



Forest Stewardship Council®

Sustainable public procurement =
requiring FSC® for construction projects

An introduction to the whys and hows of
sustainable public procurement for construction

Why go for (FSC-certified) wood in construction?

Because it is green and socially responsible! Provided it is produced in a sustainable manner, increasing the wood component in a building reduces its environmental impact throughout its lifecycle. In particular, it can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

However, deforestation and forest degradation are still a reality today. Illegal logging and unsustainable forest practices undermine the environmental and social benefits of using wood. That is why certification of wood is so important and effective, particularly if done with the FSC global certification scheme.

Is this a mission for public authorities?

Indeed it is. In the EU, the public authorities together spend around 18% of GDP on procuring works, goods and services, making procurement a powerful tool to stimulate and mainstream sustainable production and consumption patterns.

Is it difficult?

It does not have to be. FSC-certified timber is competitive and available. However, in order to prevent 'greenwashing,' you, as the buyer, need to play a role in ensuring that you get what you want. FSC has verification procedures in which the end buyer plays a role. This publication is an introduction to the whys and hows of sustainable public procurement for construction. It also describes how FSC provides solutions, and as an organization, is ready to help.

Cover Photo | Project: Ketelhuis (Amstelveen, The Netherlands). Finished: December 2013. Owner: Eneco (energy company). Constructor (CoC-certified): De Klerk Werkendam.



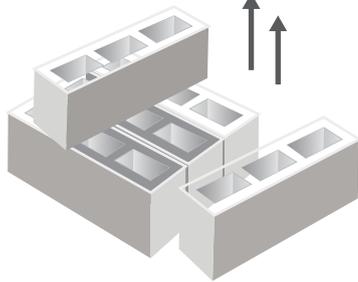
Project: 100 Hoog (Rotterdam, The Netherlands). Finished: January 2014. Owner: Port Au Vin CV. Constructor: BAM Woningbouw Rotterdam. Winner of the 2013 FSC Chain of Custody Award

Wood and construction

Wood is a wonderful building material – beautiful to look at, easy to work with, renewable, and recyclable, carbon-efficient, low-energy and high-performing.

Increasing the use of wood in construction can reduce the environmental footprint of a building upfront, during its lifetime, and at the end of it. One important element is the climate impact of wood compared to other materials, such as concrete and steel. Producing steel is 24 times as energy-intensive as producing wood. The production of concrete comes with 0.14 tons of CO₂ emission per cubic meter, while timber absorbs approximately 0.9 CO₂ per cubic meter, storing that carbon until the wood finally decomposes or gets burnt (ideally for energy production). So increasing the wood component in buildings makes a contribution to mitigating climate change.¹

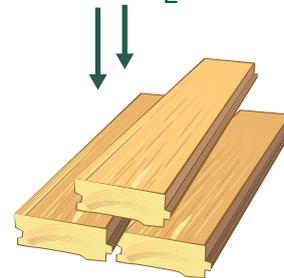
140 kg of CO₂ emitted



1 cubic meter of concrete produced results in 140 kg of CO₂ emissions.

VS

900 kg of CO₂ absorbed



1 cubic meter of timber produced results in 0.9 tonnes of CO₂ stored.

Other environmental impacts of wood use are positive as well – considerably less air and water pollution, less solid waste, etc. More information about impacts can be found here: <http://benefitsforbusiness.fsc.org>.

¹ Source: FSC Forest Stewardship Council, 2013. Choose FSC® certified wood and paper: Discover the benefits for your business. Section: Sector benefits [online]. Available at: <http://benefitsforbusiness.fsc.org/sector-benefits.3.htm> [accessed 15 July 2014].



Project: London 2012 Olympic Park (London, UK). Finished: Spring 2012. Owner: Olympic Deliver Authority. Constructor: CLM.

However, the positive environmental impacts can be undone if the wood comes from harvesting practices that degrade or destroy forests. Unsustainable forestry practices undermine biodiversity, deplete soils, contaminate water and cause carbon emissions. The carbon storage component of timber can only be counted if one is sure that new trees replace the harvested ones.

But there is more: after fishermen and the military, timber and logging work is globally regarded as the third most dangerous job. Training, equipment and safety measures are essential. Moreover, in some parts of the world, logging practices undermine the livelihoods of forest-dependent people, and where they are illegal, also undermine the rule of law, foster corruption, deplete tax incomes, etc.

