



FSC UK[®] Strategic Plan

2021 - 2024

Summary Document



FSC UK Strategic Plan

The FSC UK 2021-2024 strategic plan builds on our previous three-year plans and is developed in the context of FSC's global vision and mission and our own charitable objectives. As we seek to align ourselves as "One FSC" the strategic priorities for FSC UK increasingly reflect our global objectives.

Whilst we will always need to react to new challenges and opportunities, we need to have clarity in terms of our overarching priorities and to translate these priorities into objectives, deliverables and key performance indicators.

FSC's Mission

Forests For All Forever.

The Forest Stewardship Council® AC shall promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC's 2050 Vision

Resilient forests sustain life on Earth.

A new forest paradigm is realised, where the true value of forests is recognised and fully incorporated into society worldwide.

FSC's Values

Embrace Diversity - Conserve Nature - Empower People – Realise Rights.

FSC's Code of Conduct builds on these values to provide guidance for behaviour and actions in all FSC work settings.



FSC UK's Charitable Objectives

The Charity's objects (the Objects) are to promote for the benefit of the public the protection and conservation of the world's forests. In particular, but not exclusively, by:

- (1) raising awareness of the value of responsibly managed forests*
- (2) promoting and supporting a programme of voluntary forest management certification and chain of custody certification*
- (3) developing consensus around standards for good forest management;*
- (4) increasing public awareness about independent forest certification*

The Charity works to promote the FSC system in the UK by:

- Raising awareness of the value of responsibly managed forests¹
- Supporting certificate holders and retailers to maximise the market for FSC products and thus increase the demand for certified forests
- Encouraging maximum participation from the UK in FSC's global objectives
- Protecting the integrity of the FSC logo

¹which includes providing an FSC approved national forest stewardship standard and other woodland related guidance

Priorities for FSC UK

The following priorities are proposed for 2021-24:

- Promote the value of forests and demonstrate the impact and benefits of FSC
- Support FSC globally and encourage stakeholder engagement to ensure that the FSC system is fit for purpose, accessible, relevant and trusted
- Improve standards for forest management in the UK for all sizes and types of forest
- Support UK based licence holders to maximise the demand for FSC products
- Promote the FSC system, FSC certification and the specification of FSC-certified products

These strategic priorities are underpinned by our work to:

- Ensure that FSC UK pursues its objectives as a registered charity, meets its legal and charitable obligations and operates as a professional organisation that values its people.



Promote the value of forests and demonstrate the impact/benefits of FSC

Forests play a vital role in enabling and maintaining life and help to mitigate global challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss. At the same time, forest products are increasingly important as renewable materials that can be a main factor in enabling the bio-based and circular economy which the world needs to develop.

FSC's vision is that the true value of forests is recognised and fully incorporated into society worldwide. Forest management certification and ecosystem services verification provide tools to deliver this. We should continue to promote FSC certification and demonstrate the positive impacts on our forests whilst also working with others to develop additional tools and solutions.

UK stakeholders are engaged in the development, evaluation and use of FSC forest solutions for conservation, restoration and sustainable use.

It is important that UK views are represented as FSC seeks to develop solutions on issues such as landscape-scale approaches and sustainable intensification. Whilst the consultations may be undertaken by FSC International, there is a role for FSC UK in promoting the opportunities to engage on these subjects.

The value of forests and the role of certification are recognised in Government policies including those related to meeting commitments to climate change mitigation and adaptation under the Paris Agreement.

FSC UK needs to engage with the UK and devolved Governments to promote the role of FSC certification in assuring responsible land management and of Ecosystem Services verification in the delivery of public goods. We also need to be actively engaged in discussions on issues such as afforestation, climate mitigation and Environmental Land Management.

FSC certification and Ecosystem Services verification are promoted to forest owners and managers.

Convincing forest owners and managers of the importance and benefits of certification remains a key part of delivering FSC's mission. We can now broaden our conversations with owners and managers thanks to FSC's approach to Ecosystem Services verification.

