



Why SmartLogging?

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Introduction

Since 1988, the SmartWood Program (SW) of the Rainforest Alliance (RA) has been working to design and implement third-party, performance-based, forest-oriented certification systems that consider the full range of forest values, are applicable to all forest types, and are accessible to a wide variety of organizations. As a founder of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), RA has strongly supported policies that require the FSC system in general, and FSC-approved Certification Bodies (CBs) in particular, to adopt procedures that are responsive to all scales and types of operations. These policies have resulted in innovative certification models, such as “group” forest and chain-of-custody (CoC) certification, which allow smaller operations to be more cost-effectively grouped for certification, as well as a standard for small and low-intensity managed forests (SLIMF), which streamlines certification requirements for such operations.

However, despite these and other SmartWood efforts to increase certification among small and medium sized forest enterprises (SMEs), there are still many non-industrial forests that are not FSC certified. Because these forests are already supplying significant volumes of commercially important forest products, and are becoming an increasingly important part of the commercial wood supply, we believe that we must continue to develop new, innovative certification models to encourage and acknowledge responsible forest management in these forests. Why? In addition to commercial reasons, these forests provide key ecosystem and community services, such as protecting water quality, conserving biodiversity, providing bird and wildlife habitat, and providing recreational opportunities. Improving forest management on these lands is critical to ensure that these lands continue to be able to provide a full range of forest values and services over the long-term.

In the USA alone, there are over 10 million small landowners who control approximately 42% of the nation’s forestland – totaling over 100 million hectares (247 million acres). However, less than 5% of these landowners have a written management plan – a commonly accepted fundamental requirement for credible forest certification. The USA is not alone in this regard. From Costa Rica to Indonesia to Portugal to Kenya, there are millions of forest landowners who do not have management plans. Yet many of these same landowners supply crucial percentages of wood or other forest products (e.g., resins, nuts, mushrooms, essences, etc.) for commercial use.

A Shift in Forest Values

Improving forest management on small forest ownerships, or for low intensity managed forests, requires sensitivity to the rights and privileges of small forest owners, indigenous groups and local communities, the ability to meet government regulations, keen attention to the financial viability of owning and conserving forestland, and understanding the long-term trends in the dynamics of forest ownership. Increasingly, surveys indicate that small forest owners place a higher value on aesthetics, recreation and wildlife habitat than on timber harvesting. Loggers, foresters and other resource managers are increasingly finding that the negative effects of any

commercial forest product extraction must be strictly controlled or landowners will not permit harvests to occur. This shift in forest values, which is clearly documented in many countries, presents a historical challenge for the forest sector.

The above shifts in forest values have always been recognized in the FSC system. Contrary to what appears to be a common perception, the FSC system does not require timber harvesting in certified forests. In fact, if timber harvesting is to occur, it must be balanced with other forest values. FSC certification is today having a broad global impact on mainstream forest product markets because of concerns about the negative social and environmental impacts of timber harvesting, and the pervasive nature of wood in the world's markets. However, FSC founders always envisioned that wood production must be balanced with other forest uses, and that in some situations, wood harvesting might be clearly subservient to other uses and values. In fact, some large FSC certified forests, such as the 1.5 million hectare (3.7 million acres) Kayapo Bau Indigenous Forest in Brazil, have a miniscule amount of timber harvesting. The primary commercial forest product of this forest is Brazil nuts, and non-commercial values, such as preserving natural ecosystems and cultural heritage, dominate the management approach for that FSC-certified forest.

Improving Forest Stewardship on all Forestlands

With the above in mind, RA/SW is taking a three-pronged approach to addressing the challenge of improving the quality of forest stewardship on all forestlands, whatever the management objective.

- **Continued efforts to enhance the effectiveness and efficiencies in the FSC certification system** – RA/SW remains an unequivocal, global supporter of the FSC system as the most credible forest certification system. But we also believe that the FSC system can be improved, both in terms of the quality of its certification system and enhancing the value of FSC certification for small landowners, SMEs and other types of enterprises.
- **Development of new forest certification models** – We are continuing our work testing new small landowner forest certification systems. We are now looking at new forest certification tools that will allow us, as an FSC accredited CB, to more effectively and efficiently engage forest owners and managers from all types of forests around the globe in FSC certification, particularly in regions where forests face threats of deforestation or degradation.
- **Development of alternative approaches to more effectively engage harvesters or loggers, and all types of landowners, in enhanced forest stewardship** – Historically, some participants in forest management (e.g., loggers), have seen the FSC or other forest certification systems as either a threat or as disrespectful to the key roles that they play. At the same time, foresters, whilst recognizing the important role that loggers can play, have tended to see forest stewardship as primarily a forester task or responsibility, and intentionally or not, they have minimized the potential positive role that professional loggers might play.