In the coming years, the demand for forest products will increase because of population and prosperity growth, increased demand for bio-energy, and the emergence of the bio-based economy (replacing oil as resource for plastics etc.). This makes it even more important to promote sustainable forest management through responsible purchasing.

Public authorities can make a difference: if they systematically require the maximum use of wood in construction, restoration and (re)furbishment. If they also include the requirement of certification of such wood in the technical specifications, they contribute to reducing climate change and maintaining biodiversity as well as to social and economic progress in the harvesting regions.

FSC is the most reliable certification scheme

FSC's mission is to promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of the world's forests. It has developed a global scheme of leading national standards for forest management, and a certification scheme for foresters committed to applying them. In combination with robust third-party verification of the performance of these foresters, supply chain standards, a certification scheme for traders and producers and trademark protection, it has developed the world's most well-known and trusted wood products label that helps businesses, public authorities and individual consumers to support these foresters with their purchasing choices.



The FSC scheme is based on permanent balanced multi-stakeholder decision-making, monitoring and evaluation. Environmental and social organizations, trade unions and representatives of indigenous peoples have a strong say, while small and large economic operators feel their interests are taken into account as well. The result is a system based on robust principles and criteria for forest management, adapted to national circumstances; tested rules for companies active in the supply chain; and third-party verification of the performance of certificate holders by professional organizations controlled by a unique specialized global accreditation organization.

The scheme currently includes some 185 million hectares, or 8.6%¹, of all productive forests in the world, and more than 29,000 companies and 140,000 forest smallholders are involved. In the EU, 24%² of productive forests are FSC-certified and green public procurement schemes in several countries profit from the presence of almost 13,000 FSC-certified production and trade companies.

FSC is the preferred scheme for most of the environmental movement globally, while that movement keeps us sharp by pointing out weaknesses and abuse. Legal protection of our logos, in addition to a complaint procedure, address these. The leading global green building promotion scheme LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), uses FSC certification as the minimum requirement for wood (www.usgbc.org/international).

Purchasing FSC-certified materials for projects is the best available option to contribute to sustainable forest management and the prevention of forest degradation.

¹ Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2010. Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010: Main Report [online]. Available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1757e/i1757e.pdf> [accessed 01 August 2014].

² Source: European Union, 2011. Forestry in the EU and the world: A statistical portrait [online]. Available at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-31-11-137/EN/KS-31-11-137-EN.PDF [accessed 21 July 2014].

Special FSC rules for the construction sector

If you ask for sustainably sourced timber products you want to feel confident that you can rely on the evidence, because you want to make a difference! And for FSC, credibility is essential for its existence. That is the reason why the entire chain, from forest to consumer, is controlled. All companies in the chain are FSC-certified and audited by accredited certification bodies. This is called the chain of custody (CoC).

In the construction sector, the contractor and relevant sub-contractors also have to be FSC-certified. This is needed to ensure they know FSC's rules and have the system in place to separate FSC from non-FSC materials in their workshops and yards. Only then can you trust that you get what you want.

It is important that public authorities make it clear from the start that they expect sustainably sourced building materials to be used by certified companies to ensure compliance. Public authorities can easily check the validity of certificates that bidders refer to via the publicly available FSC database (<http://info.fsc.org/>), which shows you whether a certificate is valid and for which kinds of products and/or services.

Many construction firms are not FSC-certified however, and some may contest the need to be in order to offer you a building that they can mark as FSC-certified. Public procurers therefore have a special role to play in ensuring the job gets done properly, thereby also helping FSC to further develop its scheme.



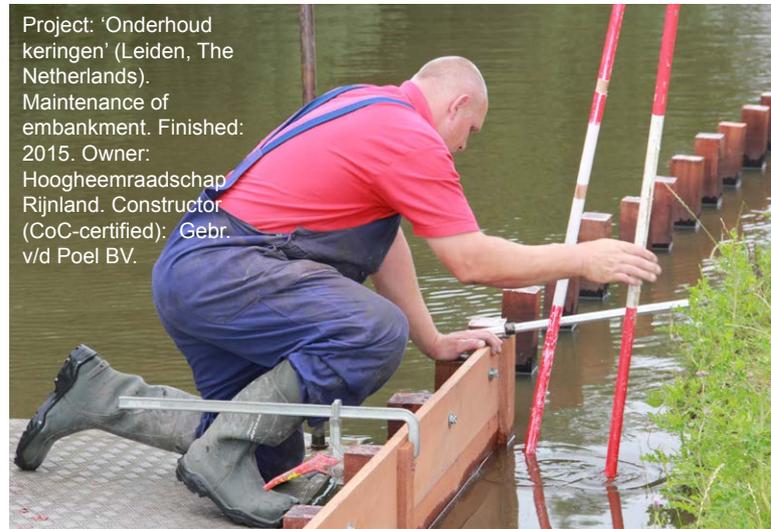
How to include sustainable forest management in tenders for construction

