

FSC FOREST CERTIFICATION

Simple guide for forest stakeholders.



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Introductory note

The high rate of deforestation and degradation of tropical forests resulted in the 1980s, in the boycott of tropical timber in Europe through campaigns organised by some non-governmental organisations of the North.

Research carried out following this boycott revealed that logging was not the only cause of deforestation - but that there were many other causes such as agriculture, grazing and so on.

Consequently, the idea of forest certification came into being in the 1990s. Several systems of certification were developed and by the way, brought confusion in the mind of consumers. Very quickly, certification lost its credibility. In 1992, the Alliance of wood workers, traders and representatives of environmental and human-rights organisations working for the protection of rainforests (Rainforest Alliance) proposed the creation of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) whose Founding Assembly met in October 1993.

By integrating all the existing systems of certification into its scheme, this body gradually gained the confidence of various stakeholders and consequently became the only credible system accepted by the majority. This guide is a simple tool to be used by the rural communities and all the stakeholders interested in the FSC forest certification process...

Louis Djomo
Director of CIEFE/ICEFS

In the past, our forests were used without any management plan, without any fear that they could disappear, thus causing serious damage to the communities living in and around them.



When arriving in villages, logging companies brandished their logging titles, entered the forest, then, cut trees and went away. Local populations had but nothing to say, as they were neither consulted nor called upon for collaboration.



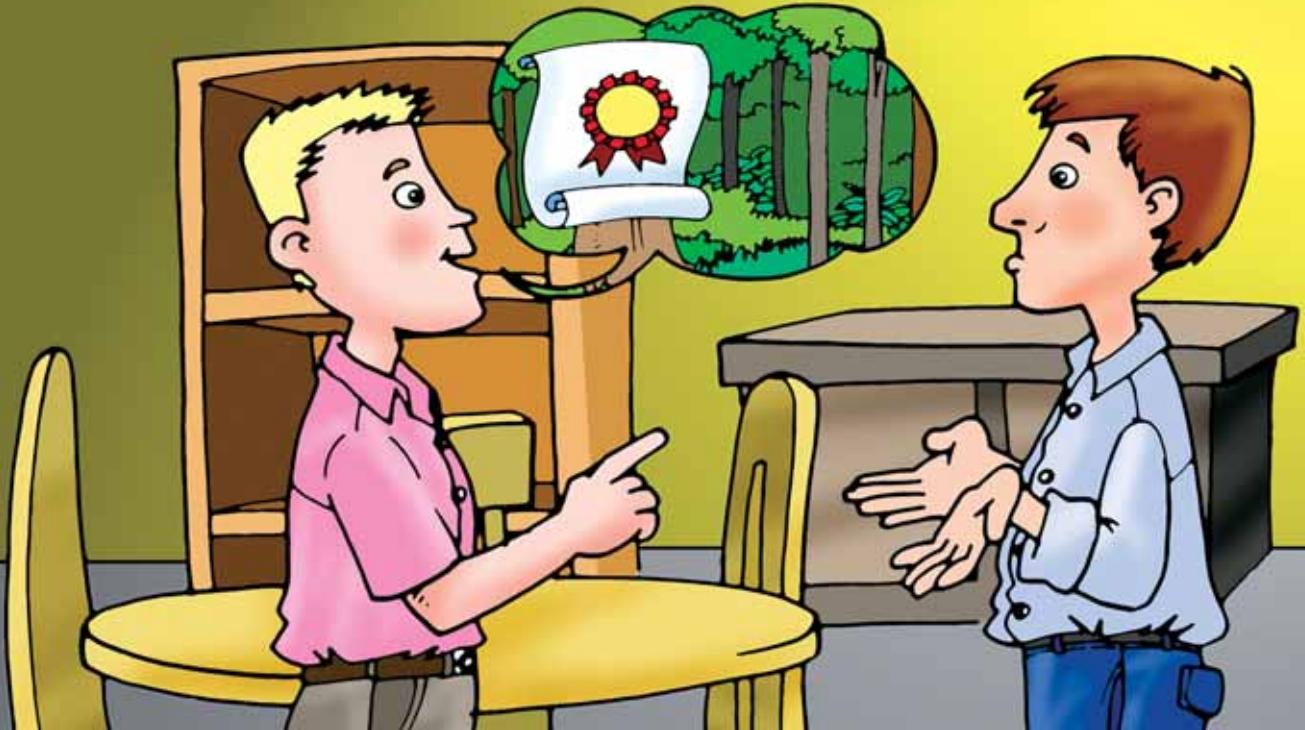
Their employees worked under unsafe conditions, without any required equipment to protect them from accidents.

