

# FSC<sup>®</sup> PACKAGING

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Cover: Tree image, © FSC Denmark Brian Kyed

## 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 packaging 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.'

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

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## ABOUT FSC

For over 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 logo, 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.





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# 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 licence

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

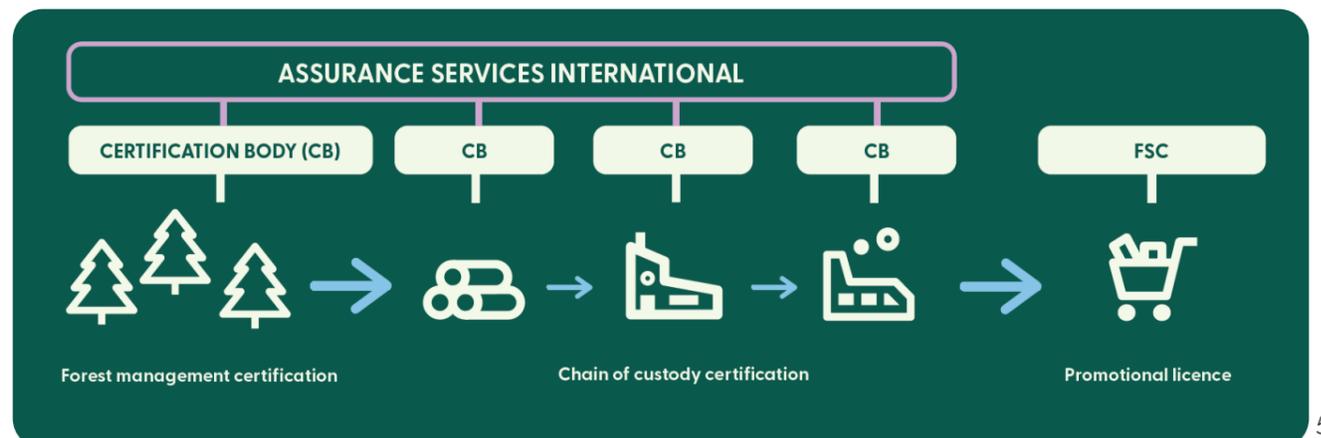
### Principles for responsible forest management

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



## PACKAGING FOR PROTECTION, PROMOTION AND PLASTIC REDUCTION

As public awareness around the environmental impact of plastics reaches new heights, businesses, organisations and the government have announced ways in which they have committed to change and innovate, in order to counter the tidal wave of waste.

In addition to reduction and reuse initiatives, the movement away from plastics is likely to mean a step towards customer-favoured renewable and recyclable materials: paper and cardboard. When questioned, UK consumers show a clear preference for paper and cardboard packaging. In 9 out of 15 categories, consumers stated that they preferred paper/cardboard over glass, metal and plastic packaging (Two Sides Trend Tracker 2025 survey).

As this renaissance takes hold, it is important that organisations making the transition to paper and card consider its environmental impact. Switching from plastic to cardboard packaging can be a positive move, however, if this packaging is not responsibly sourced it can still have a detrimental impact on the environment.

Packaging made from forest-fibre has the potential to be both renewable and recyclable/biodegradable, but only when it is responsibly sourced and sensitively processed. FSC-certified packaging can help to demonstrate a commitment to responsible sourcing through the use of FSC-certified materials and the application of the FSC labels.

Packaging can carry the FSC label if it is produced using FSC-certified materials under a valid FSC chain of custody certificate. Including the FSC label on packaging is a great way to capitalise on one of its key functions: promotion.

FSC certificate and licence holders have access to the FSC Brand Hub (<https://brandhub.fsc.org/>), which features the FSC trademarks and other assets. The use of these assets, which add further information and a more emotive angle to the promotion of FSC, can increase the influence of the FSC label. This is particularly important in packaging and other applications where sustainability can be a key differentiator. Brands that use FSC-labelled packaging can be granted authorisation to promote it using the iconic FSC trademarks via an FSC promotional licence, thus facilitating online, offline and in-store promotions.



## THE FSC LABELS EXPLAINED

It is possible for both a product and its packaging to be FSC certified e.g. a wooden hairbrush packed in a cardboard sleeve. Alternatively, it may be that an FSC 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', 'paper', 'board' and 'packaging'. Packaging can carry the FSC label if it is produced using FSC-certified materials under a valid FSC chain of custody certificate.

