

Step-by-step guide

How to become an FSC™ certified smallholder



INTRODUCTION TO FSC

What is FSC?

FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not for profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. FSC's pioneering approach is to bring together voices from the Global North and South to define environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management and identify the tools and resources that will effect positive, lasting change.

OUR VISION is that the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.



INTRODUCTION TO FSC

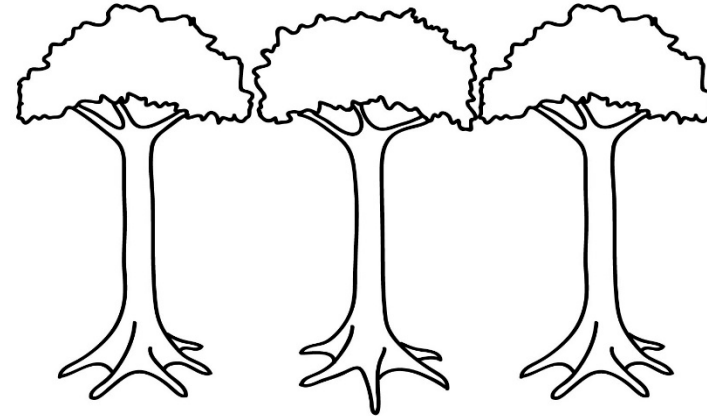
Certification options for smallholders

FSC promotes responsible forest management in all sizes, scales and types of forests around the world. However, we recognise that **small** and **community** producers face challenges related to access to the certification system and the costs of certification, which are difficult to overcome.

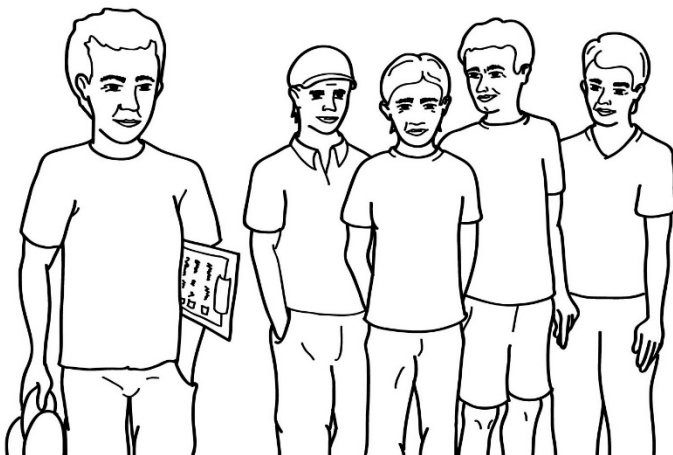
As such FSC offers three programs designed to aid small and community producers become certified:

- FSC Streamlined procedures for small forests
- FSC Group Certification
- FSC Modular Approach Program

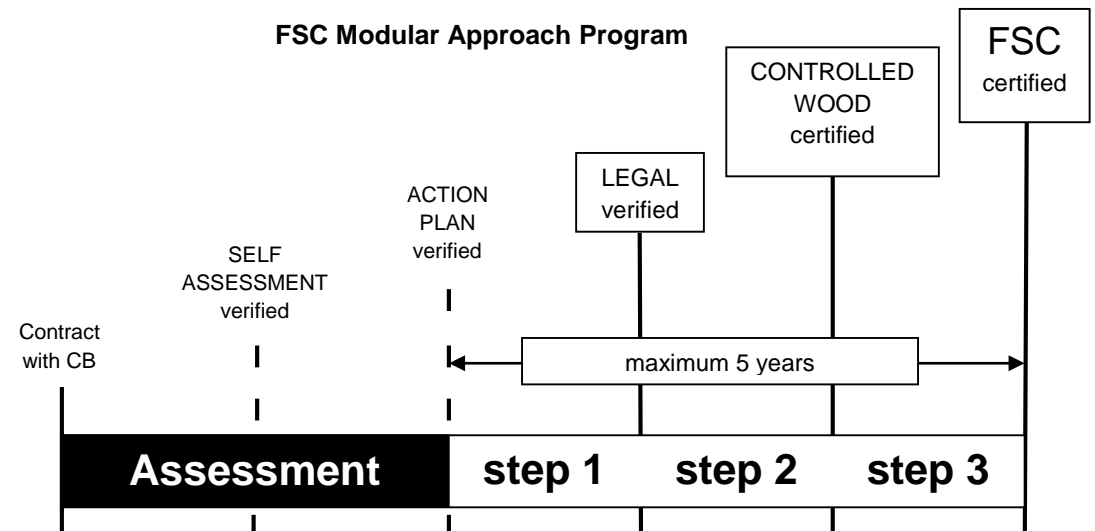
FSC Streamlined procedures for small forests



FSC Group Certification



FSC Modular Approach Program



SLIMF CERTIFICATION

Streamlined Procedures for small producers (SLIMFs)

FSC defines a small producer in terms of the area of their forests or the volume of timber they harvest each year. A small or low-intensity managed forest, or SLIMF, can qualify for special guidelines that streamline their certification procedures. The use of these procedures enables certification bodies to complete their audits more efficiently. As a result, small producers can be FSC-certified at costs that are reasonable for the size of their businesses and competitive with the cost of certification for larger producers. FSC has eligibility guidelines for SLIMFs that certification bodies use to determine if a forest is eligible or not.