The new EU Directives on public procurement, published on the 28 February 2014, increase the scope for green and sustainable public procurement. Requirements for sustainable production can now, besides in award criteria, also form part of the technical specifications. It is allowed to require labels/certificates, such as FSC, as evidence, so long as equivalent evidence should also be accepted.¹ The EU rules apply for public works contracts of a minimum of €5,186,000. For smaller projects, only national rules are relevant, but the EU rules are often used as a basis.

In the technical specifications you could start by mentioning that you have a specific ambition/minimum level for the use of wood in the project concerned, in terms of the percentage of materials (construction wood, floors, ceilings, wall coverings, furniture etc.). You can clarify that this is because of the relatively favourable ecological footprint of this material, provided it is based on sustainable harvesting. For that reason you require from the tenderers a commitment to work exclusively with timber from sustainable sourcing.

You then need to specify what you mean by sustainable sourcing. One option is to simply quote the FSC Principles & Criteria (FSC-STD-01-001 (Version 4-0, to be succeeded by Version 5 from 2016)), which you can find at www.ic.fsc.org, and require evidence of compliance through FSC certification or equivalent evidence. There are other approaches as well, as clarified for example in the “Buying Sustainable Timber” guide (see www.sustainable-timber-action.org/).

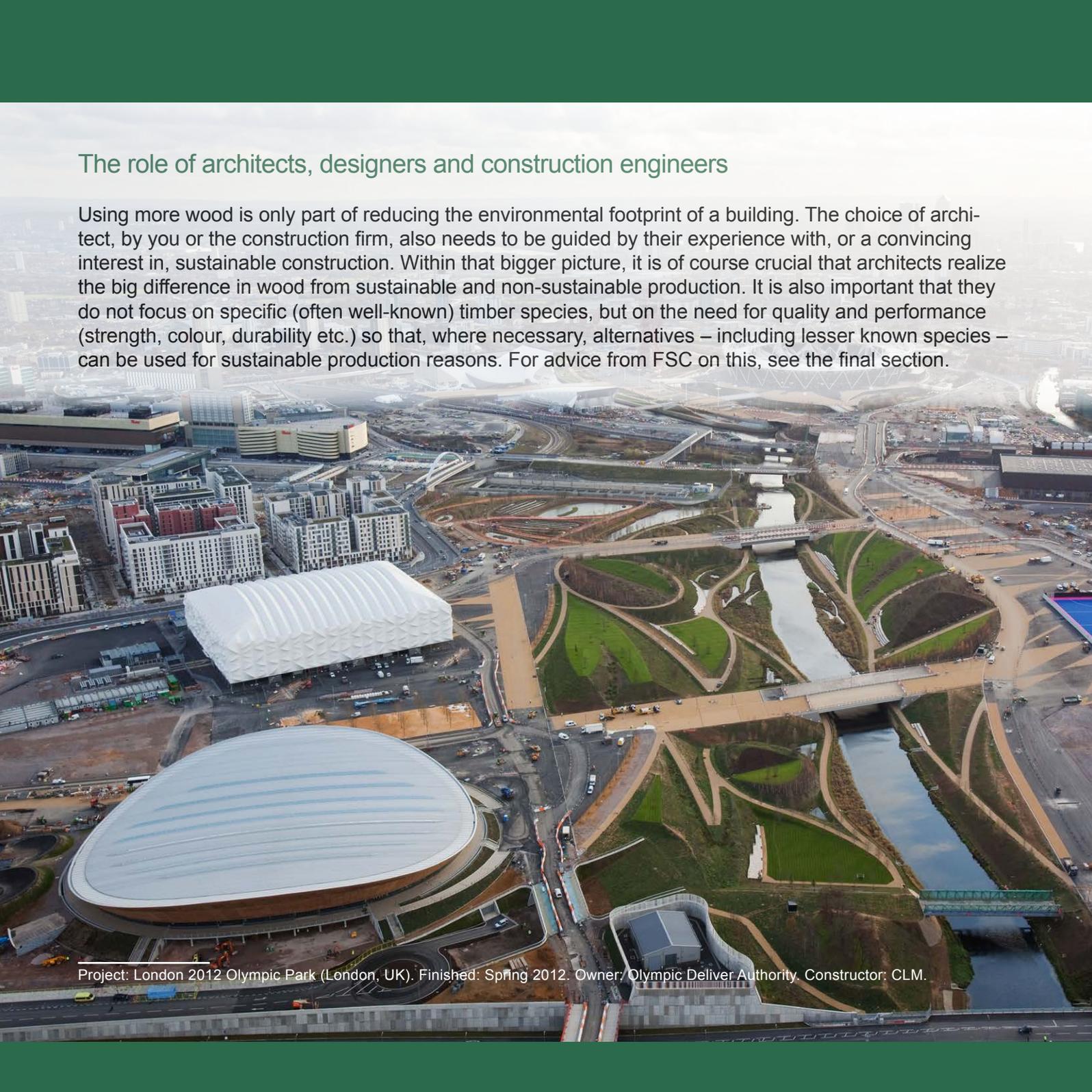
It is important to specify that, where contractors refer to FSC certification, they need to be FSC-certified or acquire such certification (on a permanent basis or specifically for the project concerned), and ensure relevant sub-contractors have, or will have, the same certification as well.