The positive impact of FSC certification and the UK demand for FSC certified products and services is measured and communicated.

FSC's Global Strategy highlights the need to demonstrate the value and benefits of forest stewardship. The UK is a strong market country and we need to better understand and quantify the impact of UK demand for certified products, as well as the impacts of FSC certification at the forest level.



Support FSC globally and encourage stakeholder engagement to ensure that the FSC system is fit for purpose, accessible, relevant and trusted

The Global Strategy calls for streamlined policies and standards while ensuring credibility. FSC is widely recognised as the most credible forest certification scheme and maintaining this credibility is fundamental to the scheme's success. As a long-established National Office, FSC UK is well placed to support FSC as it works to deliver a credible, fit for purpose system, providing input on the potential implications of proposed activities and encouraging stakeholders to engage as appropriate as well as working to maintain FSC's integrity and credibility in the UK.

FSC's policies and standards are fit for purpose, accessible, relevant, trusted and outcome oriented.

As FSC seeks to streamline policies and standards towards outcome orientation, FSC UK is well placed to highlight any technical issues and the potential impacts on UK stakeholders of changes to the normative framework. We can also alert colleagues at FSC International of issues with current standards, to inform future interpretations, directives and standard revisions.

UK stakeholders are encouraged to participate in all aspects of FSC development including revision of normative documents.

The FSC system is under constant development and FSC UK plays a crucial role in representing UK stakeholder views and passing on information regarding new projects and changes to normative documents. There is a risk that, due to stakeholder fatigue, direct participation in FSC consultation processes is relatively low. FSC UK will aim to encourage participation and to garner input through other means, including stakeholder events.

Systems are in place to minimise threats to FSC's integrity and credibility.

As the FSC system grows, the threats to its integrity also increase and it is vital that any such threats are identified and mitigating measures taken. FSC UK has a role to play in minimising the threats to our system and ensuring that consumers, businesses and government recognise FSC as a credible scheme.

FSC is recognised as the most credible scheme by environmental and social NGOs in the UK and positively assessed in external evaluations of certification schemes.

The support of environmental and social NGOs gives reassurance to our stakeholders and their continued engagement is fundamental to our success as a scheme that promotes environmentally appropriate and socially beneficial, as well as economically viable, management of the world's forests. It is important that FSC UK reaffirms the support of member NGOs and identifies projects suitable for collaboration. FSC also needs to perform well in external assessments of certification schemes.

FSC has an engaged and growing membership in the UK.

As a member-based organisation, FSC is dependent on robust, balanced representation from the three chambers. Membership has increased in recent years in the UK but we need to attract new members, particularly from the social and environmental chambers, which are currently under-represented in comparison to our economic chamber. A vibrant and engaged membership, balanced across its three chambers, can help drive FSC forward nationally and internationally.



Improve standards for forest management in the UK for all sizes and types of forest

It is a fundamental requirement, in terms of both FSC UK's charitable objectives and our role as an accredited National Office, that we have an approved national forest stewardship standard. We need to identify mechanisms to reduce the financial and administrative burden on smallholders whilst ensuring that FSC's high forestry standards are maintained. We also have a wider role to play in promoting better forest stewardship in all forests.

An approved UK national forest stewardship standard is maintained.

Maintaining a national forest stewardship standard is the main way we ensure FSC certification is workable and meaningful in the UK. Regularly revising the standard through engagement with UK stakeholders is key to keeping it relevant and making sure that our pursuit of FSC's mission leads to real benefits for the nation's forests and people.

Smallholder access to forest management certification in the UK is improved, and smallholders are supported to improve the management of their woodlands.

Access to certification can be challenging for owners and managers of smaller woodlands, especially if they are not commercially motivated and struggle to justify the costs of certification. We want to explore a range of options to try to make sure that those who want to access certification can, but we also recognise that certification might not work for everyone and that we must consider other ways of supporting improvements in the management of small woods.

Forest owners and managers are supported to improve the management of their forests.

