

FSC® PROJECT CERTIFICATION GUIDE

Project Certification (FSC-STD-40-006)

This is FSC's certification for construction and renovation projects, civil engineering works, and unique structures made of, or containing, forest-based materials (e.g., buildings, bridges, event infrastructure, pavilions, transport vehicles). A certificate is issued to the entity managing the project ('**the Organisation**'). Projects can be certified once finalised (one-time) or under continuous certification for multiple projects.

Non-Certified Contractors

Unlike standard Chain of Custody certification where every entity in the supply chain must be FSC-certified, Project Certification **allows non-certified project members to participate under a project member agreement** with the Organisation. **Project members** in this context are contractors who purchase, produce, and / or install FSC-certified materials or products for the project off- or onsite.

Sourcing & Verification

Materials for projects can be sourced by **the Organisation and by project members**. All FSC-claimed inputs must be purchased from valid FSC-certified suppliers and verified on delivery documents. See section *Documentation & Verification System* for more information, and click on the icon for our collection of resources on *Inputs & Special Cases*.



Why FSC Project Certification?



Building Standard Compliance



Public Procurement



Credibility & Transparency



National & International Market Recognition



Competitive Differentiation



Future-proofing



First-Mover Advantage



Climate & Biodiversity Impact

Three Options for Project Certification

1

Full Project Certification Claim

All wood materials are FSC-certified (FSC 100%, FSC Mix, or Post-Consumer Recycled).

Best for: Premium Swiss projects targeting highest sustainability standards and international recognition.

"Project X is FSC-certified."

2

Component-specific Claims

Claim on specific components or materials of a project that are FSC-certified.

Best for: Phased sustainability approaches or highlighting signature elements in Swiss architecture.

"All door frames in Project X are FSC Mix 80% certified."

3

Percentage Claims

Percentage of FSC material used, with remaining from recycled or controlled source.

Best for: Flexibility in material sourcing while maintaining sustainability credentials.

"Project X was built from 75% FSC wood."

1

Before: Preparation & Setup

1. Project Definition & Initial Assessment

- Clearly define the project scope, objectives, and the intended claim option (full project, component-specific, or percentage).
- Conduct an initial assessment of material needs, potential suppliers, and project members.



2. Supplier Verification & Certification Body Selection

- Identify FSC-certified suppliers, verify certificate validity & product scope in the [FSC Public Search database](#) before ordering.
- Request quote and apply with an [FSC-accredited certification body](#); align documentation system expectations with the CB early.



3. Agreements & Training

- Establish written [agreements](#) with all non-FSC-certified project members. These agreements are essential for non-certified project members purchasing, processing or installing FSC-certified materials.
- Conduct comprehensive [training](#) for all relevant project personnel proportionate to size/complexity. Training should cover how to specify and find FSC-certified wood, verify that it has been supplied, and what to do if non-FSC-certified wood is supplied.



4. Material Planning & Documentation System Setup

- Identify FSC-certified materials, check availability, and place advance orders.
- Establish a centralised, digital [documentation](#) system to manage records, as proper documentation is the key for successful certification. Verify the adequacy of the documentation system with the certification body.

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During: Implementation & Audit

1. Material Management

- Verify FSC claims immediately on delivery documents.
- Ensure physical/temporal/identification-based segregation where risk of mixing exists, at site and project members' worksites.



2. Ongoing Documentation and Internal Checks

- Maintain continuous documentation of goods receipt, processing, transfers and (if used) percentage calculations; address discrepancies promptly.
- Conduct regular internal checks to ensure compliance with procedures.



3. Main Audit and Correction Phase

- The CB performs evaluation(s) during implementation (commonly mid-project, annual for multi-year projects) to verify conformance.
- Address any non-conformities identified from the main audit during the correction phase.

3

Completion: Certification & Communication

1. Final Audit and Certificate Issuance

- A final audit involves a document review after project completion.
- For one-time certification, the certificate can be terminated after project finalisation and certification; for projects requiring changes/maintenance within one year, the Organisation may request a scope extension.
- Organisations can choose continuous certification for multiple projects (renewable every 5 years) or a single project certificate.



2. Project Statement and Communication

- Once no further forest-based materials will be added, the Organisation issues a CB-approved project statement that includes the required content (e.g., claim per Table B; completion date; unique identifier; disclaimer if applicable).
- For long-term promotional use of FSC trademarks (beyond one year post-project), a Promotional License Agreement (PLA) must be signed with FSC Schweiz.