¹ For more information about the new EU rules, visit: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/publicprocurement/modernising_rules/reform_proposals/index_en.htm [accessed 21 July 2014]. The EU Directives have to be transposed into national legislation by February 2016.

The role of architects, designers and construction engineers

Using more wood is only part of reducing the environmental footprint of a building. The choice of architect, by you or the construction firm, also needs to be guided by their experience with, or a convincing interest in, sustainable construction. Within that bigger picture, it is of course crucial that architects realize the big difference in wood from sustainable and non-sustainable production. It is also important that they do not focus on specific (often well-known) timber species, but on the need for quality and performance (strength, colour, durability etc.) so that, where necessary, alternatives – including lesser known species – can be used for sustainable production reasons. For advice from FSC on this, see the final section.



Project: London 2012 Olympic Park (London, UK). Finished: Spring 2012. Owner: Olympic Deliver Authority. Constructor: CLM.



Following up the tender

As mentioned before, for a reliable outcome it is important to work with contractors that have FSC certification. Every FSC-certified company has a unique certification number that you can easily find on the FSC database (<http://info.fsc.org/>), as well as whether the certificate is valid and covers the kind of products/works you are looking for.

If this is not the case, and there are no alternatives, you can discuss with the contractor to go for FSC certification. FSC has several options for this: single CoC certification, multi-site certification for large companies with several sites, group certification for small companies (including subcontractors), and project certification. FSC project certification is project and site-specific. It can be used for any type of new build or refurbishment project, and for permanent or temporary structures. Depending on the size of the company, a certification process can be completed within one or two months. National FSC offices are ready to help you to get this started.

Your role, however, is not over then: to be confident about the use of FSC-certified wood in the project, it is essential to confirm that the certified contractor includes claims concerning the materials/products used in the project in his delivery documents.

Finally, there are rules concerning the communication of the FSC nature of the construction project. These rules exist to protect the credibility of FSC and thereby play a role in the further expansion of sustainable forest management in the world. A certified contractor knows how and under what conditions he can physically label a building as FSC-certified as well as the related communication rights of the owner. The owner of the building can also decide whether or not to promote the building as FSC-certified and, if so, needs a trademark agreement with FSC (through the national or regional FSC Trademark Service Providers).