SmartLogging

To address the third dynamic, starting in late 2005, after over seven years of internal debate and discussion, RA/SW began to put in place a performance-oriented logger certification program – what is today called “SmartLogging”. We have been able to capitalize on the collective experience of our staff in forest management, timber harvesting, auditing and certification to put in place a system that we believe more effectively recognizes the key role that loggers play in forest conservation and management.

In developing SmartLogging, a number of key philosophical elements were at play.

1. **Recognize & support “professionalization” of the logging sector** – Since the early 1990’s, there have been a number of logger education and training programs. In Vermont, where RA/SW headquarters is located, the pioneering Logger Education and Assistance Program (LEAP) was developed by the University of Vermont and other collaborators as an effort to better educate loggers about forest ecology, riparian zone management, and reduced impact logging techniques. Starting in the mid-1990s in Brazil, and now operational in Indonesia, Guyana and West Africa, the Tropical Forest Foundation (TFF) has put in place Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) training programs, building on pioneering efforts like the RIL project in Sabah, Malaysia, which RA/SW helped design and then audited from 1992-1997. Finally, starting in 1999, the Professional Logging Contractors Association of Maine (PLC), under the leadership of the Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestland, designed and implemented the performance-based Master Logger Certification (MLC) program. A constant and key component of the MLC effort was to distinguish professional operators in the forest marketplace.

SmartLogging is built on all these efforts and seeks to both recognize responsible loggers, as well as to expand responsible logger performance requirements to ensure that logger performance responds to changing landowner and societal values. This means emphasizing not only wood production, but also water quality protection, forest ecosystem conservation, wildlife habitat management, recreation, aesthetic values, etc.

2. **Support, not undermine, credible forest certification systems** – RA is unequivocal in believing that those enterprises engaged in SmartLogging must be supportive of FSC certification, or other credible certification systems, and that SmartLogging’s development constantly consider how it can reinforce the mix of forest values to which we have a longstanding commitment. For this reason we are exploring how the harvesters involved in SmartLogging can automatically consider, or include, the new FSC Controlled Wood policy, or similar policies in other forest certification systems, so that, for example, when FSC certified wood is mixed with non-FSC certified wood, even the non-FSC certified wood does not trample on the human rights of indigenous groups or other individuals, does not contribute to large-scale deforestation or forest ecosystem conversion, etc. We are also requiring that SmartLogging participants clearly support forest certification systems.
3. **Use SmartLogging as a tool to enhance the sustainability of all forests and as a complement to other Rainforest Alliance efforts to develop credible certification**

programs and solutions to forest degradation and deforestation – We do not believe that SmartLogging, or for that matter FSC certification, are a panacea that will resolve all forest issues. Certification is and shall always be a tool to complement regulatory instruments and voluntary action by government and civil society to manage forest ecosystems in a more sustainable manner. Though SmartLogging is, by definition, oriented towards the harvesting of wood from forests, we will explore how the lessons we learn through this program might be used to develop certification or other systems that support sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products and management of other values in forest landscapes.

4. **A transparent approach to certification system design** - As per our approach for all RA certification programs, we are committed to developing SmartLogging in a transparent and efficient manner that balances environmental, social and economic dynamics and is applicable in all forest types. Our SmartLogging standards development is guided by core values at RA, and capitalizes on the policies and procedures for standards development of the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling (ISEAL) Alliance (of which RA is a member). We expect and welcome constant input on our standards, and will be managing SmartLogging through a system of annual reviews, input from external advisors, and will strive to continually improve both the standards and auditing procedures.

Who Can Get Certified

We are currently offering SmartLogging certification on a global basis. Our efforts provide, at a minimum, the following options for engagement:

- **Individual SmartLogging Certifications** – Individual firms or loggers may apply for SmartLogging certification. In our experience, it will be critical for applicants to consider the economic viability of seeking individual certificates, versus participating in a group certification.
- **Group SmartLogging Certifications** – Through either a group enterprise or a logger association, group SmartLogging certification can be a cost-effective approach for logging enterprises of all scales and complexities.
- **Mill or Procurement System Specific SmartLogging Certifications** – Whether the product is pulp and paper, lumber or bioenergy (e.g. wood-fired powerplant), SmartLogging can be one way to organize a greener supply chain for mills.

To learn more about SmartLogging, or to provide comments on the program or certification standards, please contact:

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