



FSC statement on Greenpeace report

[Bonn, Germany] 10 March 2021 - The report published by Greenpeace suggests that certification systems including FSC are “greenwashing forest destruction”; a statement that is not only broad, but is also an incorrect portrayal of the purpose and activities of certification.

As a multi-stakeholder driven and non-profit organization, FSC welcomes constructive criticism that helps it improve our systems, and has taken the necessary corrective actions in the past when flaws were detected in the system by different stakeholders including Greenpeace.

FSC does not claim that certification can solely fix multi-faceted problems such as deforestation and recognizes the importance that numerous parties have in this task. FSC certification plays a critical role in ensuring responsible management of forests in countries all around the world and maintenance of their most important social and environmental values. FSC is one tool that creates a path to a solution, but should be complemented by other tools that multiple actors - including governments, NGOs, businesses, and civil societies - should use and promote.

The Greenpeace report acknowledges several features of the FSC system, including the fact that FSC does not allow for deforestation to take place in its certified forest areas. It has several strict requirements to ensure that forest managers maintain their forest cover and maintain or enhance their forest’s structure, function, biodiversity and productivity. Breaches of FSC’s standards will lead to investigations that may result in the suspension or termination of the certificate.

The report also recognizes FSC’s multi-stakeholder governance structure and strong forest management standards that include working with Indigenous Peoples to protect their rights, protecting IFLs and other HCVs and environmental values.

FSC is already working on several of the areas where the Greenpeace report raises criticism. Importantly, FSC takes any supply chain integrity violations seriously and investigates them thoroughly using certification audit data, manual transaction verification, fibre testing and the newly introduced block-chain-based transaction verification platform. As can be seen from many examples of FSC’s action, any misuse of the FSC label can also lead to the immediate [suspension or termination](#) of the certificate of a chain of custody certified business or the FSC trademark license holder.

While the Greenpeace report recognizes some areas of improvement in certification and sustainability standards, it does not highlight the transformative outcomes that these standards can have on forests, biodiversity, economies and communities around the world. FSC is aware that it needs to continue improving, yet it has already had a major positive impact in addressing many challenges that affect forests worldwide.

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