Which forests can achieve certification under these streamlined procedures?

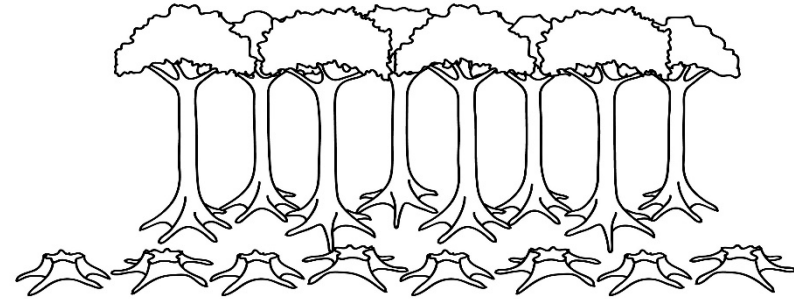
To achieve certification under streamlined procedures for SLIMFs, a forest management unit has to be either 'small' or 'low intensity' according to the definitions of FSC.

For example, in Canada, forest management units may be classified as **small in area** when they are 1,000 hectares or smaller.

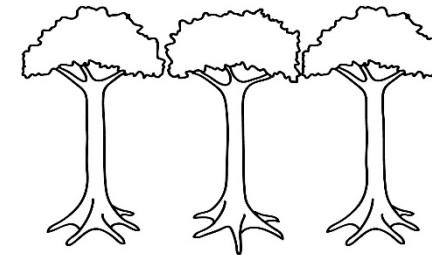
In all countries, forest management units may be classified as **low intensity** when they comply with at least one of the following two criteria:

- The harvesting rate is less than 20% of the mean annual growth in timber, AND the annual harvest is no more than 5000 m³.
- The forest is managed exclusively for non-timber forest products.

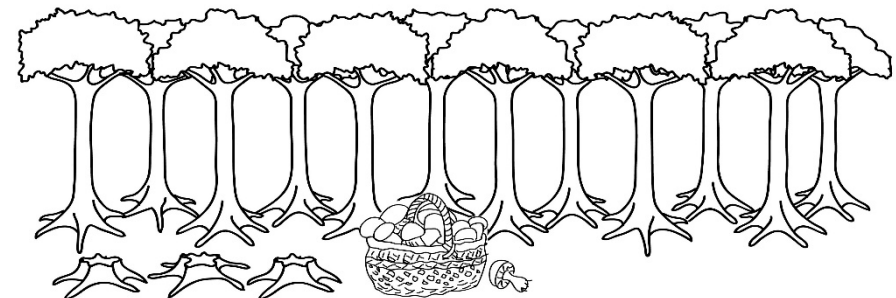
Ordinary forest



Small forest



Low intensity forest



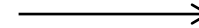
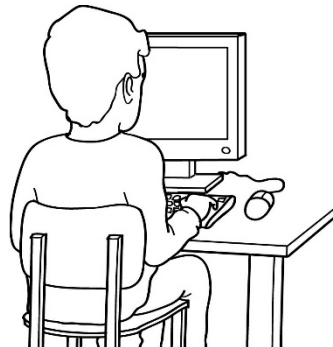
BASIC STEPS TO SLIMF CERTIFICATION

1. Contact a certification body

The first thing you have to do to get certified is to contact one or more FSC accredited certification bodies in your area. A certification body is an independent organization that performs the certification process. They should tell you what FSC standard they will use to audit you and give you an estimate of cost and time.

You can contact a certification body via telephone, letter and e-mail. The purpose is to identify which certification body you prefer to work with. Request that they send a copy of the standard that they will use to audit you. Then choose a certification body and sign a contract.