BUT, TODAY, THINGS ARE CHANGING!!!

WHY?



Now, in Europe, before buying timber coming from countries, such as Cameroon, customers ask various questions, including: where does this timber source from? How was it logged? Does the exporting logging company comply with national legislation?



Was the timber logged in a way that maintains the forest productivity so that the people depending on it would continue harvesting timber? And, do the local populations benefit from the logging activities?...???

Shortly, is the forest where the timber was logged managed sustainably? This is because if the forest disappears, people will suffer.

To address the issues raised by its customers, the forest manager should provide a certificate. The latter aims at testifying that the timber sold sources from a well-managed forest.



FSC certificate is the one that, worldwide, provides the surest warranty to consumers that the timber bought comes from a sustainably-managed forest.

WHAT IS FOREST CERTIFICATION?

Forest certification is a process which aims at testifying that a forest product sources from a well-managed forest. This is an assessment of a logging company basing on standards of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM).



Within the framework of FSC forest certification, the standard includes 10 Principles with details named Criteria and Indicators. Once a logging company has been assessed and its forest management deemed responsible; it is awarded the FSC Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) certificate.

WHAT IS FOREST CERTIFICATION?

On the market, the FSC label is used to distinguish products (wood) from well-managed forests from unsustainably-managed ones



And, to ensure that the forest manager would not label the products from uncertified sources, the path followed by each product, from the certified forest up to the end consumer, is traced back and assessed; this is the FSC Chain of Custody certification.

WITHIN FSC SCHEME, WHAT DOES SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT MEAN?

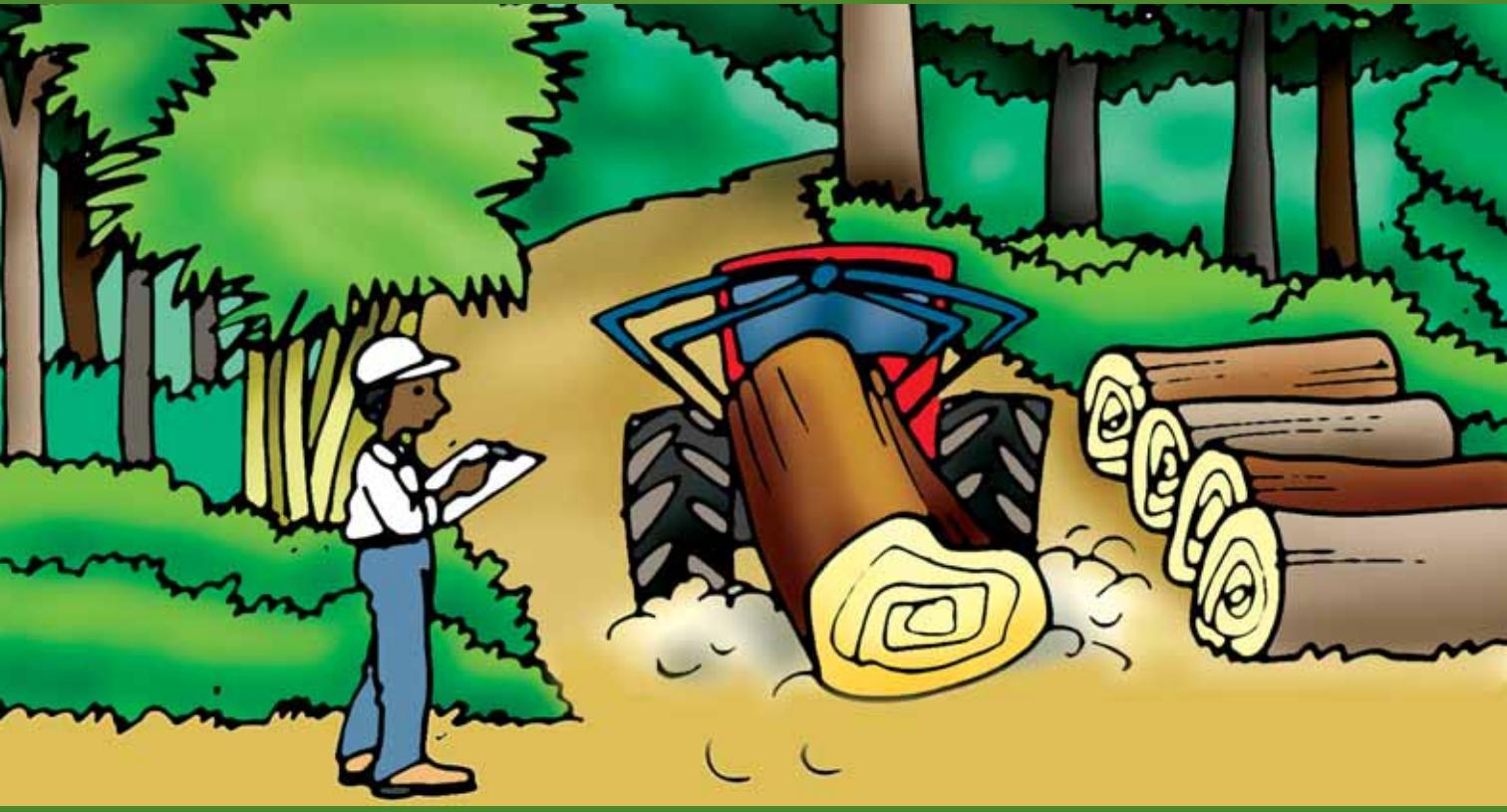
The FSC testifies that a logging company manages its forest well if it complies with the FSC ten Principles. Therefore, the logging company that wants to sustainably manage its forest must:



