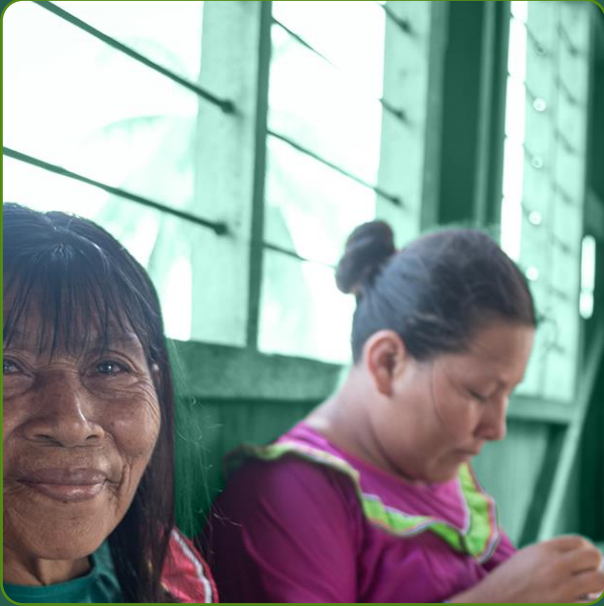




COMMUNITY AND FAMILY FORESTS (CFF) PARTNER SCOPING TOOL

Decision support and prioritisation for building partnerships

Title:	Community and Family Forests (CFF) PARTNER SCOPING TOOL	
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Objective of document:	The Community and Family Forests (CFF) Partner Scooping Tool has been designed to support the CFF team selecting and prioritizing partner organizations.	
Confidential?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Intended audience	☒ Internal (FSC)	☐ External
Personal data included?	☒ Yes	☐ No

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INTRODUCTION

The FSC Community and Family Forest (CFF) program seeks to improve access and uptake of the FSC system by small-scale forests producers, or low intensity and community forests stewards.

The CFF program began with a research and development phase that tested many different policy solutions and market tools, potentially relevant to their target groups, until selecting the ones that have achieved proof of concept.

The result of the programme's work to date is a **Community and Family Forests toolbox**. It comprises:

- Policy solutions: Accessible and tailor-made policy and standard solutions for community and family forest owners (e.g. Continuous Improvement Procedure).
- Market solutions: Tools that enable these stakeholders to derive tangible benefits from responsible forest management and FSC certification (e.g. Collective Impact Methodology, Economic Viability Tool, Timber Training).
- Enablers: Tools aiming to raise awareness, build capacity, raise funds, and scale up implementation e.g., through a Community of Practice.

Since 2023, the program has moved into an implementation phase. This means working with the FSC Network and other partners to build capacities and enable them to apply FSC solutions and tools in different settings.

However, to scale up the application of the CFF tools and increase the positive impact on community and family forests globally, capacities and skills complementary to those of the CFF team are required. Therefore, following the guidelines of the FSC's Global Strategy, the program will focus on seeking suitable allies and building strong partnerships to achieve common goals.

Thus, the objective of the Partner Scoping Tool is to gather information about potential partners, enabling informed decisions in partnership building and increasing the likelihood of success.

The tool was created by the CFF program, consulted and discussed with the CFF team and colleagues from Investment & Partnership, and subsequently tested. During the tests, it was confirmed that the tool is very useful and fulfills its purpose. However, it is designed to be a living tool that can be continuously improved. Moreover, its usefulness will always depend on the ability to interpret the data collected.

This document describes the needs for which the program aims to develop partnerships, the content of the Partnership Scoping Tool and how to use it.

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1. Accessing CFF program needs

Before reaching out to any partners, we need to clearly define our goals for these partnerships. What are our objectives, challenges, and opportunities? What gaps or pain points do we need to address? How can partnerships help us solve these issues? By identifying our needs, we can narrow down our partner criteria and focus on those who can offer the most relevant solutions.

1.1. Need for adult training and capacity building expertise

CFF has developed e-training, facilitator toolkits, and other materials to support capacity building for technicians, facilitators, and other individuals working on the ground with SLIMF and community forest managers. These resources also include training programs for these target groups. CFF is seeking additional capacities to support the development of further training programs and to deliver training and capacity building in a sustained manner.

The ideal partners for collaboration on these initiatives would be technical institutes, universities or other organizations and individuals experienced in applying adult learning principles to create effective learning experiences.

1.2. Needs for operational capacities

The CFF program has the capacity and expertise to develop solutions and tools, train facilitators, and provide implementation support. However, it lacks the resources for day-to-day and medium- to long-term implementation with SLIMF and community forest managers or in multi-stakeholder processes globally.