You can see a list of certification bodies in your area on the last page. You may also contact your National Office or Representative to get contact details for certification bodies www.ca.fsc.org



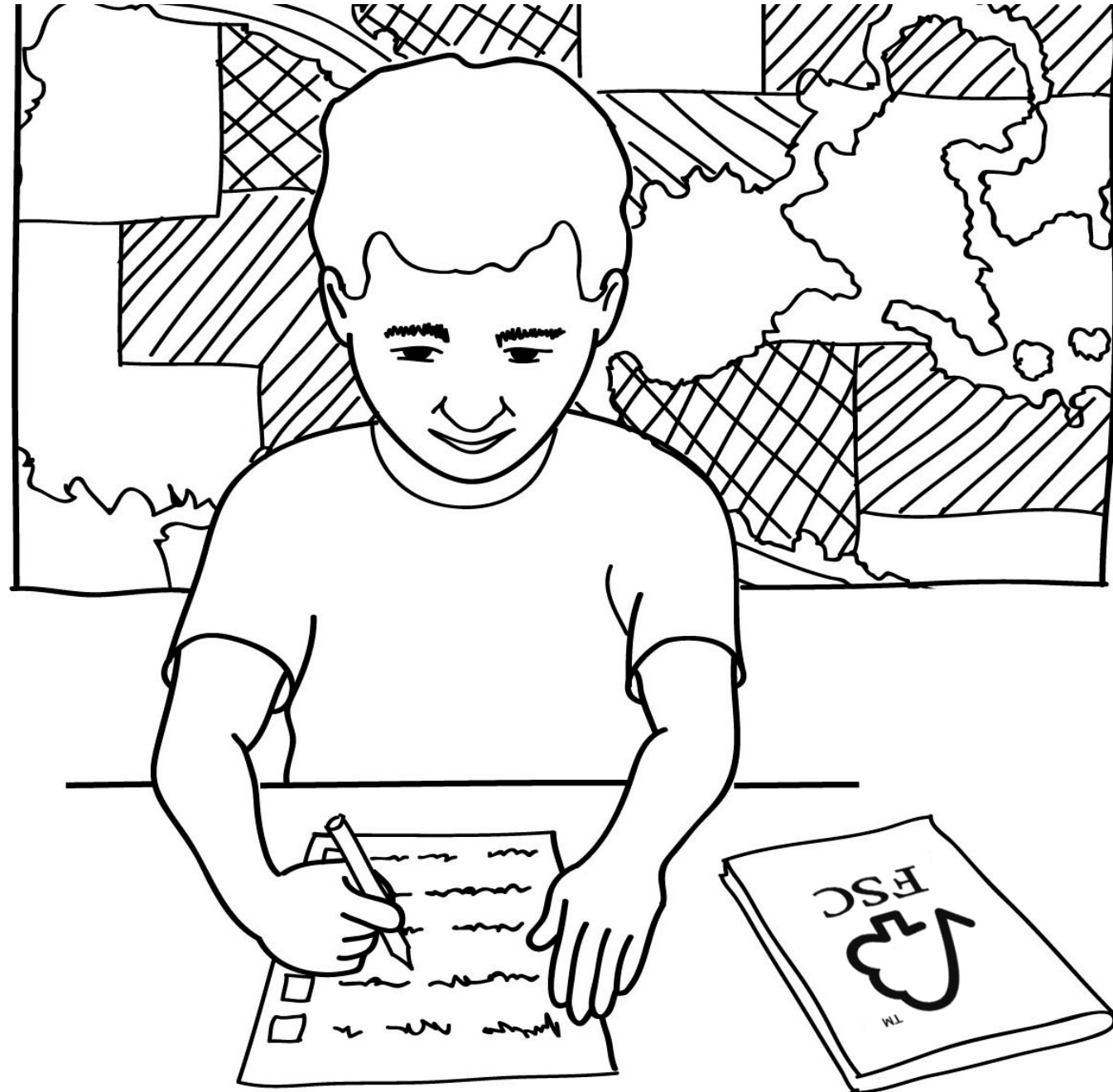
BASIC STEPS TO SLIMF CERTIFICATION

2. Management plan

Review the standard that the certification body sent you and assess whether you almost comply with the management practice defined in the standard.

Create drafts of the documentation requested and a management plan that complies with the Principles and Criteria in the FSC standard that the certification body will use to audit you. If you already have a management plan you might be able to simply adapt it.

If you do not know which standard applies to you, you can contact your National Office or Representative for advice
www.ca.fsc.org



BASIC STEPS TO SLIMF CERTIFICATION

3. Optional pre-assessment

If necessary the certification body makes a pre-assessment where they will monitor the activities in your forest and speak with your employees, the local population, and others who may be interested in your forest management practices.

If you feel ready for a full evaluation (e.g. you feel that you are in compliance with the applicable FSC standard) then you can skip the pre-assessment. This will reduce auditing costs.