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Common Challenges & How to Address Them

Category	Challenge	How to Address
Material Procurement	Limited availability of certain FSC-certified materials	Start sourcing early; pre-qualify multiple FSC-certified suppliers and verify valid certificate and product scope in the FSC Public Search before ordering; consider eligible alternatives (e.g., reclaimed inputs, FSC Mix Credit where appropriate) and plan for percentage-claim calculation if not all inputs can be claim-contributing.
	High minimum order quantities (MOQs) and longer lead times	Aggregate orders across partners/subcontractors; fix lead times contractually; sequence works to availability; maintain a substitution matrix that preserves eligibility and claim-contribution where needed.
	Eligible inputs for projects	Only FSC-claimed and eligible reclaimed inputs count toward percentage claims (FSC Mix/Recycled count proportionally, Credit counts 100%). FSC Controlled Wood/CFM is eligible in projects but not claim-contributing for percentage.
	Higher costs for FSC-certified materials	Budget early; highlight compliance/market benefits (e.g., sustainability, compliance, marketing); leverage percentage-claim pathway where suitable; avoid last-minute procurement which raises price risk. Budget for potential price premiums, and explore cost-sharing or bulk purchasing with other projects or partners
Documentation	Incomplete or late delivery documentation	Specify FSC documentation requirements in tender/Purchase Orders; on receipt, immediately verify supplier's valid FSC certificate and product scope in FSC Public Search , the correct FSC claim on delivery/sales documents, and the supplier's FSC CoC/CW code where applicable; quarantine if discrepancies.
	Complex tracking of material flow in decentralised projects	Use a centralised digital system; standardize filenames/checklists; require prompt submission of delivery/transfer docs; implement segregation (physical/temporal/ID) at site and project members' worksites to prevent mixing.
Organisational	Late involvement or low awareness	Mandatory kickoff training (delivery-claim checks, segregation, documentation); provide concise work instructions matched to member size/complexity; assign a documentation coordinator.
	Non-conforming materials discovered during or after completion	Quarantine and correct/replace where feasible; if detected post-certification, notify CB and affected direct customers within five business days and cooperate on corrective action; for continuous certification, analyze root causes and prevent recurrence.
Communication	Uncertainty about what can be claimed and how to communicate it	Checked well in advance: use the approved wording/visuals for the chosen claim type (full project, component-specific, or percentage), share drafts with the internal project contact, and obtain the certification body's clearance before release; keep messages at project level (no supplier logos/codes) and file the final, cleared versions with the project records.
	Post-project promotional requirements	For promotional use of the FSC trademarks beyond project duration, you must sign a Promotional License Agreement (PLA) with FSC Schweiz.

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Non-Certified Project Member Agreements

Non-certified members can participate in project certification, but formal agreements are essential.

Required Agreement Contents (Clause 3.2)

- **Compliance Commitment (3.2a):** Written commitment to comply with all applicable FSC project certification requirements
- **Trademark Restrictions (3.2b):** Not make unauthorized use of FSC trademarks
- **Outsourcing Limitations (3.2c):** Prohibition of further outsourcing activities that risk introducing non-certified materials. If necessary, inform Organisations and include subcontractor in scope
- **Audit Rights (3.2d):** Accept Organisation's certification body audit rights (Non-FSC-certified project members are subject to sampling audit by certification body)
- **Documentation Requirements (3.2e):** Maintain complete records of goods receipt and processing; provide audit access
- **Material Handling Procedures (4.8/5.1):**
 - Receiving and verifying FSC-certified materials
 - Physical or temporal separation of certified materials
 - Documentation of material transfers

Implementation Tips

- Provide agreement templates in advance of project kickoff (3.2)
- Review content during training session (1.5)
- Designate responsible person at each project member
- Maintain centralised agreement & documentation system (3.2e)



Note:

- **For Continuous Project Certification:** All project members sourcing forest-based input materials must be FSC-certified per [FSC-STD-40-004](#) or [FSC-STD-40-006](#) (3.1)
- **For One-Time Projects:** non-certified members may participate under agreements (3.2)



Documentation & Verification System

Early and proper documentation is the backbone of successful FSC project certification.

Required Documentation

1. Administrative Records

- Procedures and work instructions provided to project members (1.4)
- Project scope information and training records
- Trademark approvals and complaints records (1.9)

2. Supplier & Material Records

- Validation of supplier FSC certificates and product group scope (verify at [FSC Public Search](#))
- Delivery documents / invoices with correct FSC claims and certificate codes (4.8)
- Material tracking between project members

3. Project Implementation Records

- Project drawings / specifications
- Physical separation / identification protocols
- Material verification records proving only eligible inputs used (1.7)
- Volume calculations (percentage claims, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4)

Organisation Responsibilities (2)

- Provide documented procedures to non-certified members (1.4)
- Demonstrate eligible materials usage (1.7)
- Support transaction verification and testing (1.8)

Verification Procedures

- Immediate FSC claims verification upon receipt
- Document discrepancies and corrective actions
- Regular internal documentation checks
- Maintain complete audit trail

Note:

- **Record Retention (1.6):** Mandatory 5-year retention of all project records
- **Digital Management:** Clear data structure, consistent naming, and regulated access control



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Training Framework

Effective training ensures all project members understand and can implement FSC requirements, reducing non-conformities during audits.

Organisation Training Obligation (1.5)

The **Organisation** must ensure relevant personnel of non-FSC-certified project members are trained for competence in implementing certification requirements appropriate to their size and complexity.