The FSC logo, the name Forest Stewardship Council and the acronym FSC are all registered trademarks. It is the responsibility of the relevant FSC-certified entity 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 Brand Hub where they can download labels featuring their own unique licence code, along with the FSC logo 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 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.



### 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:

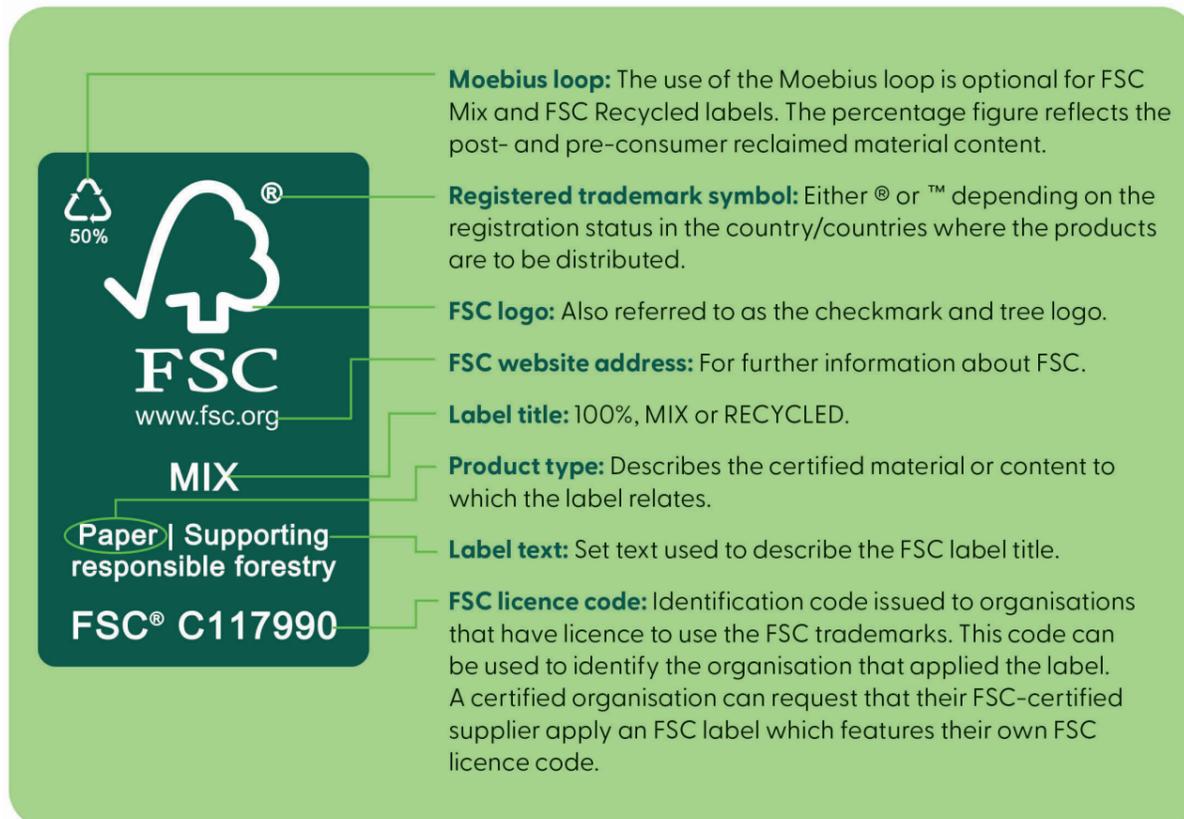
- Illegally logged
- Harvested in violation of traditional or civil rights
- Harvested in forests in which high conservation values are threatened by management activities
- Harvested in forests being converted to plantations or non-forest uses
- From forests in which genetically modified trees are planted

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.



