

PRESS RELEASE

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Certification Help for Small Woods - Forest Stewardship Council launches Smallholder Fund

The Forest Stewardship Council® has launched a fund to support FSC® certification among small private, family, and community forest owners, or “smallholders.” In the first year, €420,000 will be distributed from the fund.

“Smallholders are a cornerstone of the FSC system,” said Kim Carstensen, Director General of FSC International. “This fund is designed to help them – and the forests they manage – benefit from the FSC marketplace”.

“We know the benefits of FSC certification for landowners of all sizes, but smallholders face some unique challenges. With relatively modest amounts of support, we can help create new opportunities for these landowners and managers” said Carstensen.

What is the aim of the fund?

The fund will promote objectives such as certification readiness, compliance with FSC Principles and Criteria, strengthening smallholder organizations, building capacity for entrepreneurship, enhancing supply chain management and improving market access for FSC certified products.

This fund is an important part of FSC’s ongoing commitment to smallholders, who own and manage much of the world’s forestland. Frequently, smallholders require additional support to earn FSC certification and the fund is designed to address some of these needs.

How can the fund help smallholders?

Specifically, the fund can help smallholders prepare for FSC certification, address compliance costs, invest in new machinery or market their products. The fund cannot support direct audit costs, vehicles, office supplies, real estate acquisition or rent, payment of debts or taxes, staff salaries or

other costs such as social or health insurance.

How is the fund being funded?

A percentage of the FSC Annual Administration Fee is being used to create the Smallholder Fund. Initial distribution of funding will occur in October 2013.

Who can apply?

To be eligible, applicants must meet criteria for small or low-intensity production or be community producers (UK criteria can be found [here](#)). Applicants may be FSC certified or non-certified and may seek single-use grants (one year, €5,000–30,000) or multi-use grants (up to three years, €5,000–50,000).

What is involved?

Applicants must complete a “pre-selection phase” questionnaire about their business, with information about how they would use the grant. National and regional FSC offices will screen applications and selected applicants will be asked to submit a full proposal.

What is the deadline for application?

The deadline for submitting a pre-selection questionnaire is **30 June 2013**.

How to apply.

To download and submit an application or for more information please visit:

<https://ic.fsc.org/smallholder-fund.542.htm>.

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About the Forest Stewardship Council®

The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) is an international non-profit organisation dedicated to promoting responsible forestry. FSC certifies forests all over the world to ensure they meet the highest environmental and social standards. Products made with wood and paper from FSC forests are marked with our ‘tick tree’ logo. When you see this logo on a product, you can be confident that buying it won’t mean harming the world’s forests.

For more information visit FSC UK online at www.fsc-info.org or FSC International at www.fsc.org.