

FOREST  
STEWARDSHIP  
COUNCIL

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2025



# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ABOUT THIS REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>IMPACT IN NUMBERS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>FSC GLOBAL STRATEGY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>STRATEGY 1</b> CO-CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING FOREST SOLUTIONS	<b>8</b>
<b>STRATEGY 2</b> TRANSFORMING MARKETS	<b>15</b>
<b>STRATEGY 3</b> CATALYSING CHANGE	<b>19</b>
<b>SPECIAL THANKS</b>	<b>29</b>

# FOREWORD



## AMANDA ANDRADE

*Chair of the Forest Stewardship Council® International Board*

2025 was a pivotal year for FSC®. The Director General, Subhra Bhattacharjee, completed one full year at the head of our organization and put in place a new leadership team by the end of the year. We also kickstarted the ideation of the next FSC Global Strategy and initiated the review of our Principles, Criteria, and Indicators – core pillars of the FSC system.

The General Assembly reunited our membership and evidenced the maturing of the decision-making process at the highest level. With many first-time participants alongside experienced members, the GA showcased FSC's role as a platform for dialogue, bringing people from different realities together and reaching a common understanding. It also demonstrated a growing alignment in vision between members and the secretariat, with approved motions guiding, strengthening, and building on existing work streams. In an increasingly polarized world, this diversity of perspectives coming together is our superpower.

In a rapidly changing geopolitical context, we face the dual challenge of staying relevant and growing our collective impact. By embracing the diversity of our members, staff, and stakeholders, while balancing the need to become more agile, we are renewing our value proposition and improving the quality of our products and services.

Looking ahead, we are driving for a shift in corporate culture towards a more service-oriented and collaborative system. We can take advantage of a healthy financial position to strengthen the way we partner for impact, while maintaining a responsible spending practice and safeguarding our reserves. Our ambition is great, but we cannot achieve our mission alone. We must double down on our strengths and join forces both inside and outside of the FSC system to see significant progress in the uptake of responsible forest management worldwide and the benefits it delivers for economies, biodiversity, and people.

# FOREWORD



**SUBHRA  
BHATTACHARJEE**

*Director General of the Forest  
Stewardship Council*

The year 2025 was one of change, engagement, and results. The challenges we face are increasingly complex, but our mission is as vital as ever. This is a moment to reflect on how we operate and embrace the necessary changes to address these challenges.

First, we strengthened our foundation through changes in leadership and organizational structure, enabling us to work more efficiently toward our mission. In 2025, we welcomed a new C-suite, with Marc Jessel joining as Chief Engagement Officer and Ria Stout as Chief Programme Officer, alongside several new Unit Directors. These intentional changes will allow FSC to deliver greater impact and bring systemic change.

Second, our membership continued to grow across the social, economic, and environmental chambers, reflecting the diversity and strength of our governance model. Our members are the backbone of FSC. They guide our direction, elect our Board of Directors, promote our work worldwide, and set the global benchmark for responsible forest management. Women now account for 31% of members. They also account for 42% of the Board of Directors. A key moment for member leadership in 2025

was the General Assembly in Panama, where members deliberated on FSC's work and tabled motions that will shape FSC's future direction.

Third, FSC's influence in shaping the future of voluntary compliance, including beyond the forest sector, has grown. Our work increasingly helps to define the role of the private sector in addressing the global challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. As expectations for responsible business continue to rise, FSC remains a trusted framework for accountability and credibility.

Finally, 2025 deepened FSC's role as a consensus builder. We promoted dialogue among diverse actors, recognizing that if we do not do this at the broadest level possible, we limit our impact. These conversations are not always easy, but they are essential to address the complex threats facing forests and forest-dependent communities.

Our community of certificate holders, members, and the FSC secretariat are the joint custodians of FSC's 30-year-old legacy, reputation, and future. We thank you for your commitment in 2025 and look forward to working together in the coming year.

# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report highlights the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)'s progress, challenges, and achievements over the past year.

In 2025, against a backdrop of geopolitical uncertainty, regulatory change, and growing scrutiny of sustainability claims, FSC focused on strengthening its systems and demonstrating where it delivers in practice: in forests, in markets, and in communities.

While challenges remain, the results demonstrate continued growth in forest management certification to 171.4 million hectares, stronger engagement with economic, social and environmental actors, and increasing recognition of the value of responsible forest management for resilience.

Grounded in the Global Strategy 2021–2026, the report brings together evidence and examples to show what is working, where progress is uneven, and what must come next. It shows how FSC is converting the credibility of certification into influence – and into measurable impact.




# IMPACT IN NUMBERS

 **171,387,282** hectares  
(+7.4%)  
Forest Management certified area

 **1,678** (+5.7%)  
Forest Management certificates

 **68,037** (+6.6%)  
Chain of Custody Certificates

 **606** (+21.2%)  
Small and low-intensity managed forests certificates

 **211** (+44.5%)  
Community certificates

 **13,465,920**  
(7.3% increase)  
Tropical forest certified area

Global recognition increased by **5%**  
across 50 countries



Visits to the home page of fsc.org reached **319,580**,  
1.4% increase from last year



Social media reach: **32,564,852**  
(49.7% increase)



New members joining FSC reached **132**  
(+50% increase from 2024)





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# FSC GLOBAL STRATEGY 2021–2026

This report highlights FSC's 2025 achievements across the three strategies driving responsible forest management worldwide:

**Co-create and implement forest solutions**

**Transform markets**  
(solutions adopted by markets)

**Catalyse change**  
(solutions adopted by diverse organizations and actors)

# STRATEGY 1 CO-CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING FOREST SOLUTIONS



## 2025 focus: stronger solutions, stronger evidence, stronger trust

In 2025, FSC advanced forest solutions through partnerships, pilots, and innovative tools, strengthening the systems and processes needed to make these solutions effective. From ancestral knowledge to geospatial technology, FSC's solutions are strongest when developed in partnership with stakeholders.

## MEMBERS HELPED SHAPE FSC'S NEXT CHAPTER

**IMPACT IN NUMBERS**  
FSC General Assembly 2025

<b>700</b> participants	<b>70</b> countries	<b>16</b> motions passed
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FSC is governed by a General Assembly of over 1,200 members across 90+ countries, spanning environmental, social, and economic interests. This diverse membership is central to FSC's ability to address the world's most pressing forest challenges.

In 2025, 132 new members joined FSC, including 20 from Africa and 15 from the Asia-Pacific region, strengthening representation and diversity across the system. A structured, continuous cycle of dialogue and prioritization with members led to more focused, strategically aligned motions and deeper collaboration across chambers at the FSC General Assembly.



## HIGHLIGHT 10<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 10<sup>th</sup> FSC General Assembly, held in Panama City from 26 to 31 October 2025 brought together over 700 participants from 70 countries, including members, Indigenous representatives, partners, stakeholders and global sustainability leaders, at a time of increasing environmental and social urgency.

Over several months leading up to the General Assembly, members debated a set of 49 motions, with 36 reaching the voting stage, of which 16 were passed. These decisions will strengthen the integrity, governance, and global relevance of the FSC system, including advancing digital traceability, enhancing protection of high conservation value forests, expanding certification for restoration and ecosystem services, and improving access for Indigenous Peoples, communities, and smallholders.

The Assembly also advanced efforts to streamline standards and align FSC certification with evolving regulatory and climate frameworks. Implementation of these motions started in 2025. The outcomes will also contribute directly to the development of FSC's 2027–2032 global strategy and the revision of its Principles and Criteria.

