Explanatory Notes

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

For advice and guidance on the FSC system and standards, please contact FSC UK.
https://uk.fsc.org  01686 413916  info@fsc-uk.org

FSC®F000231
WE STAND FOR FORESTS
FSC works to take care of the world’s forests for future generations – to help ensure we have 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 the forest-based materials have been responsibly sourced.

The 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 VISION
The world’s forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.

OUR MISSION
Forests For All Forever – FSC shall promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world’s 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. We operate as a multi-stakeholder organisation and have been doing so since 1994. FSC UK is a registered charity working to promote FSC in the UK.

The not-for-profit organisation Canopy works with the forest industry’s biggest fashion customers and their viscose suppliers to develop business solutions that prevent ancient and endangered forests from being pulped into fabric. As part of the CanopyStyle initiative, brands representing over $266 billion in annual revenue are seeking science-based conservation of ancient and endangered forests, they are increasingly adopting Next Generation alternative fibre, and recognise FSC as the most credible certification for their virgin wood inputs.

“Canopy is proud to spearhead the fastest moving environmental initiative in the apparel sector in partnership with more than 320 iconic fashion brands to end the use of endangered forests in their clothes. We’re excited that brands are giving preference to FSC-certified materials, and that this is translating into more mills gaining certification, and ultimately more forests being certified to FSC forest management standards.”

Nicole Rycroft, Founder and Executive Director, Canopy
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 our 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.
Standing out is an important aspect of fashion, but so is standing up – for people and the planet.

Fashion is one of the largest industries in the world and it shows no signs of slowing down. The industry generated €1.5 trillion in annual revenue in 2016, which is expected to reach €2 trillion by 2030.1 Global apparel consumption is predicted to rise from approximately 56 million tonnes in 2017, to 92.5 million tonnes in 2030.1 In an attempt to make the sector more environmentally friendly and ensure this growth is sustainable, cellulose fibres are becoming more popular. Forest-based textiles such as viscose, cellulose acetate, lyocell and modal can be a more sustainable alternative to nylon, polyester, and cotton. Although they make up less than 7% of the global fibre market, the production volume of these forest-based materials more than doubled from 3 million tonnes in 1990, to 6.7 million tonnes in 2018, and their use is expected to increase.2 To keep up with this demand, more than 150 million trees are logged every year.3 This can potentially contribute to the deforestation of ancient and endangered forests and habitat loss if not sourced from well-managed forests.4 The industry’s dependence on forests doesn’t stop at fibres. In 2017, over 11 million tonnes of natural rubber was harvested5 and consumption is expected to reach 19 million tonnes by 2025.6 Rubber plantations can be a cause of forest degradation and deforestation if not managed responsibly.

Fashion supply chains are extremely complex, making it challenging to determine whether materials are responsibly sourced. As the world’s most trusted sustainable forest management solution, FSC can provide businesses and consumers with the assurance of supply chain integrity from forest to consumer. The FSC certification system can help to secure a long-term source of forest-based materials from forests managed with consideration for people, wildlife and the environment.

Sourcing forest-based materials responsibly not only helps to protect the planet’s forests and those who depend on them, but can also secure brand reputation and improve market access. Consumer demand for sustainable products is growing: one in three consumers consider the environmental and social impacts when buying clothes,7 and 80% of consumers who have purchased, or recall a purchase of FSC products say that an FSC label on a product has a positive effect on their purchasing decision.8 FSC can help you to meet this demand and demonstrate your commitment to responsible forest management.

In an industry where styles change by the season, make sure that your commitment to sustainability is here to stay so that we can ensure that we have Forests For All Forever.

“In autumn 2019, Masai became the first Danish fashion brand to achieve the FSC CoC-certification, and in August 2020 our first FSC-certified garments will reach the stores. It’s important to us that our sustainability measures are a natural extension of our business, and with more than 60% of our collections being made of wood-based materials, such as viscose, the responsible and sustainable profile of these materials is a key focus area for us. We’re looking into the entire product lifecycle and starting all the way back at the source, the forests, it made sense for us to join FSC to assure responsible sourcing and traceability in our chain.”

