



## About FSC : Forest Stewardship Council

FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests.



Established in 1993 as a response to concerns over global deforestation, FSC is widely regarded as one of the most important initiatives of the last decade to promote responsible forest management worldwide.

FSC provides [internationally recognized standard-setting](#), [trademark assurance](#) and [accreditation](#) services to companies, organizations, and communities interested in [responsible forestry](#).

The FSC label provides a credible link between responsible production and consumption of forest products, enabling consumers and businesses to make purchasing decisions that benefit people and the environment as well as providing ongoing business value.

FSC is nationally represented [in more than 50 countries](#) around the world



## History

In the wake of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 1992 (Rio Summit), concerned business representatives, social groups and environmental organizations got together and established the Forest Stewardship Council. Its purpose is to improve forest management worldwide.

What began in as not much more than an innovative idea has turned into the leading model for environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable [forest stewardship](#). Today, FSC is the only internationally recognized standard setting organization for responsible forest management supported by the corporate sector as well as environmental organizations and social groups.



## How FSC policies and standards are developed

To earn FSC *certification* and the right to use the FSC label, an organization must first adapt its management and operations to conform to all applicable FSC requirements. What the FSC rules prescribe are applied globally. This is how FSC makes a positive and permanent impact.



FSC standard development process © FSC International

At FSC IC, a team of experts facilitate the development, review and improvement of FSC rules and procedures.

FSC's standards have been proven to work across continents, forest types, sizes and ownership. The FSC standard-setting process is transparent, democratic and inclusive with many opportunities for the interested public to participate.

It is this process that has allowed FSC to become an important and recognized forum where innovative solutions have become possible with the support of all [stakeholder](#) groups interested in forestry issues.

FSC is the only *certification system* in forestry recognized by [ISEAL](#) to follow best-practice in standard-setting.

## ☞ The [FSC Principles and Criteria](#) for responsible forest management

The [FSC Principles and Criteria](#) describe how the forests have to be managed to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of present and future generations. They include managerial aspects as well as environmental and social requirements. In fact, FSC rules are the strictest and FSC's social and environmental requirements the highest.

These 10 principles and 56 *criteria* form the basis for all FSC forest management standards. Based on these 10 principles, the FSC has [developed further rules](#) (called policies or standards) that further define and explain certain requirements stipulated in the 10 principles.

Here is a summary of some of the points the [FSC Principles and Criteria](#) require. Many of the points listed below will appear almost basic – but in many places even these basic requirements are not fulfilled. This is where FSC can have the biggest positive impact.

- Prohibit conversion of forests or any other natural habitat
- Respect of international workers rights
- Respect of Human Rights with particular attention to indigenous peoples
- Prohibit the use of hazardous chemicals
- No corruption – follow all applicable laws
- Identification and appropriate management of areas that need special protection (e.g. cultural or sacred sites, habitat of endangered animals or plants)



## Overview of the [FSC Principles and Criteria](#)

### **Principle 1.**

Compliance with all applicable laws and international treaties

### **Principle 2.**

Demonstrated and uncontested, clearly defined, long-term land [tenure](#) and use rights

### **Principle 3.**

Recognition and respect of indigenous peoples' rights

### **Principle 4.**

Maintenance or enhancement of long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities and respect of worker's rights in [compliance](#) with International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions

### **Principle 5.**

Equitable use and sharing of benefits derived from the forest

### **Principle 6.**

Reduction of environmental impact of logging activities and maintenance of the ecological functions and integrity of the forest

### **Principle 7.**

Appropriate and continuously updated management plan

### **Principle 8.**

Appropriate monitoring and assessment activities to assess the condition of the forest, management activities and their social and environmental impacts

### **Principle 9.**

Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) defined as environmental and social values that are considered to be of outstanding significance or critical importance

### **Principle 10.**

In addition to [compliance](#) with all of the above, plantations must contribute to reduce the pressures on and promote the restoration and conservation of

## Three types of FSC certificates

### FSC forest management *certification*

Forest managers or owners who want to prove that their forest operation are socially beneficial and managed in an environmentally appropriate and economically viable manner can apply for [forest management \(FM\) certification](#).

#### FSC forest management *certification*



As forest managers or owners, *FSC certification* is a way of ensuring that your careful and long-term forest management is recognized. Certification is voluntary. It involves an inspection of the forest management by an independent organization to check that it passes the internationally agreed [FSC principles and criteria](#) of good forest management.