The General Assembly underscored FSC's growing global relevance: a new partnership with Panama's Ministry of Environment will promote the responsible management of state forests.

## INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP STRENGTHENED FOREST SOLUTIONS

Indigenous Peoples are key rights holders in the FSC system, and their traditional knowledge is a foundation of responsible forest management. This is reflected in FSC's Principles and Criteria and its governance processes, including the advisory role of the Permanent Indigenous Peoples' Committee (PIPC) to the FSC International Board of Directors. The FSC Indigenous Foundation (FSC-IF) works to defend the rights of Indigenous Peoples by safeguarding their traditional knowledge, authority, and practices to steward the forests of Mother Earth.

In 2025, FSC-IF consulted with the Indigenous community of Arimae in Panama's Darién province on the implementation of the FSC Economic Viability tool, which supports collective, data-informed decision-making about forest landscapes.

The tool was previously implemented in 2023 in the Indigenous communities of Pueblo Nuevo, Subiranam, Vallecito, and Zopilote in Honduras, where community workshops in 2025 helped prepare for potential certification.

In addition, engagement with the regional Indigenous Peoples network the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) is now underway to explore obtaining FSC certification alongside carbon projects as a potential financing mechanism for responsible forest management.

In Sarawak, Malaysia, engagement with the Sarawak Dayak IBAN Association focused on obtaining FSC Verified Impact for ecosystem services, reforesting degraded land, and improving community livelihoods through FSC certification across seven villages and 11,000 hectares of tropical forest.



## COLLABORATION ON CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK SET DIRECTION

In parallel, the process to revise FSC's Principles, Criteria, and Indicators began, following input from a public consultation to better align FSC standards with global climate and biodiversity goals.

Pilot projects tested new approaches to the protection of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFLs) within FSC-certified areas in Brazil, Canada, Peru, and the Republic of Congo. IFLs are areas of land with minimal human disturbance that contain important biodiversity and often hold cultural or spiritual significance for Indigenous Peoples. Through stakeholder dialogue and national standard development processes, the pilots explored how landscape approaches and locally adapted indicators could help identify, manage, and protect IFLs.

The pilots provided valuable results, including engagement with stakeholders and relevant Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS) indicators. FSC proposes using these indicators to move this workstream forward. However, in response to a motion at the General Assembly, the FSC Secretariat is proposing a new approach towards IFLs, as the previous approach appeared not to be scalable or be operationally sustainable as it required a significant effort from Standard Development Groups to potentially replicate the process across multiple landscapes within a country.

The Board of Directors approved FSC's Climate and Biodiversity Strategic Framework 2026–2032. The new framework articulates FSC's role in addressing climate and biodiversity crises and serves a guide for the development and implementation of solutions – within and beyond certification. It was developed through an inclusive consultative including more than 70 stakeholder interviews and engagement with the Board, the membership, the Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee (PIPC), the membership, and FSC staff.



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## VERIFIED IMPACT GAINED MARKET TRACTION

Forest ecosystem services – such as carbon storage, water regulation, soil protection, recreation, and cultural values – underpin human well-being, climate resilience, and economic activity. FSC offers a voluntary framework, Verified Impact, which enables impact to be demonstrated across seven ecosystem service categories.

FSC launched its Ecosystem Services Registry, an online platform with GIS capabilities, that enables certificate holders, certification bodies, sponsors, and FSC to interact in an end-to-end certification process and creates a marketplace where certificate holders can transact with interested sponsors.

To support application of the framework, FSC released a set of tools and guidance documents including an interactive tool aligning ecosystem service impacts with global reporting frameworks and standards and a resource hub, guidance, and capacity-building materials for forest managers, project developers, and certification bodies. A targeted campaign has significantly expanded market awareness, delivering expert-driven webinars focused on the transformative role of forests in shaping corporate sustainability.

This work is showing results. In 2025, over 60 ecosystem services projects were updated in the database, including projects from 11 new Forest Management Certificate Holders. Chestnut Carbon became the first US-based afforestation developer to verify impacts on biodiversity conservation, specifically restoration of natural forest cover, by restoring over 16,000 acres of pasture and cropland to native forest. Woodland Trust, a major landowner in the UK which has held FSC certification for over 25 years, verified its positive impacts on watershed services and soil conservation.

## HIGHLIGHT

## STUDY CONFIRMS FSC CERTIFICATION CONTRIBUTES TO MAINTAINING AND INCREASING FOREST COVER

A [recent study](#) in the *Journal of Cleaner Production* confirms that FSC certification contributes to maintaining and increasing forest cover, especially in lower-middle-income countries. These findings reinforce the conclusions of previous research and provide insights on adapting regional certification strategies to increase sustainable forest management.

The study, led by researchers Inoussa Boubacar (USDA Forest Product Laboratory) and Yaya Sissoko (Indiana University of Pennsylvania), investigated the role of FSC certification in promoting sustainable forest management and mitigating deforestation across diverse economic and climatic contexts. Using data on 70 countries from 2000–2021, the researchers examined forest cover as a measure for impact of FSC certification.

Results indicate that FSC certification contributes to maintaining and increasing forest cover across diverse economic and climatic contexts. This positive impact is most strongly observed in lower-middle-income countries (as defined by World Bank economic classifications). Scaling up certification and integrating it into national policies could benefit countries of this economic category.

The data also shows positive impacts of certification on low-, middle-, and high-income countries.

The study found that FSC certification has a positive impact on all climate zones – tropical, temperate, and others. However, the strength of the impact varies across zones, highlighting the need for region-specific strategies.

## DIGITAL TOOLS DEEPENED TRANSPARENCY

Data is integral to FSC's ability to deliver on its 2050 vision and to safeguard trust in the FSC system. Capabilities are needed to compile, integrate, and share data, and use insights to inform decision-making and demonstrate impact. In 2025, FSC deepened its data and geospatial capabilities, particularly for improving supply chain traceability and assessing ecosystem services impacts.

[FSC Trace](#) was launched in 2025 as a tool to track the journey of FSC-certified products from the forest to the shelf. The platform aims to create a secure record of verified transactions and sourcing data, for use by holders of FSC certificates and promotional licences.

FSC's Geographic Information System (GIS) tools were also expanded in 2025. In September, FSC released the [Certified Area Submittal Tool](#) (CAST), which allows forest managers to add their certified area boundaries to a [public map](#), showing certified forests globally.

[FSC Risk Hub](#) was launched in late 2025 as an interactive dashboard and map that enables users to see and explore country-level risk assessments across 64 key indicators. The platform aims to identify and mitigate risks related to forestry sourcing. Geospatial solutions were also developed for Chain of Custody geolocation tracking and address verification, to support more informed system integrity and investigative analysis.

FSC piloted Sylvi, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) agent developed with Salesforce, to explore how AI could help users navigate FSC standards. The pilot generated useful insights for FSC's broader digitalization of its normative framework, including the potential development of future AI-assisted interfaces connected to a structured, machine-interpretable knowledge base.



# INTEGRITY AND REMEDY ADVANCED TRUST

Various initiatives advanced in 2025 to safeguard the integrity, credibility, and rigour of the FSC system. The [Eurasia Integrity Workplan](#) continued to address the risk of Russian timber entering FSC supply chains and to strengthen the assurance systems in China and Türkiye. FSC expanded the use of integrity tools and procedures, including [transaction verification](#) investigations into various high-risk supply chains, to better detect and prevent false claims. Members also adopted a motion at the General Assembly to evaluate the potential adoption of a digital traceability and volume tracking system by all certificate holders and outline a relevant process for further discussion with the membership.

