

FSC Principles and Criteria

The FSC Principles and Criteria (P&C) describe how the forests have to be managed to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of present and future generations. They include managerial aspects as well as environmental and social requirements. FSC rules are the strictest and FSC's social and environmental requirements the highest.

The FSC P&C form the basis for all FSC forest management standards. Based on these 10 principles, the FSC has developed further rules (called policies or standards) that define and explain specific requirements.

Here is a summary of some of the points the FSC Principles and Criteria require. Many of the points listed below will appear almost basic – but in many places even these basic requirements are not fulfilled. This is where FSC can have the biggest positive impact.

- Prohibit conversion of forests or any other natural habitat
- Respect of international workers rights
- Respect of Human Rights with particular attention to indigenous peoples
- Prohibit the use of hazardous chemicals
- No corruption – follow all applicable laws
- Identification and appropriate management of areas that need special protection (e.g. cultural or sacred sites, habitat of endangered animals or plants)

Overview of the FSC Principles and Criteria

Principle 1. Compliance with all applicable laws and international treaties

Principle 2. Demonstrated and uncontested, clearly defined, long-term land tenure and use rights

Principle 3. Recognition and respect of indigenous peoples' rights

Principle 4. Maintenance or enhancement of long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities and respect of worker's rights in compliance with International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions

Principle 5. Equitable use and sharing of benefits derived from the forest

Principle 6. Reduction of environmental impact of logging activities and maintenance of the ecological functions and integrity of the forest

Principle 7. Appropriate and continuously updated management plan

Principle 8. Appropriate monitoring and assessment activities to assess the condition of the forest, management activities and their social and environmental impacts

Principle 9. Maintenance of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) defined as environmental and social values that are considered to be of outstanding significance or critical importance

Principle 10. In addition to compliance with all of the above, plantations must contribute to reduce the pressures on and promote the restoration and conservation of natural forests.

Frequently asked questions

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- Why does FSC certify forest management in natural forests?
- Why does FSC certify forest management in the tropics?
- How does FSC avoid certifying forests that are illegally logged?
- What is the problem and what solutions does FSC offer?
- How does FSC certification make a difference in the world's forests?
- Why should I become FSC certified?
- Who makes the FSC rules?
- What changes do FSC rules require foresters to make?

More FAQs