

**FSC<sup>®</sup> FOR FURNITURE**



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## Explanatory Notes

This document is intended to be used as an introduction to the Forest Stewardship Council for organisations who are FSC® certified and for those who are considering becoming FSC certified, specifying FSC-certified furniture or working on behalf of an FSC-certified organisation.

For latest figures on FSC certificates and presence worldwide, please visit the FSC International website at <https://fsc.org>

FSC UK is a registered charity working to promote FSC in the UK.  
FSC UK can provide advice and guidance of the FSC system and standards.

**<https://uk.fsc.org> 01686 413916 [info@fsc-uk.org](mailto:info@fsc-uk.org)**



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## ABOUT FSC

For 30 years, FSC's work in developing, defining and implementing rigorous certification standards has earned us the highest global reputation in forest management. We set standards for environmentally, socially and economically responsible forest management. We are a credible and trusted international, non-governmental organisation with a powerful track record in driving responsible management of the world's forests.



## WE STAND FOR FORESTS

As the leader in sustainable forestry, FSC is trusted by NGOs, businesses, and consumers worldwide to protect healthy, resilient forests for all, forever.

We support this through a global forest certification system that awards forest management and chain of custody certificates. In practice, this means that when a product or packaging bears the FSC label, customers are assured that it has been made with materials that support responsible forestry.

FSC forest management standards are developed through broad stakeholder engagement and set requirements for responsible forest management. Responsible forest management, as promoted by FSC, maintains and enhances biodiversity and ecological processes. It aims to protect the rights of workers, communities, and Indigenous Peoples while respecting the economic viability of forest management operations. By offering credible, simple ways for more people to make ethical choices, we are helping societies recognise the value of forests for a sustainable future.

## OUR 2050 VISION

### Resilient Forests Sustain Life of Earth

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

## OUR MISSION

### Forests For All Forever

FSC will promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world forests.

## HOW WE DO IT

FSC provides an internationally recognised global certification scheme that helps ensure socially, economically, and environmentally responsible management of the world's forests. Since its foundation in 1994, FSC has grown to become the world's most respected and widespread forest certification system.





**FSC FOR FURNITURE**

## FORESTS FOR FURNITURE AND THE FUTURE

Wooden furniture is a prominent feature in many homes, offices, and outdoor spaces. Its popularity is due to wood being versatile and robust, and the various tree species provide a style for every taste, from traditional oak to rich mahogany. Although the furniture industry is not the primary cause of deforestation, there is still a risk that wood used for furniture may be from illegal or unsustainable sources. Illegal logging can cause deforestation, species loss and reduced income for producer countries. Poor forestry practices threaten not only the world's forests and the wildlife and people that depend on them, but also business and brand reputation. More than half of people in the UK (55%) say it is important to them that their furniture is made sustainably.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the tree species used for furniture in the UK are imported. Tracing materials back to the forest they came from is complex as supply chains are difficult to follow. This can make it challenging to determine whether wood used for furniture has been responsibly sourced.

The FSC certification system can help to secure a long-term source of wood and other forest-based products. Worldwide, there are more than 10,000 FSC-certified companies in the indoor furniture sector, over 500 of which are based in the UK. As consumers and businesses seek to reduce their impact on the environment, demand for sustainable products is rapidly growing. FSC can help you meet this demand. FSC certification demonstrates your commitment to responsible forest management, which benefits our forests and

your business; 79% of UK consumers would prefer to buy a product bearing the FSC label, compared to one without.<sup>2</sup>

Furniture can carry the FSC label and be promoted as FSC certified if it is produced using FSC-certified materials under a valid FSC chain of custody certificate. The FSC label can enhance your product and set your brand apart from competitors. This publication aims to highlight the benefits that FSC can bring to your business and your clients, and outlines some of the services and support we offer.

We want to work with you to help ensure that we have *Forests For All Forever*.

<sup>1</sup> Furniture News consumer survey conducted (31/01/2024 - 02/02/2024) in United Kingdom by Savanta, a sample of 1000 UK adults were surveyed.

<sup>2</sup> FSC UK Consumer Survey 2024 conducted (21/03/2024 - 25/03/2024) in United Kingdom by Kantar via OnLineBus, a sample of 1,279 UK adults aged 16+ were interviewed.



