

The Forest Stewardship Council enables you to buy forest products of all kinds with confidence that you are not contributing to global forest destruction. FSC certified forests are managed to ensure long term timber supplies while protecting the environment and the lives of forest-dependent peoples. FSC certification can also cover non-timber forest products such as latex and foods. A system of Chain of Custody certification traces forest products through the supply chain to the end-consumer. Whenever you buy timber or timber products always look for the FSC logo.

Chain of Custody

What is the FSC?

FSC is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation. It is an association of members from environmental and social groups, the timber trade and the forestry profession, community forestry groups and other organisations from around the world. FSC runs a global forest certification system that includes two key aspects: Forest Management and Chain of Custody certification. This ensures that timber produced in certified forests has been traced from the forest to the end user.

Who needs chain of custody?

Manufacturers - timber traders - wholesalers - importers - builders - contractors - publishers - printers - in fact, all those whose customers want to advertise products as FSC certified or say that they have brought or used certified products (for example in an annual environment report).

There is a single simple rule: If you own the timber or wood product, then you will need to have Chain of Custody certification or the chain of custody will be broken and the next owner will not be able to say that the product is FSC certified.

Any company making, changing, re-labelling or repackaging products needs to be certified to do so and any company wishing to apply any of the FSC trademarks (our name, our acronym or our logo) to products or their packaging needs to be certified.

What are the benefits of certification?

Provide added value to your product, giving it a verifiable social and environmental quality.

Demonstrate that you take the environmental concerns of your customers and staff seriously.

Assist with continued market access in an increasingly environmentally aware sector.

Certification and labelling under the FSC

For you to be sure that a piece of wood comes from a well-managed forest, you need to know two things:

1. that the forest of origin can be proven to be managed responsibly
2. that the piece of wood can be guaranteed to come from a certified forest.

The FSC system provides both these elements: forest certification and chain of custody control.

Forest certification involves an inspection of the forest management by an independent organisation, such as the Soil Association or SGS Qualifor, to check that it complies with FSC's internationally agreed Principles and Criteria of good forest management. Requirements include compliance with national legislation, respect for local people's rights, ecological integrity, economic viability, and the need for adequate planning and monitoring of operations.

Chain of custody control ensures that whichever of the FSC labels the product is delivering, you can be sure that the company has met the FSC requirements. Through the chain of custody the FSC system delivers 3 distinct labels: FSC 100%, FSC Mixed Sources and FSC Recycled.

FSC 100%

Requires that the timber is marked and/or separated from uncertified timber through all processing stages from the forest to the retail shelf. FSC 100% products contain only material from FSC certified forests.

FSC Mixed Sources

Requires that the product either contains a verifiable amount of FSC fibre, or for every product line sold as FSC mixed enough raw materials have been purchased as FSC certified. FSC Mixed Sources