

VERIFIED IMPACT OF ECOSYSTEM SERVICES - AFRICA REGION



FSC® F000100

The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) is an international, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting responsible management of the world's forests.

FSC is the world's most credible solution for forest management; trusted to secure better outcomes for the markets, communities, and workers, whilst providing forests for future generations.

30+ years of existence

Currently, 150+ million hectares of forest worldwide certified.

62000+ Chain-of-Custody certificates across 130 countries

1169 members in 89 countries

85+ FM Certificate Holders with verified ecosystem services impact in 25 Countries

Certification Options

FSC provides proven tools that protect forests.



Forest Management Certification

Gold standard of responsible management of natural forests and plantations.

For forest operators



Chain of Custody (CoC) Certification

Confirms materials are sourced sustainably throughout the supply chain.

For processing



Promotional License

Leverage credible FSC trademarks for promotional purposes of FSC-certified products

For non-certified retailers and brand-owners



FSC Forest Management Certification provides the assurance that forest management practices comply with the FSC mission of promoting and protecting the forests of the world.

FSC Chain-of-Custody (CoC) Certification verifies that FSC-certified material has been identified and separated from ineligible and unacceptable material as it makes its way along the value chain from the forest to the market. FSC CoC covers a variety of situations and entities, enabling organizations to demonstrate their commitment to FSC's standards.

Certificate holders are assessed by highly qualified auditors of an independent accredited Certification Body. Once compliance is confirmed, a certificate is issued and the forestry company can now make public claims about the quality of their forest management practices.

Brand owners and retailers may enter into partnerships with FSC in the form of a **Promotional Licence Agreement** to promote their sourcing of FSC CoC certified materials and products.

Forest Management Certification is constructed around 10 core principles:



Principle 1
Compliance with Laws



Principle 2
Workers Rights and
employment conditions



Principle 3
Indigenous Peoples
Rights



Principle 4
Community Relations



Principle 5
Benefits from the
Forests



Principle 6
Environmental Values
and Impacts



Principle 7
Management Planning



Principle 8
Monitoring and
Assessment



Principle 9
High Conservation
Values



Principle 10
Implementation of
Management Activities

Our forests are so much more than trees

Forests provide society with a wide range of benefits. These include reliable flows of clean water, productive soil, rich biodiversity and carbon sequestration. These are referred to as ecosystem services, and in FSC certified forests these are protected. FSC-certified forests may well provide clear financial capital and benefits in terms of forest products, but the value of these ecosystem services has often been overlooked and is seldom factored in terms of the financial costs and benefits associated with such services.

FSC Ecosystem Services and Verified Impact

Verified Impact measures the benefits derived from ecosystem services and provides high-integrity data, which allows for a better understanding of the true value of forests.

Studies have shown that the global benefits derived from ecosystem services are 10 times as much as the value of the top 50 companies in the world.

A beautiful landscape or ecosystem is a lot more than a passing interest; it has a determinable value in the decision-making that drives our environmental and conservation efforts. FSC Ecosystem Services Claims:

- provide us with a tool to quantify the value of environmental and conservation efforts;
- offer forest owners and managers an additional incentive to implement and maintain responsible forest management rather than pursue the short-term economic benefits of forest degradation;
- aim to increase the confidence of governments, investors, and buyers in ecosystem services markets;
- can also be used to demonstrate the impact made by investments in preserving ecosystem services and contributions towards the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- for carbon capture and storage can also be used as evidence of contributions towards meeting commitments under Article 5 of the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Showing the Full Impact of Sustainable Forestry

Showing the full value of forest ecosystems is fundamental to climate action. Ecosystem Service Verified Impact claims are the only verification solution that provides reporting on a suite of ecosystem services provided by sustainably managed forests, including biodiversity, carbon, water, soil, recreation and culture (under development). Measuring these allows the full impact of sustainable forestry to be calculated and recognized. This enables partnerships to promote and reward the protection of key ecosystems.