*“James Burleigh hold FSC certification as we recognise our responsibility as a furniture manufacturer to contribute towards the sustainability of the world’s forests. In addition, by holding certification we are able to help our corporate customers and public institutions obtain LEED and SKA building accreditation.”*

**James Burleigh,  
James Burleigh Ltd**

*“Our furniture report demonstrated that 68% of the UK furniture retailers we assessed did not have any policies regarding responsible timber sourcing. Our 2019 Timber Scorecard showed that only 19% of the furniture companies assessed claimed to source more than 50% of their timber products from certified sources.*

*Illegal logging is still one of the major drivers of deforestation and habitat degradation, but sustainable forest practices can ensure production while securing the long-term survival of wildlife and ecosystem services. We call for bold action from businesses to commit to responsible sourcing policies and urgently act to implement them.”*

**James Gordon,  
Chief Forests Adviser, WWF-UK**



# DRIVING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS

FSC has provision for organisations of different sizes to gain certification, including an option for groups of smaller businesses to operate under one certificate. We also support certificate holders of all sizes with a range of tools and services that enable them to promote their commitment to responsible forest management.

We have the highest standards, giving users the strongest assurance that FSC-certified forests are being managed responsibly. The FSC Principles and Criteria outline the essential elements of environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable forest management.



## FSC CERTIFICATION

### Forest management certification

Our forest management certification is awarded to organisations that manage their forest operations in socially, environmentally and economically responsible ways. As part of the certification process, an organisation's current management undergoes an in-depth review to check for any areas of non-conformity with FSC's standards. A certificate holder's compliance is checked by independent, FSC-accredited certification bodies conducting regular audits.

The management of both natural and plantation forests falls under forest management certification. We also offer streamlined certification procedures for small or low-intensity managed forests for small-scale producers.

### Chain of custody certification

Chain of custody certification applies to manufacturers, processors and traders of FSC-certified forest products. It ensures that FSC materials and products have been checked at every stage of processing, so customers purchasing products sold with FSC claims can be confident that they are genuinely FSC certified. Any company involved in the processing or transformation of FSC-certified products (e.g. manufacturing, repackaging, pack-splitting, relabelling, cutting to size or adding other forest-based components to the product) must be FSC certified in order to apply an FSC label to their products and/or sell them with an FSC claim.

### Promotional trademark licence

Organisations that do not need chain of custody certification may be eligible for an FSC promotional trademark licence to authorise them to use the registered trademarks in promotional materials.

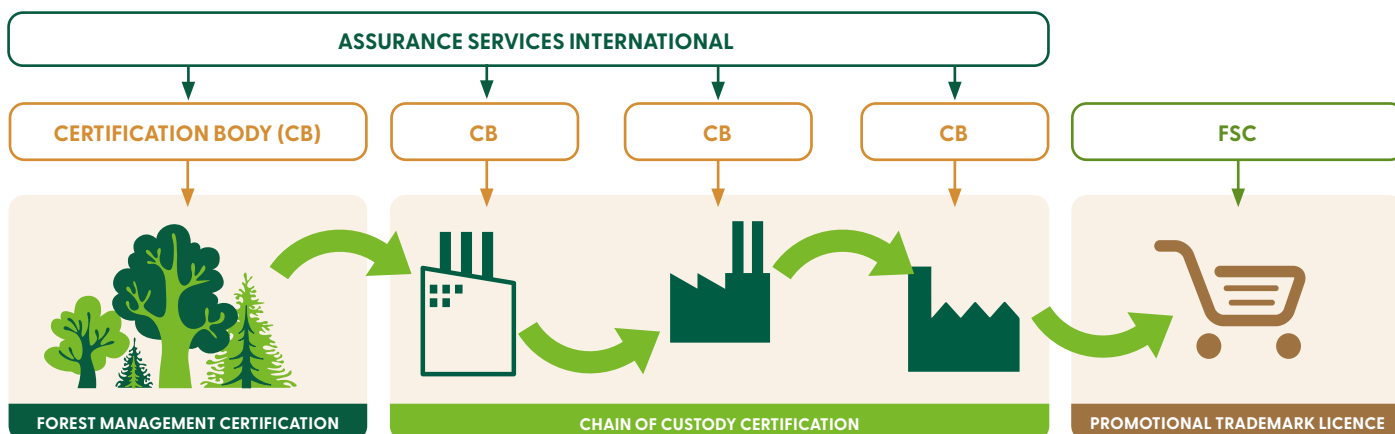
### Principles for responsible forest management

Our 10 Principles include complying with relevant laws, respecting the rights of workers and Indigenous Peoples, improving community relations, protecting workers' health and safety, minimising negative environmental impacts, maintaining high conservation values, and implementing ecologically and socially appropriate forest management and restoration techniques.

