



Certification Schemes: FSC

The independent third-party certification of socially and environmentally sustainable forest management is an important market mechanism allowing producers and consumers to identify and purchase timber and non-timber forest products from well-managed forests.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a non-profit membership organisation open to all interested stakeholders at global, regional, national, local levels. It provides an equitable global framework for the accreditation of forest certification schemes and endorsement of national standards. A growing number of national standards and certification schemes recognise each other under the FSC umbrella and more are seeking FSC endorsement and accreditation. The endorsement of national forest management standards, based on FSC's global principles & criteria, ensures compatible global standards development reflecting balanced and equitable decision-making. The FSC principles & criteria require legal compliance, recognition of land use rights including traditional rights, resolution of social conflict related to the utilization of forest resources and identification, recognition and preservation of High Conservation Value Forests.

FSC currently enjoys the support of most national and international environmental NGOs, unions, social groups, indigenous peoples, private, communal and state forest owners, timber industries, scientists and numerous individuals in more than 60 countries worldwide. All decision making in the FSC and its national and regional initiatives is based on a comprehensive consensus between environmental, social and economic interests. It currently offers the only certification system for good forest management that is globally applicable and thus ensures equal access to global markets for forest products in all continents. The FSC is based on the certification of performance of forest management against measurable standards. Over the past years the FSC has proven, that, through great flexibility in its certification approaches (individual certification, group certification, etc.), FSC certification is accessible to large as well as small forest owners and private as well as industrial or governmental forest owners in all forest regions worldwide.

The FSC provides credible independent verification of good forest management and is currently the only certification scheme that ensures environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable management of forests. It provides credible tracking of forest products from forest to consumer through rigorous independent verification of the entire chain-of-custody. In contrast to other competing certification schemes, it provides a credible guarantee to forest industries, processing companies, retailers, consumers and others that forest products carrying the FSC label come from well managed forests.

WWF believes that the scheme offers the best way forward with respect to forest certification and that:

- The FSC logo currently is the only credible label for good forest management;
- The statutes and principles & criteria of the FSC provide a clear and comprehensive reflection of the intentions and agreements at the Rio summit in 1992 and are the basis for development of any standard setting and/or certification initiative worldwide;
- The standards of the FSC are the minimum requirement for any management of forests anywhere in the world;
- The certification requirements and procedures of the FSC are the minimum requirement for any credible certification of forest management and chain-of-custody
- The statutes, principles & criteria and accreditation system of the FSC are minimum requirements, and an appropriate framework for worldwide agreements recognising substantive equivalence between national standards or between certification systems

WWF will work with the forest industry, governments and NGOs to help the FSC by:

- Promoting new national standards and/or working groups recognised by the FSC
- Promoting the labelling of wood-production from FSC certified forests
- Supporting the FSC through forest and trade networks and development of community management protocols and use of High Conservation Value Forest tools
- Working with the FSC to develop forest certification amongst a diversity of global regions, forest types and land tenure systems



Position Paper

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