FSC UK® Strategic Plan
2018 - 2021
Summary Document
FSC UK Strategic Plan

The FSC UK 2018-2021 Strategic Plan builds on our previous three-year plan 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 Vision**
The world’s forests meet the social, ecological and economic rights and needs of the present generations without compromising those of future generations.

**FSC’s Mission**
The Forest Stewardship Council AC shall promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world’s forests.

**Core purpose**
Forests for All Forever.

**FSC’s Commitments**

- **Increased focus on outcomes:** FSC will deliver meaningful impact, report on outcomes, and refine the system accordingly.

- **Empowerment of People:** Through our actions, FSC will empower smallholders, women, communities, workers, Indigenous Peoples and other under-represented groups.

- **Mission advancement through alliances:** FSC will advance impact by working more closely with complementary and aligned organisations.

- **User orientation:** FSC will renew our entrepreneurial spirit and shift processes to emphasise the needs of the users of our system.

**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 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

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

**Priorities for FSC UK**

The following priorities have been agreed for 2018-2021:

- Improve standards for forest management and promote FSC forest management certification in the UK for all sizes and types of forest
- Support and represent UK based FSC Licence Holders
- Increase demand for FSC certification and FSC certified products
- Ensure that FSC is positioned as the most credible forest certification scheme
- An overview of each priority is provided in this document with associated objectives. FSC UK is committed to the concept of working as “One FSC” and collaboration with FSC International and the wider network is integral to each of the stated priorities.

**Summary**

The strategic plan aligns our UK priorities with those of our International Centre with the aim of increasing demand for FSC certified products whilst ensuring that FSC’s high standards and credibility are maintained and recognised.

FSC UK will react to new opportunities and challenges and it is envisaged that the plan and associated documents will be regularly reviewed and should be considered as dynamic and open to further development.
PRIORITY: Improve standards for forest management and promote FSC forest management certification for all sizes and types of forest

Rationale: FSC’s mission is to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world’s forests

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 and that we should promote and support a programme of voluntary forest management certification.

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 role to play in improving standards beyond the UK by contributing to the wider discussions and developments within FSC.

OBJECTIVE 1: An approved UK national forest stewardship standard is maintained.

The current UK national forest stewardship standard (NFSS) is based on the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) version 4, and was approved by FSC in December 2017. There are lessons to be learned from the revision process, which ran from 2013 to 2017, steps to be taken to maintain the current standard, and relationships to be built and information to be gathered to inform future standard development. There are also specific requirements to be met to fulfil Condition 1 on the approval of the NFSS.

OBJECTIVE 2: Smallholder access to forest management certification in the UK is improved.

Motion 46 at the 2017 General Assembly calls on FSC to prioritise the New Approaches Initiative to smallholder certification and there is an opportunity to run a field test in the UK. We will contribute to the discussions on action-based learning, risk-based approaches and the development of new tools to improve access to certification for smallholders.

OBJECTIVE 3: Forest owners and managers are supported to maintain or increase forest management certification in the UK.

The current UK NFSS is to be phased in between April 2018 and March 2019, and current and potential UK Forest Management certificate holders are likely to require support during the period to understand and meet the requirements of the revised standard. There are also specific requirements to be met to fulfil Condition 4 on the approval of the NFSS.

In addition, FSC UK is now in a position to be more proactive in terms of reaching out to forest owners/managers, group scheme managers, certification bodies and the UK academic world to foster positive attitudes towards forest management certification.
PRIORITY: Support and represent FSC Licence Holders

Rationale: 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 7% of all Chain of Custody certificates and 13% of uncertified trademark 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. In the global context, we also need to represent our UK stakeholders to ensure that FSC’s standards are appropriate and relevant.

OBJECTIVE 1: 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. Bespoke face-to-face training is available. We will also support licence holders through regional stakeholder events.

OBJECTIVE 2: UK Stakeholders are represented 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.

OBJECTIVE 3: 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. Where appropriate, licence holders will be encouraged to use supplementary resources, such as those from FSC’s Marketing Toolkit and engage in activities or events to enhance the exposure of their FSC licence and FSC certified products.
PRIORITY: Increase demand for FSC certification and FSC certified products

Rationale: 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 increased emphasis will be placed on this B2B work.

OBJECTIVE 1: There is a measurable and significant uptake of licences (COC/TLH) in the UK.

FSC UK will proactively encourage organisations to become FSC Licence Holders in order to expand the FSC supply chain and maximise opportunities for consumers to choose FSC labelled products. Potential FSC licence holders (COC/TLH) will be targeted and informed of FSC benefits and resources will be developed to support them. Where certification gaps within supply chains are identified, we will work to address these to increase the range of certified products.

OBJECTIVE 2: FSC certified products are specified by those procuring wood and paper products.

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 to specify FSC certified materials. This will involve working with the public and private sectors, architects, tourist attractions, NGOs and others. Sector specific campaigns and tailored guidance will be developed to target these specifiers of wood and paper and best practice will be promoted. The development of a procurement standard by FSC would help to support this work and FSC UK will input into these discussions.

OBJECTIVE 3: 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.
PRIORITY: Ensure FSC is positioned as the most credible forest certification scheme

Rationale: FSC is widely recognised as the most credible forest certification scheme and maintaining this credibility is fundamental to the scheme's success.

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. As well as remaining credible, FSC needs to be recognised as such, by government, NGOs, businesses, the media and the public.

OBJECTIVE 1: Systems are in place to minimise threats to FSC’s credibility.
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. Much of this work must be addressed internationally and FSC UK will support the work of the Quality Assurance, Dispute Resolution and Supply Chain Integrity staff. FSC UK has adopted the Dispute Resolution Guide for Network Partners to ensure that complaints are dealt with in a consistent, timely and effective manner.

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.

OBJECTIVE 2: FSC is regularly, accurately and positively promoted in the media.
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.

OBJECTIVE 3: The Controlled Wood System is functional and credible.
FSC members from all Chambers are committed to implementing the new Controlled Wood System and standard and to developing the Controlled Wood strategy. FSC UK should input as appropriate to the development of the global strategy, and encourage UK stakeholders to participate. On a practical level, the revision of the National Risk Assessment for the UK needs to be completed.
OBJECTIVE 4: 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, for example, meeting the Government’s Timber Procurement Policy and being appropriately recognised under BREEAM.

OBJECTIVE 5: FSC has an engaged and growing membership in the UK with increased representation in the social and environmental chambers

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.