Each Principle is supported by several criteria that provide a way of determining whether the principle has been met in practice.



© FSC Peru



# REASONS TO CHOOSE FSC®



© FSC UK / Max More

## CONSISTENT AND ROBUST

All FSC-certified forests are managed in line with the same global principles, and our certificate holders and certification bodies are accountable and independently audited



© FSC AC UK / Geoff Howe

## CREDIBLE AND TRUSTED

We consult stakeholders on changes to our standards, have a dispute resolution process and enjoy broad NGO support.

## INNOVATIVE AND AMBITIOUS

We are the pioneers of forest certification and we continue to innovate, whether that means certification in new sectors or using more efficient, digital tools.



© FSC

## DEMOCRATIC AND INCLUSIVE

We are governed by more than 1,000 members and actively support Indigenous Peoples' rights.

## GLOBAL AND RECOGNISED

We operate globally, our iconic logo is recognised, and we help governments and organisations to meet agreed sourcing standards.



Apple Jai / Creative Commons



*"We believe equipment for children should be simple, durable, beautiful and made in a way that preserves the world they will inherit. That is why we have chosen FSC-certified solid birch as the perfect material for our products."*

**Sam Hochstetler,**  
**Sustainability Manager,**  
**Community Playthings**





**FSC FOR FURNITURE**

## FSC CAN SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS

**68%**

of consumers in the UK say it is important to them to have reassurance that the forest products they buy have been sourced responsibly.<sup>1</sup>



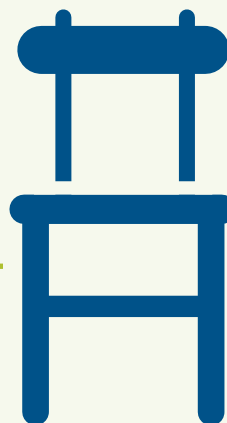
**CONSUMER**

**79%**

of people in the UK recognise the FSC logo.<sup>1</sup>

**67%**

of people in the UK say they would have a more positive opinion of a brand or retailer if they saw the FSC label on their products.<sup>1</sup>



**BRAND / RETAILER  
PROMOTIONAL TRADEMARK  
LICENCE / CHAIN OF CUSTODY  
CERTIFICATION**

**79%**

of UK consumers would prefer to choose a product bearing the FSC logo compared to one without.<sup>1</sup>

**78%**

of retailers and non-manufacturers agree FSC certification helps to create a positive corporate image.<sup>2</sup>

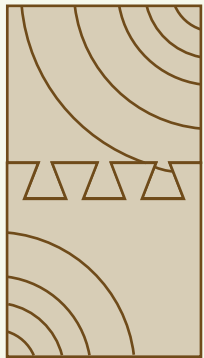
Certificate holders include improved brand image and market access as some of the most valuable benefits of being FSC certified.<sup>2</sup>



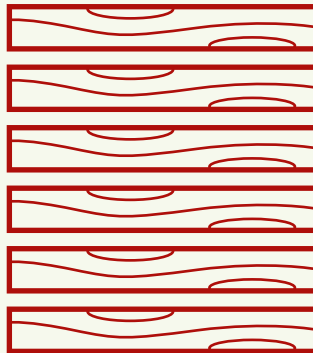


**77%**

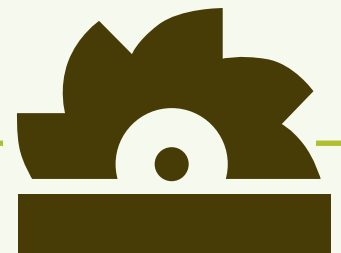
of certificate holders  
in the furniture  
sector believe that  
FSC certification is  
important.<sup>2</sup>



**MANUFACTURER**  
CHAIN OF CUSTODY  
CERTIFICATION



**DISTRIBUTOR**  
CHAIN OF CUSTODY  
CERTIFICATION



**MILL**  
CHAIN OF CUSTODY  
CERTIFICATION

**2/3**

of chain of  
custody certificate  
holders expect the  
importance of FSC  
to increase.<sup>2</sup>

