

FSC Monitoring and evaluation public report 2019

Monitoring performances, evaluating outcomes and impacts, and learning

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Table of contents

1. Monitoring and Evaluation System Requirements	3
1.1. Scope and Boundaries of FSC monitoring and evaluation system	3
1.1.1. Thematic boundaries.....	3
1.1.2. Organizational boundaries	3
1.2. Plan for expansion	7
1.3. Resources, roles and responsibilities	7
1.4. Data management.....	8
2. Stakeholder Engagement in M&E System Design	9
2.1. Stakeholder mapping and engagement.....	9
2.1.1. Stakeholder identification	9
2.1.2. Stakeholder consultation	10
3. Intended and unintended impacts and outcomes.....	11
4. Performance Monitoring and Outcome & Impact evaluations	12
4.1. Performance monitoring	12
4.2. Outcome and impact evaluations.....	13
5. Learning and improving.....	14
5.1. Learning from the monitoring and evaluation system	14
6. Transparency and Public Information	15
6.1. Publicly available information about monitoring and evaluation	15



1. Monitoring and Evaluation System Requirements

1.1. Scope and Boundaries of FSC monitoring and evaluation system

1.1.1. Thematic boundaries

FSC monitoring and evaluation system is based on FSC Theory of Change (ToC), which identifies intended and unintended effects of FSC system.

According to the ToC, there are four mutually reinforcing pathways and a set of supporting strategies and inspiring concepts FSC uses to facilitate and increase its desired outcomes and impacts contributing to its vision and mission. ToC also includes indicators for measuring intended outcomes and impacts.

1.1.2. Organizational boundaries

FSC monitoring, evaluation and learning system is integrated in many departments at FSC International, as well as supported by the activities of FSC Network. It is an ongoing process to draw conclusions about FSC contribution to intended outcomes and impacts. It consists of a set of interconnected functions, processes and activities, including continuous collection of monitoring data and the implementation of outcome and impact evaluations.

Central functions of the system are delegated to the Program of Data Analytics, Evaluation and Learning (DAEL) created in early 2019 in Technology and Information Unit. This program deals with three (3) main work areas (Fig. 1):

- **Impact:** Covering the design of the monitoring system, evaluation of the results and compilation of evidence of outcomes and impacts of FSC system, including through innovations and analytics that provide necessary data or solutions.
- **Analytics:** Covering the gathering and analyzing data about system performance including internal and external data (traditional and spatial).



- **Innovations:** Covering new ways of organizing internal processes, acquiring new tools and methodologies to increase the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation activities and the quality of evidence of outcomes and impacts.

Apart from DAEL, the following departments at FSC cover significant functions related to monitoring, evaluation and learning:

- **Performance and Standards Unit (PSU):** Responsible for standard setting processes and integrating learnings from the standard performance into revision processes (data comes from scientific findings, from collection and evaluation of feedback from stakeholders participating in standard setting processes). The unit is also working on the risk-based approach to the normative requirements and the auditing that will be reflected in impact and performance monitoring.

DAEL and PSU exchange information for evaluation and learning purposes, as well as information is shared with senior management by PSU through established reporting lines (Global leadership, Board of Directors).

- **Global Integrity and Alignment (GAI) and FSC Network Partner around the globe:** Facilitating the development of FSC national standards for forest management and controlled wood risk assessments, where integration of learnings and monitoring of the performance takes place. The unit is also responsible for managing national stakeholders and support to other key functions of FSC on the ground.