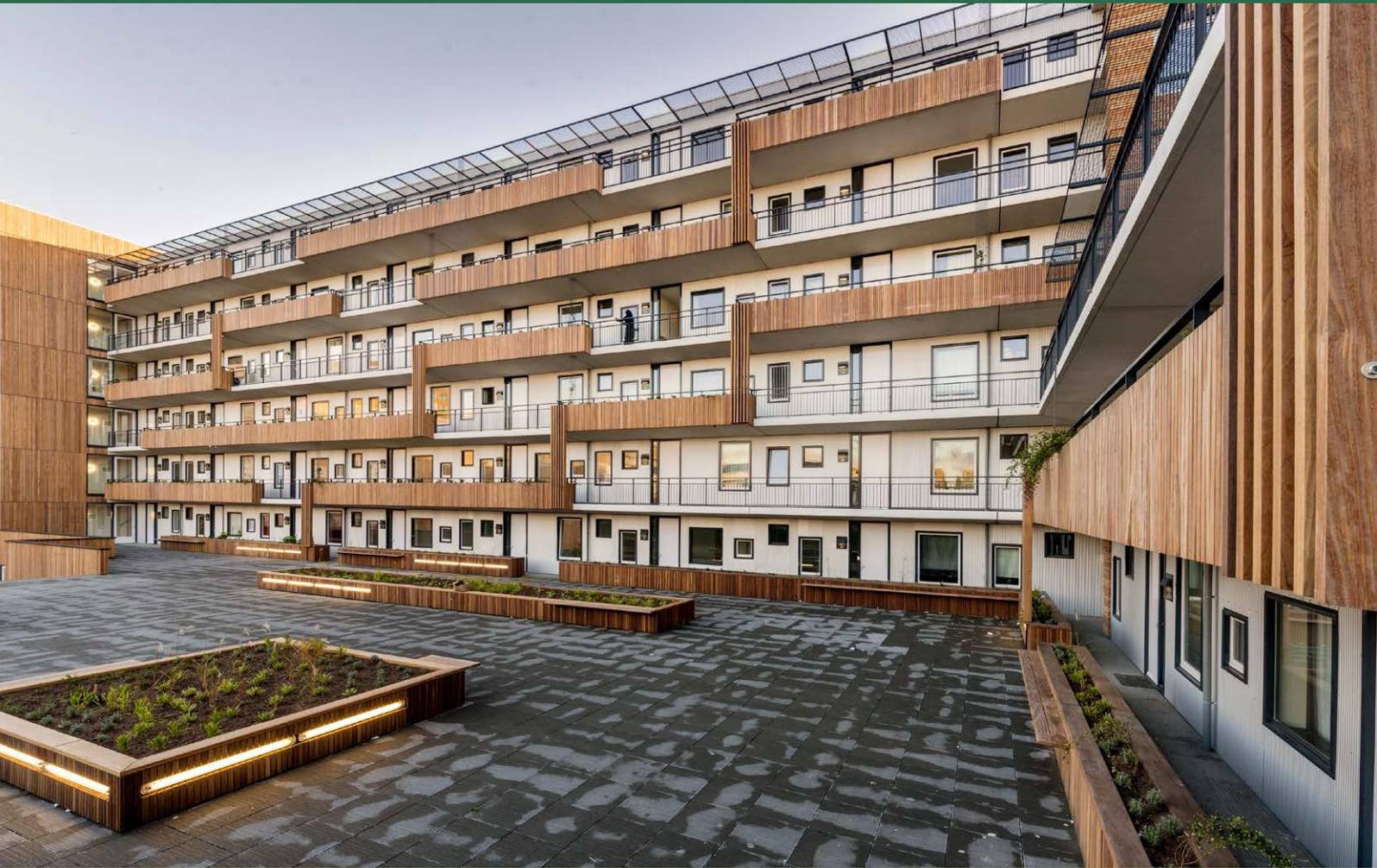
The Netherlands – pioneering in construction certification

In 2005, the Netherlands started an ambitious green public procurement policy, aiming for 100% green public procurement for the national government by 2010, and for all governmental levels by 2015. It set up a support framework to assist public purchasers.

In 2011, two environmental organizations investigated the practice. They learnt that, by then, only 10% of public purchasers had chosen certified contractors for construction projects. This gave a clear signal to FSC Netherlands and the two organizations to launch a major campaign to, on the one hand, convince construction firms to seek FSC certification <http://www.fsc.nl/bouw.594.htm>, and, on the other, mobilize and advise public authorities to focus on FSC-certified contractors.

Both were successful and the increased demand from authorities came as important motive for companies to respond. The number of certified construction firms in the Netherlands increased from 50 in 2008 to almost 1,000 in 2014 <http://goedhoutproject.nl/bouwbedrijven>. And 35% of public authorities work with certified companies.