BASIC STEPS TO SLIMF CERTIFICATION

4. Pre-assessment report

The result of the pre-assessment is a report that discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the activities in your forest. These will need to be addressed before your certification assessment. In general, this will take a year to complete.



BASIC STEPS TO SLIMF CERTIFICATION

5. Certification assessment

The certification assessment is carried out to determine whether the forest is managed according to FSC requirements. This 'main assessment' can take a few days to complete and will form the basis of the auditor's recommendation to certify your forest management unit or not.

After the evaluation, the auditor submits the final report to the certification body, who make the final decision.

The certification body will need to see all records and documents that are required for certification, so it is vital that you ensure these are available during the audit.



BASIC STEPS TO SLIMF CERTIFICATION

6. Certification

If the certification body approves, a certificate is issued. The certificate is valid for five years as long as compliance with the FSC forest management standard is maintained.

If the certification body does not approve, they will suggest the activities and changes that are needed to secure FSC certification in the future.



BASIC STEPS TO SLIMF CERTIFICATION

7. Re-certification

Annual assessments will take place for years 2-5 of your certification. If you qualify as SLIMF, some of these assessments can be desk-based which will reduce your auditing costs. After year 5, the certification body performs a full re-assessment, similar to the main assessment. If this is successful, you will be re-certified for another 5 years.

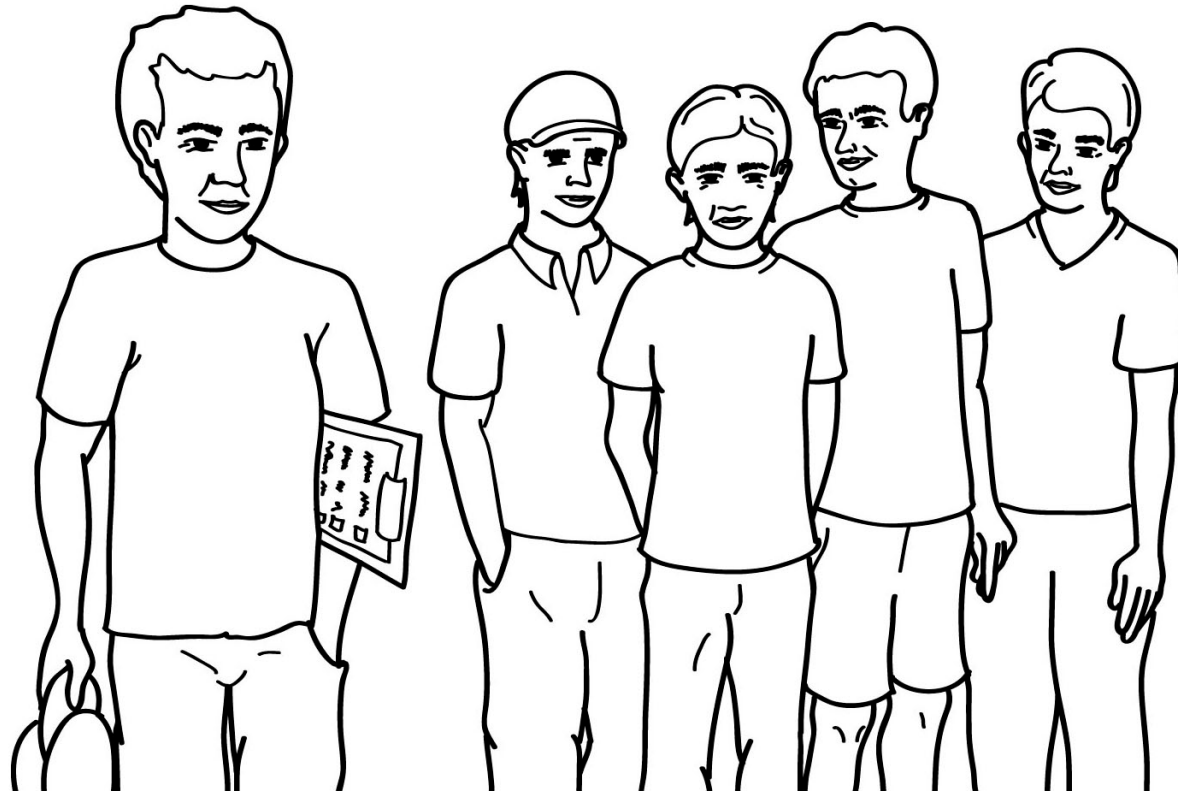


GROUP CERTIFICATION''

What is Group Certification?

Forest owners who wish to share the cost of certification can form a group and apply for one FSC certificate to cover them all. Group certification reduces the cost and workload related to achieving and maintaining an FSC certificate - a good option for small and community producers. SLIMFs can also form a group (or create a sub-group in their existing group) to reduce their certification costs even further.

