



FSC® Smallholders Update

a quarterly newsletter for small & community producers

Q1 2012

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first edition of the Smallholders Update for 2012! We have decided to change the format of this newsletter to a quarterly publication. This is to provide more time for it to be adapted and circulated through the FSC network. From now on you may see a few versions of the Smallholders Update each quarter, as National Offices take up the newsletter, add their own local and national stories, and circulate it to their readership. This is part of the effort at FSC International to make our communications more adaptable to different contexts and includes changing content and language and giving national offices and representatives a chance to add their own voice. Of course, anyone can have a say in this newsletter. We are happy to receive articles and news updates from smallholders in the FSC network and publish them in our pages.

This edition of the update is focused on training. Recently, FSC launched the Train the Trainers Asia pilot program - a project in which we work with RECOFTC and the FSC National Offices in Asia to provide more on the ground training for smallholders in Asia-Pacific, with the intention of up-scaling this model to other regions. You will find testimonies from some of the participants of the regional training workshop - who will soon be trainers themselves. We have also talked with The Forest Trust about their work with smallholders in Asia, and have had them share their ideas of how to help smallholder tackle the challenges faced. Finally, you will hear about a new FSC initiative from the Smallholders Support Program called the Regional Portfolios Project.

Happy reading,

Angeline Gough
Smallholder Support Manager
a.gough@fsc.org

Regional Portfolios Project

By Angeline Gough, Smallholder Manager at FSC

The FSC Smallholder Support Program has developed the Regional Portfolios Project to foster outreach about FSC certification to smallholders around the world. The project aims to engage and build the capacity of National Office and Representatives to do this outreach by supporting them with regional portfolios of materials and by providing support services for adapting and distributing the materials to smallholders. The Regional Portfolios include region-specific materials that can be adapted at the national or sub-national level to raise awareness of the benefits of FSC certification and the steps to becoming certified.

Materials- The materials in the Regional Portfolios include a brochure about FSC and the benefits for smallholders as well as a step by step guide on how to become an FSC certified smallholder. Both the brochure and guide are very illustrative and have short text pieces in language that is easy to understand. The Portfolios also include an editable version of the Smallholder Update, which is meant to be distributed to smallholders and the organizations who work with them. Other materials that are useful when reaching out to smallholders are also included. Some of the materials will be in an editable version while others can only be used in their original forms. There will be a guide for all of the materials in the Regional Portfolio to make sure it is easy to use and edit for National Offices and Representatives' local contexts.

Regions- The Regional Portfolios will be developed for Latin America, Europe/ North America/ Russia, Asia-Pacific, and Africa. The materials in the portfolios will be somewhat differentiated to each region as the illustrations and languages will be appropriate to the context of the regions. The Regional Portfolios will be available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, and Mandarin Chinese, and it will be possible to request funding from FSC IC to translate it into other languages (although this funding is not guaranteed)

Regional Portfolios cont...

Support- Support for the use of the regional portfolio is available from the Smallholder Support Program at FSC IC. Support can be advice and guidance on how to use the portfolio and how to reach out to smallholders. It also includes small grants to support translation into local languages and distribution of portfolio materials.

Launch- The Regional Portfolios will be distributed through a mail-out and e-mail campaign. By June 30 it will be available by on the FSC Intranet and some of the materials will also be available at the Smallholder Portal at www.fsc.org/smallholders.



Illustrations from "How to become an FSC certified smallholder"

Train the Trainers Asia

Interview with Celina Yong, Project Officer at RECOFTC

RECOFTC, The Center for People and Forests, is an international organization with a vision of local communities actively managing forests in Asia and the Pacific to ensure optimal social, economic, and environmental benefits. RECOFTC works to improve the ability of people and organizations to conduct community forestry effectively and sustainably, and capacity building is central to all of RECOFTC's work. Celina Yong from RECOFTC tells us about the collaboration with FSC; "FSC and RECOFTC have joined hands to develop a Train the Trainers program to increase smallholder training and capacities for FSC Certification in Southeast Asia, China and the Pacific."

"Train the Trainer is a multilayered type of training, which RECOFTC and FSC have developed from scratch. There is a central section on FSC certification for smallholders, but the training also introduces the livelihoods framework and value chain approach. These provide the tools to understand the role of smallholders, and the types of intervention available or feasible. The training also includes tips and handles for adult learning so that the trainers are able to train other trainers or smallholder directly and more effectively," she elaborates.

"It was a natural fit working with FSC," Celina explains when asked about RECOFTC's motivation for carrying out the training. "We have always been supportive of FSC's philosophy of responsibly managing the world's forests, and it has, by far, one of the strongest social and environmental safeguards for local communities." She went on to explain that; "It is really the next step up for community forestry. We adopt a market oriented livelihood strategy to try and change the value chains. We want these chains to be pro-poor, in that the benefits are equally distributed along the chains. When this happens, we will see increased income and better roles for the smallholders and the local communities.

"It is also empowering the smallholders to act. The better they understand their roles, positions, and options, the better they are to improve their livelihoods. The more middlemen they can bypass, the more income they can receive," Celina adds.

For Celina bridging the gap between concept and practice is a challenge; "It can be difficult to try and communicate the livelihoods framework, value chain approach and smallholder certification in ways that are both relevant and applicable to smallholders as well as other service providers. However, I have confidence in the trainers, and also in the training materials FSC and RECOFTC developed. These trainers have the experience and ability to adapt the materials to their context."

Celina finished the interview by revealing RECOFTC's future plans; "The markets and livelihoods area is new for us, but it is one we are committed to developing, be it through actual demonstration or strategic communications or capacity building. For the latter, we are looking forward to the feedback from the trainers so that we can improve our training materials. We will use the improved materials to build the capacity of policymakers from the ASEAN region later this year."