**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.

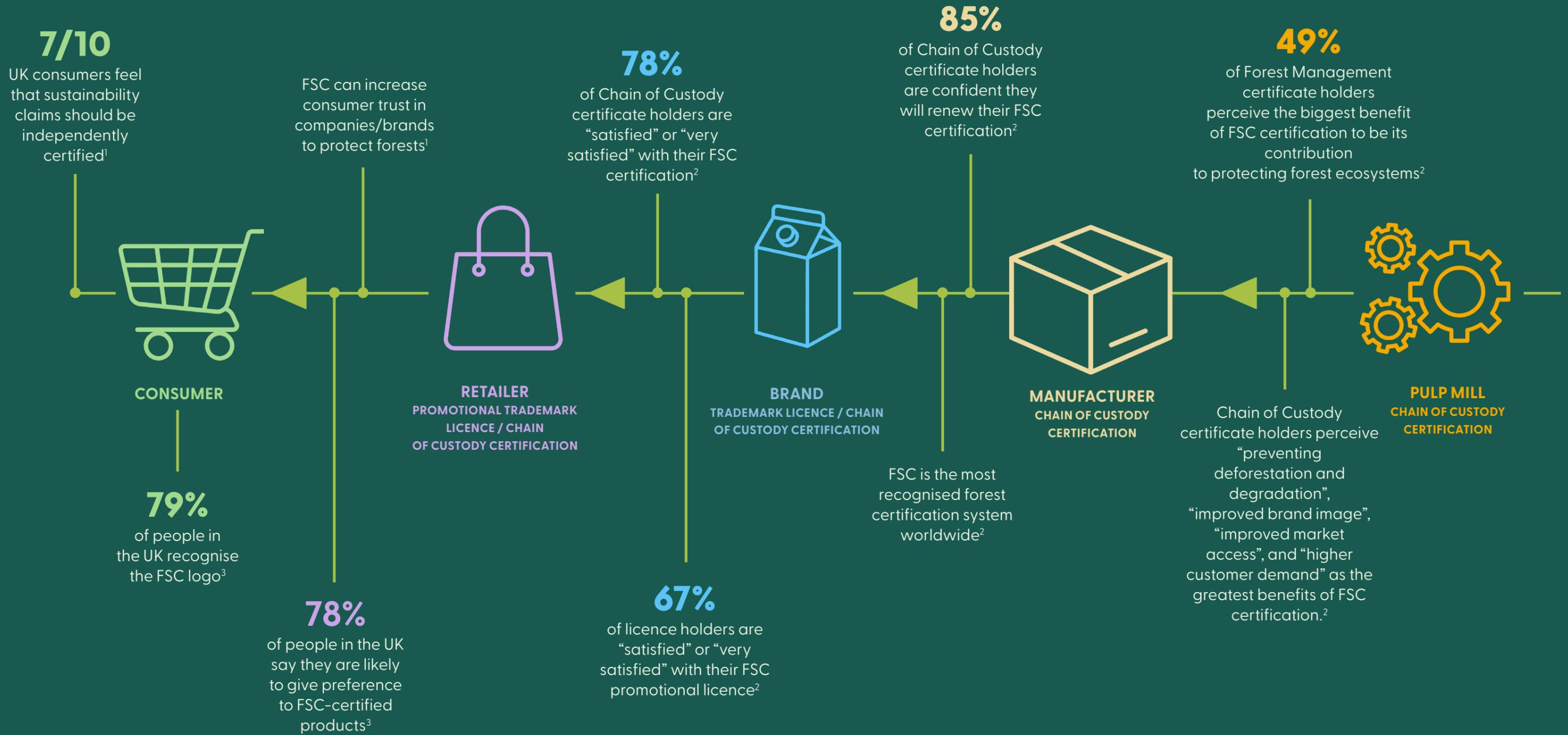
**Label title:** 100%, MIX or RECYCLED.