At the same time, FSC deepened collaboration with its assurance provider Assurance Services International (ASI) and certification bodies to support effective oversight of the system. An [annual certification body meeting](#) strengthened alignment. FSC hosted a [calibration workshop in Beijing](#),

bringing together certification bodies operating within the FSC system in China and ASI as an expert assurance partner to explore practical and effective ways to detect and manage integrity risks across the certification system. A targeted campaign, 'A life less ordinary', was launched by FSC to help certification bodies increase the pool of auditors.

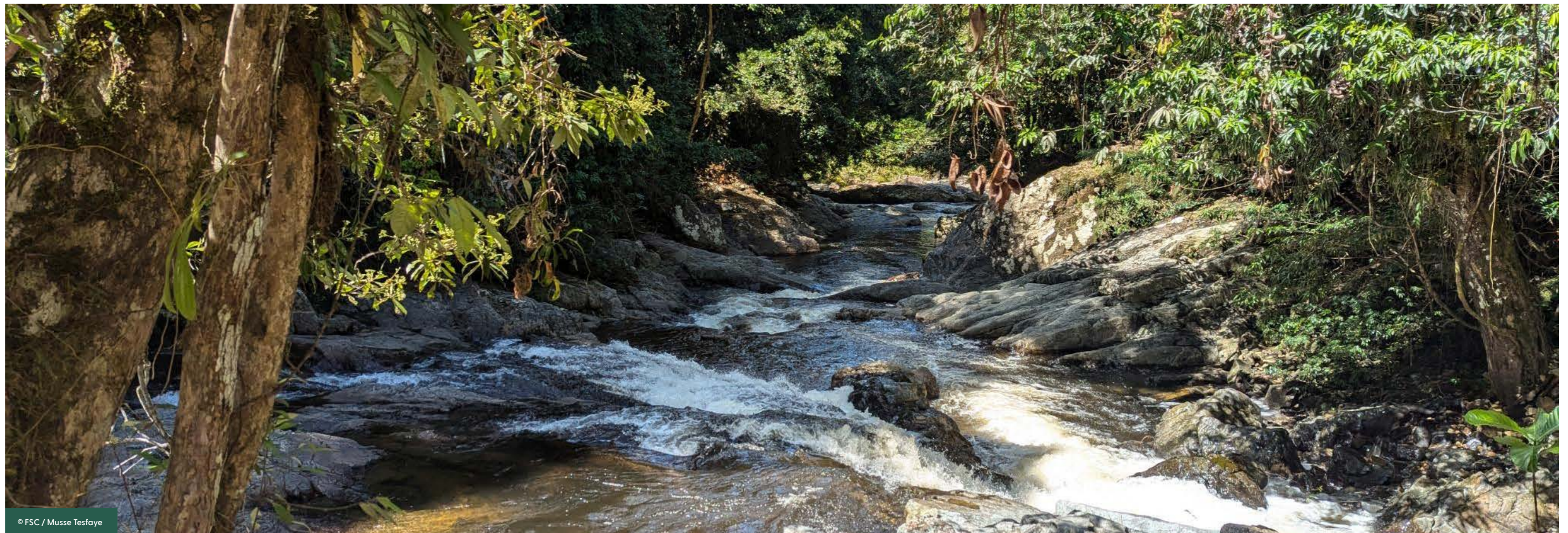
The revision of FSC's complaints procedure underwent a second public consultation and the feedback stakeholders provided is informing the final version.

Alongside these efforts, FSC continued strengthening implementation of its [Remedy Framework](#) – a verified pathway for organizations to embark on a journey of healing and regeneration by addressing past social and environmental harm. In 2025, significant progress was made in developing tools to support actors implementing the framework.



## STAKEHOLDERS CALL FOR SCALED UP AND ACCELERATED REMEDY

FSC convened a [Remedy Forum](#) in Jakarta, Indonesia in June, bringing together rights holders and stakeholders, including communities and Indigenous Peoples affected by deforestation, and those engaged in or interested in the Remedy Framework. Participants shared a clear message: environmental and social harm must be remedied, trust must be re-established and the voices of communities must be heard. They urged FSC to accelerate and scale up its Remedy Framework to ensure restoration of degraded forests and meaningful redress for affected communities.



## STORY

## SAFEGUARDING ROMANIA'S FORESTS

There's an old saying in the Maramureş region of northern Romania: "the forest is like a brother". Traditional knowledge and practices have long guided forest management in the region, where some people still say a prayer before cutting down a tree. It is practices like these that have enabled one community in the village of Breb to protect some of Europe's last primary and old-growth forests, while building everything around them from wood.

The community's approach is shaped by generations of knowledge about which trees to cut and which to leave, when to use horses instead of heavy machinery, and how to let young trees grow in the space created by their elders. Through responsible management of the forest, the community maintains its resources for firewood, construction, looms for weaving textiles, and other purposes.

Today, the village's young people are moving to the cities and its traditional crafts are disappearing. WWF and local communities are betting on a pilot project that aims to recognize the forest's full value, for timber, biodiversity, natural and recreational values – and for the stories it holds.

In 2010, after years of work by local foresters and WWF, the community's approach to forestry was recognized when the forest of Maramureş received FSC certification. In 2022, these forests became the first in Romania to receive FSC Ecosystem Services certification for recreation and biodiversity. These developments have opened doors to new funding for conservation and local employment, keeping both the forests and their traditions alive.

## EVIDENCE AND BENCHMARKS MADE IMPACT MORE MEASURABLE

Measuring our impact is crucial to understanding how we are progressing towards our mission. In collaboration with stakeholders, FSC advanced work to integrate outcome definitions and assessments into ongoing revisions of its Principles, Criteria, and International Generic Indicators (PCI), and procedures for developing nationally determined standards. These processes aim to ensure that the effects of FSC certification can be evaluated in a more robust and comprehensive way. They also aim to streamline policies and standards, so they can be easily accessed by all.

These revision processes brought together diverse stakeholders to jointly shape how outcomes in forest management are defined and measured. A total of 186 participants from 44 countries participated in a public consultation. Participants included FSC members, certificate holders, forest managers, NGOs, academia, certification bodies, and other stakeholders.

Further collaborative work continued in 2025 to build evidence on the environmental and social impacts of certification. In Finland and Sweden, FSC concluded multi-year field tests of new biodiversity monitoring frameworks. In Brazil, field work and earth observation analytics testing was finalized, while a project continued to evaluate the social impacts of FSC certification. CIFOR-ICRAF and FSC completed a working paper on the institutional and legal context of natural forests and plantations, with results to be disseminated in 2026.

# WHAT CHANGED IN 2025

In 2025, FSC continued its evolution toward a more outcome- and impact-driven system. Collaboration across the FSC network advanced the revision of the Principles, Criteria, and International Generic Indicators (PCI), helping shape standards that are more user-friendly and focused on delivering meaningful outcomes. Member engagement contributed to a more mature and inclusive governance process, demonstrated at General Assembly 2025, while FSC Indigenous Foundation projects strengthened relationships and credibility with Indigenous partners around the world.

As expectations around sustainability claims continued to evolve, FSC strengthened the integrity of its system through investigations and the implementation of the Remedy Framework. The Board's approval of the Climate and Biodiversity Strategy provided a clearer direction for addressing interconnected climate and biodiversity challenges, while practical solutions such as Verified Impact further connected ecosystem services to markets, helping demonstrate the value of responsible forest management for biodiversity, carbon, and beyond. Supporting these efforts, technology solutions enhanced FSC's ability to measure impact, improve supply chain traceability, and assess ecosystem services benefits.





