

AFRICA SUCCESS STORY SERIES:

THE EVOLUTION OF FSC® CONTROLLED FOREST MANAGEMENT:

LES SCIERIES DU BETSILEO AND HAZOVATO'S JOURNEY TO CERTIFICATION

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UNDERSTANDING FSC CONTROLLED FOREST MANAGEMENT (CFM)

The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) Controlled Forest Management (CFM) standard is an evolution of the FSC Controlled Wood framework. The Controlled Wood standard was originally developed to prevent wood from unacceptable sources entering FSC-certified supply chains. As demand grew for more robust verification, FSC transitioned to the CFM standard because it provides a more rigorous and structured approach to verifying responsible forestry practices in areas where full FSC Forest Management (FM) certification is not yet feasible.

FSC published the **FSC-STD-30-010 V3-0 Controlled Forest Management** standard on **1 January 2024**, replacing the 2007 version (V2-0). Under the earlier system, materials from certified management units were sold under the 'FSC Controlled Wood' claim. The new version introduced significant revisions, shifting from a risk-based to a performance-based approach by incorporating more than 70% of the **FSC-STD-60-004 International Generic Indicators (IGIs)**. This change aligns with FSC's strategy to reduce reliance on controlled wood, expand certified forest areas, and increase FSC 100% products in the market.

CFM certificate holders must transition to full Forest Management certification under a nationally adapted Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS) within one certification cycle (five years).

The update also introduced the **'FSC Controlled Forest Management' (FSC CFM) claim**, regulated by **ADVICE-40-004-27**. This follows the same chain of custody rules as Controlled Wood but is considered certified. Currently, FSC CFM materials can only be sold as raw or semi-finished products to FSC-certified customers. FSC is also investigating whether finished products made from CFM material could carry the **FSC MIX 70%** claim, which would further integrate these materials into certified supply chains.

The shift from Controlled Wood to CFM was driven by the need to enhance credibility and transparency within the FSC system. Controlled Wood was criticized for limited oversight, as it allowed non-certified wood to be mixed into certified products under a risk-based approach. In contrast, CFM applies a more structured auditing process. It requires companies to meet stricter sustainability, social, and legal requirements, while providing a stepping stone towards full FSC FM certification.

APPLYING CFM IN COUNTRIES WITHOUT NATIONAL STANDARDS

Of the 13 countries that make up Southern Africa, seven have full FM standards or Interim Forest Stewardship Standards. Interest in CFM or FM has been shown in at least three additional countries – Angola, Malawi, and Madagascar.

FSC Southern Africa has strategically adopted the CFM standard as a certification pathway for countries without national standards. This approach allows forestry organizations to gain certification under the CFM framework while country-specific standards are developed. At the same time, it enables organizations to strengthen internal management systems, align with global sustainability practices, and participate in FSC-certified supply chains.



The CFM standard is structured into three main parts: **general requirements, quality management systems, and five key categories of responsible forest management:**

-  **1. Legality** – ensuring all forest management and trade activities comply with national and international laws.
-  **2. Respect for human and customary rights** – upholding rights, including those outlined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.
-  **3. Protection of social, cultural, environmental and high conservation values (HCVs)** – safeguarding biodiversity, ecosystems and cultural heritage.
-  **4. Prevention of deforestation and degradation** – maintaining forest cover and ecosystem integrity.
-  **5. Exclusion of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)** – prohibiting their use in forest management activities.

By meeting these requirements, forestry organizations operating in uncertified regions can align with internationally recognized sustainability standards while adapting to local conditions. FSC Southern Africa's strategy not only supports responsible forest management but also facilitates the transition to national standards, strengthening long-term forestry sustainability in the region.

LES SCIERIES DU BETSILEO AND HAZOVATO: PIONEERS OF FSC CFM IN MADAGASCAR

Les Scieries du Betsileo (LSB), founded in October 1998 by Mr François Bueche, is based in Fianarantsoa, Madagascar. The company employs 108 permanent workers, around 10-day labourers and subcontracting teams of 150–200 people. Operations take place at two sites: the Mandaratsy forest, 30 km from Fianarantsoa, where forestry and primary processing occur, and a second site in the city that houses administrative offices, timber storage, and a mill for further processing.

Hazovato, founded in 1956, is a pioneering company dedicated to harnessing Madagascar's natural resources for high-quality furniture, building materials, and decorative products. With a focus on sustainability and craftsmanship, Hazovato manufactures a wide range of products including pine and hardwood furniture, wooden houses, frames, staircases, and mezzanines.

These two prominent forestry enterprises recently embarked on their FSC CFM journey following the publishing of the standard in 2024, setting a precedent for responsible forest management in Madagascar. Their commitment began with initial engagement with FSC representatives, who visited the enterprises in quarter 1 of 2025 to assess feasibility and outline the standard's requirements. During these early consultations, FSC experts outlined the fundamental requirements of the CFM standard, emphasising the need for robust environmental and social safeguards. They discussed biodiversity conservation, worker safety, community engagement, and mitigation of environmental risks associated with forestry activities.

Following this assessment, both companies conducted internal evaluations, mapped plantations, and identified gaps. Action plans addressed monitoring systems, worker training, and stakeholder engagement to meet CFM requirements. Before pursuing FSC certification, LSB and Hazovato had already invested in sustainability. They used FSC to structure those practices and strengthen their competitiveness in international markets.

To meet certification requirements, both companies worked with consultants and FSC to formalize and refine their practices.

THE AUDIT PROCESS AND NEXT STEPS

In the first quarter of 2025, both companies underwent formal FSC CFM audits. These evaluations included on-site inspections, stakeholder interviews, and a detailed review of management practices.

Today, LSB and Hazovato have officially obtained their FSC CFM certificates in quarter 2 and 3 of 2025. Their dedication to responsible forestry marks the beginning of a powerful movement toward sustainable forest management in the country. Their progress positions them as leaders in Madagascar and sets a benchmark for other forestry operators in the region.

As demand for responsibly sourced wood grows, FSC CFM will be crucial in bridging the gap between uncertified and fully certified operations. The progress made by LSB and Hazovato is expected to encourage others to follow their example.

Looking ahead, FSC will develop a full FM standard for Madagascar within five years. LSB and Hazovato are expected to transition within that period, reinforcing their commitment to responsible forest management. Their example is likely to inspire other companies to adopt certification and promote a culture of responsible forestry across the region.



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