Sidse Jensen, CSR and Sustainability Manager, Masai Clothing Company

1 Global Fashion Agenda & The Boston Consulting Group, 2017, Pulse of the Fashion Industry
2 Textile Exchange, Preferred Fiber & Materials Market Report 2019
3 Canopy, 2019, CanopyStyle 5-year anniversary report
7 Thomas et al. 2013, Conservation Letters, Increasing Demand for Natural Rubber Necessitates a Robust Sustainability Initiative to Mitigate Impacts on Tropical Biodiversity
8 Fashion Revolution, November 2018, Consumer Survey Report: A baseline survey on EU consumer attitudes to sustainability and supply chain transparency in the fashion industry
9 GlobalScan Consumer Insights Survey, 2017. Sample 3,991 consumers in 13 countries
When buying clothes, more than one in three consumers surveyed across the five largest EU markets said that they consider social (38%) and environmental impacts (37%).

The majority of people think it is important for fashion brands to reduce their long-term impacts on the world by addressing global poverty (84%), climate change (85%), environmental protection (88%) and gender inequality (77%).

Acetate has a market share of around 14% of all MMCFs in 2018 with a production volume of roughly 0.95 million tonnes. It had a market share of around 4% of all MMCFs in 2018 with a production volume of roughly 0.26 million tonnes. The compound annual growth rate of lyocell from 2017 to 2022 is estimated at around 15%. This means that lyocell is expected to grow faster than other MMCFs.

Viscose is the most important MMCF with a market share of around 79% of all MMCFs and a production volume of around 5.3 million tonnes in 2018.

Global manmade cellulosic fibre (MMCF) production increased from 5.9 million tonnes in 2014 to 6.7 million tonnes in 2018.

Clothing represents more than 60% of the total textiles used and is expected to remain the largest application.

The fashion industry is projected to use 35% more land for fibre production by 2030 — an extra 115 million hectares.

World production of all apparel and textile fibres reached approximately 100 million tonnes in 2018, and natural fibres accounted for 29% of the total, down from 41% in 2008. Cellulosic fibre production accounted for 6% of the total in 2018, synthetic filament accounted for 45%, and synthetic staple 20%.

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FSC CAN SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS

7/10 consumers feel that sustainability claims should be independently certified.

FSC can increase consumer trust in companies/brands to protect forests.

66% of certificate holders (88% of retailers and non-manufacturers) agree the FSC label adds value to their products.

78% of certificate holders say ‘meeting the demands of current clients’ is one of the most important benefits of certification.

83% of certificate holders (89% of retailers and non-manufacturers) agree FSC certification helps to create a positive corporate image.

8/10 respondents agree that FSC is the market leader in forest certification.

74% of certificate holders (90% of retailers and non-manufacturers) agree that FSC helps them to communicate their Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives.

50% of people worldwide recognise the FSC logo.

References
1. Global Consumer Insights 2017 conducted by GlobeScan on behalf of FSC International. 10,435 consumers sampled in 13 countries.
2. FSC Global Market Survey 2018. Online survey of FSC certificate and trademark licence holders (31/10/18 – 03/12/18) conducted by UZBonn on behalf of FSC International. In the analysis of the results, “I don’t know” responses were treated as empty answers.
3. Differentiating the FSC brand B2B segmentation and brand positioning research, 2016, conducted by B2B International on behalf of FSC International. 332 external respondents in 13 markets plus 71 internal interviews. The confidence interval is +/-5.4% of all FSC members and licence holders (at a 95% confidence level).
Forests produce more than just the archetypal forest materials: wood and paper. FSC certification can apply to textiles, bamboo, rubber, cork, rattan and more.

**Manmade cellulosic fibres** made with forest-based cellulose can be FSC certified. These include viscose, lyocell, modal and cellulose acetate. Most manmade cellulosic fibres (MMCFs) take the form of viscose, also known as rayon. Wood or bamboo cellulose must be chemically treated to produce viscose. Some producers have developed more eco-friendly processes which use less chemicals and water during production. A life cycle analysis of MMCFs concluded that due to the wide variability in impacts associated with sourcing, “it is critical to understand not just the type of material […], but also the source of material”.

**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. Natural rubber can be used to produce many products including soles. As a key global commodity, best practices are crucial for ensuring a sustainable supply in the long term.