STRATEGY 2

# TRANSFORMING MARKETS

## 2025 focus: turning responsible forestry into market demand

Market uptake of FSC products drives impact on the ground. By strengthening markets for responsibly sourced forest materials, FSC contributes to the transition towards bio-based and circular economies and markets that work for producers, communities, and businesses alike. In 2025, FSC focused on accelerating this transformation by strengthening strategic value chains, promoting circular markets, expanding technical tools and solutions for product visibility, and ensuring that diverse stakeholders can participate in and benefit from sustainable markets.

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## PRIORITY VALUE CHAINS CREATED NEW DEMAND

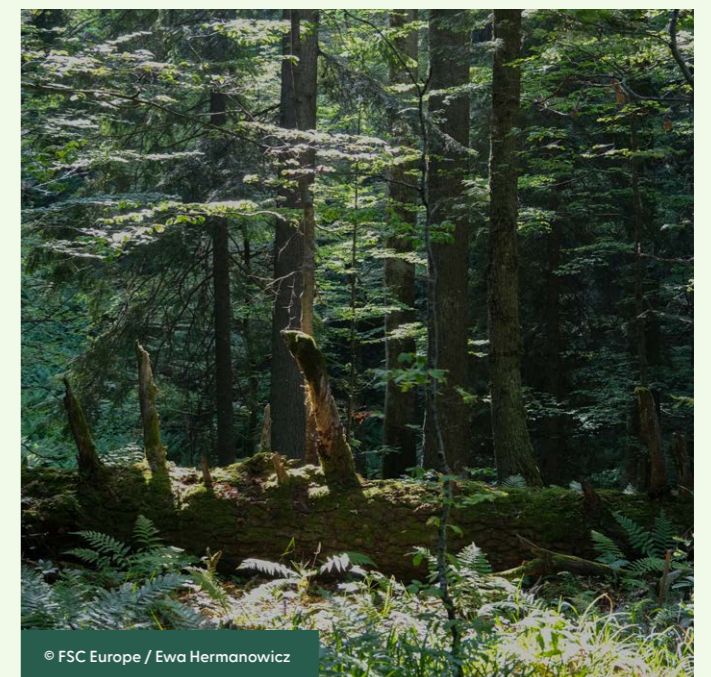
In 2025, FSC worked to strengthen value chains with the greatest potential to contribute to its 2050 vision, including those for fibre, wood, and non-timber forest products.

In the pulp and paper sector, FSC surveyed 220 European and UK leaders, and found that fewer than 40% of companies had reached high sustainability maturity. In response, FSC developed industry-specific recommendations to strengthen supply chain resilience, expand certification uptake, and support companies in advancing sustainability targets through tools such as [FSC Verified Impact](#) and [FSC Trace](#).

A roundtable with Textile Exchange at *Challenge the Fabric*, a design competition in Milan, resulted in collaborations with key pulp producers and industry brands, reinforcing the role of FSC in ensuring the availability of responsibly sourced manmade cellulosic fibres in markets.

Building on a successful Business-to-Consumer campaign, FSC released a documentary on sustainable fashion.

Non-timber forest products (NTFP) are important for the livelihoods of smallholders and forest owners. In 2025, certified areas for natural rubber increased in Colombia, Laos, Malaysia, and Thailand. In Brazil, 23,000 hectares were certified for the first time to produce natural rubber. Pre-assessment audits for additional certifications in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia were completed, paving the way for certification of an additional 88,000 hectares. Sainsbury's supermarket chain and two major footwear brands increased their preference for FSC sourcing of rubber, cork, and/or bamboo.



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## POLICY ALIGNMENT STRENGTHENED MARKET READINESS AND COMPLIANCE

Despite challenges arising from the European Union's decision to delay and revise the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), FSC advanced work on alignment with the regulation. A ticketing system, communication assets, webinars, and solution-specific FAQs are now available, as well as the first of the country risk assessments for certificate holders.



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## ECOMMERCE EXPANDED PRODUCT VISIBILITY

### IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**350,000+**

FSC-certified products now connected through a standardized technical eCommerce solution

**1**

pilot launched with a major global eCommerce platform, **3** additional partners identified

**10%**

increase in glance views on products featured under Amazon's Climate Pledge Friendly campaign

## CIRCULAR MARKETS MOVED FROM CONCEPT TO PILOTS

In 2025, FSC strengthened its role in supporting the circular bioeconomy. Through targeted campaigns, FSC engaged more than 2,000 stakeholders and contributed to global discussions at six major circular economy conferences. FSC also helped shape the global conversation by providing input and co-signing the Circularity Gap Report 2025, highlighting the importance of renewable fibres and regenerative forest ecosystems.

FSC advanced practical solutions to support circular business models. In 2025, pilot testing successfully concluded across four regions to inform the revision of the Chain of Custody standard.

In parallel, FSC launched a project exploring the responsible inclusion of non-forest bio-based fibres in FSC-certified products, supported by a EUR 200,000 grant from the ISEAL Innovation Fund. To further scale this work, FSC is seeking EU LIFE funding backed by signed collaboration letters from a wide range of globally recognized organizations. Through this collaborative approach – with more than ten global companies, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Circle Economy, and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) – FSC can pilot, refine, and scale circular solutions that respond to real market needs.

Market work in 2025 focused on strengthening FSC's impact across the supply chain from forest managers and certificate holders to brands and retailers. The team finalized the revision of the FSC Trademark Standard, making the use of FSC marks and related claims clearer and easier for Forest Management and Chain of Custody Certificate Holders, while reinforcing safeguards that protect the credibility of FSC claims and support alignment with emerging anti-greenwashing regulations.



## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRENGTHENED PARTICIPATION ACROSS THE FSC SYSTEM

Diversity and gender balance are essential to achieving FSC’s 2050 vision. Access to markets and inclusion in supply chains is important for forest-dependent people and communities to flourish. To this end, FSC developed a 2024–2026 action plan to implement a Diversity and Gender Strategic Framework across three pillars: system, organization, and regions.

In 2025, FSC completed a global study on gender and diversity standards for the Principles and Criteria revision, embedded gender and diversity elements in FSC’s membership database, and conducted a gender analysis in East Africa to attract more women’s organizations and young people to join FSC as members. FSC rolled out the Diversity and Gender Action Plan in North America and, together with the Inclusion

Council, developed a framework to advance gender, workers’, and Indigenous Peoples’ rights through aligned metrics and best practices. Workers’ rights remain an important part of FSC’s principles. In 2025, workers’ rights continued to be a priority within the Chain of Custody and the Principles and Criteria revision processes, with proposed enhancements including new requirements on access to workers as part of ensuring the right of freedom of association, and freely elected representation of workers for health and safety. Progress was also made in the evaluation of workers’ rights requirements for Chain of Custody Certification, with materials to support evaluations now available for relevant stakeholders in all FSC official languages, and Mandarin.

### IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**150**

**participants** (both women and men) participated in pilot trainings on gender and diversity in forest certification from **29 countries**

**1,800**

**Indigenous women** in Kenya, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama enhanced skills to support their communities natural resource management through FSC Indigenous Foundation projects, based on their economic, political, cultural, and social priorities.

### STORY

## FROM THE HEART OF THE AMAZON

Located three hours by boat from Itapiranga in the Brazilian state of Amazonas, the Uatumã Reserve spans 424,000 hectares across the Uatumã and Jatapuen river basins. Many families migrated to this area in the 1970s and 1980s to work on the construction of the Balbina hydroelectric dam. They then began to exploit the available natural resources for their livelihood.