**64%**

of certificate holders  
in the furniture sector  
believe that the  
importance of FSC-  
certification in the  
sector will increase.<sup>2</sup>

## References

<sup>1</sup> FSC UK Consumer Survey 2024

<sup>2</sup> FSC Global Market Survey 2022 conducted by Horváth & Partners via online survey  
(22/02/22 to 22/03/2022)

## THE FSC LABELS EXPLAINED

It is possible for both a product and its packaging to be FSC certified e.g. wooden furniture packed in a cardboard box.

Alternatively, it may be that an FSC-certified product is packed in uncertified packaging or vice versa; in cases such as these it must be made clear to which element the FSC label refers. FSC labels can include a range of product types, including 'wood', 'bamboo', 'rattan' and 'packaging'. The FSC label can be applied to products and/or packaging produced using FSC-certified materials under a valid FSC chain of custody certificate.

The FSC logo, the name Forest Stewardship Council and the abbreviation FSC are all registered trademarks. It is the responsibility of the relevant FSC-certified company to ensure that the trademarks are used correctly.

Appropriate approval should be sought for all uses of the FSC trademarks.

An FSC-certified company will have access details for the FSC Trademark Portal where they can download labels featuring their own unique licence code, along with the FSC trademarks for promotional use. If you are creating artwork on behalf of an FSC-certified company, they may provide 'for placement only' graphics to incorporate into your designs.

There is a provision within the FSC standards whereby two FSC-certified organisations can enter into an agreement which allows the supplier to label products with the buyer's FSC licence code. The products to be labelled need to be included in the certificate scope of both organisations. For full details, please refer to FSC-STD-50-001.



**Moebius loop:** The use of the Moebius loop is optional for FSC Mix and FSC Recycled labels. The percentage figure reflects the post- and pre-consumer reclaimed material content.

**Registered trademark symbol:** Either ® or ™ depending on the registration status in the country/countries where the products are to be distributed.

**FSC logo:** Also referred to as the checkmark and tree logo.

**FSC website address:** For further information about FSC.

**Label title:** See page 15 for more information about the 3 FSC labels.

**Product type:** Describes the certified material or content to which the label relates.

**Label text:** Set text used to describe the FSC label title.

**FSC licence code:** Identification code issued to organisations that have licence to use the FSC trademarks. This code can be used to identify the organisation that applied the label. A certified organisation can request that their FSC-certified supplier apply an FSC label which features their own FSC licence code.



## FSC 100%

All of the timber or fibre in the product comes from an FSC-certified forest. FSC-certified forests are managed with consideration for people, wildlife and the environment. They are independently audited to meet FSC's Principles and Criteria for Forest Management. FSC 100% products are processed using the FSC transfer system.



## FSC MIX

The timber or fibre in an FSC Mix product is a mixture of some/all of the following:

- Virgin timber/fibre from an FSC-certified forest
- Reclaimed/recycled timber/fibre
- Virgin timber/fibre from other controlled sources (Controlled Wood\*).

\*Controlled Wood is material which has been assessed using the relevant FSC standards as being at low risk of coming from the following unacceptable sources:

- Illegally logged
- Harvested in violation of traditional or civil rights
- Harvested in forests in which high conservation values are threatened by management activities
- Harvested in forests being converted to plantations or non-forest uses
- From forests in which genetically modified trees are planted

When produced under the FSC percentage system, the product must contain a minimum of 70% FSC-certified wood/fibre and/or recycled input, and the balance must be Controlled Wood. If the product is produced under the FSC credit system, there is no minimum FSC input; however, only a proportion of products can be labelled and/or promoted as FSC certified. Again, the balance must be Controlled Wood.



## FSC RECYCLED

All timber or fibre must be pre-consumer or post-consumer reclaimed. For wood products produced under the FSC percentage system, a minimum of 70% of the inputs must be post-consumer reclaimed; there is no threshold for paper products, but all inputs must be verified as reclaimed. FSC Recycled products can also be produced under the FSC credit or transfer systems.