**Bamboo** is a fast-growing, hollow grass. Although it is frequently promoted as a highly sustainable material, uncertified bamboo production may negatively impact local ecosystems. Where bamboo occurs within the matrix of an FSC-certified natural forest or plantation it may be FSC certified and labelled. Bamboo can be used to create a range of products including, but not limited to, yarn and textiles.

**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 100 metres. 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, shelter and handicrafts, although it is used mainly for furniture.

**Cork** is harvested primarily from *Quercus suber*, commonly called the cork oak, a medium-sized, evergreen oak tree. The tree forms a thick, rugged bark which can be harvested every 7 to 10 years to produce cork. Although more traditionally used to produce wine closures, cork can also be used in bags, shoes and accessories.

**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 (the other FSC labels are FSC 100% and FSC Recycled). This does not apply to inorganic materials that have a different function in the product in relation to the certified ingredient (e.g. glass, plastic, metal) or to products where the FSC-certified ingredient is distinguishable from other ingredients.

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1 SCS Global Services, 2017, *Life Cycle Assessment Comparing Ten Sources of Manmade Cellulose Fiber*
**MANUFACTURERS**

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.

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. Organisations that do not take legal ownership of FSC-certified products (e.g. logistics companies, 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.

**BENEFITS OF FSC CERTIFICATION**

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

**Group certification**

Chain of custody group certification is a tool available to help small businesses become FSC certified. Companies can join existing group certificates, which can be a simpler, faster and more cost-effective option than becoming certified on their own.

“Kering is committed to reducing and rethinking its impacts on primary raw materials, maximising the opportunities for sustainable forest management and ensuring that its sourcing policies enable the conservation of forest ecosystems. As outlined in the Kering Standards for Raw Materials, Kering requires its suppliers of all wood-based materials to source from FSC-certified resources (including FSC Recycled), as FSC is in line with Kering’s commitment to sustainable management by preventing destructive forestry practices.”

Géraldine Vallejo, Sustainability Programme Director, Kering

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VALUE OF THE FSC LABEL

FSC labels have been appearing on forest products for more than 20 years. In this time, public awareness of environmental and social issues has increased, as has awareness of the FSC logo – the little tree with a tick, that means so much to so many.

The FSC label can only be applied to eligible products by organisations holding FSC certification.

For inspiration and tools to develop purpose-centred campaigns, visit the FSC Marketing and Communications Toolkit https://marketingtoolkit.fsc.org

This Toolkit is freely available to FSC certificate and licence holders and was launched in line with the FSC Forests For All Forever brandmark and associated suite of assets. A growing range of marketing and communications information, campaigns and tools can now be found within the Toolkit.

79% of UK consumers say it is either very or fairly important for the products they buy to be responsibly sourced – 28% say it is very important.¹

75% of UK consumers say it is either very or fairly important for the packaging of the products they buy to be responsibly sourced – 26% say it is very important.¹

67% of UK consumers and 71% of 16-34 year olds recognise the FSC logo.¹

82% of UK consumers say they are either very or fairly likely to buy a product bearing the FSC logo as opposed to one without – 29% are very likely.¹

¹ Kantar OnLiveBus, 2020, online survey of 1281 UK adults aged 16+

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FSC SPECIFICATION

Using an FSC-certified supplier
Products can be labelled and sold as FSC certified if they are produced under a valid chain of custody certificate.

If your supplier is FSC certified and sourcing the FSC-certified products on your behalf, they will be able to issue an FSC claim for the products they are producing for you.

To ensure your products are FSC certified you should use an FSC-certified supplier and specify FSC-certified products from the outset.

To search for and verify FSC certificates you can use the FSC Public Search database. [https://info.fsc.org/certificate.php](https://info.fsc.org/certificate.php)

Why is FSC specification important?
Specifying FSC-certified materials 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 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 products.

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.

“With the Future Fabrics Expo we encourage brands to use fibres that are more sustainably and responsibly produced. Regenerate cellulosics such as lyocell and viscose, or other fibres made from trees are becoming more popular. It is paramount that any fibres made with wood pulp come from FSC-certified wood sources which means the product was created with feedstock from a responsibly managed forest, addressing multiple environmental issues.”