BIODIVERSITY



CARBON



WATER



SOIL



RECREATION



CULTURE
(under development)

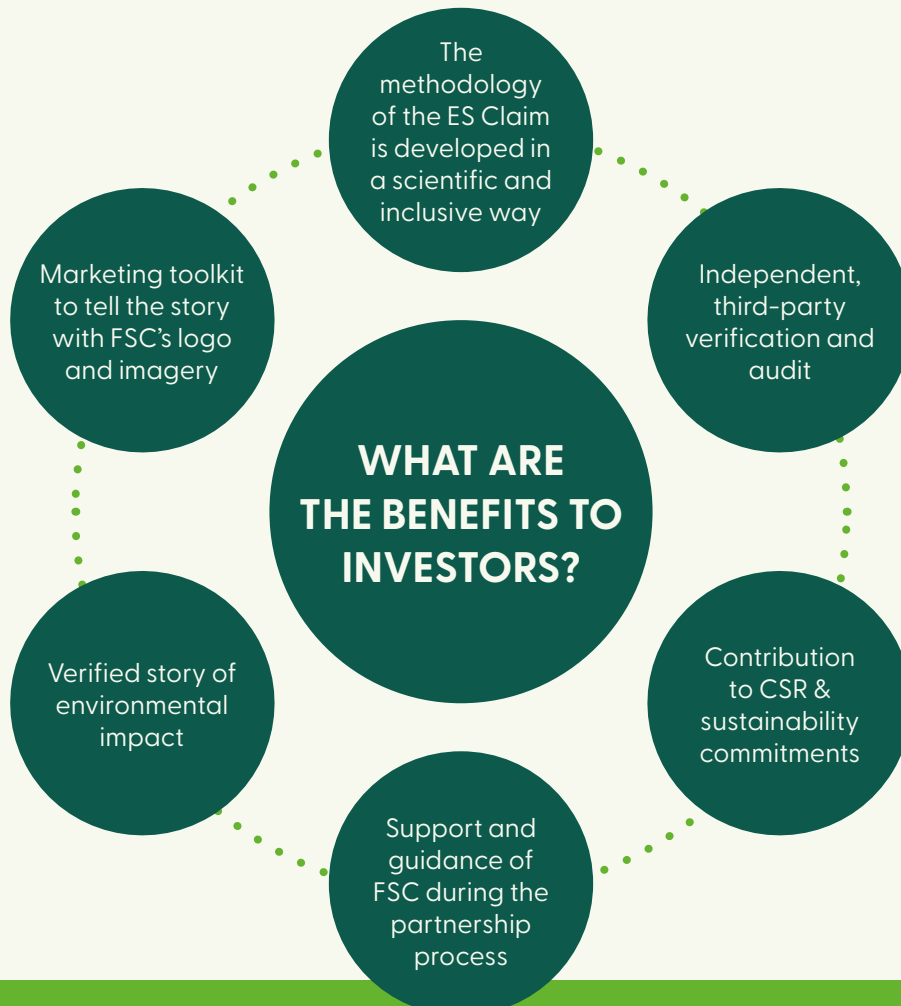
FSC believes that markets should work for the ecosystems they are part of, and the Verified Impact claims are our tool to show the true value of forests to markets.

FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure

Building on its existing world-renowned Forest Management certification, the FSC Ecosystem Services Procedure provides a global approach that FSC Certificate Holders use to demonstrate the impact of their forest management activities on one or more ecosystem services at the forest management unit level.

Once a forest manager has implemented a seven step process to demonstrate a positive impact, this is evaluated by a Certification Body. The resulting positive impacts, verified by third-party auditors, can be developed into Ecosystem Services claims, which can be used internally for promotion and communication purposes as well as externally to seek sponsorship.

External sponsorship allows the verified Impact or credits to be converted into a monetary value for the landowner (forest steward) and participating stakeholders.



FSC Biodiversity Conservation Impact Verified in Namibia

Bush encroachment is a natural phenomenon characterised by the excessive expansion of bush (indigenous and alien invasive tree and shrub species) at the expense of other plant species, especially grasses. Bush encroachment results in land degradation and is estimated to affect up to 45 million hectares of Namibian land, increasing by approximately 3%/year at the expense of savannah landscapes, i.e. approx. 1.3 million ha per annum. (www.conservationnamibia.com)

Bush encroachment has severe negative consequences on key ecosystem services, especially biodiversity and groundwater recharge. Wildlife populations including grazing antelope species, zebra and cheetahs (already near endangered status) are declining in affected areas. Agricultural productivity in Namibia has declined by two-thirds throughout the past decades, mainly due to the negative impact of bush encroachment. The phenomenon affects both commercial and communal farming in Namibia, where approximately 70% of the population depends on the agricultural sector. (www.fao.org)

An independent study, in 2020, concluded that while trying to improve the ecosystems with selective harvesting, managing this process needs to be sustainable.

