

Understanding SLIMF and Community Forests in FSC Standards

For Working Groups

Information related to FSC-STD-01-003 V2-0

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What is SLIMF?

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A Management Unit (**MU**) may qualify as '**SLIMF**' if it is '**small**' AND/OR managed as '**low intensity**'.



Tenure: The legal and/or **customary right** to manage a 'community forest' MU is held at **communal level**, either located in a communal forest and/or on individually assigned plots ⁴.

Management: The management is done **actively by** the **community** (e.g., under a communal forest management plan) **or** the community authorizes the management **by others** ⁵ (e.g., resource managers, forestry contractors or forest products companies).

⁴ Working Groups shall consider more specific definitions for tenure and management for their region or country AND/OR develop additional criteria following FSC-STD-01-003 V2-0.

⁵ Refer to **Clause 2.1.2.1** FSC-STD-01-003.

A 'small' MU may qualify when they are 100 hectares or smaller in total area¹.

A 'low intensity managed' MU may qualify as **SLIMF** when the rate of harvesting is less than 20% of the **MAI**², and:

- the annual harvest is less than 5,000 m³, **OR**
- the average annual harvest is less than 5,000 m³/year during the certification cycle.

In a 'low intensity managed' MU, only NTFPs³ **or** NTFPs + Timber can be harvested if they meet the 'low intensity' eligibility criteria.

¹ Working Groups may develop other parameters and/or different thresholds for the total area for their region following FSC-STD-01-003 V2-0.

² MAI = Mean Annual Increment.

³ NTFPs – Non-timber forest products.

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What are Community Forests (CF)?

A management unit (**MU**) may qualify as '**Community Forest**' when tenure AND Management criteria are met.



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Benefits of incorporating SLIMF and Community Forests



Based on [FSC's Theory of Change](#):



Social Equity: Empowers local communities through tenure rights and inclusive decision-making, fostering sustainable livelihoods and cultural heritage preservation.



Economic Development: Provides local communities with improved market access and sustainable economic opportunities, contributing to poverty reduction and social value generation.



Biodiversity Conservation: Promotes sustainable forest management practices that preserve biodiversity and enhance ecosystem resilience.

Adaptation in Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS)

SLIMF & CF definitions are reflected through the use of specific indicators or verifiers, allowing for regional and national adaptation. This approach simplifies Forest Management (FM) certification, making it more accessible and relevant to the unique conditions and challenges of SLIMF and Community forests.

Applicability in FSC International Standards

SLIMF & CF criteria can be used in FSC international normative documents, e.g., granting eligibility for the CIP⁵. The SLIMF & CF criteria application supports users by streamlining certification processes and reducing associated costs.

⁵ Refer to the Continuous Improvement Procedure (CIP) FSC-PRO-30-011 V1-1.



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Use of SLIMF & CF in FSC Standards

Some example indicators:

Indicator 4.4. “The Organization shall implement additional activities, through engagement with local communities, that contribute to their social and economic development (...).”

- **Adapted Indicator** in FSC-STD-ZAF-01-2017 (South Africa) for:

SLIMF & CF: “Opportunities for local social and economic development are identified through engagement with local communities and other relevant organizations.”

Indicator 5.2. “The Organization shall normally harvest products and services from the Management Unit at or below a level which can be permanently sustained.”

- **Adapted Indicator** in FSC-STD-CAN-01-2024 (Canada) for:

SLIMF: “Timber harvesting levels are based on an analysis of best available information on growth and yield; inventory of the forest; mortality rates; and maintenance of ecosystem functions.”

CF: “Analysis and calculation of harvest levels for timber forest products are done frequently enough (at least every 10 years) to ensure they remain current with respect to harvest activities, natural disturbances, management objectives, and supporting information, such as inventories.”

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Application in the FSC system

The inclusion of the **SLIMF** definition allows for the recognition of small-scale and low-intensity managed forests, while **CF** definition empowers community decision-making activities within the MU.



SLIMF and CF criteria in Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS) provide tailored guidelines to promote sustainable forest management practices, ensuring that small and low-intensity forests adhere to ecological and social benchmarks.

By incorporating SLIMF and CF criteria, FSS helps regulate forest management practices, promoting responsible resource use, community involvement, and long-term sustainability.

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Join us in advancing responsible forest management!

Incorporate SLIMF and Community Forests eligibility criteria in our FSC standards for more responsible forestry practices.

Reach out with any queries or support. Let's grow together sustainably.

Contact us at communityfamilyforests@fsc.org