The GIA is responsible for handling disputes in FSC, which are important for performance and impact evaluations because they reveal specific non-compliances with FSC requirements or concerns, and outcomes related to them. Disputes are regulated by normative requirements developed by the unit, for which elements of PSU work in standard setting above apply. DAEL and GAI exchange information for evaluation and learning purposes, as well as information is shared with senior

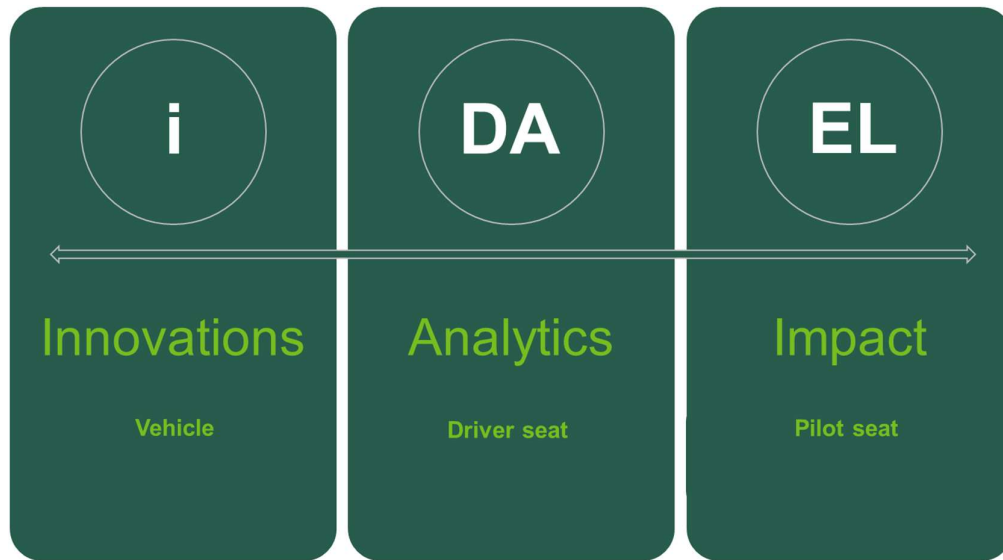


management by GAI through established reporting lines (Global leadership, Board of Directors).

- **Marketing and Communications Unit (MCU):** Supporting key value chains in FSC chain of custody, monitoring consumer and media opinion of FSC, exploring new markets for potential expansion of FSC certification (therefore potential increase of FSC impact). The unit is also conducting relevant standard setting process (e.g. trademark standard), for which elements of PSU work above apply. These work areas relate to the systemic impact of FSC and impacts of CoC certification. DAEL and MCU exchange information for evaluation and learning purposes, as well as information is shared with senior management by MCU through established reporting lines (Global leadership, Board of Directors).
- **Engagement:** Consisting of several programs and functions supports systemic impacts, integration of the newest trends and initiatives related to sustainability in the whole FSC system (e.g. climate change, landscape approach), and the engagement with research community.

Other programs of the **Technology and information unit (TIU)** include core systems, supply chain integrity, IT systems, innovations Lab. Collaboration with these departments take place on a daily basis to ensure the integrity of FSC data, as well as for learning and evaluation purposes.

Fig 1. Scope of the Data Analytics, Evaluation and Learning Program at FSC.



Historically monitoring, evaluation and learning has been focusing mainly on the forest management certification, being in the core of FSC mission and vision.

Forest management certification is a vehicle of FSC and therefore is in the focus of the monitoring and evaluation system. Other system areas (chain of custody, controlled wood, systemic impacts) may intensify or decrease the impact of forest management certification; therefore, these are not treated as a priority.

The following key projects are included in the scope of the DAEL in 2019:

- Development of the program's strategy;
- Development of a methodology to prioritize geographical areas for achieving highest impact in forest management certification (with support from external consultants);
- Development of an online platform for systematic and efficient collection of audit data from forest management certification;
- Development of the GIS capacity for data analytics, monitoring, evaluation and learning;



- Data mapping across the organization to review and improve data management and data quality, as well as how the outcomes and impacts evaluations will be systematized.

1.2. Plan for expansion

FSC expanded its system from 2.5 to 4.5 FTE in early 2019 to intensify and strengthen monitoring, evaluation and learning system. This structure is expected to be sufficient enough for fulfilling the objectives of the system. Therefore, no further expansion is planned. The performance of the new structures will be monitored and needs for the eventual expansion revised.