**FSC FOR FURNITURE**

## WHO NEEDS FSC CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION?

Any company involved in the processing or transformation of FSC-certified products (e.g. manufacturing, repackaging, pack-splitting, relabelling, cutting to size or adding other forest based components to the product) must be FSC certified in order to apply an FSC label to their products and/or sell them with an FSC claim in sales documents.

Any change of ownership in the supply chain requires FSC chain of custody certification if the receiving organisation wants to make an FSC claim about their products. Organisations that do not take legal ownership of FSC-certified products (e.g. transport, sales agents) do not normally need chain of custody certification.

An FSC-certified organisation may outsource activities within the scope of its certificate to FSC-certified and/or non-FSC-certified contractors provided that all FSC chain of custody requirements are met. An outsourcing agreement must be held with each contractor and the FSC-certified organisation must maintain legal ownership of all materials during outsourcing.

*"Blue Line recognised in 1998 that there was an issue with illegal logging and as soon as we discovered FSC we realised that by proving that our timber content was not only legal, but also from responsibly run forests, that we needed to be part of it, both from a moral and a commercial point of view! We are proud that we were the first company in our trade in Europe and the second in the world to achieve chain of custody, and that we achieved it on all ranges of furniture. FSC certification has raised our profile within our industry and outside it and has definitely added clients to our portfolio, we are also very happy that we can offer our clients the assurance of great quality, value and conscience-free purchase. It is our belief that offering FSC-certified furniture is the future for the industry."*

**Alan Marshall,**  
**Managing Director,**  
**BlueLine Office Furniture**





## BENEFITS OF FSC CERTIFICATION

- Enhance public image
- Meet customer expectations
- Improve market access
- Use the FSC trademarks and supplementary marketing assets
- Comply with Government Procurement Policy
- Meet Corporate Social Responsibility commitments.





## FOR FURNITURE

### GETTING FSC CERTIFIED

FSC chain of custody certification ensures that FSC-certified materials and products have been checked at every stage of processing, so customers purchasing products sold with FSC claims can be confident that they are genuinely FSC certified.

#### STEPS TO BECOMING FSC CERTIFIED

- Step 1** Contact FSC-accredited certification bodies (and/or small business group schemes if appropriate) to request quotes.
- Step 2** Submit a certification application to the FSC certification body of your choice.
- Step 3** Ensure that an appropriate chain of custody management system is in place, in line with the requirements of FSC-STD-40-004.
- Step 4** Undergo an on-site audit by your chosen certification body.
- Step 5** Gain certification and receive an FSC certificate code (XXX-COC-000000) and an FSC trademark licence code (FSC®C000000).

*"The use of FSC-certified timber in the manufacture of our products is central to our vision to reduce our impact on the planet whilst creating sustainable value for our customers. We are proud to hold our own chain of custody certificate which demonstrates our commitment to sourcing our timber with integrity."*

**Michelle Ackers,**  
**Marketing Manager,**  
**Be Modern Ltd**



*"As our vision is to be world leaders in sustainable mattress and comfort innovation, it is essential we use FSC-certified wood in all of our products. Our customers can rest easy knowing that all wood in our headboards and divan bases is sustainably sourced"*

**Rafal Slimak,  
Purchasing Manager,  
Harrison Spinks**





**FSC FOR FURNITURE**

## **SPECIFYING FSC-CERTIFIED FURNITURE**

### **Using an FSC-certified furniture supplier**

Furniture can be sold as FSC certified, and labelled as such, if it is produced under a valid chain of custody certificate. If your supplier is FSC certified and sourcing the FSC-certified materials on your behalf, they will be able to issue an FSC claim for the furniture they are producing for you. To search for and verify FSC certificates you can use the FSC Public Certificate Search database: <https://search.fsc.org>

### **To ensure your furniture is FSC certified and carries an FSC label you should:**

- Use an FSC-certified furniture supplier
- Specify FSC-certified materials from the outset and request that your supplier apply the appropriate FSC label

### **Why is FSC specification and labelling important?**

Specifying FSC-certified materials and asking your furniture supplier to apply an FSC label gives your customers the assurance that your business has chosen to source responsibly. It can also enhance your Corporate Social Responsibility policy and increase credibility with stakeholders, governments, NGOs, and the general public. An FSC-certified furniture supplier can issue an invoice which will include the FSC claim(s) and their FSC certificate code. This is your assurance that you have purchased FSC-certified furniture.

