system. The new concepts include continuous improvement to certification in Latin America and Eastern Africa, forestry contractors' certification and participation in group management, a simplified regional standard in the Asia Pacific region, and a specific program for smallholders in the United States.

¹ See also, [Motion 83/2014 Development of a Forest Certification Standard adapted to the realities of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Forest Communities](#).

Latin America

The concept of continuous improvement centers on the idea that smallholders and communities can achieve FSC certification over a pre-defined time period to meet critical forest management criteria. Smallholders and communities follow clear steps to ensure their forestry activities fully conform with the requirements of applicable FSC standards. They also commit to continuously improving their performance and forest management. The concept is currently under exploration in Latin America and Eastern Africa.

NEW CONCEPTS

Latin America
Continuous Improvement
Participatory Workshops

In Latin America, conformity with FSC requirements is a challenge for smallholders and communities. The path to certification demands a significant investment from landowners, often outweighing the economic benefit. Additionally, certification alone is not enough. Building the skills and capacities of smallholders and communities through trainings, technical assistance, and connection to third-party resources are critical elements to achieve and maintain certification. Each of these solutions is currently under evaluation.

To address these challenges in Latin America, the New Approaches project facilitated a series of workshops to explore the concept of continuous improvement. The workshops collected ideas and opinions to inform recommendations for FSC, including expanding the range of services FSC can provide for smallholders and communities. In 2018, the project achieved the following:

- Developed a **concept note and work plan** that was agreed upon regionally.
- Led **15 workshops** in eight countries, including Honduras, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador, Brazil, Guatemala, Peru, and Bolivia.
- **210 participants** attended, including smallholders and communities, smallholders and communities' representatives, Standard Development Groups, and FSC Network Partners.

In 2019, the New Approaches project will publish the findings of these workshops and inform next steps. The findings will also be shared back with the smallholders, communities, and Standard Development Groups who participated in the workshops. The final report will be published for public consultation on FSC's platform in 2019. Following the public consultation period, the New Approaches project will generate recommendations for FSC to integrate and implement the continuous improvement to certification concept across the FSC system.

Eastern Africa

The New Approaches project is also exploring the concept of continuous improvement to certification in Eastern Africa, specifically focusing in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The results of this effort will contribute to the development of National Forest Stewardship Standards in Eastern Africa, implement a risk-assessment of the FSC National Standards, and generate guidance for the Standard Development Groups for the better inclusion of smallholders and communities in the FSC system.

NEW CONCEPTS

Eastern Africa
Continuous Improvement
Field Tests

In 2018, the New Approaches project advanced the concept of continuous improvement in Eastern Africa through the following activities:

- Developed a **discussion paper** and submitted the paper for public consultation.
- Developed **Terms of Reference** and **Standard Operating Procedures** to guide the efforts of the Technical Working Group.
- Established the **Technical Working Group** comprised of five technical experts from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.
- Facilitated the **first key stakeholder meeting** in Kenya.
- Identified **field test sites** to evaluate the concept of continuous improvement.

In 2019, the Technical Working Group will organize additional events – including consultations – throughout Tanzania and Uganda. The project will engage with various stakeholders, such as existing and potential certificate holders. The group will then compile learnings and findings generated during the consultation period, with the final report to be published in 2019.

Forestry Contractors

The New Approaches project is assessing the feasibility of including forestry contractors in the FSC system. Allowing the division of responsibilities between forest owners, group entities, and forestry contractors may reduce the burden that conformity represents for smallholders and communities. This concept is intended to evolve across international contexts based on feedback from both internal and external FSC stakeholders.

NEW CONCEPTS

Forestry Contractors
Certification
Field Test

The project activities are assessing the potential impacts of including forestry contractors in the FSC system. Efforts are also identifying other FSC policies and procedures that may require revision if forestry contractors are incorporated. In 2018, the New Approaches project advanced this new concept through the following activities:

- Established a **Working Group of nine forestry contractors** from Lithuania, Finland, and the United States.
- Held several **Working Group meetings**, with one in-person meeting in Lithuania.
- Developed a proposal for **Public Consultation**.
- Received more than **80 comments** in response to the Public Consultation.

