

What is FSC?

FSC, or Forest Stewardship Council®, is a global forestry certification system established for forests and forest products. It was founded in 1993 and is an international, non-profit, open membership organization which is constituted of individuals and representatives from organizations. FSC certification covers three main areas: environment, social conditions and economics. FSC's aim is that the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations.

What is PEFC?

PEFC, or Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification™, is an international forest certification system that promotes environmentally, socially and economically sustainable forestry throughout the world. Requirements of PEFC certification covers the protection of forest biodiversity, forest health and growth, maintenance, and recreation. PEFC works as an umbrella organization by endorsing national forest certification systems which are tailored to local priorities and conditions.

What are the similarities between FSC and PEFC?

Both FSC and PEFC are international non-governmental, non-profit organisations. Both schemes work to promote responsible forestry through standards for responsible forestry and standards for traceability. This means that both schemes represent a guarantee that the product carrying their logo comes from forests where no more trees are cut down than the forest can manage to reproduce. At the same time it is a guarantee for the protection of the animal life and flora and that the people working in the forests are ensured proper working conditions.

What is the difference between FSC and PEFC?

For the average end-consumer there is not much difference between the two label schemes FSC and PEFC.

FSC was founded in the early 1990s on the basis of concerns over tropical deforestation and the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Few years later PEFC was founded, evolving from a pan-European rival to FSC to become a global competitor. Today FSC is clearly in the leading position when it comes to appeal and market presence, however, PEFC extends to more of the world's forests.

Other than that the most notable differences are that FSC is based on environmental organisations, companies, and social organisations whereas PEFC is the foresters' own organisations. Generally speaking it can also be said that FSC works by a global set of rules whereas PEFC adapts their rules to national standards.

Over the next years FSC and PEFC are raising their standards making them more compatible.

What is Chain of Custody (CoC)?

Chain-of-Custody is an expression frequently used in connection with sustainability and green forestry. It has to do with traceability which basically means that there is evidence of a product's origin from a sustainable forest.

CoC is the channel through which products are distributed from their origin to their end-destination. That means it is the flow through the supply chain all the way from the actual forest to the final destination (retailer/merchant) which proves that the product comes from well-managed forests. To comply with CoC all the links in the chain must have an audited Chain of Custody process. The expression CoC can also be used to provide traceability for schemes which verify the legality of wood (e.g. EU Timber Regulation)