(Shikangalah, R. and Mapani, B., 2020. A review on bush encroachment in Namibia: From a problem to an opportunity?)



CMO Namibia (FSC-C140298)

ES1: Biodiversity Conservation; Impact ES1.5: Restoration of natural forest characteristics

The first ecosystem service claim in Africa was verified in 2021 in Namibia, by FSC Certificate Holder – CMO Namibia (Pty) Ltd (FSC-C140298). The impact was for the restoration of natural forests via the selective harvesting of indigenous encroacher bush and eradication of alien invasive tree species. To date 72 000 hectares, have been restored through selective harvesting.

Robust management systems are applied in the setting of harvest levels, the selection of the invasive trees for harvesting, and ensuring that responsible measures are implemented in the harvesting and extraction processes so as to not damage remaining tree species, which are vital to creating a healthy ecosystem. The management system ensures that a mosaic approach is utilised in the selection process, ensuring that a mix of different tree species, densities and height classes remain to promote and maintain biodiverse populations of plants, insects, reptiles, birds and mammals.

Monitoring mechanisms are employed by the landowners and managers to ensure that re-growth of encroacher species is monitored and minimised to prevent a regression to the encroached state.

Jumbo Charcoal, Namibia (FSC-C015680)

ES1: Biodiversity Conservation; ES1.5: Restoration of natural forest characteristics

ES 1.5 focuses on restoring rangeland to its natural state. For a large part of Namibia this includes thinning out encroacher bush species to improve species diversity, increase carrying capacity, promoting biodiversity, and improving soil health and overall ecosystem functioning. The aim is to restore natural habitats and processes that support Namibia’s ecosystem services and diverse wildlife while ensuring long-term sustainability.

16 505 hectares were verified in 2023.



Restoration of Forest Carbon Stock and Biodiversity Conservation in Uganda

Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA) (FSC-C148799)

ES2.2: Restoration of forest carbon stocks; ES1.1: Biodiversity conservation

Uganda Timber Growers Association (UTGA) is restoring 1000ha of degraded forest land in West Bugwe Central Forest Reserve (CFR) and is expected to restore it to its natural forest cover, increase forest carbon stocks and conserve biodiversity while contributing to the global efforts to mitigate climate change. In 2023, UTGA added the CFR to expand its FSC group scheme and has so far planted 347 953 indigenous tree seedlings covering 680 hectares of the restored forest area.

1000 hectares verified in 2023.

FSC Biodiversity Conservation Impact Verified in Republic of Congo

Interholco (FSC-C022952)

ES1: Biodiversity Conservation; ES1.5: Restoration of natural forest characteristics

According to WWF's Living Planet Report 2022, wildlife populations have plunged an average of 69% over the past 48 years.

The Ngombé Forest Management Unit managed by Interholco's subsidiary Industrie Forestière d'Ouessou (IFO) in the Republic of Congo covers an area of 11 600 km (11 59 600 ha) which has been FSC®-certified since 2009. Together with the two adjacent national parks, the Ngombé forest covers an area of more than 2.96 million hectares. This is one of the largest wildlife hotspots in central Africa, home to Western lowland gorillas, African forest elephants and other threatened species.

IFO management actions allow the maintenance of populations of priority species gorilla, chimpanzee and forest elephant, and the ecological integrity of the forest. The claim was approved by the Certification Body, Preferred by Nature which verified the requirements of the FSC® Ecosystem Services certification during an audit in November 2022.

2.96 million hectares was verified.



INTERESTED?

Interested in driving innovative, nature-based solutions to meet your corporate environmental commitments?

Supporting FSC®-certified landowners and managers is vital to ensuring continued implementation of responsible forest management practices and protection of ecosystem services. You can assist by purchasing FSC-certified products and by investing via sponsoring Ecosystem Services projects in FSC-certified forests.

By providing financial support or sponsorship for the protection of valuable forest ecosystem services, you receive clear evidence of the positive impact your investment has created – leveraging several benefits for your company. Moreover, you can use the widely recognised FSC trademarks to tell the story of the unique forest landscape involved and promote your support for protecting its ecosystem services. Research shows that 46% of global consumers recognise the FSC logo and 77% show moderate to high levels of confidence in FSC to protect forests. (IPSOS FSC Global Survey, 2023)

Interested in purchasing these verified FSC Ecosystem Services Claims?

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