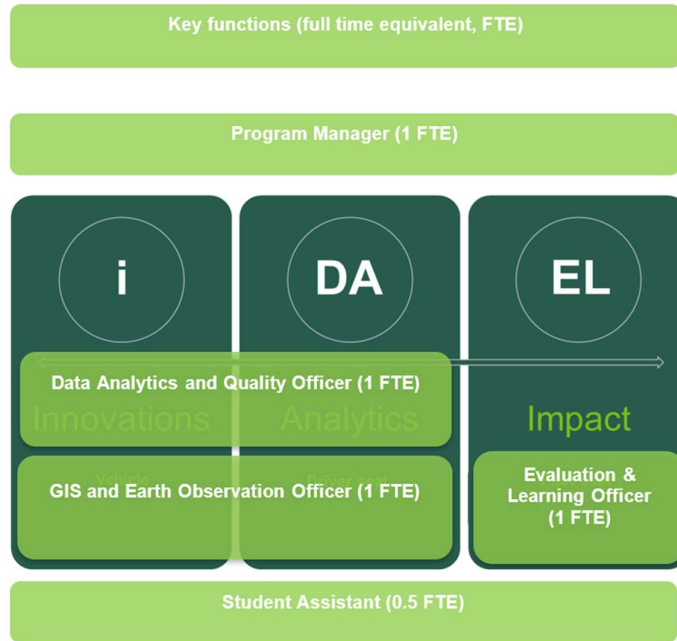
The aspirational goal of the new structure is to add new areas into the monitoring and evaluation portfolio to include the integrity of the system (parts of the chain of custody certification), impacts from Controlled Wood and Ecosystem Services certification, and systemic impacts.

1.3. Resources, roles and responsibilities

The Data Analytics, Evaluation and Learning Program (DAEL) consist of the following key functions (Fig. 2):

- Evaluation and Learning Officer: responsible for impact area of the Program - IMP (1 FTE);
- GIS and Earth Observation Officer – GIS (1 FTE);
- Data Analytics and Quality Officer – DA (1 FTE);
Both GIS and DA are responsible for data analytics in the Program.
- Student Assistant: providing support to the Program – STU (0,5 FTE);
- Program Manager: responsible for the strategic development, management and deliverables in the Program - PM (1 FTE).

Fig 2. Key functions of DAEL Team (2019)



1.4. Data management

The FSC Certificate Database is the system for storing, organizing and facilitating analysis and use of performance monitoring data. It uses a Salesforce interface, where certification bodies upload reports from the certification process and other relevant information. Data from the Salesforce is exported to other formats for the analysis (e.g. excel), or a connection to reporting tools is made (e.g. Power BI).

The results of the analysis are stored outside of Salesforce in relevant folders, with relevant access rights. Additionally, several sets of qualitative and quantitative data on standard setting processes, market and consumers are collected, analyzed and stored by relevant units (PSU, MCU, GAI).

With the establishment of DAEL, new solutions are being designed to integrate data storage across units, with key data being centralized in the future global intranet. FSC has



procedures to protect confidential and proprietary data. Transparency and data sharing aspects are also part of the Certification Body contracts with their clients.

Apart from the certification data, FSC has different confidentiality agreements with different partners, following the legislative framework. The confidentiality agreements are part of nearly every project and part of every contractual engagement (e.g. funding or services). All confidentiality agreements are overseen by FSC Legal department. When publicizing the data, FSC looks for and obtain the consent from relevant parties as applicable. Upon introduction of General Data Protection Regulation by European Union (GDPR), FSC has revised and adapted the procedures for handling personal data.

The legal barriers to the use of data for the implementation of the M&E system are addressed by the existing procedures for data protection. Additionally, when barriers are identified, FSC is engaging with the data holders via its Legal Department to come to a solution.

2. Stakeholder Engagement in M&E System Design

2.1. Stakeholder mapping and engagement

2.1.1. Stakeholder identification

Categories of stakeholders relevant for FSC monitoring and evaluation system will be revised on an annual basis, as part of the revision of this document. The identification of stakeholder categories in 2019 was done by DAEL Team. In the future, the consultation process will include revision of the stakeholder categories. Additionally, relevant stakeholders will be consulted for specific projects/events.