“My parents lived and worked here when it wasn’t yet a reserve. They used to freely harvest wood from various species such as rosewood. I grew up with the goal of not doing the same,” says Elisangela Conceição Cavalcante, part of the Agroextractive Association of Communities of the Uatumã Reserve.

Today the Association has become a pioneer in responsible forest management. It is the only organization in the Amazon whose FSC

certificate includes timber and non-timber forest products, such as resins and natural oils, used for the manufacturing of perfumes, cosmetics, skincare and therapeutic products, soaps, scented candles, and more.

Certification and local processing have transformed these value chains. Once used primarily to waterproof boats, breu had little market value, selling for just BRL1 per kilo. Today, it reaches BRL8 per kilo, an 800% increase. Copaiba oil has similarly risen in value, from BRL45 to BRL75 per kilo.

The experience of the Uatumã Reserve demonstrates that development and conservation can coexist and strengthen each other when communities are the protagonists, contributing their traditional knowledge, collective work, and trust in a sustainable future.



© FSC / Celio Cavalcante Filho

# WHAT CHANGED IN 2025

FSC's role expanded further beyond traditional timber certification, with stronger engagement across the circular bioeconomy and markets such as construction, pulp and paper, and non-timber forest products. Efforts to improve visibility and scalability advanced the integration of FSC-certified products into standardized digital commerce solutions across global markets, supporting broader market uptake and accessibility.

As markets evolved, inclusion became more deeply embedded across the FSC system. Mechanisms supporting the participation of women, Indigenous communities, and other potentially marginalized groups were further integrated into governance and standard development processes, helping ensure that diverse perspectives continue to shape the future of responsible forest stewardship.



## STRATEGY 3

CATALYSING  
CHANGE2025 focus: making  
forests central to climate,  
biodiversity and finance

Forests are essential to address climate change and biodiversity loss, and to support sustainable development. In this context, FSC plays a unique role, convening governments, businesses, researchers, and financial institutions to scale up solutions and turn global commitments into action for forests. In 2025, FSC partnered across sectors, expanded engagement in global policy forums, and accelerated demand for responsibly managed forests.

System-level change requires strong partnerships across sectors. In 2025, FSC and FSC Investments & Partnerships engaged in major global forums to connect with organizations committed to a nature-positive future and to amplify the visibility, relevance, and impact of its mission.

At the [UN Climate Change Conference \(COP30\)](#), FSC positioned forests and forest stewards as essential partners in global climate and biodiversity solutions. Beyond COP30, FSC engaged in other key events throughout the year to increase relevance in the climate space, with leadership and experts represented on panels and a strong communications presence at [Climate Week NYC](#), the [IUCN World Conservation Congress](#), the World Conference on Ecological Restoration (SER), [London Climate Action Week](#), and [San Francisco Climate Week](#). FSC also contributed to an updated Forest Workplan developed by the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, strengthening FSC's role ahead of 2026's biodiversity COP.

Collaboration with governments included constructive engagement at the UN Forum on Forests and the 80th anniversary celebration of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). A highlight of the year was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Panama (MiAMBIENTE) during the FSC General Assembly in Panama to strengthen forest governance, promote transparency, and ensure forest conservation. FSC Africa began engagement with governments for the Zámbo Heritage Initiative, building momentum for the initiative's launch in 2026.

Engagement with European Union (EU) institutions continued to grow in 2025, covering nature, climate, and anti-greenwashing initiatives. A key achievement was the acceptance of FSC into the European Commission Expert Group on Nature Credits, and ongoing work on the EU certification of Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming (CRCF).

Long-term European research engagement resulted in FSC collaboration in the [Forest Knowledge Gateway](#) to support forest restoration, climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and integrative forest management across Europe and beyond. In addition, FSC International supported the Africa team to develop teaching modules for universities.

GLOBAL  
PARTNERSHIPS  
AMPLIFIED  
FSC'S  
INFLUENCE

## TRADE LINKAGES OPENED ROUTES TO CERTIFICATION

International trade can drive demand for sustainable, certified products. In 2025, significant progress was made to strengthen regional and global trade linkages. Two workshops in the Congo Basin deepened Chinese companies' understanding of FSC standards and certification requirements. Two companies, [Bonus Harvest](#) in Gabon and [Société Forestière de l'Equateur \(SFE\)](#) in Cameroon, received advisory support and are now progressing towards FSC certification.



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## SUSTAINABLE FINANCE UNLOCKED INVESTMENT

Scaling responsible forest management requires unlocking finance for the long-term stewardship of forests. In 2025, FSC made decisive progress in positioning forests within sustainable finance. Guided by its first sustainable finance plan, FSC Investments & Partnerships engaged asset owners and financial institutions, introduced a new due diligence tool, and secured its first partnership with a financial institution, Mirova, unlocking EUR 350 million for sustainable land-use investment.

FSC supported key transactions such as the Asian Development Bank's USD 50 million green loan for a FSC certificate holder in China that will generate jobs and climate gains through the adoption of sustainable forest management practices. FSC also provided support to the Bank to understand what certification means for social and environmental risk management, which informed their due diligence process. These milestones mark crucial steps towards scaling forest-positive finance and enhancing the role of FSC solutions in the climate transition.