1. Comply with all national laws;
2. Hold a logging title on a long term basis;
3. Respect indigenous people's rights and customs;
4. Provide good working conditions to the workers;
5. Increase benefits from the forest and reduce the losses;

WITHIN FSC SCHEME, WHAT DOES SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT MEAN?

6. Use reduced-Impact Logging techniques during logging activities;
7. Develop a well-scheduled and realistic management plan for the forest;



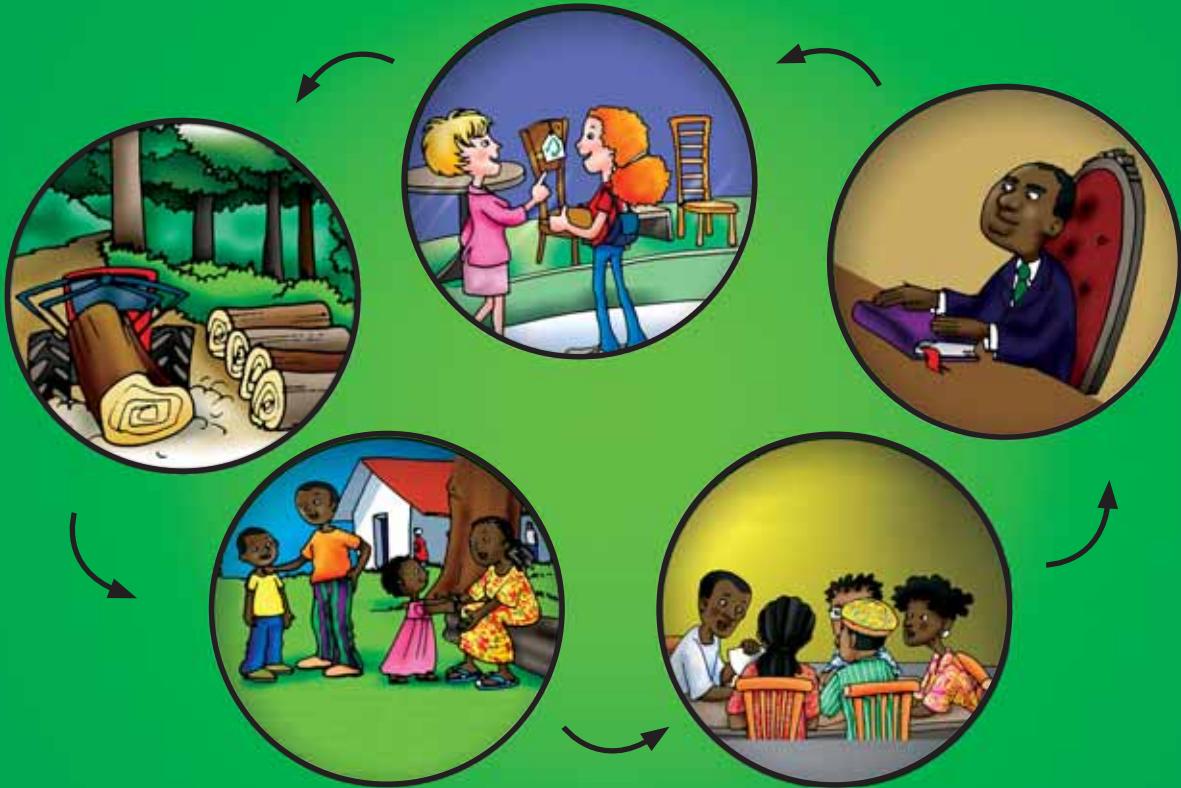
8. Monitor production and assess the impacts of logging activities;
9. Know how to identify and maintain anything that is very useful within the forest;
10. Ensure that the plantations comply with FSC principles and guidelines.

