

FSC® EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To invest in ecosystem services from Galician forests is to invest in services which are essential to human life

FSC Executive Summary

To invest in ecosystem services from Galician forests is to invest in services which are essential to human life

Forest ecosystems are not simply producers of materials such as wood and/or paper. They provide invaluable benefits for society and carry out an important ecological role in the long term health equilibrium of the planet.



They regulate the climate helping to purify the air and water.



They are actively used for the purposes of leisure, well-being, sport, physical and mental health, inspiration, creativity and culture.



They produce natural resources such as clean water and fertile land.



Their conservation helps avoid future pandemics.



They are a source of extraordinary biodiversity without which we would not be able to survive.

If we want to preserve the forests and respond to current emergencies as well as the needs of future generations, forest management has to be capable of maintaining all of the forest's aforementioned ecological, social, cultural and economic functions.

Such **responsible forest management is the very purpose of FSC** (Forest Stewardship Council) whose quest is that today's society recognise and appreciate the true value of forests and the fundamental services that they provide, the said "ecosystem services".

01/ Galicia joins in the certification of ecosystem services: a pioneer in Spain with its communal woodlands of Rogueira and Cabana in Folgoso do Courel, Lugo.

Galicia boasts a wide variety of landscapes in which man has cohabited with a wild natural environment for centuries. 22% of its territory enjoys some form of protection or another, being one of the highest percentages in Spain. It is a mountainous region with over 1.4 million hectares of forestland.



Enxeñería Forestal Asefor S.L. is a forestry consulting company that specialises in certification. It is a member of the Grupo de Certificación Forestal FSC Alvariza which is the largest Spanish group in terms of associated members and the third largest in terms of area certified. Following the certification of the ecosystem services of Monte Vecinal en Mano Común de Rogueira y Cabana the company has focussed media attention not only on this new FSC certification but also on the possibilities of creating a positive environmental and social impact on other woodlands in Galicia as well as in the rest of Spain.

The certificate, received in 2019 by SCS Global Services, authorises the company in the provision of Ecosystem Services FSC™ (Forest Stewardship Council™) in recognition of the positive impact of its ecosystem service management practises. The certified woodland includes Devesa da Rogueira which is very highly valued ecologically both in terms of its biodiversity and nature.

- **A total area of 614.80 hectares is certified to FSC standards** of which **444.35 hectares** are populated with indigenous trees strictly for the purpose of protecting and conserving the biodiversity.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION



CONSERVATION OF THE FEATURES OF THE NATURAL FORESTS

A “**devesa**” is an ancient forest with indigenous vegetation. Its preservation is to be continued so that its biodiversity and natural beauty can be enjoyed by future generations. Since ancient times, the woodlands located in the **CMVMC Rogueira y Cabana** have seen human activity interacting with the ecosystem to a greater or lesser extent depending on the accessibility and usage required. Up to the middle of the 20th century there were still areas in cultivation and paths which today are in disuse owing to the abandonment or decline of certain activities such as mining. From the second half of the last century to the present day, the forest has visibly recovered lost ground.

In the past, the woodlands experienced more human intervention but thanks to a greater emphasis being placed on the sustainability of traditional uses, it has been possible to preserve the high levels of biodiversity that currently exist.

With more than 400 hectares of incredibly diverse forestland, the “devesa” is the most important natural area to be found in the **Serra de O Courel** and one of the most important in the north west

of the Iberian Peninsula. Various studies highlight the existence of up to 21 different types of forest in one location. The varying altitude of the mountains (800 to 1,500 metres) and its geological features serve to explain the dispersion of the different plant formations as well as the local species.

Within the **woodlands** one can find *Betula pubescens*, *Sorbus aucuparia*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Quercus pyrenaica*, *Fraxinus excelsior*, *Quercus ilex*, *Quercus petraea* and *robur*. There are also **accompanying and secondary species** in abundance such as *Prunus spinosa*, *Corylus avellana*, *Castanea sativa*, *Taxus baccata*, *Ilex aquifolium*, *Crataegus monogyna*, and *Salix caprea*.

There are a large variety of **herbaceous and bush species** which form undergrowth rich in diversity such as *Viola riviniana*, *Stellaria holostea*, *Ranunculus tuberosus*, *Poa nemoralis*, *Lilium martagon*, *Daphne laureola*, *Omphalodes nitida*, *Pteridium aquilinum*, *Potentilla erecta*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Daphne laureola*. There is also an extensive range of **bulbous plants** such as *Galium odoratum*, *Polysticum setiferum* and *Hedera hibernica*.



WE TAKE CARE OF WHAT REALLY MATTERS

The **certification of ecosystem services for biodiversity conservation** guarantees the proper conservation of plant and species habitats and encourages the sponsorship of activities that preserve and improve conditions in the FSC certified area.

The whole of society benefits from these ecosystem services. At this current time in our lives, areas of high biodiversity areas should be protected and appreciated for their contribution to nature and the conservation of biological values. The **preservation of unique woodland areas** for the purposes of scientific study and knowledge is vital. At the same time, the protection of rare or endangered species that inhabit therein (such as large mammals like the Cantabria brown bear) provides a means to conserve and maintain their populations.