In 2019, the New Approaches project will incorporate comments received from the Public Consultation. The results will inform a final proposal to incorporate forestry contractors in the FSC system and provide concurrent input to the revision processes of the Group Certification Standard and Forest Management Evaluations Standard.

Group Model Type III Pilot Test

The New Approaches project is evaluating the role of forestry contractors in the group certification process as a strategic lever to increase accessibility for smallholders and communities to the FSC system. Forestry contractors are a useful resource for smallholders and their role in the system could potentially reduce the workload and the expert knowledge needed by smallholders and communities.

Through pilot tests, FSC will determine whether including forestry contractors in a group of private forest owners who have already achieved FSC certification will decrease their forest management costs. Forest owners would remain FSC certified under the FSC group certification procedures while responsibilities and auditing procedures would be shared with forestry contractors.

NEW CONCEPTS

Group Model Type III
Pilot Test

In 2018, the Group Model Type III pilot test achieved the following:

- Developed a **Standard Operating Procedure** for the pilot tests.
- **Selected participants from smallholder groups.** The scope of this project is international, with Australia, Brazil, Finland, and Spain participating in the pilot test.
- **Testing commenced in September and will last for 12 months.** The first two desk audits have already taken place, following by a Technical Framework Assessment submitted to FSC International for approval.

In 2019, the New Approaches project seeks to obtain practical information of the benefits and challenges of incorporating forestry contractors into the group certificates. The results of the pilot tests will identify FSC normative documents and aspects of FSC certification that will be impacted by the suggested Group Model Type III inclusion, starting with the Group Standard Revision process.

Asia Pacific Simplified Regional Standard

The New Approaches project is developing a regional standalone Forest Stewardship Standard and associated tools for smallholders (managing less than 20 ha) in the Asia Pacific region. The simplified regional standard will focus on smallholders' operations and address concerns expressed by stakeholders, certificate holders, and certification bodies. The effort is following FSC regulatory procedures and will maintain the integrity, reputation, and quality of FSC processes throughout the development.

NEW CONCEPTS

Asia Pacific
Simplified Regional Standard

The standard will consider the inclusion of new mechanisms to improve smallholder access to the FSC system, covering four critical countries in the Asia Pacific region: India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Smallholders in Thailand, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam manage forest lands producing a variety of forest products. Recognizing the diversity of smallholders in this region, the New Approaches project seeks to reduce the complexities of certification while managing expectations for smallholders that certification is a viable solution for responsible forest management.

In 2018, the New Approaches project in Asia Pacific achieved the following:

- Recruited and launched a **Technical Advisory Group** of 12 members to guide the standard development, representing FSC's environmental, social, and economic chambers.

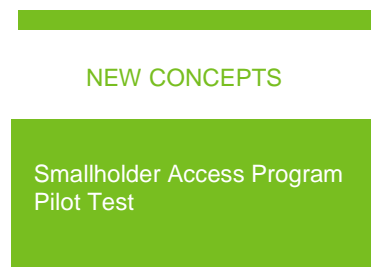
- Launched an open call for a regional **Consultative Forum** that includes stakeholders, certification bodies, FSC national partners, and others. The Consultative Forum will review the results of two public consultations in 2019.
- Drafted the **simplified regional standard**, in accordance with FSC Policy and Standards Unit.

In 2019, the project will conduct field audits in four selected sites in Thailand, India, Indonesia, and Vietnam, submit the draft simplified standard for public consultation, and incorporate all comments. It will also develop a self-assessment tool to provide a clear and simple understanding for smallholders to identify exactly what is required and evaluate themselves on where they are in relation to those requirements. By December 2019, the project will submit a proposed simplified regional standard to FSC International.