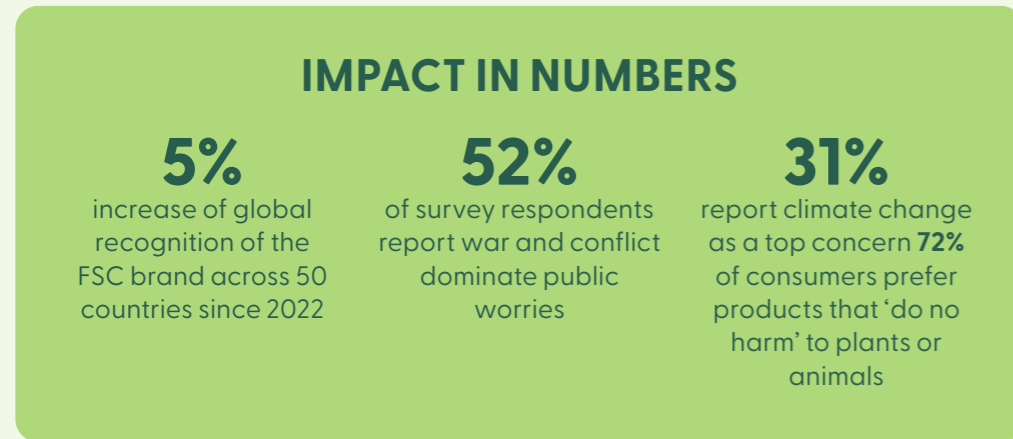


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# CONSUMER INSIGHTS STRENGTHENED FSC'S BRAND RELEVANCE

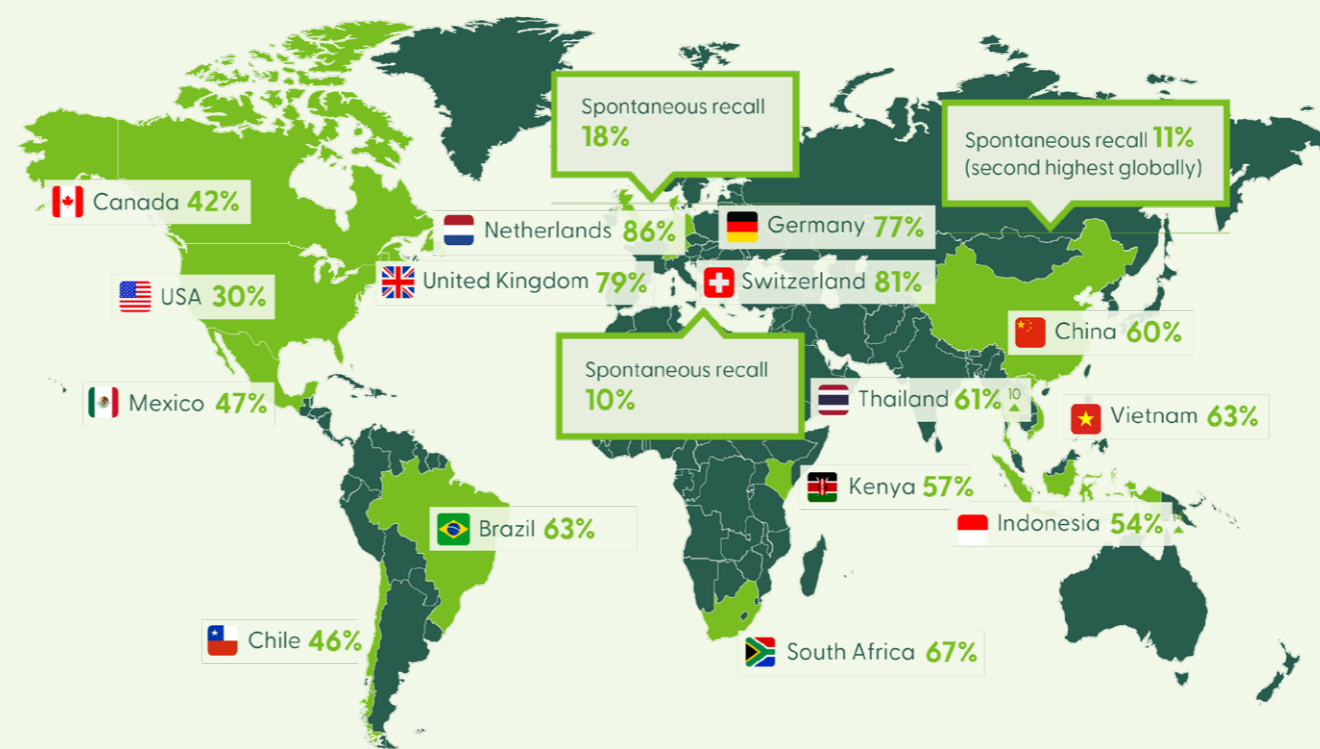
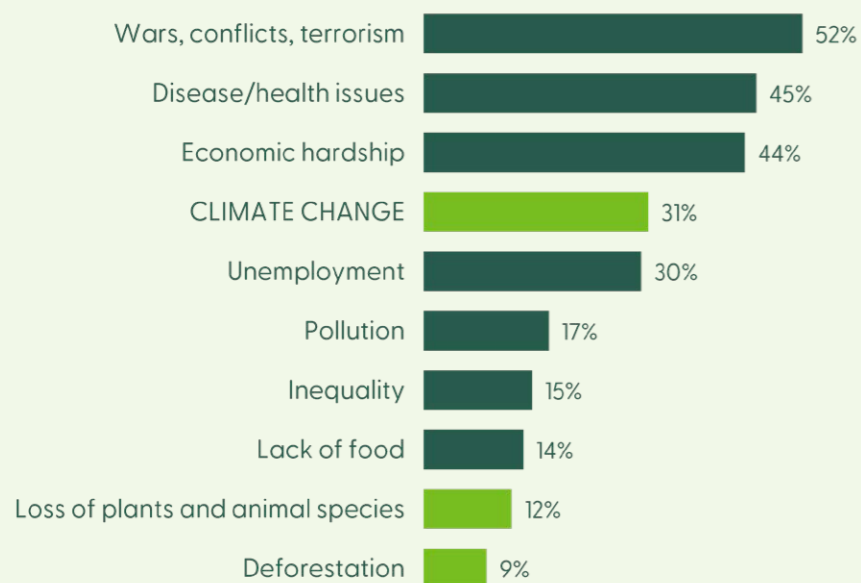
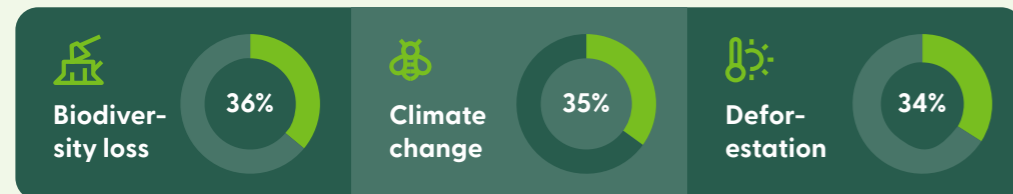
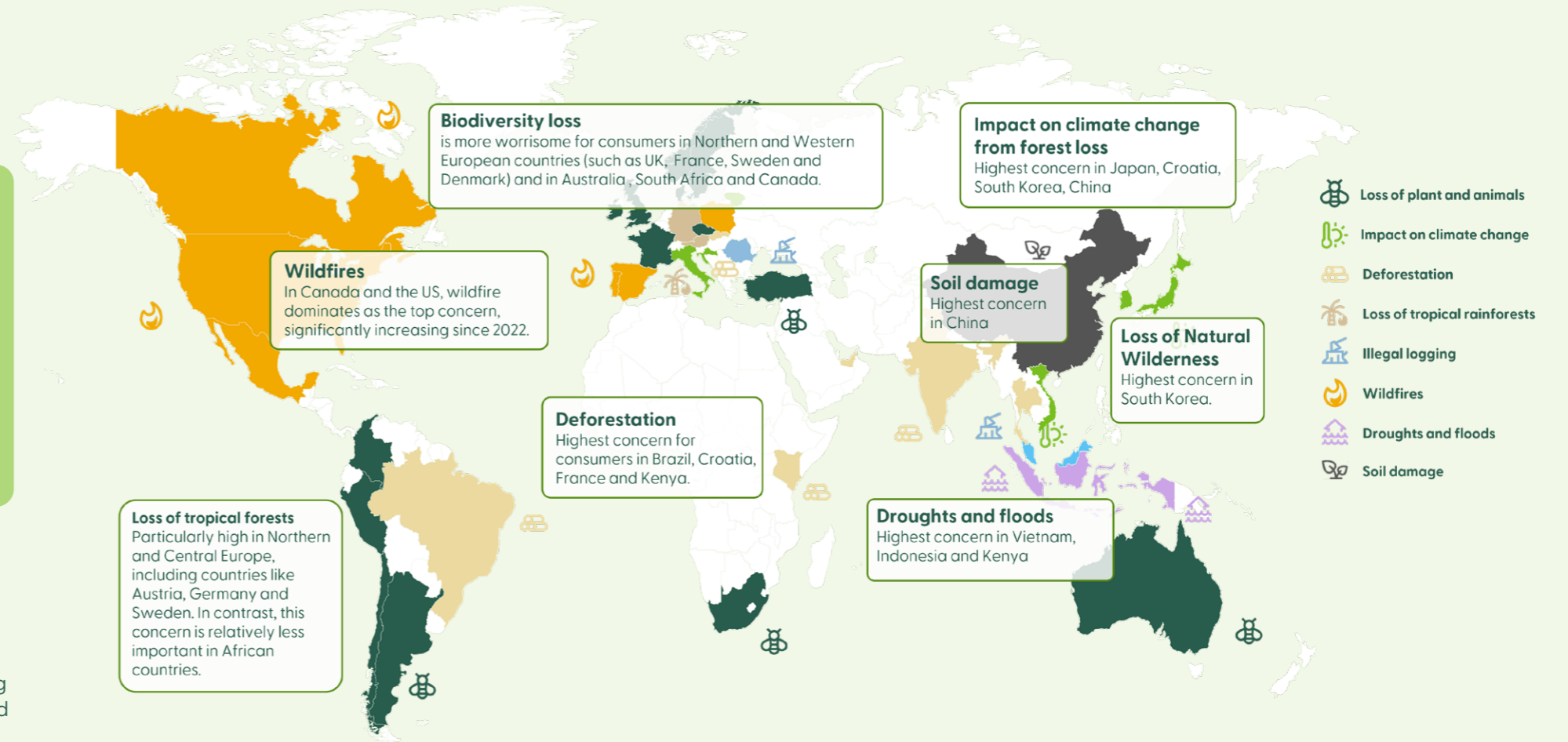
Scaling change also requires broader understanding and recognition of the environmental, social, and economic value of forests and their stewardship.