Therefore, additional capacities and human resources are needed to implement the CFF toolbox on the ground over the medium and long term. This support will help SLIMF, and community forest managers improve responsible forest management, obtain FSC certification, and/or engage in multi-stakeholder processes e.g., standard development activities or the Collective Impact methodology.

Potential partners to complement CFF's activities in this field include non-governmental organizations and community and smallholder organizations that are deeply rooted in the local context but could also be governmental organization e.g., extension programs or academic institutions. These partners should be able to provide capacity development and technical support for applying CFF toolbox to SLIMF and community forest managers and will need to possess a mid or long-term vision.

1.3. Needs for market and commercial expertise

Economic benefits through the sale of forest products are one of the primary incentives for responsible forest management and FSC certification. However, it is recognized that many forest managers also value other benefits. When CFF toolbox are applied, forest management is improved, and FSC certification is obtained, the question often arises: what benefits will compensate for the efforts made? To increase its impact, the CFF program needs the capacity to connect SLIMF and community forest managers to specific value chains and markets, supporting they receive the desired benefits.

Potential partners to complement CFF's activities in this field could be FSC-certified companies that trade FSC-certified products. These companies should have market knowledge and, ideally, experience working with SLIMF and/or community forest managers as suppliers. Additionally, they should have a mid or long-term vision.

1.4. Other technical capacities

The CFF team comprises specialists in various fields, including anthropology, economics, forestry, and social sciences. However, complementary technical skills are needed to evaluate the application of existing solutions and tools, improve them, and create innovative alternatives in a process of continuous improvement. The specific needs will be determined on a case-by-case basis identify potential partners

2. Identify potential partners

The CFF will start identifying and developing a list of potential partner organizations in collaboration with the Indigenous Foundation and the FSC Network (including regional offices and national network partners) in priority themes and geographic areas. As the program successfully establishes its initial partnerships, additional partners may be identified,

3. Evaluate and prioritize

When evaluating potential partners, CFF will consider several criteria, including their motivation to partner with FSC, their alignment with the FSC mission, their reputation and reliability, their experience, and their technical capabilities and resources (both financial and human). While some assessment factors may be common to all potential partners, others may vary depending on the partnership's objective. To evaluate them objectively, the Partnership Scoping Tool will be used, which consists of two steps.

3.1. How does the Partner Scoping Tool work

The first step aims to gather detailed information about each potential partner. In the second step, the organization's conformance with nine (9) partner evaluation criteria will be assessed, followed by the evaluation and interpretation of the results.

3.1.1. Step 1

The Step 1 is composed by a first section to gather general and contact data of the organization and 18 questions organized in the following sections.

1. Motivation.
2. General Compatibility
3. Scope
4. Financial Capacities

In addition, there is a section with questions on special capacities. These questions should be tailored to the objectives of the partnership, ensuring the potential partner is thoroughly assessed when starting to use the tool.

After inserting the identification data (name, date, and the person filling out the sheet) in the respective row, the user inputs the answers that describe the potential partner. In some cases, answers can be selected from a drop-down list, but there is also space for more detailed information and comments. If any information is missing, it should be sought out to complete the questionnaire.

3.1.2. Step 2

Based on the information provided in Worksheet 1, the questions in Worksheet 2 must be answered. There are three answer options: 'yes', 'no', and 'don't know,' each marked in different colours.

- **Red:** Indicates an alert and suggests that partnering with this organization is not recommended.
- **Green:** Indicates that the organization meets our basic evaluation criteria for partner selection.
- **Yellow:** Indicates that more information is needed to make an informed decision.

This is why, it's important to ensure that the questions in Worksheet 1 are answered by someone knowledgeable about the potential partner organization.

After completing steps one and two, the color-coded responses in sheet two should be reviewed to evaluate and prioritize potential partners. The focus will be on organizations with predominantly green responses, as they align well with our criteria. Yellow responses indicate areas where further investigation is needed, while one or more red responses suggest reconsidering the partnership.

4. Prioritizing our partners is not a one-time activity

Prioritizing our partners is not a one-time activity. We need to review our partners periodically and update our rankings based on their performance, feedback, and changes in our needs or goals. We should also communicate our expectations and appreciation to our partners and seek their input on how to improve the partnership and to explore new opportunities and challenges with our partners. By reviewing our partners, we can ensure that our partnerships remain relevant, mutually beneficial, and aligned with goals.

One of the benefits of partnering with others is that we can learn from their expertise, insights, and best practices. We should not only prioritize our partners based on what they can offer us, but also on what we can learn from them. We should ask questions, listen actively, and seek feedback from our partners. We should also share our knowledge, challenges, and successes with our partners and create a culture of learning and collaboration. By learning from our partners, we can enhance our skills, improve our performance, and increase our impact.



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