FSC and the Modern Slavery Act

In 2015 the UK Government passed the Modern Slavery Act. The Transparency in Supply Chains provision in the Act seeks to address the role of businesses in preventing modern slavery from occurring in their supply chains and organisations.

Every business in the UK with a total annual turnover of £36m or more is required to produce an annual slavery and human trafficking statement. Smaller organisations can still choose to voluntarily produce a ‘slavery and human trafficking statement’ and may be asked to so by those they supply, if they are bidding for contracts with larger businesses above the threshold.

There is an extensive due diligence process to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not part of the production process of FSC-certified products. FSC-certified companies and others trading FSC-certified products can refer to the FSC standards to help demonstrate compliance.

FSC’s requirements for consultation processes (for certification bodies), complaints mechanisms (open to all stakeholders) and engagement with labour unions and social NGOs, also provide further safeguards, helping to identify previously undetected “modern slavery”.

Policy for Association

This Policy provides FSC’s position on unacceptable activities of organisations which are or would like to be associated with FSC and the mechanism for disassociation. The Policy for the Association of Organizations with FSC (FSC-POL-01-004 V2-0) states that:

“FSC will only allow its association with organizations that are not directly or indirectly involved in the following unacceptable activities:

a) Illegal logging or the trade in illegal wood or forest products

b) Violation of traditional and human rights in forestry operations

c) Destruction of high conservation values in forestry operations

d) Significant conversion of forests to plantations or non-forest use

e) Introduction of genetically modified organisms in forestry operations

f) Violation of any of the ILO Core Conventions*  
*As defined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.”
The International Labour Organization (ILO) core conventions are:

- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

**Forest Management Standards**

The FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship, upon which FSC national forest stewardship standards are based, and their associated indicators, reference the ILO conventions.

Version 4-0 of the FSC Principles and Criteria (FSC-STD-01-001 V4-0) refers to the ILO conventions under Principle 1 (Compliance with laws and FSC Principles) and Principle 4 (Community relations and worker’s rights).

In the latest version of the FSC Principles and Criteria (FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2) “workers’ rights” are addressed under Principle 2 (Workers Rights and Employment Conditions):

“The Organization shall uphold the principles and rights at work as defined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) based on the eight ILO Core Labour Conventions.”

**Chain of Custody Standard**

The FSC Chain of Custody standard (FSC-STD-40-004) requires organisations to commit to FSC values, as defined in the FSC Policy for Association, by signing a self-declaration.

**International Generic Indicators**

In August 2017 FSC reached an important milestone with the approval of generic criteria and indicators based on the principles of the ILO core conventions and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at work (1998). The criteria and indicators address a number of relevant issues including labour exploitation, discrimination, forced labour, child labour and human trafficking.

These criteria and indicators have now been incorporated in the revised International Generic Indicators standard (FSC-STD-60-004 V2-0), which became effective in July 2018. This standard provides the basis for developing auditable requirements, which will be incorporated in the applicable normative documents.