Photo courtesy of A.Gough

Smallholder spotlight: The Forest Trust

Supporting Smallholders to become FSC certified

By Robin Barr, Senior Manager at TFT

TFT has been training and supporting smallholders to implement responsible forest management and achieve FSC certification since 2004. We are an international, non-profit organization who works with companies to help get responsibly-managed raw materials into their supply chains. This includes working with international retail companies who are seeking to buy wood from FSC certified forests.

As a first step to working with companies, we map their supply chains to analyze where their wood is coming from. Over the years, we have found that many furniture retailers in Europe and America are actually sourcing wood from smallholder agro-forests throughout SE Asia. As a result, we decided that TFT should make supporting smallholders to become FSC certified a major part of our activities.

Before TFT begins working with smallholders, we first analyze current systems and structures that are in place for forest management and marketing. Below are some common findings when looking at smallholder forest management and timber marketing:

1. Most smallholders have never been formally trained in forest management. Some just let their trees grow wild with no active management whatsoever. Most are eager for information related to improving the quality of their trees, especially if this can result in higher prices.
2. Most smallholders do not know how much their trees are worth, and usually sell them as 'standing tree', rather than negotiating a price per cubic meter.
3. There are often 3-4 middlemen / wood traders between smallholders and factories selling to international companies. This results in lower prices for the smallholders, and great difficulty in determining sources.



Photo courtesy of TFT



Photo courtesy of TFT

TFT has tailored its training programs to address these major issues. Our training programs include:

- Basics on silviculture / agro-forestry: How to plant and tend the trees being grown for sale. This includes training on techniques such as seed provenance selection, spacing, pruning, and monitoring growth and mortality.
- Environmental and social concerns: How to consider issues such as protecting water bodies, minimizing erosion on slopes, protection of endangered species, and areas of cultural or religious values.
- Marketing: We train smallholders on how to measure and grade their wood, and negotiate prices based on timber grade and volume, as opposed to standing trees.
- Group development: We support smallholders to come together to form a group which can sell the timber they produce as a whole directly to regional factories seeking FSC certified goods. The group also becomes responsible for establishing Chain of Custody systems, Standard Operating Procedures for the members, and maintaining the group FSC certificate.

As a result of the trainings, TFT has helped smallholders in many remote parts of Southeast Asia to improve their forest management, improve the price they receive for their wood, and build their capacity to work together on business management. We have seen that this work results in better livelihoods for smallholders, a healthier environment and a more sustainable wood supply for our members.

You can find more information about TFT's projects online at www.tft-forests.org.

Zhang Xinxin, Forest Programme Officer for WWF China

I attended a train the trainer's course on FSC smallholder certification in February 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop was an intensive four days of training on livelihoods, market access, business models, and FSC certification for smallholders. This event is part of the Train the Trainers Asia - a pilot program coordinated by FSC. The training equipped me with inspiring and useful approaches on how to build up capacity to smallholders on FSC certification, along with broader views on positive value chain interventions using tools such as certification to motivate the development of sustainable smallholder enterprises. More importantly, the course facilitated an opportunity for technical experts from FSC International Centre and FSC's National Offices in the Asia-Pacific region to have free discussions and peer-learning on smallholder certification issues.

Participants in the workshop also received training on how to be a trainer and techniques for teaching adults. Part of this content focused on developing a training design for applying the knowledge from the course on the ground, with a smallholder audience. I worked with my Chinese colleagues to develop a comprehensive training design that included another 'training of trainers' workshop in China, an information session for buyers and actors in the supply chain, and two trainings for smallholders in group certificates in China. This is an exciting schedule of activities and we were able to present and get feedback on our initial ideas during the course.

One major take home message for me came from all of the case studies used in the training. It was reassuring to see that so many talented people have contributed to the development of smallholder certification through FSC. On the way of promoting FSC smallholder certification, through this course, I found I was not alone; there are excellent examples in other countries/regions to replicate and great teachers with mature knowledge to learn from. I am very excited to keep learning through this process.



Photo courtesy of RECOFTC

Hartono Prabowo, manager for TFT in Indonesia

FSC in collaboration with RECOFTC held a Train the Trainer for Smallholder on February 8-11 in Bangkok. The audience was those who have been assisting smallholder concessions in improving their ability to manage the forests through FSC certification. The participants will hold training sessions to build smallholder concessions capacity over the coming two years.

The training focused on two main topics; first, was training method for adults, and second, technical topics such as livelihood systems, market-based solutions, and FSC certification. Training methodology equipped the participants with skills on how to deliver training to smallholders, while the livelihood system, market-based solution and FSC certification are modules, which will be delivered to smallholders.

It was a well organized training. The training design that was applied could be a model for participants to deliver similar training for smallholders, since it was easy to understand the content. The technical module would be very beneficial for smallholders to understand the importance of good forest management practices in improving their welfare and livelihood, as well how to achieve it. It also will help in understanding how to enter and develop one's business in the broader market, whilst marketing is one of the weak points of smallholder concessions.

This kind of training should also be attended by people who have been working with smallholders as mentors and capacity-builders. Especially, if a module on how to access and obtain soft loans from microfinance institutions is added, since an important obstacle for smallholders is how to access financial support. It would also be a good idea to have a module on how to develop business plans and to assist them in the planning, executing and evaluating their firms, in order to build stronger and more sustainable businesses.

In the next issue...

Smallholders in the marketplace

- FSC Marketplace Smallholders
- Small and Community Label Option
- FAO's Market Analysis and Development Approach

Comments and/or feedback on anything you've read in this edition of the newsletter?

Please contact Angeline at a.gough@fsc.org