The following core stakeholder categories are considered relevant for the FSC monitoring and evaluation:

- Researchers
 - Individual researchers;
 - Research institutions;
- FSC Global leadership Team
 - Directors of FSC Units;



- Regional directors and chosen Network representatives;
- FSC Policy and Standards Committee;
- FSC program areas relevant for monitoring and evaluation
 - Forest Management;
 - Chain of Custody;
 - Controlled Wood;
 - Ecosystem Services;
 - Quality and Assurance;
 - Value Chain Development;
 - Marketing;
 - Trademark;
 - Communications;
 - Indigenous peoples;
 - New approaches (smallholders);
 - Engagement (FSC Membership and partnerships);
 - Dispute Resolution;
 - All programs at Technology and Information Unit;
- External partners:
 - Certification bodies and Accreditation Services International (ASI) (“dialogue group” composed from representatives of certification bodies and ASI);
 - ISEAL (through the assessment of compliance against the Impacts Code);
 - Key environmental individuals or organizations;
 - Key social individuals or organizations;
 - Key economic individuals or organizations.

2.1.2. Stakeholder consultation

Starting from 2020, stakeholders will be regularly consulted to receive feedback on:

- Intended impacts and outcomes of the standards system;



- Unintended effects of the system, including identifying the most significant and potentially damaging unintended negative effects;
- Scope and boundaries of the M&E system.

FSC welcomes the feedback on the above at any point of time at impacts@fsc.org.

Apart from the above, FSC is collecting feedback on system performance as part of standard setting and revision processes. This feedback is collected and managed by relevant departments and shared with DAEL as relevant.

3. Intended and unintended impacts and outcomes

FSC developed its Theory of Change in 2015 (ToC), which defines intended long-term social, environmental and economic impacts of the FSC certification system. Our ToC is complemented by a list of detailed indicators that relate to the short and medium term social, environmental and economic outcomes that are expected as a result of compliance with FSC standards.

In the organization, the ToC describes and illustrates four (4) main pathways and supporting strategies that contribute to the intended impacts. But also, includes description of unintended impacts from the FSC system. In order to identify the unintended effects, the FSC ToC was consulted with stakeholders at the time of its development.

Additionally, as part of regular standard setting processes and the oversight on implementation, FSC is collecting feedback from stakeholders which often reports on unintended effects. From 2020, the unintended effects will be explicitly mentioned in the consultation with stakeholders identified as relevant to M&E (See section 2.1.2).



4. Performance Monitoring and Outcome & Impact evaluations

4.1. Performance monitoring

FSC implements monitoring and evaluation mainly through performance monitoring and through support to external impact evaluations. Monitoring is guided by the indicators provided in the FSC Theory of Change.

The key to performance monitoring is data collected through certification process and included in the certification reports. With the introduction of DAEL, FSC has invested in developing capacity to access and analyze this data more efficiently. Instead of manual extraction and analysis of the certification data we now initiated the FM online (forest management online) project to enable data standardization, collection and automatic transfer to FSC, which will significantly increase the scope of possible analytics.

With the new GIS capacity, we are also introducing GIS analytic for corroboration and expansion of evidence for (in)compliance with FSC standards. Newly launched FSC interactive maps constitute an example of initial GIS functionality and its added value to traditional data analysis (visualization, geo-component, time series, automatic selection etc.).

FSC analyzes certification status in real time using interactive reports (FSC Map of Facts and Figures, Internal Power BI dashboards). On semi-annual basis FSC has been compiling the data originating from certification reports for the analytical purposes. This process will be replaced with the FM online project mentioned above.

Additionally, future annual revision of the systemic report of monitoring and evaluation brings compiled summary of the performance monitoring.

Various performance monitoring elements have been traditionally conducted by many departments within FSC (compare section 1.1.2), which will continue in close collaboration with DAEL:

- **Performance and Standards Unit (PSU):** analyzing the performance of the international FSC standards and introducing improvements based on evaluation of standard



implementation. Through the standard setting processes and through the oversight of their implementation we also monitor the performance indirectly, implementing necessary amendments to the system as relevant.