### **Sourcing and risk mitigation**

The integrity of FSC supply chains is core to everything we do. As FSC grows and the number of chain of custody certificate holders increases, so does the potential risk of non-compliance. We take this seriously and investigate thoroughly using certification audit data, manual transaction verification, fibre testing and other methods.







© Thors Design



**FOR FURNITURE**

## PROMOTING FSC-CERTIFIED FURNITURE

Brands and retailers who buy finished furniture, labelled as FSC, from an FSC-certified company, may apply for a promotional trademark licence to use the FSC trademarks in promotional materials and marketing campaigns.

By signing an FSC promotional trademark licence agreement, companies can create their own unique and powerful point-of-sale materials, signalling their commitment to responsible forest management.

Use of the FSC trademarks via a promotional trademark licence can also help brands to

enhance the transparency of their supply chains and communicate their corporate responsibility.

Some brands and retailers choose to hold their own FSC chain of custody certification in order that the licence code (within the FSC label applied to their products) links back to themselves rather than their supplier.

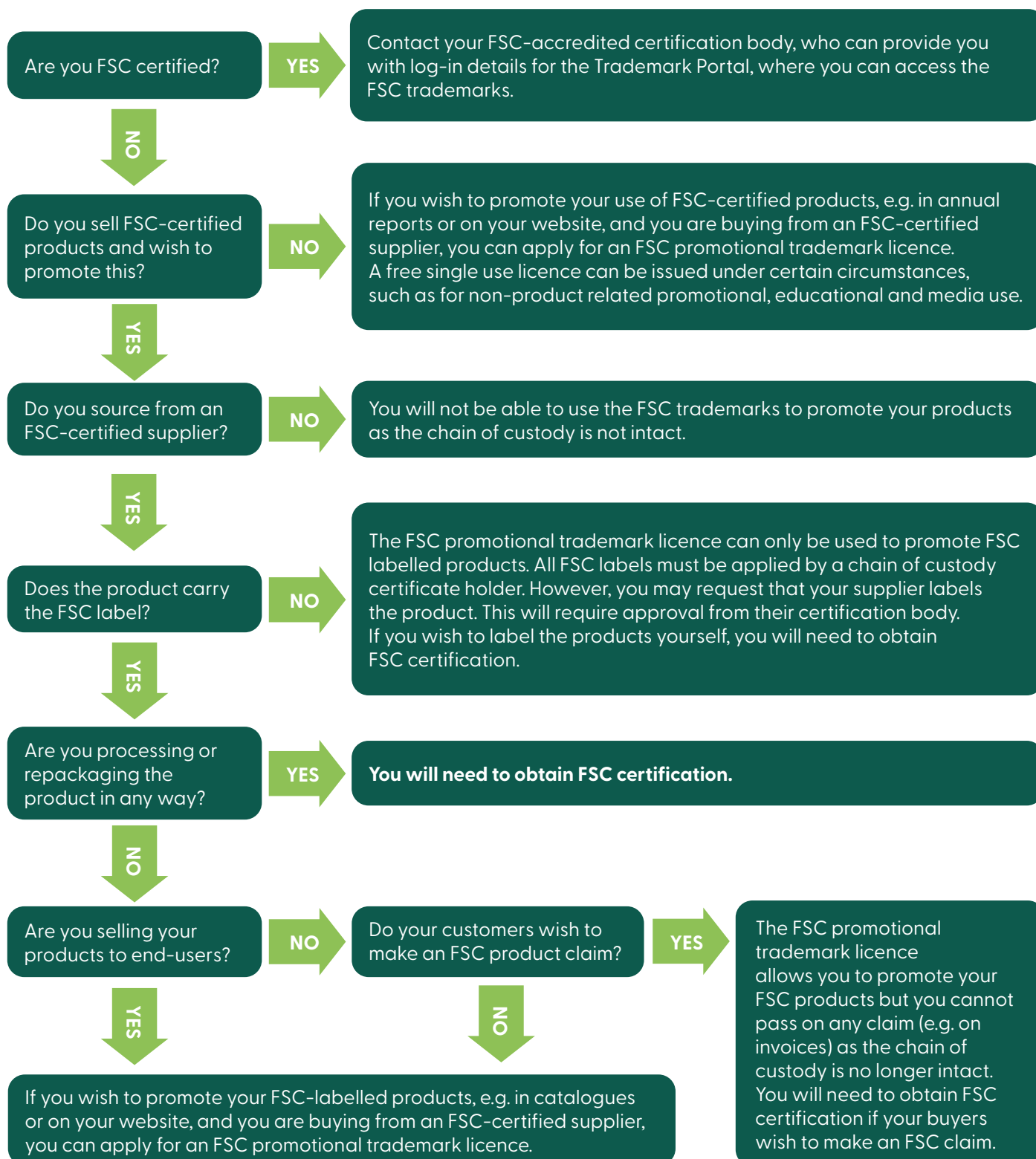
In order to find out whether you are eligible to hold an FSC promotional trademark licence, please contact FSC UK, the trademark service provider for the UK: [info@fsc-uk.org](mailto:info@fsc-uk.org)