The group has to choose a group manager. This person or organization will have the main responsibility for ensuring that the forest management of group members meets the FSC requirements for certification and report it to the auditor.

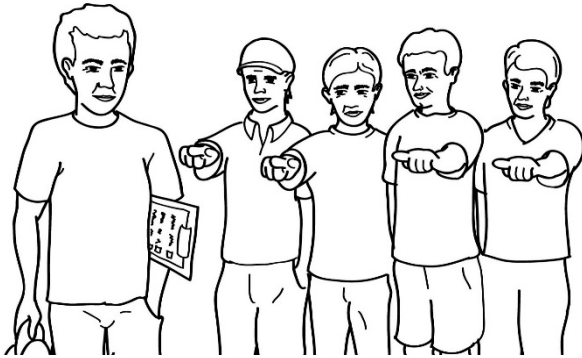


Group manager

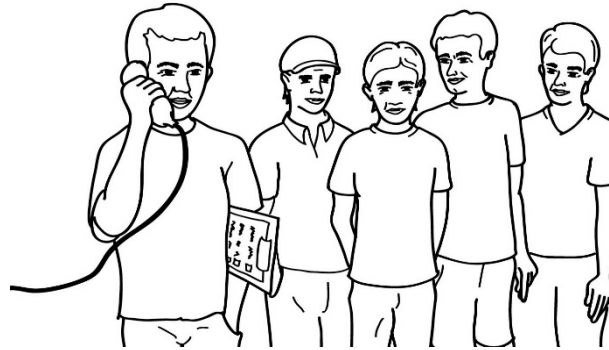
Group members

BASIC STEPS FOR GROUP CERTIFICATION

1. Form a group and designate the group manager. Determine the responsibilities of the group manager and the members and sign a contract officially forming the group.



→ 2. Contract a certification body and find out what FSC requirements will be introduced.



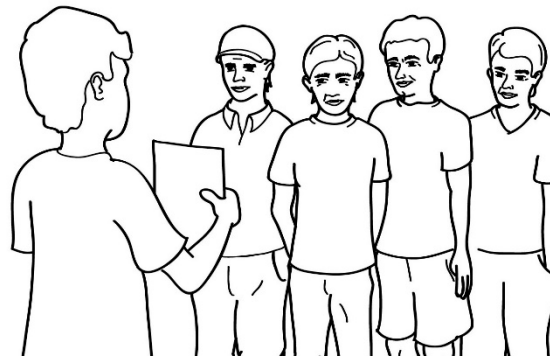
→ 3. Create procedures for group members to meet FSC requirements.



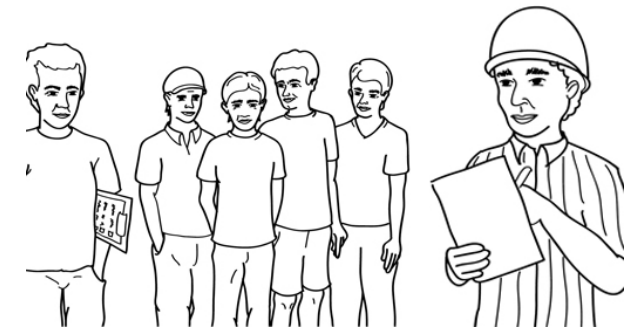
4. Assess progress towards FSC certification through an internal audit. This internal audit is fundamental.



→ 5. Implement any changes recommended by the internal audit.