WHAT IS THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF FOREST CERTIFICATION?



To encourage people who harvest forest resources either for sale or for consumption to do it in a sustainable manner, so that their children can also profit from it in the future. It does so by offering premium prices and advantages to those who commit themselves to sustainable forest management.

WHO ARE THE MAIN PERSONS CONCERNED WITH FOREST CERTIFICATION ?



Forest companies and their workers, local populations, local organisations and NGOs, local authorities and consumers.

This guide will show you how to take part in the FSC certification process ...

WHICH FORESTS CAN BE FSC-CERTIFIED?

Any forest well managed either by logging companies, local communities, local councils, or individuals, etc.



FSC forest certification covers wood and all other forest products like wildlife, leaves, fruits and so on.

HOW IS FSC FOREST CERTIFICATION DONE?

To be certified, a forest manager gets in contact with an FSC-accredited certification body. They agree on the certification requirements (duration, period, and costs).



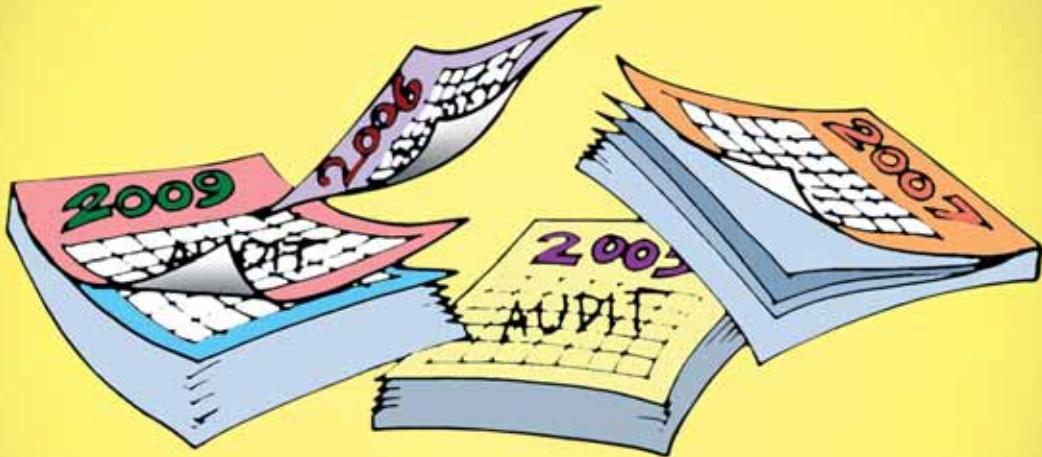
A certification body is an agency made up of a team of experts known as auditors. They carry out an audit or assessment of the management practices of the logging company. They check whether the forest manager manages the forest well.

HOW IS FSC FOREST CERTIFICATION DONE?