United States

The New Approaches project is pilot testing a risk-based approach to evaluate if low-impact logging can be a proxy for responsible forest management for smallholders in the United States. The results of this effort will enable smallholders, in particular, small family forest owners, to participate in the FSC system.

Spearheaded by the Appalachian Woodlands Alliance and supported by the New Approaches project and FSC US, the pilot test will assess the viability of temporary membership in a group certificate and a highly-simplified standard for family-owned forests. The New Approaches project will test the feasibility of implementing the Smallholder Access Program (SAP) standard in the United States.



In 2018, the New Approaches project in the United States achieved the following:

- Co-developed the **Smallholders Access Program (SAP) standard** specifically for the pilot test.
- Held a **global smallholder workshop** to shared information about ongoing activities, received input into the standard revision and pilot processes, and continued to refine best practices for recruiting smallholders.
- Identified the **criteria for the pilot test participants**.

Throughout 2019 and 2020, the New Approaches project will partner with FSC US and the Appalachian Woodlands Alliance to complete pilot testing. The results of the pilot will inform alignment with existing FSC policies and procedures.

MARKET DEVELOPMENT

The New Approaches project advanced its market development activities, specifically focused on developing value chains for smallholders and communities. The goals of these efforts are to improve FSC’s market intelligence, develop relevant supply chains, and to design marketing strategies and tools. In 2018, the New Approaches project focused on solidifying key partnerships and aligning those partnerships with ongoing New Approaches work streams.

The New Approaches project continues to strengthen its partnership with the Forest and Climate Change Fund (FCCF) and Eco-Innovation Foundation (EIF). With an intentional focus on Latin America, the FCCF makes investments in secondary and degraded forests to demonstrate that they can be more productive when supplied with innovative and solution-oriented tools. In turn, these forests can be more competitive to alternative land use, such as palm oil plantations or cattle farms. FCCF creates and disseminates knowledge on business models adapted to the specifics of secondary and degraded tropical forests and forges lasting alliances with local communities and locally-rooted entities.

By aligning the New Approaches project's regional efforts – such as continuous improvement and partnerships with FSC National Offices – the New Approaches project seeks to establish a deeper partnership with FCCF and other partners in 2019. This will include workshops specifically to design market strategies for smallholders and communities throughout Latin America and Africa. This effort will focus on the identification of pilot sites to develop smallholder-based wood value chains.

ENABLERS

FSC is a unique multi-stakeholder dialogue platform that brings diverse groups together to find solutions that lead to positive, locally-relevant impacts for forests and people. The New Approaches project seeks active stakeholder participation from smallholders, communities and Indigenous Peoples. Active stakeholder participation drives the design, innovation, and implementation of new concepts, pilot testing, and solutions.

As these new solutions are scaled-up across the world, consistent engagement with stakeholders will facilitate a rapid uptake and implementation. FSC will engage smallholders, communities, and relevant local stakeholders and interest groups, such as forest owners' associations, in dialogue events to seek their input to the new solutions. Their input will drive the assessment and evaluation of how viable these solutions will address local challenges and barriers to engage with the FSC system.

In 2018, the New Approaches project published more than 20 news items to internal and external stakeholders, updated the FSC website with project activities, and published case studies. This included facilitation and coordination meetings, as well as all the participation on other FSC events such as the Forest Network Spring and Autumn meetings, FSC Global Staff Meeting, Certification Bodies' annual meeting, and the US global workshop.

In 2019, the New Approaches project will partner with FSC national offices to facilitate multiple stakeholder engagement events. The events will be tailored to different target audiences and they are planned in all FSC regions in 2019. The following events are prioritized:

- Europe – Sweden, Italy, Germany, Portugal (Q1 2019)
- Africa – Uganda (Q1 2019)
- South East Asia – Vietnam (Q1 2019)
- Latin America – Guatemala (Q1 2019)
- Europe – Germany, Portugal (Q2 2019)
- Latin America (Q3 2019)

- North America (Q4 2019)
- Europe (Q4 2019)

Equally, the New Approaches project will provide regular updates to smallholders and communities of its work streams, certification bodies, key accounts and donors, FSC international members, FSC staff and Network Directors. The FSC website will become more interactive enabling the New Approaches project to create project timelines, publish regular status updates, and centralize the publication of materials related to project activities.