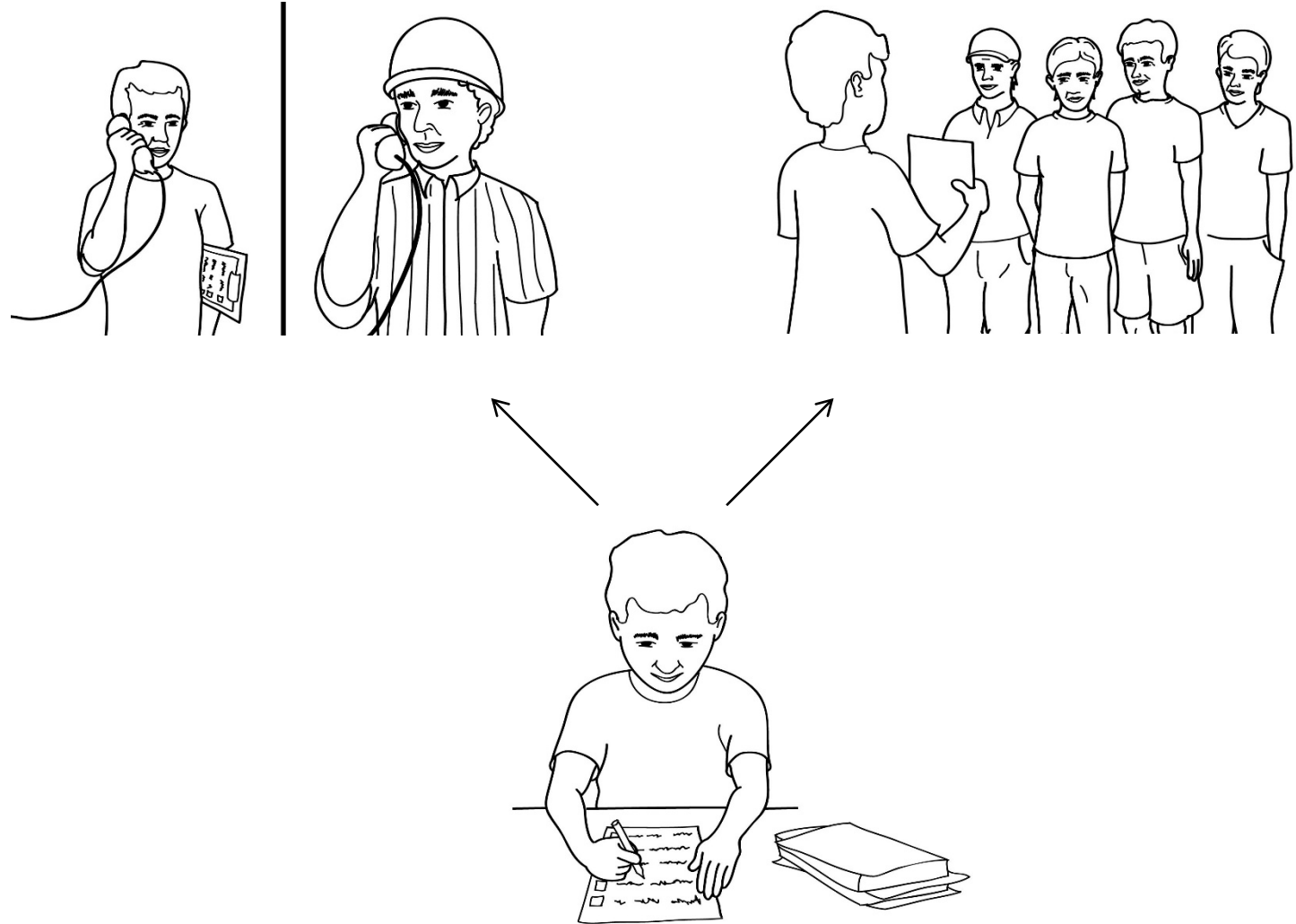
→ 6. When ready contact the certification body to do a pre-assessment (optional) and the main assessment.



GROUP CERTIFICATION

Typical Group Manager's responsibilities

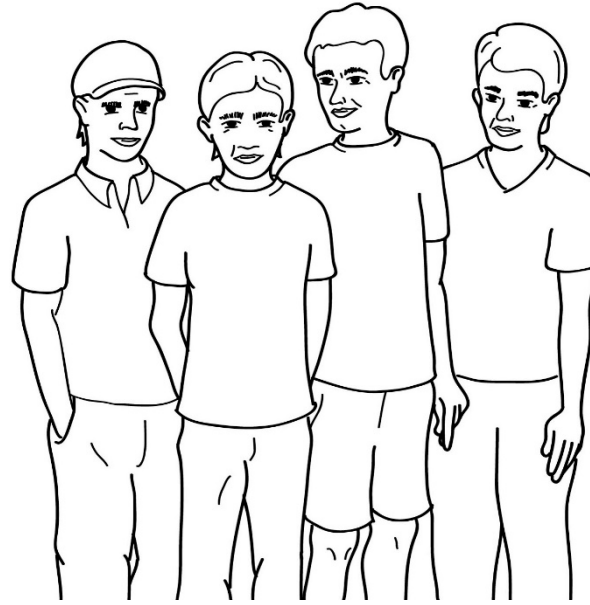
- Apply for group certification with a certification body.
- Act as contact point for the certification body.
- Inform the group about their responsibilities.
- Make sure that all group members are meeting the FSC forest management requirements.
- Monitor all of the group members and organize internal auditing.
- Keep records of e.g. lists of group members, forest areas and reports with the results of the internal audits.



GROUP CERTIFICATION

Typical Group member's responsibilities

- Manage their forests according to the FSC requirements.
- Agree to the rules of the group scheme.
- Confirm that the group manager will apply for an FSC certificate on their behalf through a contract with the group manager.