The FSC forest certification process is done in several stages summarized as follows:

Pre-assessment;

Certification audit(s);



Certification award;

Surveillance visits / Control audit(s).

PRE-ASSESSMENT

A pre-assessment is the baseline appraisal that is done before certification. The auditors monitor the activities carried out in the forest and they discuss with the forest workers and local populations.



The results of a pre-assessment is a report that discusses the strengths as well as the weaknesses that need to be addressed before the certification audit. The gaps to be addressed are referred to as “Corrective Actions Requests” (CAR). There may be minor CARs (conditions) or major CARs (pre-conditions).

CERTIFICATION AUDIT

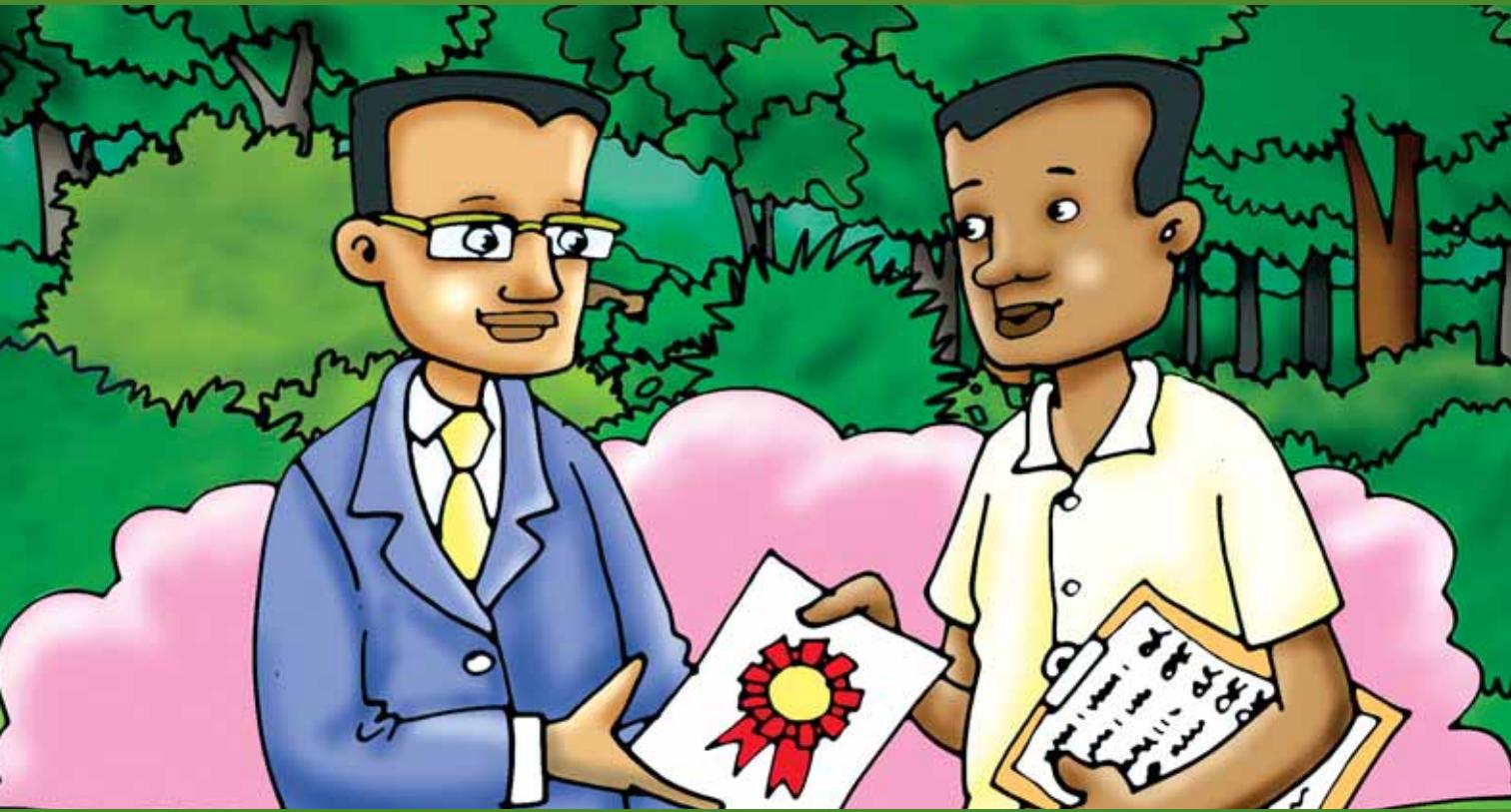
A certification audit is a comprehensive assessment carried out at the time when the certifier should say whether or not it is possible to certify. During a certification process, there may be many according to situations.



