

# Understanding the Forest Management Groups Standard

Information related to FSC-STD-30-005 V2-1

Version: March 2024

## What is FSC FM Group certification?

# 01



The Forest Management Groups certification (FM Groups) is a **policy solution** developed by FSC to facilitate the certification of **several Management Units (MU)** grouped together<sup>1</sup> and managed by a Group Entity, which holds a **single FSC certificate** for the whole group.

A group can be certified following the requirements for the establishment and management of FSC **Forest Management (FM)** groups as outlined in FSC-STD-30-005 V2-1.

<sup>1</sup> Each group have one certificate, refer to Clause 1.3 of FSC-STD-30-005 V2-1.

## Key actors on the FM Groups certification

**Group Entity:** Person or group of persons registered as a legal entity responsible for managing the group and holding the FSC certificate on behalf of all members. The Group Entity<sup>3</sup> coordinates certification activities, develops group rules, and ensures compliance with FSC standards.

<sup>3</sup> For group entity requirements refer to Clause 1.

**Group Member:** Individual Forest owners or leaseholders, whose MU participate in the group for certification<sup>3</sup>. While they don't hold individual FSC certificates, their **MU** are covered under the group certificate issued to the Group Entity.

<sup>3</sup> For members' requirements refer to Clause 2.



# 02

## Who can use the FM Group certification?

Groups are commonly made of small and family forests but are **available to any type of forest and ownership worldwide**, including communities.

**Any forest** can become part of a group<sup>2</sup>, and any forest manager or expert can become a Group Entity.

<sup>2</sup> For the rules to set up and manage a group, refer to Clauses 7 to 12 of FSC-STD-30-005 V2-1.



# 03

## Internal Monitoring System

The Group Entity has to establish a **documented internal monitoring system**<sup>6</sup> to ensure the members conform with the applicable FSS. This system includes regular monitoring visits, analysis of monitoring results, and corrective action procedures to address non-conformities.

With the **inclusion of forestry contractors**<sup>7</sup>, the monitoring system shall be adapted, undergoing targeted evaluations of contractors to ensure compliance with FSC standards, with intensity adjusted based on identified risks.

<sup>6</sup> Implementation of the monitoring system and minimum sample size is detailed in Clause 11.

<sup>7</sup> For details on internal monitoring with contractors in the group, refer to Clauses 17 and 18.

**Resource Manager:** is responsible<sup>4</sup> for ensuring conformance with FSC and FSS standards within designated **Resource Management Units (RMUs)**. They oversee operational forest management activities and may also serve as the Group Entity.

<sup>4</sup> For resource manager requirements refer to Clause 3 of FSC-STD-30-005 V2-1.



**Forestry Contractor:** a legally registered person or group of persons, who provide forest management services, such as logging, silviculture, or other activities, **on behalf**<sup>5</sup> of Group Entities or group members. They operate within the management units of the group and are **covered** under the group certificate.

<sup>5</sup> Forestry contractors' inclusion is optional, for requirements refer to Clauses 13 to 19.



- ✓ **Cost savings:** Group certification reduces certification expenses by sharing costs among members and achieving economies of scale, allowing efficient access to necessary services.
- ✓ **Reduced administrative burden:** Group certification simplifies administrative tasks, such as paperwork and management responsibilities, for individual members by consolidating these under the Group Entity.
- ✓ **Technical Support:** Group members receive robust support<sup>8</sup> in implementing responsible forest management practices, which enhances productivity and profitability.

<sup>8</sup> The Group Entity can facilitate access to specialized resources and expertise, such as hiring forest management specialists and identifying buyers for FSC-certified products.

# 04

## Benefits of using FSC Group certification



Group certification helps communities **meet government regulations**, ensuring legal compliance and **improved access to government support**.

## Application in the FSC system

# 05



The FM Groups standard does not stand alone. It is **coupled** with the relevant FSC's **Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS)** by ensuring that group members adhere to responsible forest management practices.

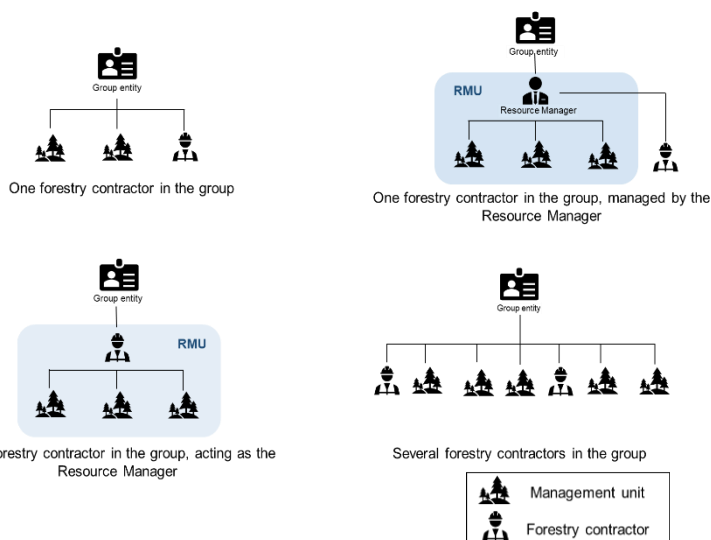
The FM Groups certification scheme provides a **framework** for implementing FSS requirements at the group level, covering environmental conservation, social responsibility, and economic viability.

Furthermore, the Group Entity or some/all of its members can integrate the **FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure**<sup>9</sup>, impact demonstration<sup>10</sup> and market tools into their MU when holding FM or FM/CoC certification.

<sup>9</sup> FSC-PRO-30-006 offers a structured approach to showcase the impact of ecosystem services, enhancing access to ecosystem services markets.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to the FSC-GUI-30-006 for demonstrating Ecosystem Services impacts.

## Some examples of contractors' inclusion<sup>11</sup>:



<sup>11</sup> For a more detailed explanation of Forestry contractors' inclusion in the group, refer to Box 8 of FSC-STD-30-005 V2-1.

# 06

## Unlock the power of collective Forest Management!

Embrace FSC Group Certification to streamline your path to responsible forestry practices.

Together, we can amplify our impact, simplify processes, and thrive in responsible forest management. Reach out with any queries or support. Let's grow together.

Contact us at  
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