

Asia-Pacific Regional Forest Stewardship Standard for smallholders



The background

Throughout Asia-Pacific, many thousands of smallholders with very small pockets of land dominate.

Typically, people have limited education, are poor and know very little about forestry, yet rely heavily on the income from their land.

FSC has been working in the region to develop a regional, simplified forest stewardship standard specifically for smallholders. The aim is to make sure many more smallholders can join the FSC system, which will encourage them to grow and look after trees.

“We’ve gone through the documents and taken out all the technical terms, to put it in much simpler language that a typical farmer can understand.”

What we are doing

This work will, as much as possible, be consistent with existing FSC rules for developing forest management standards, while exploring its flexibility to the limit.

The project has used a Technical Advisory Group, with a chamber and country balanced representation. This is the decision making structure that develops FSC standards and simplifies them so that smallholders understand what is required to get certified.

This highly-experienced team has worked through the documents, removing technicalities and putting things into much simpler language that a typical small forest owner or producer will understand.

The simplified standard has been tested in India, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, on both those that are not familiar with FSC, as well as smallholders that have already gone through the process and have been certified. The goal will be to develop a Regional Forest Stewardship Standard

(RFSS) for smallholders for India, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Additional work that will facilitate smallholder participation is also envisioned and will be delivered in parallel by the New Approaches team.

Key features

- The simplified standard is composed of **critical requirements**, or indicators, that for the selected users reflects responsible forest management.
- Smallholders with limited education will **no longer have to wade through lots of complicated documents** to find what is relevant to them.
- The RFSS for smallholders **will work in conjunction with other national forest management processes** in the four countries involved in this initiative. The results will also be shared with other regions, aiming for potential replication.

Current progress and next steps

A first draft was shared with key stakeholders in a process designated as target consultation. The feedback received was incorporated and a new draft, that was later used for the forest tests, was prepared.

At the end of last year, four forest tests in a wide range of settings were held and the results used for preparing a final draft. This new draft of the standard will go out for a 60 days public consultation in the second quarter of 2020.

Reference documents

- FSC-PRO-01-001 Development and Revision of FSC Normative Documents
- FSC-STD-60-006 Process requirements for the development and maintenance of National Forest Stewardship Standards

> [Process weblink](#)