



THE DECENTRALIZED FSC NETWORK

Promoting Responsible Forest Management Globally and Locally

Over the past decade, FSC has become the global leader for forest certification and labeling. Our successes include:

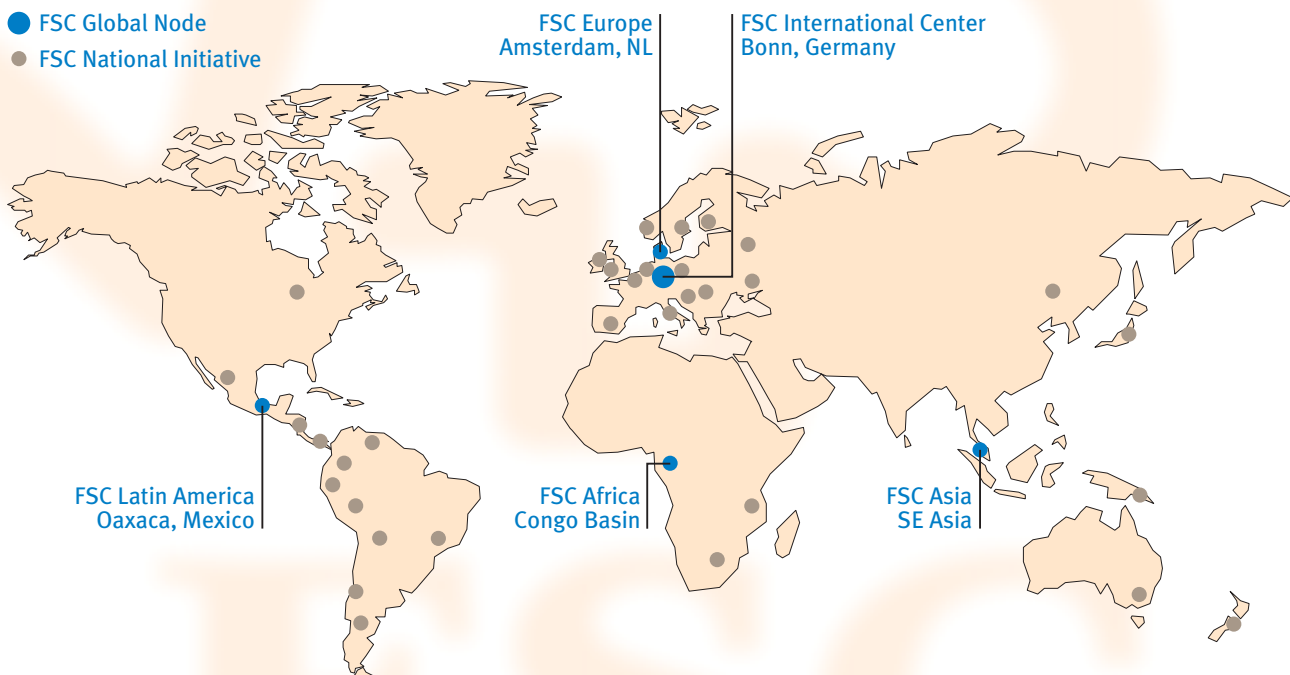
- Endorsement of national working groups and contact persons in 31 countries
- 39 million hectares of certified forests in 55 countries
- Over 2400 chain-of-custody certificates in 66 countries
- 12 accredited certification bodies
- More than 10 000 labelled products available worldwide.

In order to continue providing high-quality service to a growing and diverse range of clients, FSC is decentralizing into a flexible, global network. FSC decided to decentralize to build an organization that better served a growing, diverse clientele.

By decentralizing, FSC can:

- Respond better and in a more timely and professional way
- Deliver services closer to the source of demand
- Maintain continuous open dialogue with members and stakeholders
- Maintain the brand and its integrity.

This means delegating authority and responsibility to appropriate levels and opening offices in different regions, while the International Center will ensure high quality control. The decentralized network of National Initiatives and Regional Offices will be active in all the principle forest regions of the world.



Decentralization will significantly change the operation of the entire FSC network, especially the operation of the FSC Secretariat. Once fully implemented, many of the Secretariat's activities will have been delegated to the National Initiatives and Regional Offices. Below is a description of these new roles and responsibilities.

FSC National Initiatives

National Initiatives form the foundation of FSC's global network and are the gateway to its members and stakeholders. National Initiatives are independent organisations or individuals that are associated with FSC's International Center. They can be a contact person, working group or permanent office promoting FSC in the country.

Under the decentralization strategy, National Initiatives advocate FSC's approach and mission throughout the country. They develop and implement national marketing and communication strategies, support trademark management and dispute resolution. National Initiatives act as service centers to individuals and organizations interested in FSC. They are the main source of information, and support, and promote the development of national or sub-national standards.

For FSC, National Initiatives are the strongest link to supporters and stakeholders in FSC's network. They inform FSC of events and opinions from their local discussions on the FSC system and responsible forest management. National Initiatives represent FSC in their country.

For a list of FSC National Initiatives, refer to Document 5.1.2 on the FSC website (www.fscoax.org).

FSC Regional Offices & National Offices

Regional Offices act as service centers for National Initiatives in their region by providing training and coaching programs, and assisting with fundraising. They also support FSC processes in countries without National Initiatives and encourage and facilitate coordination of activities between National Initiatives in the region, and with the FSC International Center.

Regional Offices will enable FSC to better address regional perspectives and imbalances, develop locally-appropriate policies and tools, and support the growth of FSC in new areas. There will be four FSC Regional Offices. The FSC Latin-america and Europe offices have been established, and the African and Asia-Pacific Regional Offices will open in late 2003.

Some National Initiatives are considered 'regions' because of their geographical size and the diversity of forest types in their country. Currently, Canada and the USA are considered 'regions'. Their scope is much more than a National Initiative, and in FSC's decentralization plan, they will develop into National Offices with similar functions as Regional Offices. FSC hopes to establish National Offices in Russia and China, countries with a similar scope, by 2005.

FSC International Center

Located in Bonn, Germany, the FSC International Center supports the network by focussing on global issues, coordinating the activities of the Regional Offices, and ensuring consistent practices worldwide. As part of the decentralization process, the International Center has been organized into an accreditation unit and four management and policy units, managed by the FSC Executive Director.

Accreditation Business: Conducts FSC accreditation activities, and independently verifies that certification bodies meet FSC requirements for certifying forest operations. Accredited certification bodies are audited annually. The FSC Accreditation Business Unit is financially independent of FSC International.

Administration and Human Resources: Coordinates FSC's financial, personnel and administrative activities, and supports Regional Office and National Initiative administration.

Marketing and Communications: Markets FSC in the global arena, and develops marketing, communication, education and training tools for the FSC network.

Policy and Standards: Provides the framework for the development of policies and standards in the FSC network. This framework ensures consistency in all FSC national and regional policies and standards.

FSC Executive Director: Coordinates activities between the FSC Board of Directors and the FSC International Center, and promotes FSC in international arenas.

While part of the same network, FSC National Initiatives, FSC Regional Offices and the FSC International Center are all financially independent of each other.