Project: 'Laan van Spartaan' (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), 84 apartments including sport facilities. Finished: January 2014. Owner: Ymere Ontwikkeling & Bouwfonds Ontwikkeling. Constructor (CoC-certified): De Nijs en Zonen BV.



In some cases, authorities worked together to be more effective in stimulating the market – such as the municipalities of Leeuwarden, Heerenveen, Wymbritseradeel and the local water-board who agreed to work exclusively with certified constructors. As a result, the province of Friesland has a relatively high number of certified construction firms nowadays.

Project: 'Laan van Spartaan' (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), 84 apartments including sport facilities. Finished: January 2014. Owner: Ymere Ontwikkeling & Bouwfonds Ontwikkeling. Constructor (CoC-certified): De Nijs en Zonen BV.

FSC-certified products = value-added

FSC products are not necessarily more expensive. When there is a price difference it is often only marginal. FSC certification brings many benefits to certificate holders, such as companies noting a reduction in costs and increased profits, given greater efficiencies in the work processes and/or by choosing a lesser known timber species. Through certification processes and addressing corrective action requests, forest managers can improve their management activities (e.g. better planning, better risk management, no pesticides, less accidents etc.) and gain more direct and indirect benefits as the financial investment made towards the certification is compensated.

Price differences do also occur given illegal and/or unsustainable logging. Higher prices for FSC timber typically occur in direct competition with forest operations where more trees than permitted or ecologically acceptable are cut down, taxes are evaded, indigenous people's rights are ignored, workers are underpaid and their safety is neglected.

Project: Low energy house (Maarkedal, Belgium). Finished: August 2012. Owner: De Medts-Eeckhout. Constructor (CoC-certified): De Medts Houtcreaties.



Resources

For additional information, the FSC system has made available a broad range of resources in several languages on public procurement, FSC-certified material sourcing and sustainable construction. For specific information in your language, please contact your nearest FSC National Office.

Danish

- Byg med FSC
www.fsc.dk/bygmedfsc

Dutch

- Meldpunt werken met gecertificeerde bedrijven
<http://www.fsc.nl/meldpunt-werken-met-gecertificeerde-bedrijven.601.htm>
- Borging opdrachtgevers
<http://www.fsc.nl/borging-opdrachtgevers.590.htm>
- Masterclass Borging
<http://www.fsc.nl/site.training-borging>
- Goedhoutproject
<http://goedhoutproject.nl/home>
- Bouw & Hout Convenant
<http://goedhoutproject.nl/bouw-hout-convenant>
- Handleiding Bouwen met FSC hout - van beleid tot realisatie
http://groenkapitaal.be/media/2966/FSC_Handleiding_voor_bouwen_met-FSC-hout.pdf

English

- Tropical wood: Introducing lesser known species
www.fsc.dk/lesserknown
- FSC Project Certification
<http://www.fsc-uk.org/download.project-certification-factsheet.49.pdf>

- Using Trademarks for non-certificate holders
<https://ic.fsc.org/non-certificate-holders.53.htm>
- FSC and architects and timber specifiers
<http://www.fsc-uk.org/download.architects-and-timber-specifiers-factsheet.34.pdf>
- How to specify FSC Timber
<http://www.fsc-uk.org/download.how-to-specify-fsc-timber-factsheet.45.pdf>

French

- FSC et la nouvelle politique d'achats publics
www.lu.fsc.org/politique_achats_publics.html
- Manuel Construire avec du bois FSC de la construction a la realisation
http://www.fsc-lux.lu/fileadmin/fsc_luxembourg/page_content/pdf/fscmanuels.pdf
- Guide ECOFORAF acheteurs publics - politiqued'achats bois responsable
<http://fr.fsc.org/guides.292.htm>

German

- LeitfadenöffentlicheBeschaffung
www.fsc-deutschland.de/leitfaeden-merkblaetter.136.htm

Italian

- Sustainable Timber Action in Europe
<http://it.fsc.org/sustainable-timber-action.33.htm>

FSC International

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, non-governmental, not for profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. FSC is a unique forum where stakeholders from around the world meet and through strong multi-stakeholder processes define essential social and environmental criteria for forest management. These fundamental principles are realized in forests worldwide through FSC certification. Through programs, services and solutions that support FSC certification, the Forest Stewardship Council empowers organizations, businesses and communities to support forest management that meets the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations.