Meanwhile, the neighbours and landowners of the Rogueira and Cabana woodlands are the people who live in and care for the area and the purpose of this certification is to help them in their custodianship of the wonderful biodiversity which contributes so much to society and the natural environment.

One of the proposed methods of biodiversity conversation is to encourage the traditional activity of pruning. This woodland practice has a positive impact in the conservation of the older trees in the forest; be it chestnut groves for fruit production or cork oaks for firewood. Such practices help conserve the biodiversity of plant, vertebrate and insect species.

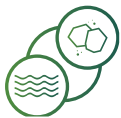


Verification method

- **Indicator to measure the anthropogenic disturbance in the landscape:** road density.
- **Indicator to measure the changes:** level of disturbance.
- **Indicator to measure the composition and structure of the forest in the landscape:** structure of the forest or the ecosystem.

The proposed procedures are based on methodologies successfully employed in different types of projects and by different entities.

- **The sources of information utilised** correspond with those obtained by technical teams at all times and those provided by different public institutions and organisations such as the European Space Agency, Instituto de Estudios del Territorio (Xunta de Galicia), National Geographic Institute (Government of Spain), etc.
- **The methodology for the analysis of tracks, paths and roads is based on a parametric methodology** underpinned by the topological analysis of land use maps.
- **The methodologies for the study and monitoring of the structure of the forests and the conservation of the biodiversity** are underpinned by LiDAR analysis and are based on both Spanish and international methodologies and studies.
- **The methodology utilised is appropriate for its use in the monitoring of the measured values.** In addition to being an indicator of changes in the forest structure, disruptions and density of paths, it can be proven in the field by way of the creation of parcels of land or experiments. The methodologies are non-subjective being based on mathematic indexes and metrics. Consequently, for similar locations and conditions they should be comparable.



FUTURE DECLARED ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

The Rogueira and Cabana woodland as well as conforming to responsible forest management standards, conforms to additional requirements that enable it to declare other FSC ecosystem services as established in the specific subset of forest ecosystem services stipulated by the FSC.

The **water basin and soil conservation services** are additional examples of easily evidenced environmental impacts.

This area is frequently visited by hikers and nature lovers who like to enjoy and improve their knowledge of the indigenous forests. Accordingly, a field study serves to verify other important impacts for the social and economic development of the region such as ecotourism.



02/ Invest in nature

To invest in forest produced ecosystem services is to invest in the future given that their tangible benefits are of benefit to society as a whole

Until now, forest maintenance and preservation has been financed purely by the extraction of forest products. The purpose of FSC procedure is to respond to the global problem that forest governance and economic systems operated in many parts of the world provide a greater incentive for deforestation than for responsible forest management.

FSC certification of ecosystem services offers an additional economic incentive to forest owners and administrators alike and one which satisfies the needs of companies and government agencies who want

to spearhead conservation schemes in a social context of constantly increasing awareness. This is also relevant to those investment funds in the "sustainable and responsible economy" (SRE) sector who promote social and environmental principles.

To invest in the financing of ecosystem services is to recognise the importance of the benefits that woodlands have to offer us. It also helps the local stakeholders who are engaged in the promotion of such environmentally important forest management.

The new standard FSC-PRO-30-006 (FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure) is the solution:

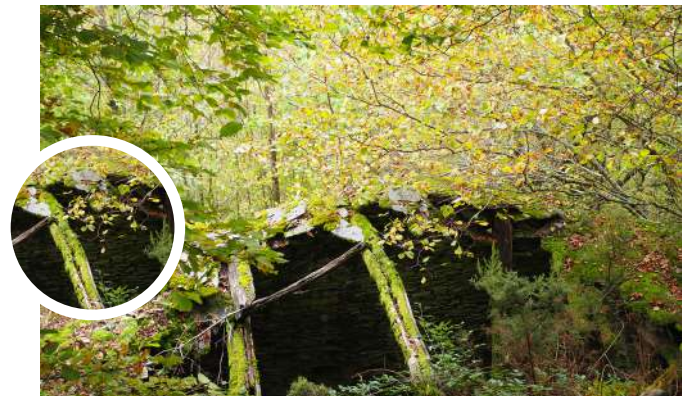
- 1 It facilitates the validation of the positive impacts of well managed forests such as carbon capture and sequestration, the conservation of biodiversity, water basins, soil conservation and recreational services.
- 2 It reinforces the value of responsible forest management as promoted by the holders of FSC certificates to preserve such important environmental services.
- 3 It is a new market tool that incentivises the protection of forest ecosystem services.
- 4 It gives value to responsible management by those holders of the certificate.
- 5 It will compensate holders and users of FSC certificates with the help of governments, investors, purchasers and businesses who wish to invest in these services.

