



## PARTICIPATION IN FSC IRELAND.

### BUILDING RESPONSIBLE FOREST MANAGEMENT FOR IRELAND'S FORESTS

#### Summary:

FSC Ireland is currently writing a National Standard for responsible management of Ireland's forests. If you care about how Ireland's forests will be managed into the future now is the time to join FSC Ireland and become involved in this process. This paper outlines more information on this process.

#### What is the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)?

On its website the FSC says *"FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not for profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests"*. It further states *"Products carrying the FSC label are independently certified to assure consumers that they come from forests that are managed to meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations"*.

#### What does this mean?

FSC offers responsible forest owners a certificate to show that they are managing their forests the FSC way – following the highest social, economic and environmental *criteria*. These forests are independently audited and inspected against a **National Standard** to ensure forest owners meet these high criteria and so maintain their certification. The reward for forest managers is that they may sell their produce as certified products giving them access to environmentally sensitive markets and giving the public confidence that the product is truly sustainable.

#### What is a National Standard?

Each country, and sometimes even different regions within countries, prepare a national standard against which responsible forest management may be measured. All National Standards are based on FSC's ten principles of sustainable forest management which aim to balance the environmental, economic and social aspects of forest management. (Appendix 1). Each of these ten principles is then translated to reflect the different types of forests found in different regions of the world. This is typically the work of a Standard Development Group and is presently ongoing in Ireland.



### **What is a Standard Development Group (SDG)?**

Each country or region that agrees to undertake the FSC principles of responsible forest management must first establish a National FSC Initiative. In Ireland, this is simply known as “FSC Ireland”. These bodies are charged with developing an appropriate National Standard based on FSC principles. At present, FSC Ireland has assembled an SDG consisting of three chambers, environmental, social and economic and are busy interpreting the FSC principles for use in Irish forests. The SDG has received formal training from FSC International in how to interpret the FSC principles and criteria and create verifiers (which are used to verify compliance with the standard in the field) to include into the National Standard.

### **How does this work?**

Each of the ten FSC principles has a number of criteria set against them. The three chambers of the SDG go through each of these meticulously and agree and assign verifiers to meet each of the criteria in an Irish context. These verifiers will then be included into the Irish National Standard. It is these verifiers that internationally accredited auditors will use to assess whether a forest manager is managing his forests in a responsible manner and so may be awarded the FSC Certificate of good forest management.

### **Where do I come in?**

FSC Ireland needs your participation now more than ever! At present the SDG is busy elaborating a National Standard which will then go for public consultation. If you care about how Ireland’s forests will be managed into the future now is the time to join FSC Ireland and become involved in the process. This is a very exciting time, and now is the time to have your say!

### **How do I get involved?**

The easiest way is to browse the website of FSC Ireland, (address below) and get more details there. Joining is easy, simply download and complete the membership form and pay the annual €5 membership fee. Members may serve on the Steering Committee of FSC Ireland, or a technical working group or work on a particular theme in developing the standard. Interested parties can also join a Consultative Forum to give formal comment on drafts of the Irish National FSC standard. Website of FSC Ireland:

<http://www.irishforestcertification.com/>



### Appendix 1: FSC's ten principles of responsible forest management

1: Compliance with laws & FSC Principles	6: Environmental impact
2: Tenure & use rights & responsibilities	7: Management plan
3: Indigenous peoples' rights	8: Monitoring & assessment
4: Community relations & worker's rights	9: Maintenance of HCVF*
5: Benefits from the forest	10: Plantations

\* High Conservation Value Forest

### Appendix 2: Useful websites

FSC Ireland: <http://www.irishforestcertification.com/>

FSC International: <http://www.fsc.org/>

FSC database of certifying bodies: <http://www.fsc-info.org>

High Conservation Value Forest Resource Network: <http://hcvnetwork.org/>

FSC Ireland News letter:  
<http://www.irishforestcertification.com/docs/FSCIrelandnewsletterJan09.pdf>

International Accreditation Services: <http://www.accreditation-services.com/>