Recovery through FSC certification

The forests of the Ejido Noh-Bec community in Mexico was a devastating sight after Hurricane Dean ripped through in 2007. It was in a critical condition, with many trees lay broken on the ground. Dean was a Category 5 hurricane and had enormous consequences for the communities depending on the ejido. Many years of work, dating all the way back to the 1980s, were destroyed and the people using the ejido now faced a huge challenge – their entire source of income was in ruins.

Rescue programs were initiated immediately to recover both ruined wood, the forest and the Ejido Noh-Bec economy. Six years later, and after a lot of hard work, the forest had gradually recovered and an evaluation began in order for the community to obtain both Forest Management and Chain of Custody (CoC) certification with FSC.

With the FSC certification in 2010 came the support needed to get where they are today. The Ejido Noh-Bec community needed to diversify their products and have successfully developed into being a provider of precious hard and soft woods. From their 18,000 hectares of FSC-certified forest, they harvest various tree species. These include Caoba, Tzalam, Chicozapote and Chechen. These are sold both locally and nationally, in quantities of up to a total of 5,000 m3 a year.

Out of the woods

The Ejido Noh-Bec community have seen huge benefits from FSC certification, which have led to secondary benefits. They have seen economic benefits due to higher incomes from the sale of

“Ejido”

[Spanish e-hee-th aw] noun, plural ejidos

A Mexican farm communally owned and operated by the inhabitants of a village on an individual or cooperative basis.
exported timber. Good forest management has also helped to conserve the area’s impressive biodiversity (including the endangered jaguar), which has made it a sought-out destination for ecotourism. Their improved market position has led to more and better-paid jobs, which persuades the youth of Noh-Bec not to migrate in search of better living conditions.

All this has enhanced the general economy of Noh-Bec and improved the quality of life and conditions for over 200 households. When asked about their economy, the Ejido Noh-Bec talk about “before” and “after” certification, so great have the changes been. The extra income is spent on social services and infrastructure, such as churches and schools. One major development is that they now have their own water well, which was constructed under the supervision of the water authorities (CAPA Commission for water and sewage system) of Quintana Roo. They administrate their own water distribution, which benefits the whole community. Through selling FSC-certified products, the community managed to save some funds to connect the village to the internet.

The Ejido Noh-Bec still face the same challenges as many forest owners in Mexico. Competition from unmanaged forests is hard, while increasing the quality and quantity of products while keeping costs low is a constant issue, as machinery becomes obsolete. To overcome some of these challenges, the Ejido Noh-Bec have started

**FACTS**

**Certificate Holder**
Ejido Noh-Bec

**Certificate details**
RA-FM/COC-000066

**Size of certified area**
18,000 hectares

**Products**
- Solid wood (sawn, chipped, peeled)
- Flitches and boules
- Rough wood
- Roundwood (logs)

**Tree species**
- Caoba (Swietenia macrophylla)
- Tzalam (Lysiloma bahamensis)
- Chicozapote (Manilkara zapota)
- Chechen (Metopium brownei)
- Amapola (Pseudobombax ellipticum)
- Chacáh rojo (Bursera simaruba)
- Chactecoc (Sikingia salvadorensis)
- Chacteviga (Caesalpinia platyloba)
- Granadillo (Platymiscium yucatanum)
- Katalox (Swartzia cubensis)
- Paasak (Simaruba glauca)
- Ramon (Brosimum alicastrum)
- Sacchaca (Dendropanax arboreus)
- Yaaxnik (Vitex gaumeri)
- Palizada (Coccoloba espicata, Protium copal, Malmea depressa, Pouteria campechiana, Alseis yucatanenses, Guettarda combsii, Gymnanthes lucida, Pouteria unilocularis, Chrysophyllum mexicanum, Drypetes lateriflora, Blomia cupanoides)

**FSC-certified products sold per year:**
3,000 m³
to repair and renew their machinery, while the increased income from the FSC-certified wood helps them to fund these repairs.

**Plans for the future**

Only one of the current buyers of the wood from Ejido Noh-Bec has a CoC certificate. The community wishes that more national companies would become aware of the certification and the benefits it brings. This would help them overcome issues around illegal timber that are a major problem for all FSC-certified smallholders in Mexico. Ejido Noh-Bec has many potential buyers in sight and would especially like to engage with more internationally CoC-certified customers. With the high quantities of wood they obtain from their forest, and previous success in overcoming enormous challenges that came after Hurricane Dean, the Ejido Noh-Bec certainly seem to have a bright future ahead.