

Press Release – Visé, 16 September 2026

A first validated FSC® Verified Impact project in Belgium: recognition for Argenteau Forest as a recreational ecosystem service.

This approach shows that a well-managed forest can be recognised not only for the wood it produces, but also for the benefits it brings to society.

Sylva Nova, D'leteren and FSC® Belgium are very pleased to announce the first FSC® validation for a 'Verified Impact' project in Belgium. This project highlights the recreational services offered by Argenteau Forest (district of Visé) along with an action plan intended to maintain, or even improve, these services for the general public.

Recognition of the forest's benefits for society

While the FSC® system is known mainly for its certification of responsible forestry management, since 2018, it has also allowed any owner or manager of an FSC-certified forest to demonstrate the benefits of its management on one or more of their forest's ecosystem services.

These benefits relate in particular to preservation of biodiversity, carbon sequestration and storage, conservation of soil and water resources, air quality and recreational and cultural usage.

The focus for Argenteau Forest was recognition of an action plan aimed at improving the socio-economic impacts relating to leisure activities and/or local tourism.

An innovative response to the challenges of a peri-urban forest

Located between Liège and Maastricht, Argenteau Forest faces an increasing need to balance the interests of user groups such as walkers and sports with forestry operations and nature conservation issues.

To address these challenges, in 2025 Sylva Nova launched a Forest Living Lab¹ in partnership with AgroParisTech, bringing together owners, users, public bodies and associations to develop solutions combining forestry management, ecological restoration and mixed user requirements. This participative process made it possible to map out usages, identify the main areas of tension and draw up a shared action plan for all stakeholders.

¹ A Forest Living Lab is a participative innovation approach designed to develop shared solutions for complex problems (usage conflicts, lack of understanding, etc.). It involves diverse stakeholders (Public-Private-Population) and places forest users at the heart of the dialogue and decision-making process. In close collaboration with AgroParisTech and following its working method, over a series of interactive workshops we construct a participative and progressive approach covering issues ranging from identification of usages and conflicts to the creation of a practical action plan to be applied and followed by all parties.

The measures developed include, for example and not exclusively:

- Creation of a steering committee
- Installation of educational signposting
- Differentiated marking of hiking trails
- Continuation of educational activities in the forest
- Regular monitoring of user satisfaction

This action plan was validated in July 2026 following an FSC audit. This third-party recognition confirms the relevance of the actions set out and the commitments made to improve the visitor experience sustainably while maintaining the other functions of this woodland area. Within a 5-year period, i.e. by 2031, the monitoring indicators introduced as part of this process will make it possible to measure and quantify the real impact of the management approach on this forest's recreational services for the general public.

D'leteren supports the promotion of natural capital

As a partner of Sylva Nova for many years now, D'leteren supports various projects contributing to the preservation, restoration and resilience of forest ecosystems and the biodiversity they contain.

This commitment aligns with the group's ESG strategy which aims to complement its efforts to reduce its impacts with initiatives that create positive value for nature and communities.

By supporting the Argenteau project, D'leteren is further confirming its commitment. The third-party validation for this project gives even greater credit to the process and reinforces the company's support for practical actions to promote nature and its benefits for society.

This is just the start

Following this first validation of an 'FSC Verified Impact' project in Belgium, Sylva Nova intends to continue to develop similar projects and extend the validation to other forest ecosystem services, in particular in the areas of biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

You can find more information about this project and the 'FSC Verified Impact' approach by clicking on this link: <https://be.fsc.org/be-fr/newsfeed/valoriser-sur-les-marches-limpact-positif-de-sa-gestion-forestiere-un-premier-projet>



About FSC® Belgium

Established in 2005, FSC Belgium is the national Belgian office of the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®), an international non-governmental organisation created in 1994.

Its mission is to promote ecologically appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests, with the aim of preserving and sharing the value represented by forests in meeting the needs of current and future generations.

Thanks to democratic and balanced governance, as part of a dialogue-based approach, the FSC works with the market to create and provide users with robust, innovative and audited tools to promote responsible forestry management.

To find out more: www.fsc.be

About Sylva Nova

Sylva Nova is an international forestry management office created in Belgium almost thirty years ago. Its activities span a wide range of areas: operational management of private and public forests, FSC® certification in Belgium and France, forestation, reforestation and restoration of forest landscapes in many regions of Europe and engineering and technical consultancy services. Sylva Nova practises non-invasive forestry, promotes continuous vegetation cover and mixed high forests, supports and enhances natural regeneration and encourages diversity to foster improved resilience.

To find out more: www.sylvanova.eu

About D'leteren

D'leteren is a key player in mobility-related social changes. In a rapidly evolving world, we are preparing for the future. We want tomorrow's mobility to be seamless and sustainable for everyone.

For over 220 years, D'leteren, a family business and corporate citizen, has continuously invested in research and the implementation of tailored solutions to transform people's everyday mobility.

To find out more: [https://www.dieteren.be/en/Sustainable Development](https://www.dieteren.be/en/Sustainable%20Development) | D'leteren

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