© FSC International

## USING THE FSC TRADEMARKS

The name Forest Stewardship Council, the abbreviation FSC and the FSC logo are all registered trademarks, and there are strict controls on their use.







**FSC FOR FURNITURE**

## NOT JUST WOOD

Forests produce more than just the archetypal forest materials: wood and paper. FSC certification can apply to a vast array of forest products including bamboo, textiles, rubber, cork and rattan.

**Natural rubber** comes from the sap of the rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*), native to the Amazon Basin. Unlike synthetic rubber, which is a petroleum product, natural rubber is a renewable resource. Though it has traditionally been harvested from rubber trees scattered through the rainforests of South America, most natural rubber now comes from plantations in other regions, primarily South and Southeast Asia.

Natural rubber is a key global commodity and best practices are crucial for ensuring a sustainable supply in long term. As international demand for natural rubber increases, millions of rubber trees are being planted across the tropics (a potential driver for forest degradation and deforestation). While grown primarily for their latex, these trees also produce high quality wood. There is a growing market for rubberwood – used for everything from furniture and construction, to biomass. FSC certification covers both rubber and rubberwood.



© Fair Rubber Association

### Textiles

More than 150 million trees are logged every year and turned into cellulosic fabric – if placed end to end those trees would circle the earth seven times.<sup>1</sup>

FSC certification can apply to all wood and bamboo man-made cellulosic fibres. These include Viscose, Lyocell, Modal and Cellulose acetate.

### Cardboard

Corrugated fibreboard or cardboard is a surprisingly strong material which can be folded or laminated to make lightweight,

printable furniture. Such furniture is particularly useful for temporary uses, such as event furniture.

### Mixing materials

FSC-certified products that contain neutral materials (e.g. cotton fibre, synthetic rubber) that cannot be distinguished from FSC-certified ingredients and may be misinterpreted as being FSC-certified can only be claimed and labelled as FSC Mix. This does not apply to inorganic materials that have a different function in the product (e.g. glass, plastic, metal) or products where the FSC-certified ingredient is distinguishable from other ingredients.

<sup>1</sup> Canopy <https://canopyplanet.org/campaigns/canopystyle/>





### Bamboo

Bamboo is a fast-growing, hollow grass. Although it is frequently promoted as a highly sustainable material, bamboo production may negatively impact local ecosystems: natural forests may be cleared to make way for monoculture plantations; intensive use of inorganic pesticides and fertilisers can reduce biodiversity and soil fertility, and pollute water courses.

### Rattan

Rattan is a climbing or trailing palm that grows in the tropical regions of Africa, Asia and Australasia. There are around 600 species of rattan, some of which can reach up to 100m. Rattan relies on healthy forests for its survival and is under threat due to deforestation and degradation. Rattan is fast-growing, light and durable and can be used for food, shelters and handicrafts, although it is used mainly for furniture.

Where bamboo occurs within the matrix of an FSC-certified natural forest or plantation it may be FSC certified and labelled. FSC certification prohibits the conversion of natural forests to plantations and ensures that forests of all kinds are managed responsibly. The use of highly hazardous pesticides in FSC-certified forests is restricted and standards require that their use is reduced and, when there is no alternative, managed responsibly.

### Cork

*Quercus suber*, commonly called the cork oak, is a medium-sized, evergreen oak tree. It is the primary source of cork for wine bottle stoppers and other uses, such as cork flooring and the cores of cricket balls. The tree forms a thick, rugged bark which can be harvested every 7 to 10 years to produce cork.





