



Establishing FSC Certification in Iceland: Roadmap, Challenges, and Implementation Strategies

Aaron. Z. Shearer¹

¹Land og skógur (aaron.z.shearer@landogskogur.is)

Forest certification has become an essential mechanism for market access in the global timber industry, particularly as regulatory frameworks increasingly govern international trade in forest products. The European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) exemplifies this trend, establishing stringent requirements for supply chain verification and sustainability. In this evolving regulatory landscape, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification provides a critical pathway for market integration and competitive positioning, especially vital for emerging forestry nations developing sustainable domestic timber resources.

Iceland represents a distinctive case in forest management, having experienced severe historical deforestation that reduced tree cover from 25-40% to less than 1% by the early twentieth century. Contemporary afforestation initiatives have incrementally increased coverage to approximately 2% of land area, positioning Iceland's forestry sector at a pivotal development stage. This nascent industry faces unique challenges within certification frameworks designed for established forestry nations, necessitating tailored approaches that acknowledge Iceland's ecological context and plantation-dominant landscape.

This presentation outlines Land and Forest's (Land og skógur) strategic implementation approach to establishing FSC certification in Iceland. We will detail our methodological progress toward FSC Controlled Forest certification as an initial phase, followed by the collaborative development of an interim national forest standard calibrated to Iceland's specific conditions. The discourse will address our strategy for creating an accessible group certification mechanism designed to overcome barriers faced by Iceland's numerous small forest holdings.

Our roadmap demonstrates how countries with developing forestry sectors can systematically build certification capacity while positioning themselves for future market integration, particularly significant as Iceland potentially moves toward EU membership. This strategic approach balances international certification compliance with the practical realities of Iceland's unique forestry context, establishing the foundation for sustainable sector growth in an increasingly regulated global marketplace.



Múlaþing