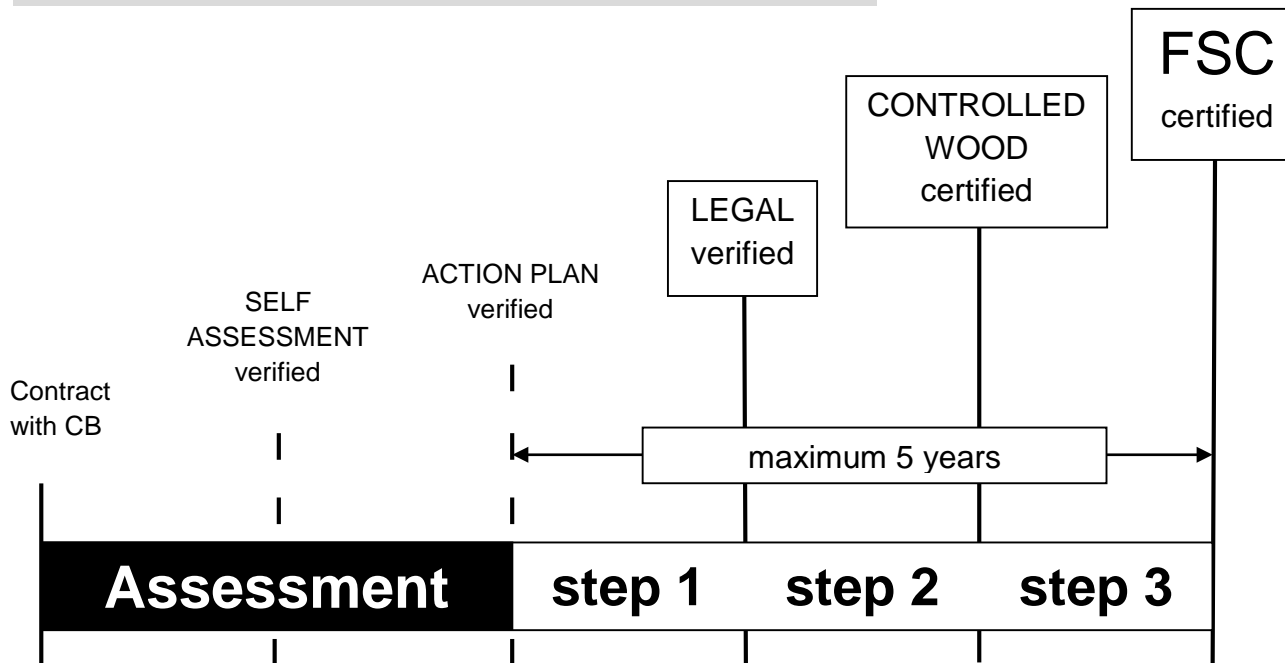


FSC MODULAR APPROACH PROGRAM (MAP)

FSC Modular Approach Program (MAP)

The FSC Modular Approach is a step-by-step program for achieving FSC forest management certification in 5 years. MAP is designed to make FSC certification easier to achieve by dividing certification into 3 steps: legality, controlled wood, and full FSC certification. At each step, FSC will facilitate access to financial and technical assistance for smallholders.

For more information and step-by-step guidance on MAP, please go to www.fsc.org/smallholders.



How to get involved

You can read more about FSC and the benefits for smallholders in the brochure “Why choose to be an FSC certified smallholder?” and at www.fsc.org/smallholders.

You can also contact the national FSC office in your country for more information.

Web: www.ca.fsc.org

Email: info@ca.fsc.org

The first thing you have to do to become FSC certified is to contact a certification body. Here are the certification bodies in Canada:

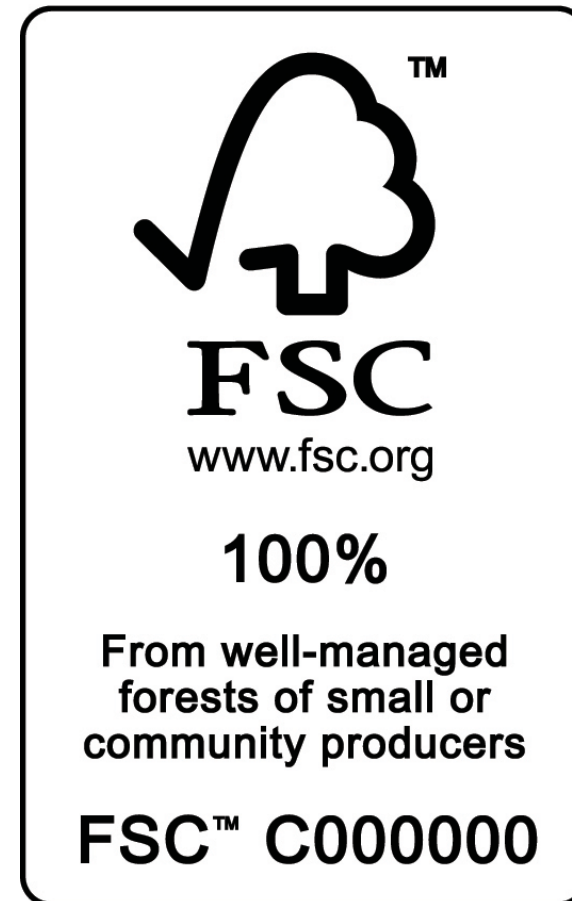
- [BM Trada](#)
- [Bureau Veritas](#)
- [Control Union](#)
- [KPMG](#)
- [Rainforest Alliance](#)
- [SAI Global](#)
- [SCS Global Services](#)
- [SGS Canada](#)
- [Soil Association](#)