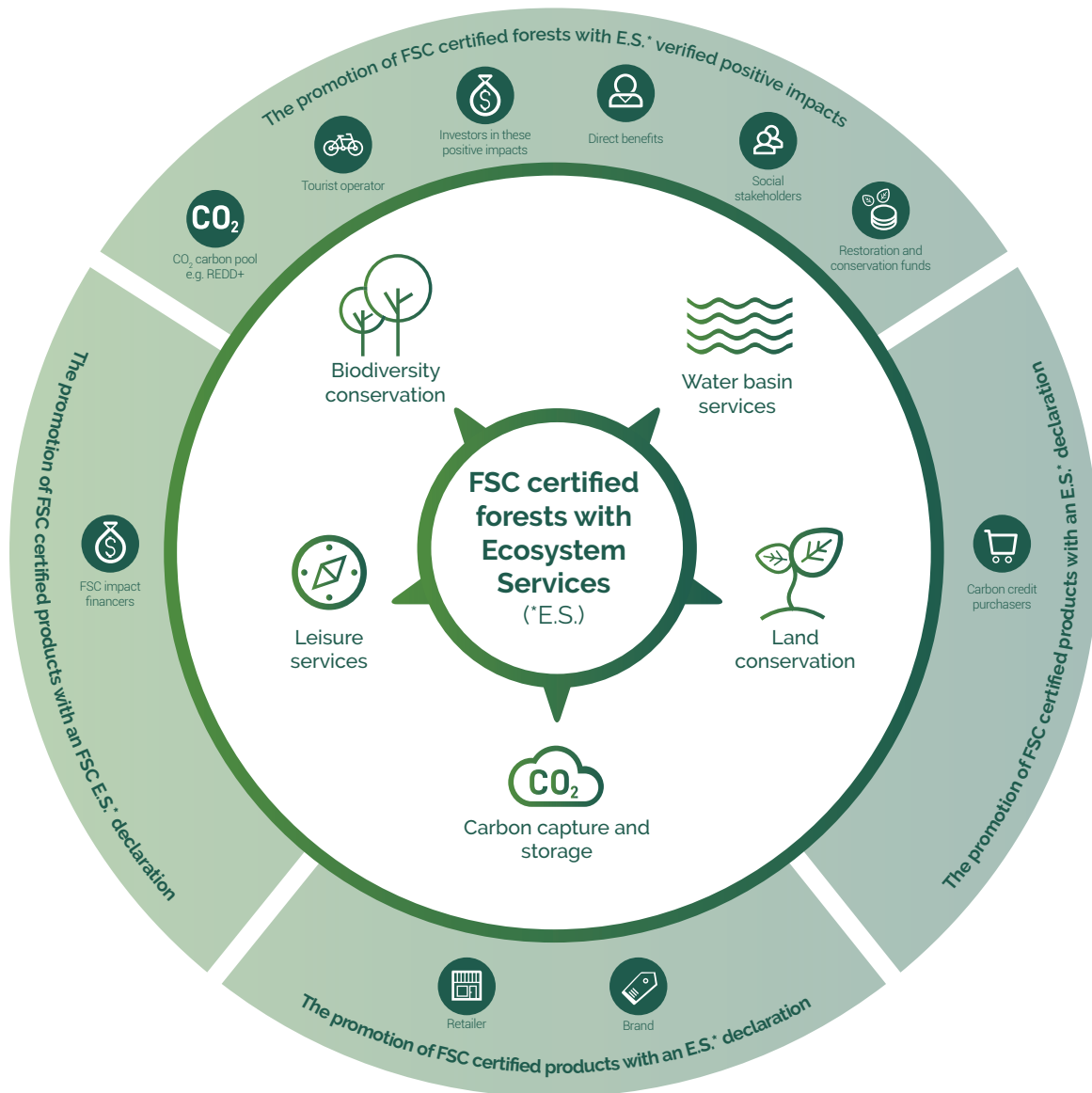
03/ Objective of the ecosystem services certificates

The ecosystem services certificates are in increasing demand. Across the world there is a growing interest in certifying and investing in these forest services. This is due to the following:

Reasons for acquiring ecosystem services certification:

- For forest managers it forms part of their responsible management plan as certificated by the FSC.
- It generates additional funding to facilitate a sustainable form of forest management.
- The ecosystem services statements also highlight the impact that investment has in mitigating global challenges such as the decline in biodiversity, water scarcity and climate change. These are all challenges that many companies and institutions have earmarked in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Objectives (SDO) of the United Nations (UN). They also form part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy.
- It allows the FSC labelling of forest based products to be linked with declarations of ecosystem services.





FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) is an international and independent non-governmental and non-profit organisation created to **promote environmentally correct, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management**. It currently has more than 213 million hectares of certified woodland in 89 countries and 353,000 hectares and 1,210 Chain of Custody certificates in Spain. FSC's vision is one of forests satisfying present needs without compromising the needs of future generations.

© Adaptation and redesign of the infographic belonging to FSC F00010



FSC® España - C/ Alcalá nº20 2ª planta.
 Oficina 202. 28014 Madrid
 FSC® F000228
 informacion@es.fsc.org
 www.es.fsc.org