To sell material from an *FSC certified* forest with the FSC logo, a *forest manager* must also achieve [FSC chain of custody certification](#). The FSC label shows that it comes from a well-managed forest and enables you to pass on the benefits of *certification* to your customers.

FSC forest management *certification* also includes the *certification* of tree plantations. *Principle 10* of the [FSC Principles and Criteria](#) is dedicated to plantations. FSC is currently reviewing the [implementation of the FSC Principles and Criteria in plantations](#)

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### FSC chain of custody *certification*

FSC *chain of custody* traces [FSC certified](#) timber through the production chain.

[FSC chain of custody \(CoC\) certification](#) is for companies that manufacture, process or trade in timber or *non-timber forest products* and want to demonstrate to their customers that they use responsibly produced raw materials. *FSC chain of custody* helps companies to strengthen their sourcing policies and comply with public or private procurement policies where FSC is the preferred option.

#### FSC chain of custody *certification*



FSC *chain of custody* ([CoC](#)) tracks [FSC certified](#) material through the production process - from the forest to the consumer, including all successive stages of processing, transformation, manufacturing and distribution.

Only FSC CoC certified operations are allowed to label products with the *FSC trademarks*. The FSC label thus provides the link between responsible production and consumption and thereby enables the consumer to make socially and environmentally responsible purchasing decisions.

FSC CoC *certification* assists your business with improved market access in an increasingly environmentally aware sector. It demonstrates that you take the environmental concerns of your customers and staff seriously. Furthermore, CoC *certification* can be used to demonstrate *compliance* with public or private procurement policies and specifications such as the EU Ecolabel scheme for furniture, or the [U.S. Green Building Leadership in Energy and](#)

[Environmental Design \(LEED\)](#) rating system.

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## FSC Controlled Wood

Forest Management companies that comply with the five [FSC Controlled Wood criteria](#) will be able to supply FSC Controlled Wood to [FSC Chain of Custody](#) operations. FSC Controlled Wood supports the production of FSC Mixed Sources by providing [FSC certified](#) companies with tools to control the non-[FSC certified](#) wood in their product groups to avoid the wood produced in socially and environmentally most damaging ways.

### FSC Controlled Wood



Despite continued and sustained growth of the FSC market share, some shortages remain in the supply of FSC material. To allow manufacturers to provide FSC labeled products, FSC has introduced the 'FSC Mixed Sources' label which allows manufacturing companies to mix [FSC certified](#) material with non-certified material.

The non-certified portion has to comply with the FSC Controlled Wood standards which enables manufacturers and traders to avoid unacceptable timber and timber products. FSC Controlled Wood specifies the following five origins must be **avoided**:

1. Illegally harvested wood
2. Wood harvested in violation of traditional and civil rights
3. Wood harvested in forests in which High Conservation Values (areas particularly worth of protection) are threatened through management activities
4. Wood harvested from conversion of natural forests
5. Wood harvested from areas where genetically modified trees are planted

FSC Controlled Wood must be independently verified before it is mixed with [FSC certified](#) material to become part of a product that can be sold carrying the FSC label.

## 5 Steps towards FSC certification

FSC does not issue certificates itself. The *certification* process is carried out by independent organizations called *certification* bodies. These *certification* bodies assess forest management and *chain of custody* operations against FSC standards. Only FSC accredited *certification* bodies are authorized to issue FSC certificates.

1. Contact one or several [FSC accredited certification bodies](#). To give you a first estimate regarding cost and time needed the *certification body* will need some basic information about your operation. The *certification body* will provide you with information about the requirements for FSC *certification*.
2. You decide which *certification body* you would like to work with and sign an agreement with the *certification body*.
3. A *certification* audit takes place to assess your company's qualifications for *certification*.
4. The data collected at the audit is the basis of the audit report based on which the *certification body* makes the *certification* decision.
5. If the *certification* decision is positive, you receive a FSC [certificate](#). If the audit revealed that your operation is not yet in full *compliance* with FSC requirements, then you can go for further audits after you have implemented the changes suggested in the *certification* report.

FSC certificates are valid for five years. The FSC accredited [certification body](#) will conduct annual *surveillance* audits to verify your continued [compliance](#) with FSC *certification* requirements. These steps are the same independent on whether you want to become [forest management](#) or [chain of custody](#) certified

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