Even for owners and managers of larger forests, there might be challenges in meeting FSC standards. We are open to providing whatever support we can to help owners and managers reach the highest possible standards of responsible forest management.



Support UK based licence holders to maximise the demand for FSC products

Supporting certificate holders and retailers to maximise the market for FSC products is stated as one of the means by which we meet our charitable objectives.

Approximately 5% of all Chain of Custody certificates and 10% of promotional licence holders are in the UK. It is essential that the relationship we have with our licence holders is proactively managed and that we support those companies committed to the FSC system.

All licence holders receive support, updates and advice on the FSC normative framework.

The FSC UK advisory service is widely utilised by licence holders, providing guidance on a range of FSC related questions. Through our direct contact with licence holders, we hope to further promote this service and foster closer relationships. Online training material is developed, updated and made freely available to licence holders. We will also support licence holders through online events and bespoke training.

Licence holders use the FSC trademarks correctly and are encouraged to maximise their promotion of FSC.

Correct use of FSC trademarks both on and off product helps to improve levels of consumer awareness and understanding to drive market demand. Licence holders will be encouraged to better promote their FSC status and FSC certified products and to engage in activities or events that support this.

Unauthorised use of the FSC trademarks is addressed to ensure those working within the FSC system benefit appropriately from the market differentiation.

With the growing recognition of the FSC logo in the UK, there is an associated growth in the number of companies seeking to benefit from this without holding certification or a trademark licence. This directly undermines the credibility of the system and acts as a disincentive for those operating within the system and abiding by our strict trademark standards. By becoming more proactive in our fight against trademark infringements and misuse we not only reduce the risk of inaccurate claims, we can also seek to bring companies into the system.



Promote the FSC system, FSC certification and the specification of FSC certified products

As a strong market country, the UK can have a significant impact on uptake on FSC certification of forests globally by driving demand for certification and certified products throughout the supply chain. Raising public awareness of FSC and, in turn, driving consumer demand is one aspect of this but FSC UK recognises that this can be best achieved in conjunction with businesses and NGOs. In many cases, it is the procurement policies of retailers and other businesses and organisations that creates the demand rather than the consumer and emphasis will be placed on this B2B work.

FSC is accurately portrayed in the media and by other organisations.

FSC owes it to its members and other stakeholders to position itself as the most credible forest certification scheme and to highlight its unique benefits. FSC UK needs to take full advantage of opportunities to reaffirm this position and to promote those committed to our system and to respond accordingly to any negative publicity. Media enquiries responded to, liaising with FSC International and the wider FSC Network as appropriate.

There is a measurable increase in uptake of licences (FM/COC/PLH) in the UK.

Certificate numbers in the UK have remained fairly stable in recent years, with promotional licences being the greatest area of growth. Interest in FSC is high and we will continue to support those wishing to engage with the FSC system.

Procurers of forest-based products are encouraged to specify FSC-certified products and advised how to do so correctly.

Demand for certified products is driven by many different sectors, from retailers and brands to the construction industry and procurers of printed material. We are aware of many businesses and organisations that support FSC and/or wish to promote their environmental credentials but may not be currently specifying FSC certified materials. We will support and encourage those in a position to do so, including those in the public sector, to specify FSC certified materials and we will highlight the benefits of doing so.

Consumers in the UK recognise the FSC logo, understand what it means and choose FSC certified products over alternatives.

We will measure consumer recognition and understanding of the FSC logo and their purchase preference in relation to FSC certified products. We will work with key consumer-facing influencers and amplifiers to ensure that they communicate accurately about FSC and utilise the FSC system fully and appropriately, disseminating the FSC message and demonstrating best practice.

Emerging market opportunities for Ecosystem Services are identified and developed into robust business models for responsible forest management.

There is growing interest in sustainable investments and payments for protecting and restoring ecosystems. The Ecosystem Services Procedure can provide access to these market opportunities for forest managers, and there is a role for FSC UK to identify and promote these.