FSC International has a wide range of materials to assist your sustainable procurement decision-making process:

FSC Benefits for Business

The FSC Benefits for Business website is a useful resource to show the value of FSC certification, with sector-specific information, case studies from leading companies, fun facts, infographics, examples of impacts and much more. <http://benefitsforbusiness.fsc.org/>

FSC Public certificate search

The FSC Public Certificate Search is a database that derives wholly from the original data of certificate holders administered by FSC. Search options include by company, products, species, country, FSC code and status (valid or suspended). <http://info.fsc.org/index.php>

FSC Marketplace

The FSC Marketplace is a new business-to-business platform connecting sellers and buyers of FSC-certified materials and products. It offers an opportunity to strengthen business-to-business networks allowing registered users to view in-depth supplier profiles at a global level. It is a free and easy-to-use resource. <http://marketplace.fsc.org/>

For further details:

FSC International
www.ic.fsc.org
fsc@fsc.org

Charles-de-Gaulle-Straße 5, 53113 Bonn
Deutschland/Germany
☎ +49 (0)228 367 660

FSC National Offices in the EU and Switzerland

<p>FSC Belgium www.fsc.be Boulevard St Michel 47, 1040 Brussels, Belgium ☎ +32 016 22 61 37 info@fsc.be</p>	<p>FSC Finland www.finland.fsc.org Haperokuja 8 H 15, 1690 Vantaa, Finland fscfi@fi.fsc.org</p>	<p>FSC Netherlands www.fsc.nl Wilhelminapark 41, 3581 Utrecht, Netherlands ☎ +31 (0)30 276 7220 info@fsc.nl</p>	<p>FSC Spain www.es.fsc.org C/ Alcalá, 20. 2ª Planta. Oficina 202, 28014 Madrid, Spain ☎ +34 91 446 48 81 informacion@es.fsc.org</p>
<p>FSC Czech Republic www.czechfsc.cz Kounicova 42, 602 Brno, Czech Republic ☎ +42 0 5452 11383 info@czechfsc.cz</p>	<p>FSC France www.fsc-france.fr 5 Rue de Bernus, 56000 Vannes, France ☎ +33 297 630829 guillaume.dahringer@ fsc-france.fr</p>	<p>FSC Luxembourg www.fsclux.lu 1, Rue Collart BP5 Steinfort, Luxembourg ☎ +352 26393391 fsclux@pt.lu</p>	<p>FSC Sweden www.fsc-sweden.org Dragarbrunnsgatan 71 UppsalaSweden ☎ +46 18 14 15 26 info@fsc-sweden.org</p>
<p>FSC Denmark www.fsc.dk Klostertorv 6-8 2.tv., 8000 Aarhus C, Denmark ☎ +45 2878 0819 info@fsc.dk</p>	<p>FSC Germany www.fsc-deutschland.de Merzhauser Str. 183, 79100 Freiburg, Germany ☎ +49 761 3865350 info@fsc-deutschland.de</p>	<p>FSC Poland www.pl.fsc.org Wojska Polskiego 25/906, 65 Zielona Góra, Poland ☎ +48 68 454 70 04 sekretariat@fsc.pl</p>	<p>FSC Switzerland www.fsc-suisse.ch Neustadtgasse 9, P.O. Box 113, 8402 Winterthur, Switzerland ☎ +41 52 214 02 67 info@fsc-schweiz.ch</p>
<p>FSC Estonia www.fsc.ee Lai 29, 51014 Tartu (Tartumaa), Estonia ☎ +372 56 98 55 88 info@ee.fsc.org</p>	<p>FSC Italy www.fsc-italia.it Dep. TeSAF – University of Padova, Viale dell'Università, 16 Legnaro (Padova), Italy ☎ +39 049 827 2773 info@fsc-italia.it</p>	<p>FSC Portugal www.fscportugal.org Av. Do Colégio Militar, Lote 1786, 1549 Lisboa, Portugal ☎ +351 217 100 014 geral@pt.fsc.org</p>	<p>FSC United Kingdom www.fsc-uk.org 11-13 Great Oak Street Llanidloes (Powys), UK ☎ +44 01 686 413 916 info@fsc-uk.org</p>



Forest Stewardship Council®

FSC® International Center GmbH
Charles-de-Gaulle-Straße 5
53113 Bonn, Germany

T +49 (0)228 367 660
F +49 (0)228 367 66 30
<http://ic.fsc.org>

© 2014 Forest Stewardship Council
FSC® F000100