The certification body officially announces its field visit, 30 days before the date of the certification audit. It sends its visit programme to the people concerned and inquire if they have complaints relating to the activities of the logging company applying for certification.

CERTIFICATION AWARD

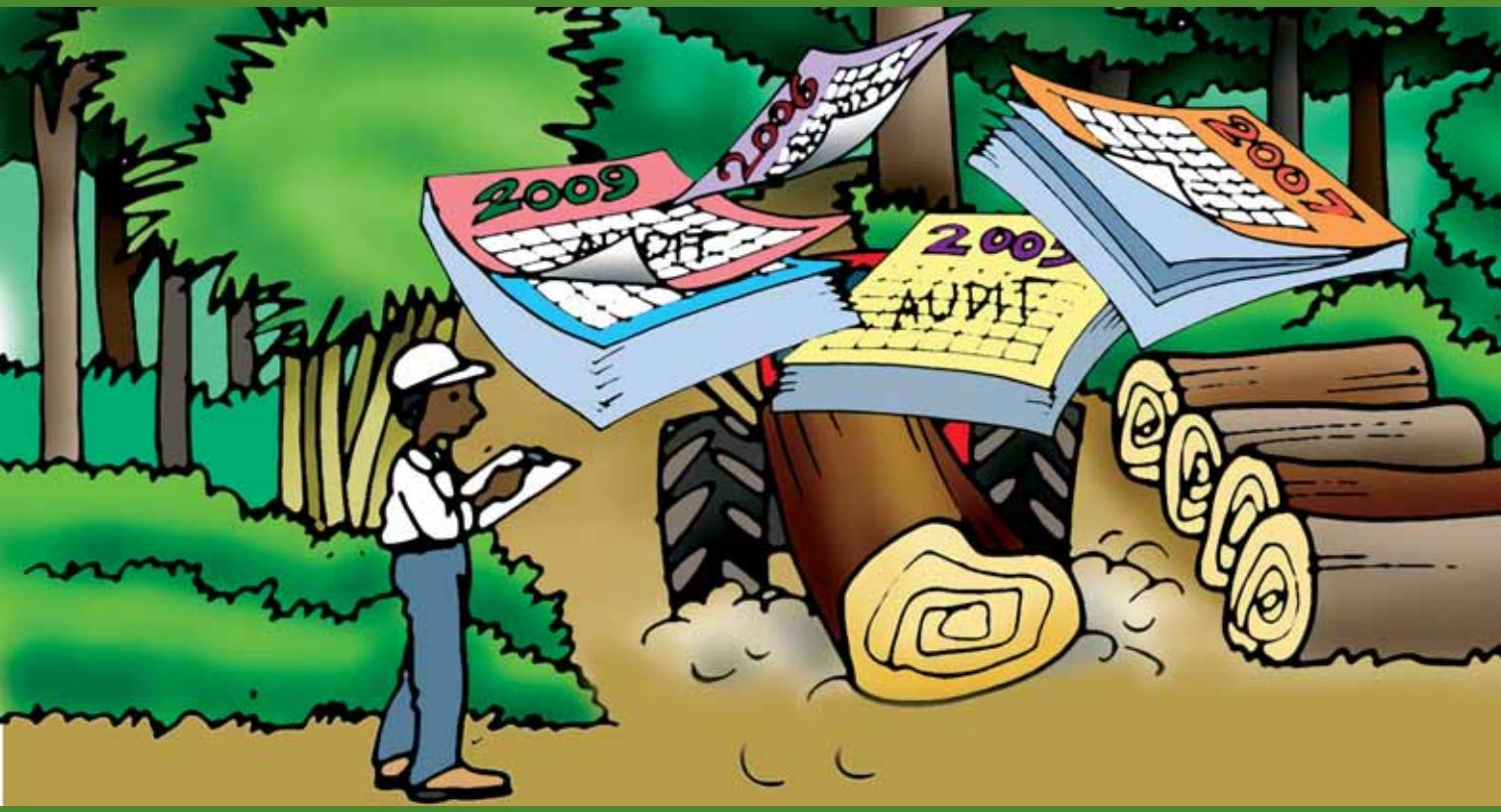
During the main assessment, they still assess the activities carried out in the forest, inquire from the employees about their working conditions, and from the local communities about their relations with the logging company.