CONCLUSION

The New Approaches project made significant progress in 2018 to adhere to and to advance its goals. In 2019 as the project pivots to scaling up validated solutions, the progress will be regularly published and shared with stakeholders.

ADDITIONAL READING

The following news items were recently published on FSC's website to highlight the activities of the New Approaches project.

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| <p>1. The New Approaches project presentation to Family Forest Workshop in US</p> <p>The New Approaches project engaged family foresters and partners in the United States to update on project activities and pilot activities to benefit smallholders and communities. Read more: https://ic.fsc.org/en/news-updates/id/2197</p> | <p>6. FSC China is Pilot Testing Initiatives to Increase Access to Certification for Smallholders</p> <p>FSC International approved a proposal to initiate a pilot test for smallholders in China. The pilot project will test alternative approaches to conservation requirements in effect in FSC-certified forests in China to safeguard species, habitats, and ecosystems. Read more: https://ic.fsc.org/en/news-updates/id/2235</p> |
| <p>2. Selection of FSC-Certified Group Managers to Participate in International Pilot</p> <p>A working group elected four forest management groups to take part in an international pilot test. The testing will determine whether including forestry contractors in a group of private forest owners who have already achieved FSC certification would decrease their forest management costs. Read more: https://ic.fsc.org/en/news-updates/id/2213</p> | <p>7. Improving Access to FSC Certification for Smallholders and Communities in Africa</p> <p>The New Approaches technical working group met in Uganda to develop recommendations for improving access to FSC certification for smallholders and communities. The challenge for the group was to determine if continuous improvement could be integrated and implemented within the FSC system. Read more: https://ic.fsc.org/en/news-updates/id/2245</p> |
| <p>3. The Forestry Contractors International Working Group Explores New Ways to Develop Smallholder Certification</p> <p>The New Approaches for Smallholders and Communities Certification (commonly named 'New Approaches') team and the Forestry Contractors International Working Group met at the end of October to explore new solutions to increase smallholder certification worldwide. Read more: https://ic.fsc.org/en/news-updates/id/2214</p> | <p>8. Developing the First Regional Standard for Smallholders in Asia Pacific</p> <p>For the first time, FSC is developing a forest management standard tailored to a specific audience: smallholders in Asia Pacific. The standard will be drafted by December 2019 and will include a self-assessment tool for smallholders. This new, simplified standard should help increase the number of smallholders by reducing the complexity of the certification process. Read more: https://ic.fsc.org/en/news-updates/id/2255</p> |
| <p>4. FSC Establishes Technical Working Group for Group Certification Standard Revision</p> | <p>9. Simplifying Access to FSC Certification for Latin American Smallholders and Communities</p> |

Seven technical experts will revise the FSC-STD-30-005 V1-1 FSC Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups within the scope of FSC forest management certification. One of the proposed changes calls for the standard under revision to be now titled as FSC Group Certification Standard. Read more: <https://ic.fsc.org/en/news-updates/id/2225>

Smallholders, communities, and standard development groups participated in numerous workshops across Latin America over the past year. The aim was to discuss how FSC could develop a simplified way for Latin American smallholders and communities to access certification. Read more: <https://ic.fsc.org/en/news-updates/id/2256>

5. FSC Czech Republic Hosts Seminar for Small Forest Owners and the Wood-Processing Industry

The event brought together FSC supply and demand stakeholders to demonstrate the opportunities and benefits of FSC certification in the Czech Republic. Read more: <https://ic.fsc.org/en/news-updates/id/2236>