**FSC FOR FURNITURE**

## FSC WORLDWIDE SERVICES

FSC is represented around the world and can be found online at: <https://fsc.org>

### Market Info Pack

A biennial document that outlines the evolution of FSC certification. It provides an overview of sectors, the FSC brand, recent market trends and relevant figures and statistics.

### Trademark Portal

Provides FSC licence holders with access to the FSC label generator (for FSC certificate holders), promotional panel generator, and a collection of related resources.

### FSC Search

The FSC public search database includes details of all FSC forest management, chain of custody and project certificates, and promotional licences.

### FSC eTraining Platform

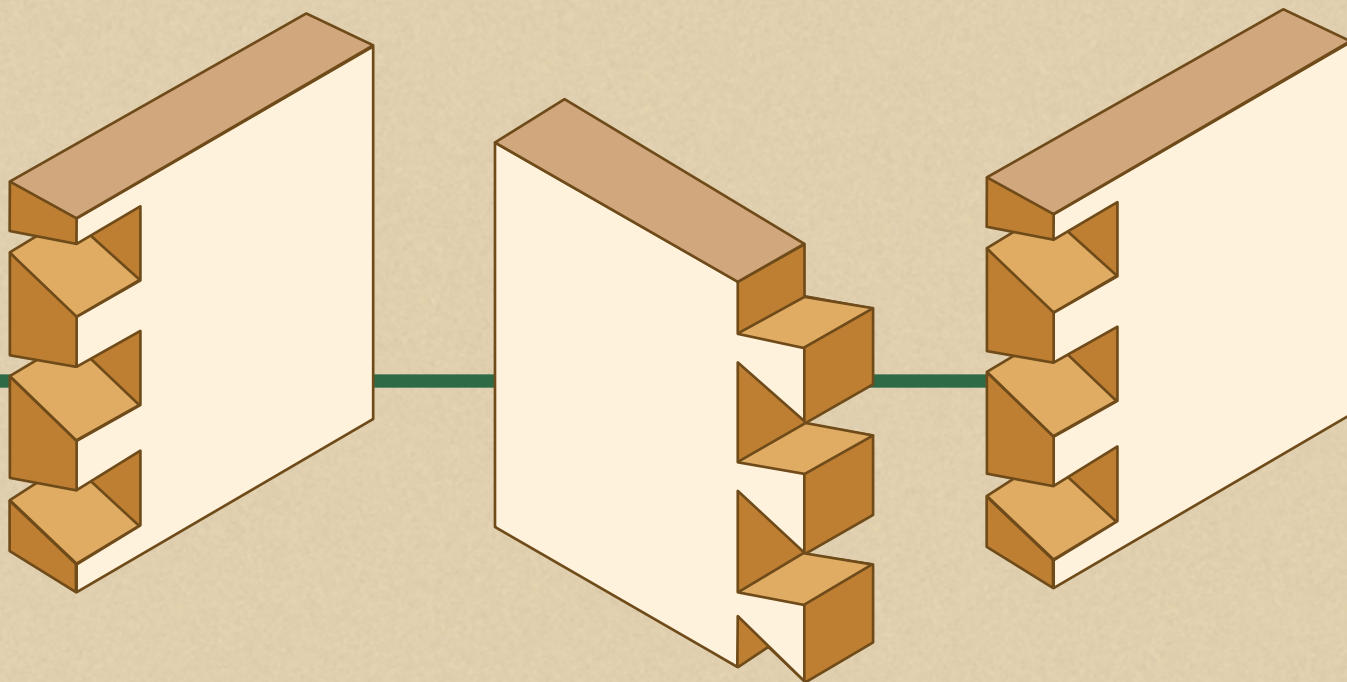
The FSC eTraining platform provides a variety of courses to take a deep dive into the FSC System. These courses are mostly relevant for Certification Bodies, Certificate and Promotional License Holders, Auditors, Staff, and any person working with or interested in FSC's work.

## FSC UK

FSC UK (<https://uk.fsc.org>) offers a range of services designed to help you and your organisation understand and benefit from the FSC system:

- Advisory service
- Online and webinar training
- Guidance on the FSC standards
- Notification of revision of FSC standards, interpretations and updates
- Online business, consumer and educational resources
- Marketing/communications support
- Trademark protection and licensing
- Forest Matters newsletter
- Stakeholder events
- UK membership administration
- Press office and picture desk





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