

Temperate forest

Sustainable brands

Certification according to FSC

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international non-governmental, not for profit organization. It was established in 1993 to promote responsible management of world's forests and plantations. 'Responsible management' means: safeguarding natural environment, delivering real benefits to populations, local communities, and workers, ensuring economic efficiency. FSC members are: environmental and social groups (Greenpeace, WWF, Legambiente, Amnesty International, etc.), native communities, forest owners, industries processing and commercializing timber, companies in large-scale distribution, researchers and specialists, certification bodies, citizens and anybody sharing the goals of the organisation. FSC has adopted a practical tool to accomplish its mission: a voluntary and third-party (independent) certification system specific for forestry and forest products, which operates at an international level. It's divided among between Forest Management certification and Chain of Custody certification. Good forest management certification is based on 10 Principles & 57 Criteria (P&C) which FSC has studied involving all interested parties. These P&C hold international value and must be adjusted on a local scale. Both individual and group (which means for more than one owner) certifications are available and faster and simpler certification procedures are provided for small forest areas. Chain of custody certification (COC), instead, is based on norms related to product traceability and laws over the use of international registered trademarks. A traceability certification implies the identification of all steps from the forest of origin where logs are extracted to the finished product. Possession of a valid chain of custody certificate is necessary to mark products with the FSC logo.

FSC-Italy

Gruppo FSC-Italia is an independent not-for-profit association established in 2001 and officially recognized as a National Italian Initiative by FSC in 2002. It works in harmony with the goals and the mission of FSC International to promote the diffusion of good forest management and FSC certification in our country.

Gruppo FSC-Italia works on a voluntary basis only and without any external funding. Among its members, which have become many by now, figure: forest owners and their trade associations, wood and paper firms, environmental organizations, trade unions, freelancers and certification bodies.

Some public bodies also participate playing the role of observers (Emilia Romagna, Tuscany and Umbria Regions). At a national level, as well as at international level, operating mechanisms adopted by FSC ensure the greatest participation of all interested parties and maximum balance among different interests (environmental, economic and social) at stake.

- Among the activities carried out by the Group we must mention:
- definition of standards of good forest management in accordance with FSC International principles and criteria which suit different forest areas on the Italian territory;
- technical assistance and information to anyone interested in FSC certification;
- promotion of the FSC brand and control over the correct use of the latter;
- encouraging exchange of knowledge and information among actors involved in forest management and wood processing;
- promotion of studies and pilot projects on issues related to sustainable forest management, certification and marketing of certified forest products;
- comparison within existing forest agreements for mutual recognition, etc.

The Association recognizes voluntary certification and independent management of forest products as a tool which can contribute to valorisation of the forest-wood sector and promotion of correct management of woods.

Other sustainable brands

Other available brands apart from FSC are:

- European Ecolabel: ecological quality community trademark, voluntary and selective based on the evaluation of ecological qualities and performance of the whole life cycle of a product; established in 1992 and currently subjected to a guideline approved in 2000;
- Blue Angel: German brand and Ecolabel forerunner, it was founded in 1977 and for roughly ten years was the only ecological labelling programme;
- White Swan: created in 1989 in the northern European area, it has less restrictive rules in comparison to Blue Angel and also certifies companies which use fibers coming from virgin forests having scarce environmental guarantee;
- These brands are the most renowned brands in Italy and Europe but there are others used in Japan, Brazil and other parts of the world.