**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.

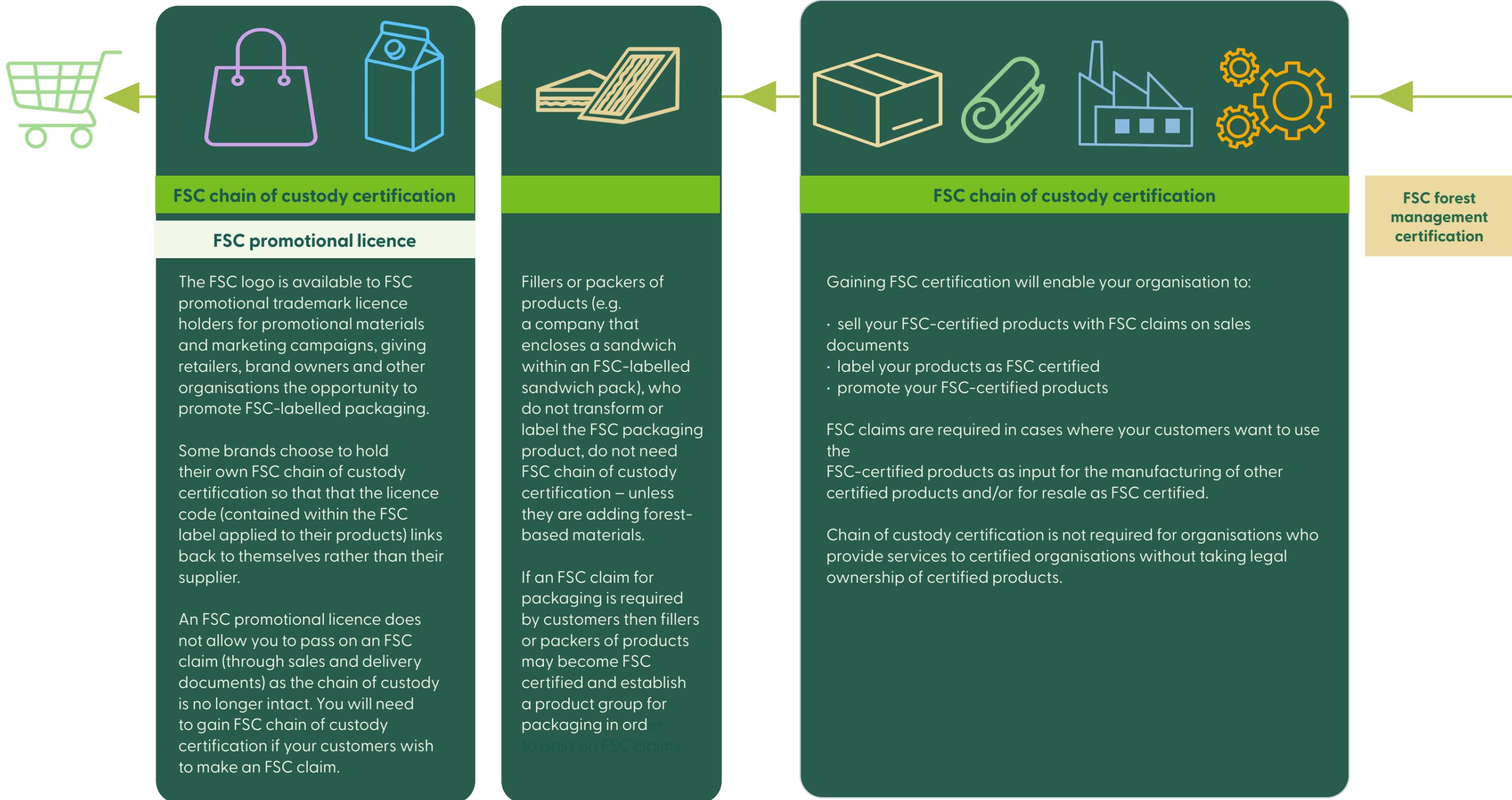
FSC CAN SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS



References

- 1 FSC Global Consumer Insights 2025
- 2 FSC Global Market Survey 2022
- 3 FSC UK Consumer Survey 2025

## FSC AND YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN



For advice on how your organisation can use the FSC trademarks, contact FSC UK.

## SPECIFYING FSC PACKAGING

FSC-certified paper and board is widely available and most carries either an FSC Mix or an FSC Recycled claim. Timber products and cellulose may also be sourced with FSC certification for use in packaging applications.

### Using an FSC-certified packaging supplier

Packaging can be labelled as FSC if it is produced and labelled under a valid FSC chain of custody certificate. If your supplier is FSC certified and sourcing the FSC-certified materials on your behalf, the FSC label can be applied to your packaging. Text-only claims printed on packaging such as 'Made from FSC-certified board' are not permitted. An FSC label must be used and only an FSC-certified organisation can apply this.

To search for and verify FSC certificates you can use the [FSC Public Certificate Search database](#)

To ensure your packaging carries an FSC label you should:

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

### Why is it important to apply the FSC label and specify FSC from suppliers?

Specifying FSC-certified materials and asking your packaging supplier to apply an FSC label gives your customers an 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 packaging supplier can issue an invoice which includes the FSC claim(s) and their FSC certificate code. This is your assurance that you have purchased FSC-certified packaging.