- **Marketing and Communication Unit (MCU):** analyzing market-related data and adjusting work areas accordingly (e.g. prioritization of value chains, revision of the relevant standards, communication strategies).
- **Global Integrity and Alignment (GIA):** analyzing the contents and frequency of disputes, standard revision processes (including relevant international procedures and support to national FSC normative frameworks). There are also different initiatives within GIA and the FSC Network that collect and systematize FSC-relevant country information.

The data collection protocols to ensure data quality are detailed in the monitoring and evaluation indicators included in FSC Theory of Change, as well as in a separate overview document. The processes of data collection by certification bodies are detailed in accreditation standards and data quality is monitored in the Salesforce. Data submission and quality by certification bodies (CBs) are part of the regular evaluation of certification bodies by ASI. Data quality is monitored while data is used. In case data quality issues are discovered, data is corrected.

4.2. Outcome and impact evaluations

Complementary to performance monitoring are the independent evaluations conducted by independent parties. In order to stimulate the production of external impact evaluations FSC engages with researchers. The engagement includes participation in research projects, compilation and distribution of the list of the main research topics interesting for FSC, and participation in research events. Engagement with research community gives FSC a chance to address questions relevant for monitoring and evaluation, to support robust methodology or take measures that help achieving accurate, reliable and relevant findings.



FSC is currently not commissioning the external evaluations due to budget constraints. However, we explore the opportunities of collaborating with researchers on available grants. The lack of direct intervention in the research by FSC supports independency of the evaluations.

FSC is developing an open repository of FSC related literature, research and impact evaluations. The repository aims to make publication material more easily accessible for both internal and external stakeholders.

Until the repository is developed, the interested public can find the links to independent monitoring and evaluation studies [here](#), as well as on the “[Sustainability Impacts Learning Platform](#)” (maintained in collaboration between the Food Lab, ISEAL, and WWF) and the [Evidensia](#) platform. Additionally, FSC annual systemic report will include summary information on independent evaluations.

5. Learning and improving

5.1. Learning from the monitoring and evaluation system

With the establishment of DAEL, FSC is further investing in learning from its monitoring and evaluation system. From 2020 onwards, DAEL will hold an annual, public webinar to ensure that the definition of intended impacts and change, reports from performance monitoring and outcome evaluations, and the learning from these activities are distributed and discussed throughout the organization.

Furthermore, various aspects of the monitoring and evaluation system are reported to the FSC Global Leadership Team (GLT) on a regular basis, including through in-person sessions at the GLT meetings, or existing reporting tools (e.g. Power BI dashboards, GIS dashboards).

Results from performance monitoring, outcome and impact evaluations and the learning from these activities are used to inform a periodic review and refinement of the intended change in the FSC Theory of Change and FSC Global Strategic Plan. These subsequently lead to relevant updates of the monitoring and evaluation strategy (its scope and boundaries). In 2019 the work on the revision of ToC was initiated, as well as the revision of the



FSC Global Strategic Plan. Both are planned for finalization in 2020. Apart from monitoring results, the feedback obtained from stakeholder consultation on the monitoring and evaluation system will be considered for the revision of the monitoring and evaluation strategy.

6. Transparency and Public Information

6.1. Publicly available information about monitoring and evaluation

FSC provides information on its monitoring and evaluation system on FSC websites. The publicly available information included in the present report encompasses:

- A contact point for submission of any comments, questions or complaints about the M&E system;
- A description of the current scope and boundaries of the monitoring and evaluation system, and if appropriate, the plan for expansion;
- Procedures and opportunities for stakeholder engagement in the design and revision of the M&E system and the results of these consultations through this report;
- An explanation of the scheme's strategies, intended outcomes and impacts, and the most significant unintended effects in the FSC Theory of Change;
- A list of all indicators being used in the monitoring and evaluation system;
- A list of completed, ongoing and planned outcome and impact evaluations; and
- Links to the most relevant independent impact evaluations.