



25 July 2018

## Call for expression of interest – pilot testing Type III group model

### Introduction

FSC has committed to developing new tools that will improve smallholders and communities certification uptake in its *Global Strategic Plan 2015-2020*. The commitment has been further strengthened by the FSC membership's decision during the 2017 General Assembly through motion 46 with a focus on developing new solutions and improving the FSC forest management group certification framework.

Motion GA2017/46 is calling for FSC to include forestry contractors as a part of the FSC certification system. After a series of FSC engagement events with stakeholders and standard user groups, FSC has developed a first approach to including forestry contractors as a part of the certification system. The New Approaches to Certification for Smallholders and Communities Certification project (herein referred to as New Approaches) is proposing a pilot test to improve the group certification process and certification uptake by smallholders, through the inclusion of forestry contractors as members of the group certificates (i.e., Type III group model).

FSC is looking for forest management groups that are interested in participating in pilot testing this concept (Type III group model). The pilot test will feed input to the upcoming revision process of the FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups (FSC-STD-30-005 V1-1 *FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups*).

### Why would forest management groups want to be a part of the pilot test?

The participating FSC group certificate holders will have the possibility of testing the Type III group model as a part of their FSC certified operations. There is a possibility for participating group entities to apply the pilot testing to cover either a part of their established forest owner group members or to use the pilot test to include new forest owners into the group certificate. In both options, the inclusion of forestry contractors as members of the group will be mandatory.

The group entities will be able to assess the feasibility of the Type III group model as FSC will collect feedback from the group entities as well as the certification bodies to assess further development needs. The participating group entities will have the possibility of implementing a new group management model before its official consideration during the upcoming revision process of standard, FSC-STD-30-005 V1-1 *FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups* and get a deeper understanding of its applicability.

### How does the proposed Type III group model work?

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The implementation of Type III group model implies a shift in the responsibility to implement the FSC requirements from the forest owner to the forestry contractors and the group entity, and a focus on the management activities rather than on the management unit. Forest management certification will remain as the basis for certified operations while the audit will be more focused on the forestry contractors and forest management activities.

### **Objectives of the pilot test**

Through the pilot tests, FSC seeks to study the impacts of the newly proposed Type III group model, including the allocation of responsibilities to conform to the FSC requirements within the group certificate between the group entity, the forest owners, and the forestry contractors.

To make FSC group certification a more compelling option for forest owners and group entities, a cost analysis of the proposed changes will be carried out during and after the pilot tests. As FSC is preparing to launch the revision processes of two important standards (FSC-STD-30-005 V1-1 *FSC standard for group entities in forest management groups*, and FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 *Forest management evaluations*) that regulate the management of group certificates, the aim of the pilot is also to provide input to these revision processes. The pilot test will be used as well to collect feedback from the standard users into the proposed Type III group model.

### **Pilot test preparation and audit**

The pilot test will be carried out in conjunction with the regular audit process. Before the implementation of the pilot, the certification body evaluates the certificate holder in a desk audit as according to a pilot implementation guide. The certificate holder is expected to have a regular audit during the pilot test period. At the end of the 12-month pilot test period, the certificate holder and the certification body are expected to provide FSC with a pilot test report.

### **Conditions and selection criteria of pilot test participants**

FSC aims to include up to four pilot groups in the pilot testing. There are some conditions that forest management groups participating in the pilot testing of the Type III group model must meet:

- I. All participating organizations must have a valid FSC group certificate;
- II. Applicant confirms the availability of co-finance in piloting activities;
- III. Type of group certificate (a significant part of the members are smallholders);
- IV. The group certificate has been active for more than five years;
- V. Working relationship with forestry contractors for more than two years;
- VI. Group certificate has a proven track record (no outstanding CARs);
- VII. There is a clear and significant potential for growth;
- VIII. The willingness of the certificate holder to share information;
- IX. Geographical location of the group certificate;
- X. Demonstrated challenges to smallholder certification in the region;
- XI. A willingness and ability of the certificate holder to participate and manage a pilot test<sup>1</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> If you would like to get an idea of the time and resources needed to participate and manage the pilot test, send us an email to [v.santos@fsc.org](mailto:v.santos@fsc.org).



- XII. A reasonable level of understanding of FSC procedures and expertise over group certification is required;
- XIII. Ability to communicate in English;
- XIV. The possibility of communicating via e-mail.

**Next steps**

Are you interested in participating in the pilot testing of Type III group model in FSC forest management group certification? Then please:

1. Fill in the form below and send it to [v.santos@fsc.org](mailto:v.santos@fsc.org) before 25 August 2018.
2. Upon submitting your form, you will receive a confirmation of receipt including whether everything is clear or whether additional information is needed. A staff member of the FSC New Approaches project team may get in touch with you to verify suitability for a collaboration.
3. Upon 25 September 2018, you will hear whether or not you have been selected as one of the sites for pilot testing.