If the activities of the logging company comply with the FSC 10 principles, it is awarded the FSC certificate that authorizes it to label the products that source from the certified forest.

SURVEILLANCE VISITS / CONTROL AUDIT(S)

The logging company that receives a certificate should continue to implement good management practices in the forest and maintain good relations with the other interested parties to keep its certificate.



To ensure itself of this continuity, the certifier carries out an annual monitoring assessment, at least once a year, in the logging company; this is a surveillance visit or control audit.

SURVEILLANCE VISITS/CONTROL AUDIT (S)

During the annual surveillance visit, the certifier assesses the logging activities, inquires from the workers, local communities, and other interested parties.



The certificate is withdrawn if the logging company's practices do no longer comply with the FSC principles.

WHO BENEFITS FROM FOREST CERTIFICATION?

LOGGING COMPAGNIES



Certification enables them to gain easy access to markets for their products and gain the confidence of buyers to whom certification indicates that the forest is well managed and can produce for a long time.

WHO BENEFITS FROM FOREST CERTIFICATION?

FOREST WORKERS

In certified logging companies, employers should:
Comply with the labour law;



Ensure safety at work and during transport, and provide employees with all the equipment they need;
Provide for good working conditions;
Facilitate work by organising training courses regularly.

WHO BENEFITS FROM FOREST CERTIFICATION?

LOCAL POPULATIONS

They are consulted and associated in the management of their forest. Their customary rights and traditions on the forest are acknowledged, their cultures are respected.



The people living in the vicinity of a certified forest concession may:
Enjoy priority hiring for vacancies in the logging companies when they have required skills. Receive support from the forest manager for the implementation of development micro-projects.

WHO BENEFITS FROM FOREST CERTIFICATION?

CONSUMERS:



The consumption of FSC-certified products contributes to the protection of forests and improvement of the livelihood of the forest populations and workers.

OK!!! THAT IS VERY GOOD!!! HOW THEN DOES ONE TAKE PART IN THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS?

FOR THE WORKERS OF CERTIFIED LOGGING COMPAGNIES,
IT IS IMPORTANT TO:



Know your rights very well.

During assessments, provide the certifier with information on your working conditions and your employer's behaviour.

IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF A COMMUNITY LIVING IN AND AROUND A CERTIFIED FOREST CONCESSION, YOU CAN:

Attend consultation meetings organised by the logging company, certification body, forest administration, environmental NGOs to inform yourself, learn and eventually raise your concerns. Meet with the certification body and provide them with information on:



Your relations with the logging company;
Whether the logging company's activities have caused damages to the community;
Whether the logging company respects your customary rights;
Whether the logging company carries out illegal activities or does not comply with FSC standards.

When discussing with the logging company or auditors, it is advantageous to be organised and speak as a group. By so doing, you command respect, your chances of getting your message through are greater and your participation to the FSC forest certification process is more significant.



Now that you know more about FSC forest certification, take this opportunity to participate in forest certification in Cameroon and in other African countries.

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The **Instituto de Manejo e Certificação Florestal e Agrícola - IMAFLORA** - (www.imaflora.org) is a Brazilian non profit and non governmental institution which goal is to contribute to the sustainable development, by the support and promotion of the environmentally responsible, socially beneficial, and economically viable forest and agronomic management practices.

SUPPORT:



The **Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation's - ICCO** - (www.icco.nl) mission is to work towards a world where poverty and injustice are no longer present.

It finances and facilitates the development process by funding development programmes and through the technical support provided by its experts' network. It mediates for cooperation between partners in the South in collaboration with the private sector, governments, producers' groups, and other support organizations.



SUPPORT: 