SMALL AND COMMUNITY LABEL OPTION

Small and community Label Option

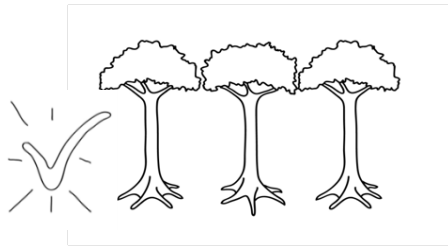
FSC certificate holders that qualify as SLIMFs and/or indigenous or traditional communities can put a special claim on their products that identify those products as coming from an FSC-certified small or community source. This claim helps small and community producers improve market access. To motivate buyers and retailers to ask for the claim, FSC is creating a marketing tool kit to help tell the story of FSC-certified small and community producers. This will help educate consumers that buying FSC means supporting forest-dependent people and their livelihoods.

To use the label follow these simple steps on the next page.



SMALL AND COMMUNITY LABEL OPTION

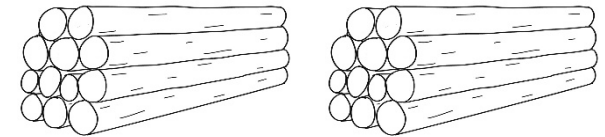
1. Check your eligibility- contact your source of FSC advice (group manager, consulting forester, local service provider) to see if you qualify.



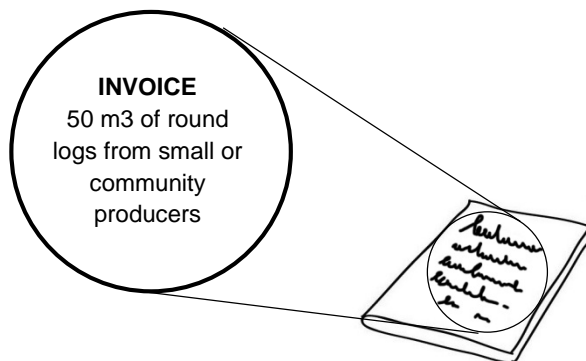
→ 2. Confirm your eligibility with your certification body (by email, phone, or in person).



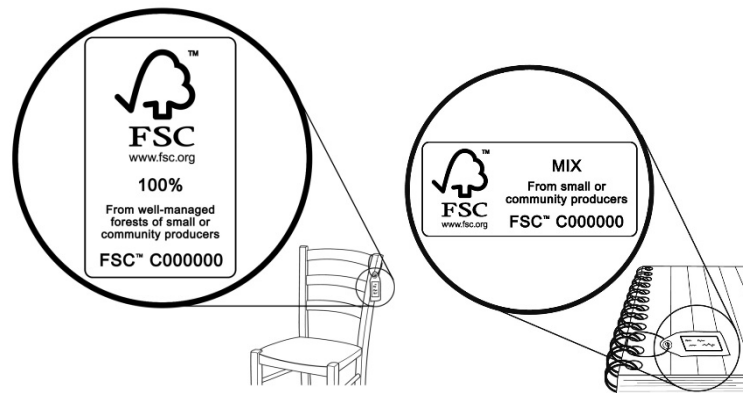
→ 3. Determine what products you have are 100% from FSC-certified small and community sources. If only some of your products qualify, create a product group especially for products from FSC-certified small and community sources.



4. Include a special statement in your sales documents for those products that can carry the label option. The statement should be clearly linked to the product being sold e.g. "50 m³ of round logs of (timber species) from small and community producers."



→ 5. When passing on the claim, please note that it can't be used with the credit system. If using an FSC mix label, the controlled wood in the mix must also be from small and community sources in order to use the label option on finished products.



→ 6. If you fulfill these steps, you can use the FSC Small and Community Label.

