



## ARCHITECTS AND TIMBER SPECIFIERS

### Claims of Sustainability – What can you believe?

Many timber suppliers will tell you – usually in good faith – that their supplies are from ‘sustainable’ or ‘managed’ sources, or from plantations. But without an independent certification system, you have no way of checking this or of proving to your clients that you have met their expectations.

### What is the Forest Stewardship Council?

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation. It is an association of members from environmental and social groups, the timber trade and the forestry profession, community forestry groups and other organisations from around the world. FSC runs a global forest certification system that includes two key aspects: Forest Management and Chain of Custody certification. This ensures that timber produced in certified forests has been traced from the forest to the end user.

Forests are inspected and certified against strict national or regional Forest Management Standards. These inspections are undertaken by independent certification bodies. In order to gain FSC certification a forest must be managed in an environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable manner. The timber from the forests is then tracked through a chain of custody system, with each link in the chain being audited.

The FSC Trademark therefore makes it possible to choose timber for construction projects with the confidence that you are not contributing to the destruction of the world's forests. By buying from certified sources an incentive is provided through market forces for good forestry practice.

### What are the benefits of the FSC label?

Using FSC timber helps to achieve Excellent ratings under both BREEAM and EcoHomes schemes. The Government's Central Point of Expertise on Timber Procurement (CPET) has stated that FSC certified timber meets its criteria for both legality and sustainability, of vital importance in public sector contracts.

FSC delivers your clients' environmental requirements.

FSC is simple: a single global label on all timber and forest products which ensures equivalently high responsible forest management standards for all forest types worldwide.

FSC is credible: our certification system is currently the only one recognised by the main environmental organisations such as WWF and Greenpeace, social groups, including indigenous people's groups, and trade unions.

FSC provides an advisory service and support services including consultancy and training

### Specifying FSC Timber

Many organisations are now implementing timber specification policies. Such a policy would ideally cover all projects where timber is specified. Having a policy about timber specification is a good way of ensuring that all timber specifiers within an organisation are clear about what timber is acceptable for use. A timber specification policy template is available from FSC UK.



## Products Available

There are a wide variety of FSC certified timber species available in the UK: European hard and softwoods, North American hard and softwoods and tropical hardwoods. However, there are a few species not currently available carrying the FSC label. There are many lesser known species which can be substituted - woods which have the same or similar properties to their better known counterparts. Contact FSC UK for further details.

With over 120 million hectares of FSC certified forests around the world, supplies of timber and building materials are increasing all the time. Suppliers include large importers, local sawmills, and well-known builders' merchants. There are also a growing number of contractors including joiners, timber frame builders and timber engineers with FSC Chain of Custody certification thus enabling their clients to make verified claims about the timber used in projects. There is a product and supplier database on the FSC UK website - [www.fsc-uk.org](http://www.fsc-uk.org)

## Purchasing

To be sure that a piece of wood comes from a well-managed forest, it is important to know two things; firstly that the forest of origin can be proven to be managed responsibly; and secondly that the piece of wood supplied can be guaranteed to come from certified forest sources.

The FSC system provides both these elements: forest certification and chain of custody control. Specifiers and purchasers can be sure that FSC's accredited certification bodies have checked the source of the timber stocked by suppliers who hold FSC Chain of Custody certification and that they have good systems for segregating and identifying certified timber. You don't have to check further back yourself.

Timber may or may not physically carry the FSC trademarks. Your proof that contractors have actually purchased FSC certified timber products, as specified, is the invoice of the supplier which should clearly state that FSC certified products were supplied and identify them on the invoice. There should also be a code, specific to the supplier, that refers to their FSC chain of custody certification. The validity of certificates can be checked on the international certificate database [www.info.fsc.org](http://www.info.fsc.org)



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## Chain of Custody & Project Certification

The FSC logo, the name Forest Stewardship Council and the acronym FSC are all registered trademarks and there are strict controls on their use. The trademarks can be used to promote construction projects using FSC timber, but authorisation to use the trademarks must first be obtained. If you or your clients want to be able to make such a claim, the construction companies, contractors and subcontractors you are working with will need to be covered by an FSC Chain of Custody certificate. There are various options, including multi-site certification for large companies, and group schemes for small ones.

In response to the complex nature of the construction sector, where several subcontractors may be involved, with a mix of off-site and on-site construction, FSC has developed a Chain of Custody Standard for Project Certification. FSC Project Certification is one-off and site-specific. It can be used for virtually any type of new build or refurbishment project, and for permanent or temporary structures.

FSC certification cannot be retrospective; projects must be registered with an FSC accredited certification body before any timber is delivered to site.

More information on gaining FSC certification for construction projects is available from FSC UK.

We would like to thank Ecochoice and WPG Ltd for their sponsorship of this factsheet.



Ecochoice are specialist trade suppliers of a wide range of

FSC certified tropical, temperate and thermo modified timbers. SA-COC-1654-DQ