Training Content for Project Members

1. FSC Basics

- What FSC certification means & project benefits
- Different FSC claims (FSC 100%, FSC Mix, etc.)
- Difference between certification of project vs. certification of products

2. Material Handling

- How to verify FSC claims on delivery documents (4.8)
- Approved separation methods (physical, temporal, identification by markings) (5.1)
- Procedures for handling non-compliant materials (5.2)

3. Documentation & Procedures

- Record-keeping requirements (see Documentation)
- Implementation of documented procedures provided by Organisation (1.4)
- Complaint handling procedures (1.9)

Training Implementation (1.5)

- **Competence-based approach (1.5):** Verify understanding, not just attendance
- **Size-appropriate (1.5):** Scale training complexity to project member capabilities
- **Mandatory initial training:** In-person or online session before the start of the project
- **Refresher sessions:** Before critical project phases
- **Visual aids:** Production area reference materials and quick guides

Training Records (1.6)

- Maintain complete training records for a minimum of 5 years
- Document attendees, content covered, competence verification, and training dates
- Include in centralised documentation system for audit access



Audit Preparation

Successful audits require careful preparation and understanding of common non-conformities.

Pre-Audit Preparation

1. Documentation Review (1.6)

- Verify completeness of all project member agreements (3.2)
- Ensure training records complete & signed (1.5)
- Compile delivery documents with FSC claims and certificate codes (4.8)
- Prepare material flow documentation showing traceability (1.7)

2. Site Preparation (5.1)

- Ensure FSC materials are clearly identified and separated
- Brief all staff who might interact with auditors
- Prepare separation procedures demonstration
- Make all relevant documentation accessible

Final Audit Preparation

- Complete material inventory with FSC claims
- Delivery documents organised chronologically
- Material transfer records between project members
- Final percentage calculations (if applicable) (4.3)
- Draft project declaration for approval (**mandatory, see 7.1**)
- Prepare promotional materials for verification

Audit Follow-Up

- Document non-conformities with corrective actions
- Non-conforming materials (5.2): Notify CB & customers within 5 business days
- Support transaction verification requests (1.8)
- Share lessons learned with project members

Tips: Common Main Audit Non-Conformities

- Incomplete documentation of material flow (1.7)
- Insufficient separation procedures (5.1)
- Incomplete training records (1.5)
- Missing supplier agreements (3.2)
- Unclear responsibilities among project members



Note: Non-FSC-certified project members are subject to sampling audit by certification body

FSC® PROJECT CERTIFICATION GUIDE RESOURCES

Project Certification

Resource	Source	Link
Project Certification Standard	FSC International	FSC-STD-40-006
Project Certification Standard (German)	FSC Germany	FSC-STD-40-006 in German
Project Certification Standard Questions & Answers (Q&A)	FSC International	FSC-STD-40-006 Q&A
FSC Supplier Certificate Search	FSC International	FSC Certificate Database
Certification Body Selection	FSC Switzerland	Find a Certifier
Swiss Timber Construction	FSC Switzerland	FSC Timber in Construction
General Information	FSC International	Tools from FSC International

Chain of Custody (CoC)

Resource	Source	Link
CoC Standard	FSC International	FSC-STD-40-004
CoC Directive	FSC International	FSC-DIR-40-004
CoC Product Classification	FSC International	FSC-STD-40-004a
FSC Supplier Certificate Search	FSC International	FSC Certificate Database
General Information	FSC International	Tools from FSC International

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Inputs & Special Cases

Resource	Source	Link
Sourcing Reclaimed Material Standard	FSC International	FSC-STD-40-007
FSC & Circular Bio-Economy	FSC International	FSC Circularity Hub
Sourcing Controlled Wood Standard	FSC International	FSC-STD-40-005
Sourcing Controlled Wood Directive	FSC International	FSC-DIR-40-005
FSC Supplier Certificate Search	FSC International	FSC Certificate Database

Communications

Resource	Source	Link
FSC Trademark Requirements	FSC International	FSC-STD-50-001
FSC Trademark Use Advice Note	FSC International	FSC-ADV-50-006
FSC Trademark Use Guide	FSC International	FSC Trademark Guide
Promotional License Agreement / Holder	FSC International	Promotional License
Promotional License Agreement / Holder	FSC Switzerland	Promotional License
Marketing Design	FSC International	FSC Brand Hub *

*Only can access after passing the main audit

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Training Framework Resources

Resource	Source	Link
Training Materials & E-Learning	FSC International	FSC E-Training
FSC Connect: Informational Portal	FSC International	FSC Connect
Overall Document Library	FSC International	FSC Document Center

Effective Agreements with Non-Certified Project Members Resources

Resource	Source	Link
Agreement Template	FSC Switzerland	Mustervorlage_Agreement Template
Project Certification Checklist	FSC Switzerland	FSC Project Certification Checklist

Documentation & Verification System Resources

Resource	Source	Link
FSC Supplier Certificate Search	FSC International	FSC Certificate Database
Trademark Guidelines	FSC International	FSC Brand Hub*

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