Nina Marenzi, Founder and Director of The Sustainable Angle
FSC certification can apply to a vast array of forest products. Whether fitting out new premises, specifying forest-based materials in products, choosing forest-based packaging or producing marketing materials, there is often an FSC-certified solution available. Ensuring that responsible sourcing practices are employed throughout the business can help to reflect the company’s ethos and its appreciation of the importance of protecting forests.

Packaging and swing tickets
Paper and paperboard made with forest fibres are a popular choice for packaging and labelling materials. Paper-based packaging can protect goods, provide product information and be both biodegradable and easily recyclable.

Forest can also provide fibre to make cellulose-based plastics and films. Paper and cardboard packaging ranks highest with consumers for sustainability attributes including: home compostable (72%), better for the environment (62%) and easier to recycle (57%).

Bags, till rolls and point of sale marketing
Many shoppers now bring their own reusable bags, however, an increasing number of shops opt for those made from paper when required to provide bags for their customers. Consumers rank paper bags highest for environmental factors such as: recyclability (52%), compostability (47%) and made with renewable materials (43%).

Each year, 300 billion paper receipts are produced, consuming 25 million trees. In 2009, Marks and Spencer became the first major UK retailer to print all their receipts on FSC-certified paper. Receipts bearing the FSC label are now commonplace in the UK.

From wobblers to barkers to the more elaborate point of sale displays, many in-store marketing materials use forest-based components, predominantly paper and card. Their impact can be substantial when the full quantity of such materials is calculated.

Brochures, catalogues and postal marketing
When produced using FSC-certified materials and under a valid FSC certificate, printed brochures, catalogues, leaflets, flyers and direct mail can carry an FSC label.

Using the FSC trademarks to promote FSC-certified products (e.g. garments) within such promotional materials can be authorised via FSC certification or an FSC promotional trademark licence.

Construction and fit-out
The fashion industry can be an important driver to ensure sustainability in the furniture and construction sectors, for new-build or refurbishment of shops, offices or warehouses, furniture and shopfitting.

For printed materials to carry an FSC label they must be produced under a valid FSC chain of custody certificate. In-house printers can seek their own certification. Companies using external printers can select those with certification already in place and specify FSC-certified and labelled products when ordering.

1 Two Sides, 2020, European Packaging Preferences 2020
2 Parcel Hero, 2018, Stamping Out Receipts
SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

FSC has taken a leadership role in supporting and promoting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our certification, standards, and practices can be a robust and effective tool to help a variety of organisations contribute to the goals. Launched in 2015, these 17 goals contain 169 targets covering the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.

FSC is a particularly relevant partner for stakeholders implementing the SDGs, which we actively helped formulate. Our work addresses deforestation and forest degradation and strengthens the contributions forests make to sustainable development. It also helps mitigate climate change, protect biodiversity, supply raw materials for a ‘low ecological footprint’ economy, and support the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

FSC’s work and comprehensive forest management standards contribute to achieving 40 targets under 14 sustainable development goals.

FSC fully supports the Modern Slavery Act, passed by the UK Government in 2015, and SDG 8, which includes a call to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking, and child labour. There is an extensive due diligence process to ensure that these activities are 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.

The Together We Are FSC (https://marketingtoolkit.fsc.org/togetherwearefsc) campaign supports anyone working within the field of Corporate Social Responsibility to better understand how FSC helps their business work towards the SDGs and safeguard our planet for future generations.
NEXT STEPS
Show customers your products support better outcomes for forests, people and businesses.

For FSC chain of custody certification:
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).

To find out about promoting FSC-certified products:
Brands and retailers who buy finished products, 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. To find out more, contact FSC UK.

To search for and verify FSC certificates:
Use the FSC Public Search database: https://info.fsc.org

For guidance, support and training:
• http://uk.fsc.org
• info@fsc-uk.org

“At Clarks, working to lighten our footprint and protect forests is an integral part of our Made to Last sustainability programme. Naturally, this led us to look at using FSC certified materials within our shoes, starting with FSC rubber in the crepe soles. Launching our first collection of products this Autumn, we can’t wait to share the benefits of FSC certified materials with our consumers.”

Clarks