



FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

People Building Bridges toward Responsible Forestry

What is the Forest Stewardship Council?

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) promotes environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

It is a not-for-profit international organization that has developed a system for identifying and labeling products from well-managed forests. For over a decade, FSC has given people the choice to support responsible forest management.

In the 1980s, public concern and awareness about deforestation reached international levels. People wanted to know that the forest products they were buying were not contributing to the destruction of the world's forests. FSC was set up in 1993 as the world's first independent labeling scheme for forest products.

From a simple idea, FSC has grown to become a global success. Over 39 million hectares of forests are now FSC certified, and this area is increasing.

FSC is active in 66 countries on five continents. Our success comes from a not-so-secret recipe: help people come together to define and support responsible forest management in their country.



What is responsible forest management?

Responsible forest management means forests are managed in a way that protects water, soil and wildlife. It means communities, Indigenous Peoples, forest workers, industry, forest owners – anyone who is affected by what happens to forests – agree how the forest will be managed. And it means people can continue to work, live and earn an income from the forest.

Principles for Forest Stewardship

FSC has developed ten rules or principles, that define responsible forest management. These principles are global – they can apply to any forest around the world.

1. Compliance with laws and FSC principles
2. Tenure and use rights and responsibilities
3. Indigenous peoples' rights
4. Community relations and worker's rights
5. Benefits from the forest
6. Environmental impact
7. Management plan
8. Monitoring and assessment
9. Maintenance of high conservation value forests
10. Plantations

FSC Services

Accreditation:

Endorsing credible certification organizations

As part of our accreditation business program, FSC accredits certification bodies. These are the organizations that go to the forest or manufacturer, carry out the inspections and issue FSC certificates.

FSC independently verifies that certification bodies meet our requirements for certifying forest operations. Certification bodies interested in becoming accredited can apply to FSC International. They are evaluated and, upon meeting FSC's requirements, accredited. They are audited annually by the Accreditation Business Unit.

FSC Logo: Identifying FSC products

Products that come from FSC certified forests and are covered by a chain of custody certificate may be labeled with the trademark FSC logo. The logo identifies to consumers that the product comes from a well-managed forest and gives them the choice to support responsible forest management.

Certified forests and processing operations are monitored by FSC-accredited certification bodies to ensure the logo is used correctly. Certificate holders can use the FSC logo both on- and off-product.

Non-certificate holders can only use the logo off-product for promotion of FSC and FSC-certified products.

Specific guidelines and regulations about FSC trademark use can be found in the Trademark Policy Manual on the FSC website (<http://www.fscoax.org>).

Policy & Standards Framework: Ensuring consistent practices

FSC International provides the framework for the development of policies and standards in the FSC network. This framework ensures consistency in all FSC national and regional policies and standards.



Communication & Education:

Spreading the word about FSC

FSC International provides training and education to FSC National Initiatives, Regional Offices and working groups.

Our communication resources are available to the FSC network in both official FSC languages, English and Spanish.

Forest certification

FSC does not certify forest operations or manufacturers. This important step is done by FSC-accredited certification bodies. This maintains FSC's independence between our standards and requirements, and operations seeking certification.

Certificate Types

There are several types of FSC certificates available from certification bodies. Forest management certificates apply to operations managing forest land. Chain of custody certificates ensure that processing operations can track the path of certified forest products through production. This guarantees that a finished forest product comes from a FSC certified forest. Joint forest management-chain of custody certificates are also available. These three types of certificates can be for individual forest operations or for groups of forest operations.

Forest Stewardship Standards

Working together to define responsible forest management at the local level

FSC forest stewardship standards are developed through FSC National Initiatives. Forest stewardship standards define the key characteristics of responsible forest management within a country. They must address all of FSC's Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship.

National or sub-national working groups develop standards through an open, democratic process. The working groups are set up to include the views of all stakeholders, with an equal balance of social, environmental and economic interests.

Once written, forest stewardship standards are accredited by FSC and can be used for forest evaluations. FSC-accredited certification bodies use the standard to evaluate forests in that country. Forests that meet the requirements of the national standard can become FSC certified.

In countries that do not have accredited standards, certification bodies can use their own locally-adapted standard to evaluate and certify forest operations until a national standard is developed.



Participation: Giving people access, voice and vote

There are many ways to get involved in FSC:

Forest Stewardship Standards: Contact your National Initiative to become involved with the national and sub-national standards process. If there is no National Initiative in your country, contact FSC International to find out how you can promote FSC in your area.

Policies: All FSC policies are developed with the input of stakeholders, interested groups and individuals. To comment on draft policies or to join a Review Committee, visit the Policy and Standards section on our web site at: <http://www.fscoax.org>

Accreditation: Stakeholders are consulted during the accreditation process and prior to an accreditation decision. After an accreditation decision is made, there is a two-month advertised appeals period before an accreditation contract can be signed. All FSC-accredited certification

bodies must consult local stakeholders before awarding a forest management or chain of custody certificate.



Become an FSC member: Show your commitment to responsible forest management! Members set the vision of FSC, and have a voice in the direction FSC takes.

Buy FSC products: By buying FSC certified products you are supporting responsible forest management around the world. Look for the FSC logo whenever you buy forest products.

Why is FSC different from other forest product labels?

Credible: FSC is the world's first and most rigorous forest product labeling scheme. It is the only forest label supported by the World Wildlife Fund, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, and by major forest product retailers such as Home Depot, B&Q and IKEA.

Inclusive: FSC believes that respect for the views and needs of others is essential. Through open, multi-stakeholder processes, FSC has helped give access, voice and vote to people from every stratum of life.

Democratic: FSC is governed by its members, who meet every three years to vote on the direction of FSC. Equal voting weight is given to social, environmental and economic chambers and North and South (developed and developing) countries.

Global: FSC can be found in 66 countries all over the world. With headquarters in Bonn, Germany, four Regional Offices and 31 National Initiatives, FSC truly is a global network.

Local: The strength of FSC is at the local level. Through our standards development processes, people define and agree what responsible forestry means in their forests. The result is forest stewardship standards that are balanced, local and lasting.

THE FSC NETWORK: COVERING THE GLOBE

Our decentralized network of National Initiatives and Regional Offices covers 31 countries around the world

FSC National Initiatives

National Initiatives form the foundation of FSC's global network. A National Initiative can be a contact person, working group or permanent office promoting FSC in the country.

National Initiatives provide information, support and services to individuals and organizations interested in FSC, and support the development of national or sub-national standards.

FSC Nominated Agents

Nominated agents are individuals or organizations which play a fundamental role in the protection and monitoring of the FSC trademarks around the world. They issue, approve and control FSC logo use by non-certificate holders.

FSC Regional Offices

Regional Offices act as service centers for National Initiatives by providing training and coaching programs. They also support FSC processes in countries without National Initiatives.

There are currently two FSC Regional Offices: Europe and the Americas, and two more planned for Africa and Asia. National Initiatives in Canada, China, Russia and USA are also considered 'regions' because of their geographical size.

FSC International

Located in Bonn, Germany, FSC International coordinates the activities of the Regional Offices, and ensures consistent practices throughout the network.