*“We decided on FSC through a cautious selection process, and we currently believe it to be the right decision for us as it matches our company values.”*

**Jes Faltum, Director, Environmental Sustainability, the Lego Group**

*“For Tetra Pak, FSC is the gold standard for ensuring that the paperboard that we use in our packages is from responsibly managed and other controlled sources. It is therefore a key component of delivering our sustainability strategy to protect food, people and our future.”*

**Gavin Landeg, Head of Environment for Tetra Pak in North West Europe**

## GETTING FSC CERTIFIED



FSC chain of custody certification 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.

### 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 ownership (legal title) of FSC-certified products (e.g. transport, sales agent) do not normally need chain of custody certification.

Companies that use FSC-certified packaging produced by a certified company do not normally need to hold their own FSC certification. Fillers or packers of products (e.g. a company who enclose a sandwich within an FSC-labelled sandwich pack), who do not transform or label the FSC packaging product, do not need FSC chain of custody certification, unless they are adding forest-based materials.

If an FSC claim for packaging is required by customers, fillers or packers of products may become FSC certified and establish a product

group for packaging in order to pass FSC claims through sales and delivery documents. An FSC-certified organisation may outsource activities within the scope of its certificate to FSC-certified and/or non-FSC-certified

contractors provided the 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

## BENEFITS OF FSC CERTIFICATION

- Improved market access
- Enhanced public image and meet customer expectations
- Use of the FSC trademarks and supplementary marketing assets
- Compliance with Government Procurement Policy and meeting Corporate Social Responsibility

## 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 approval and receive an FSC certification code (XXX-COC-000000) and an FSC trademark licence code (FSC-C000000).



*“It’s important for us to consider ethics in all aspects of our work. Therefore, when we were looking for a packaging alternative to plastic bottles, we chose FSC-certified cartons because it gave us the trust and reassurance that the paperboard used came from well-managed forests and other controlled sources, giving us the peace of mind that we were not having a detrimental effect on the planet.”*

**Emily Frank, Marketing Director,  
The One Brand**

*“Our goal is to lead the way in sustainability. Demonstrating the FSC certification of DS Smith’s entire paper and packaging supply chain creates sustainable value by balancing the needs of our business, our environment and our people. As a result, we operate ever more responsibly and delight our customers through our sustainable performance.”*

**Stefano Speck, Audit and Certification Manager,  
DS Smith**



## **PROMOTING FSC-CERTIFIED PACKAGING**

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

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

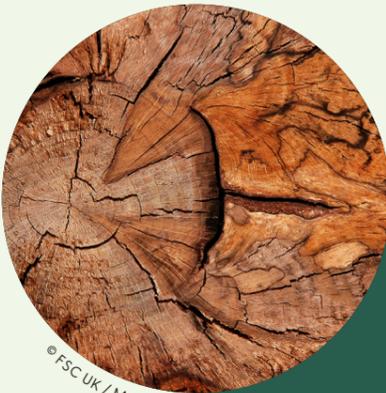
Use of the FSC trademarks via a promotional licence can also help brands to enhance the transparency of their supply chains and communicate their corporate responsibility.

Some brands 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 licence, please contact FSC UK, the trademark service provider for the UK: [info@fsc-uk.org](mailto:info@fsc-uk.org)



# REASONS TO CHOOSE FSC



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## 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

## 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.



© FSC



## FSC SERVICES AND SUPPORT

### FSC International

FSC is represented around the world and can be found online at [fsc.org](https://www.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.

### FSC Brand Hub

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

The Brand Hub provides a dynamic set of campaign materials to help licence holders communicate their FSC commitments across various channels.

### FSC Trademark Training Course

FSC certificate holders can access an online training course in how to use the FSC trademarks. For access instructions see the FSC Brand Hub.

Find these and other tools at the [FSC Brand Hub](#)

### FSC UK

FSC UK offer a range of services designed to help you and/or your organisation understand and benefit from the FSC system:

- Advisory service
- Online training
- Guidance on the FSC standards
- Notification of revisions of FSC standards, and any interpretations and updates
- Online business, consumer and educational resources.
- Marketing/communications support
- Trademark protection & licensing

- Forest Matters, our monthly newsletter
- UK membership administration
- Press office and picture desk

### Useful links:

- [Visit the FSC UK website](#)
- [Get FSC certified](#)
- [FSC promotional licensing](#)
- [Subscribe to the FSC UK newsletter](#)
- [Become a member of FSC](#)
- [FSC UK training courses](#)
- [Contact FSC UK: info@fsc-uk.org](mailto:info@fsc-uk.org)