In 2025, Ipsos consumer research, with over 40,000 respondents across 50 countries, provided valuable insight into awareness, trust, and expectations, informing brand strategy and messaging.



Media coverage of the survey extended the reach of its findings, bringing consumer perspectives into mainstream public discussion and broadening engagement with the issues raised, with coverage appearing on [CNN](#), [France 24](#), [Newsweek](#), and [EFE](#).

The [FSC Forest Week](#) campaign mobilized participation in 70 countries, expanding global reach and network engagement, and encouraging brands, consumers, and NGOs to make small changes for forests.



### REGIONAL AVERAGES: <sup>1</sup>

EUROPE	58%
ASIA-PACIFIC	50%
AFRICA	52%
LATIN AMERICA	42%
NORTH AMERICA	36%

## STORY

## NAMIBIA'S THORNY PROBLEM

In Namibia – a vast country more than twice the size of Germany, yet home to just 3 million people – the relationship between people and nature has always been intimate.

Years of overgrazing stripped the land of its grasses, while fencing prevented elephants and antelopes from controlling shrub growth, leading to the spread of thorny bushes. Native woody plants that had once played supporting roles in the savanna ecosystem suddenly exploded in numbers. With grass already depleted and no large herbivores to browse the shrubs, these plants spread unchecked, their roots and canopy blocking any grass from recovering..

Yet what conservationists saw as a pressing environmental issue, entrepreneurs began to recognize as an untapped resource. In the early 2000s, farmers began producing charcoal and, more recently, biochar from harvested biomass of woody plants for international markets. In 2020, revisions to FSC's national standards for Namibia created an opportunity for small-scale forest managers and landowners harvesting bush biomass to gain certification in accordance with FSC's rigorous standards.

Beyond energy production, the biomass sector is now creating employment and supporting rural livelihoods, with thousands already working in harvesting and processing. At the same time, careful management is needed to balance bush removal with biodiversity conservation. While questions remain about long-term ecological impacts, Namibia's approach demonstrates how environmental restoration, economic development, and climate action can be pursued together.



# WHAT CHANGED IN 2025

FSC's contribution to global agendas on forests, climate, and nature-based solutions became more visible through sustained engagement across international forums and strategic partnerships with government and research partners. At the same time, greater focus was placed on positioning forests as investible assets for climate resilience and biodiversity protection, helping to strengthen connections between financial institutions and on-the-ground impact.

Cross-regional trade dialogues and partnerships, including work in the Congo Basin, helped create new pathways for sustainable forest management certification. Strategic communications and brand positioning further strengthened FSC's authority, trust, and visibility in global sustainability discussions, helping shape conversations on forests, climate, and market systems.



# SPOTLIGHT AFRICA

**Forest Management Certification grew by 18% to 11.2 million hectares.**

## What changed

Africa advanced certification growth, government engagement, and innovative solutions to climate and biodiversity challenges.

## 2025 highlights

- Certification growth in the Congo Basin:** In Gabon, FSC partnered with the National Park Agency to facilitate certification of the country's protected areas. In April 2025, 256,683 hectares in the provinces of Ogooué Lolo and Haut Ogooué were certified under a new holder, Exploitation Gabonaise de Grumes, to increase the total area of FSC-certified forests from 2.2 million to more than 2.4 million hectares. Partnerships and projects in Ethiopia and Tanzania supported certification, responsible management, and conservation of forests and biodiversity.
- Government engagement and finance for forests:** At the second Africa Climate Week in Addis Ababa, FSC and partners soft launched the Zámbe Heritage initiative, a platform to secure the continent's forests as a global climate and biodiversity lifeline through African leadership, land restoration, and innovative financing.
- Innovative climate solutions:** FSC launched Jihami (to prepare oneself in Swahili), a climate-themed chess game developed with YMCA, to engage Africa's youth in climate and biodiversity solutions through strategy and play.

## Why it matters

The African continent is home to 15% of the world's forests. Spanning 637 million hectares, Africa's forests form a vital ecological and economic backbone for the continent, supporting vast biodiversity, regulating regional climates, and underpinning the livelihoods of millions of Indigenous Peoples and communities. Strengthening responsible forest management with partners across the continent is essential to protect these ecosystems for future generations and build long-term climate resilience.

## IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**60**

Forest Management Certificates

**497**

Chain of Custody Certificates, **11%** growth from the previous year

**586,330**

hectares certified in the Republic of Congo, raising the total certified area in the country to over 3.6 million hectares

**4**

million hectares of forest in the Oromia region of Ethiopia aiming to be certified in new project launch with the Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise



# SPOTLIGHT EUROPE

**Forest Management Certification grew by 10% to 66.2 million hectares, with the most significant growth in Poland, Türkiye, and Sweden.**

## What changed

Europe saw strong growth in certification alongside continued expansion in market uptake and partnerships, particularly in the construction sector. Institutional growth continued across the region: FSC UK celebrated 30 years as a network partner, while FSC Netherlands marked 25 years. [FSC Bulgaria](#) became the 17th FSC network partner in Europe, and FSC Ukraine was formally registered as a legal entity.

## 2025 highlights

- **Promoting sustainable construction through partnerships and finance:** The European construction coalition strengthened FSC's position in construction markets across 10 countries in Europe by deepening strategic partnerships and engaging high-value stakeholders.
- **Protecting ecosystem services:** In 2025, FSC established a new ecosystem services project in the Tuscan Emilian Apennine National Park in Italy, supported by Scavolini furnishing company. A [bee chalet](#), now under construction, will offer an open-air laboratory for educating the public about the ecosystem value of bees and wild pollinators. The initiative has already sparked further corporate interest in supporting local ecosystem services projects. In addition, Italy's Presidential Estate of [Castelporziano](#), a nearly 6,000-hectare forest reserve near Rome, became the first of its kind to receive FSC certification, recognizing its responsible management of biodiversity and ecosystem services as a model for sustainable urban forest stewardship across Europe.

## Why it matters

Europe has the greatest area of FSC-certified forest globally, spanning 31 countries. The region's forests, including temperate, boreal, and Mediterranean ecosystems, play a critical role in biodiversity conservation, climate regulation, and economies. The initiatives described above help expand responsible forest management and sustainable construction practices across Europe, while strengthening market demand for certified products and increasing investment in biodiversity and ecosystem protection.

## IMPACT IN NUMBERS

### 24,009

Chain of Custody Certificate Holders, an increase of **1.7%** from the previous year.

### 120

additional Chain of Custody Certificates were issued in Italy

### 2.7

**million** increase in hectares of certified forest areas in Poland



# SPOTLIGHT NORTH AMERICA

**Certified community and family forests increased by 8.4% to 2.7 million hectares.**

## What changed

In 2025, North America was established as an FSC region of focus for the first time. 2025 highlights:

- Standards, strategy, and expansion in the United States:** Two milestones were the development of its three-year Strategic Plan and the completion of the National Forest Stewardship Standard, both informed by extensive engagement with stakeholders and certificate holders nationwide. FSC US also launched targeted initiatives to expand certified forest management area and increase primary processor certification in the Southeast and Pacific Northwest, already securing significant external funding. **First US-based project certified under FSC Verified Impact Programme for biodiversity:** Chestnut Carbon's [Sustainable Restoration Project](#) aims to restore over 16,000 acres of pasture and cropland to native forest across 25 sites in Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.
- Market trust and innovative solutions in Canada:** Major retailers in Canada expanded their responsible sourcing commitments and increased the presence of FSC-certified products online and in stores, including Amazon Canada's Climate Pledge Friendly programme. FSC Canada advanced climate smart forestry through the launch of the [Forests as Climate Solutions](#) pilots, supported by Environment and Climate Change Canada and launched the first Indigenous Knowledge

Hub with the Indigenous chamber to support knowledge sharing, capacity building, and the integration of Indigenous rights and knowledge into forest stewardship.

## Why does this matter

North America's boreal, temperate, and tropical forests cover 650 million hectares, or 36% of the continent's total land area. Establishing North America as an FSC region strengthened collaboration, allowing for forest management growth, climate and biodiversity solutions, Indigenous engagement, and market uptake of FSC-certified products.

### IMPACT IN NUMBERS

**60.3**

million hectares of certified forest areas

**42%**

of Canadians recognize the FSC brand, an **8%** increase from 2022



# SPOTLIGHT LATIN AMERICA

**Certification of small or low intensity managed forests grew 58% to 298,836 hectares.**

## What changed

Latin America advanced community forestry, while scaling government partnerships and ecosystem services.

## 2025 highlights

- Government partnerships for impact:** In Peru, FSC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Service of Natural Protected Areas (SERNANP) to promote certification and ecosystem services across more than 8 million hectares of protected forest. In Paraguay, FSC signed an MoU with the National Forestry Institute (INFONA) to strengthen traceability, improve market access, and promote responsible forest management.
- Reaching new certification milestones:** Afro-descendant communities from Colombia's Medio Atrato region achieved the country's first FSC certification for natural forest management, covering more than 20,000 hectares – the first Afro-descendant organization in Colombia to receive this recognition. For the first time

in FSC's history, shrubland ecosystems were certified under Forest Management and Chain of Custody standards in Mexico. Brazil reached new milestones with Latin America's first FSC-certified honey production and the first FSC-certified rubber forest management operations verified for ecosystem services impacts.

- Increasing ecosystem services impacts:** A total of 67 Verified Impacts of ecosystem services were recorded across just over 3.2 million hectares in eight countries in Latin America, marking a 10% increase from the end of 2024. The first FSC Ecosystem Services Summit in Latin America generated new opportunities, sparking interest from forest-owning communities, companies, and organizations, and reaching around 50% of participants with information on ecosystem services for the first time.

## Why it matters

Latin America has approximately 842 million hectares of forests, representing nearly 20% of the world's forest area. These forests cover almost half of the region's total land surface, with more than 80% located in the Amazon basin. This extraordinary natural wealth is at risk

as the region continues to face high levels of deforestation, largely driven by the expansion of agriculture, cattle ranching, and illegal mining – making these initiatives for strong partnerships, community forestry, and the protection of ecosystem services vital to support long-term forest resilience.

### IMPACT IN NUMBERS

## 19.9

million hectares of forests certified, representing **8%** growth from 2024

## 2,426

Chain of Custody Certificates, **5.9%** growth from 2024

## 1,827%

**growth** in small or low intensity managed forests and community forest certified area in Colombia



# SPOTLIGHT ASIA- PACIFIC

**Certified community forests have increased by 21.4% to cover more than 2 million hectares.**

## What changed

Asia-Pacific advanced responsible forestry through new standards, stronger government engagement, and growing business uptake. The revised Asia-Pacific Regional Forest Stewardship Standard expanded its scope to include natural forests, opening pathways for smallholders across India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Viet Nam to certify non-timber forest products and ecosystem services for the first time.

## 2025 highlights

- Strengthening government ties and institutional partnerships:** In Indonesia, the [FSC Remedy Forum in Jakarta](#) brought together the governments, industry, and civil society to advance forest restoration and community-centred remedy, strengthening FSC's system integrity work across the region. In Northeast China, FSC forged a landmark partnership with state forest bureaus in a landscape undergoing ecological recovery following a national logging ban, laying the groundwork for one million hectares of Forest Management certification.
- Opening new markets and building responsible supply chains:** In [Chinese Taipei](#), FSC established its presence for the first time in 2025, inviting diverse stakeholders into discussions on responsible forestry and laying the foundation for nature-positive market development. In [Malaysia](#), the [country's first FSC-certified bamboo and rubberwood](#) created responsible sourcing pathways for smallholders and Indigenous communities, translating directly into Forest Management and Chain of Custody growth. In China, Linglong Tire, a global top 15 manufacturer, became the first Chinese tyre company to achieve FSC certification.
- Driving market development through sustained engagement:** Through the Asia-Pacific Change Agent Series, FSC convened value chain actors across the region's most critical commodity sectors. The region also rolled out Asia-Pacific in Action: The EUDR Readiness Journey, a [webinar](#) and [on-the-ground training series](#) equipping supply chain actors to meet deforestation-free compliance requirements. In Australia, FSC deepened its partnership with Indigenous communities through the commissioning of [a new artwork](#) by Tolita Davis Angeles, Chair of the FSC Australia-New Zealand Indigenous Working Group, giving a culturally grounded voice to FSC's values, governance structure, and shared responsibility for forests across generations.

## Why is this important

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 740 million hectares of forests, making up around 18% of the world's total forest cover. These forests are a lifeline for millions of people and are at the heart of global forest supply chains – the region accounts for 57% of FSC Chain of Custody certificates worldwide. This means that responsible forest management, government partnerships, and market uptake in the region has significant global impact.

## IMPACT IN NUMBERS

### 13.8

million hectares of certified forest area

### 38,922

Chain of Custody Certificates, an 11% increase from 2024

Nearly

### 1,000

stakeholders engaged in the revision Regional Forest Stewardship Standard, in more than 30 training sessions



# SPECIAL THANKS

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries  
Inc.

Amazon's Climate Pledge Friendly  
program

Azure

Brambles Industries Limited

Building and Wood Workers'  
International

Celulosa Arauco y Constitucion SA

DocuSign

Empresas CMPC SA

Environment and Climate Change  
Canada

Esri

EU LIFE

GitHub, Inc.

Global Environmental Facility

Google LLC

Horizon Europe

IKEA

International Paper

ISEAL Alliance

Kimberly-Clark Foundation

Klabin S.A.

McConnell Foundation

Microsoft Corporation

M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust

Natural Resources Canada

Olam International Inc.

Pantheon

Procter & Gamble Co.

Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend  
Nederland

Salesforce.com Inc.

Slalom Consulting

Suzano

The Coca-Cola Company

think-cell

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