

From: Kim Carstensen k.carstensen@fsc.org 
Subject: FSC Misleading Claims report
Date: July 25, 2016 at 5:20 AM
To: Kim Carstensen k.carstensen@fsc.org
Cc: Phil Guillery p.guillery@fsc.org, Emily Crumley e.crumley@fsc.org



Dear FSC Stakeholder

The enclosed report contains the findings of a survey that the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) commissioned to find out about misleading and inaccurate claims within its system. It is based on a survey that was sent to 1,173 FSC stakeholders (certification bodies, Accreditation Services International staff, auditors, and FSC staff), of whom 384 responded; and they confirmed that inaccurate claims exist within the system.

FSC has one key mission: to take care of the world's forests. When you see an FSC label on a product, it tells you that the material used to make that product has come from a forest that is responsibly managed, and was not made at the expense of the environment or of local communities. This report is about protecting the integrity of that label.

The idea of a product incorrectly carrying the FSC label is one we take extremely seriously. Through our chain of custody (CoC) certification we aim to ensure supply chain integrity, meaning that any issues are caught and corrected before any non-conforming product can reach the shelves.

With 112 countries in operation across our supply chain, comprising more than 30,000 certificates, we understand that the task of monitoring all activity is complex, brings new demands every day, and requires hard work from our certificate holders and certification bodies.

Most inaccurate claims are usually made by mistake or unintentionally, and we want to work with all of our stakeholders to find solutions to ensure that the FSC system is as simple and efficient as possible to prevent such negligence. At the same time, some inaccurate claims are intentional, and FSC is prepared to do whatever it takes to ensure fraudulent claims can be identified and eliminated. Working together we can ensure the integrity of our supply chains.

After discussions with our stakeholders, a number of actions are being taken. We must simplify the FSC system and ensure truthfulness of any claims made. Our members are considering proposals to our CoC standard that would allow the verification of FSC claims between certificate holders. [A third public consultation on the CoC standard has been launched to gather feedback on possible solutions](#), and this will lead to a revised CoC standard being presented later in the year. We encourage all of our stakeholders to review this standard and provide their thoughts, as only together can we increase our ability to strengthen and simplify the FSC system.

It's important to add that we don't work alone in this pursuit. The hard work of our accredited certification bodies has allowed FSC to build on our existing world-renowned certification, setting higher standards than any other forest certification scheme, and giving the best assurance that our certified forests are being managed responsibly. I hope that by releasing this report, and revealing the challenges we all know the industry faces, we will help to extend that trust into the future.

With kind regards

Kim Carstensen
Managing Director

FSC International
FSC Global Development GmbH
Charles de Gaulle Straße 5
53113 Bonn Deutschland/ Germany
Phone: +49 (0)228 367 66-(22)
Fax: +49 (0)228 367 66 65

Fax: +49 (0)226 507 00-00

E-Mail: (k.carstensen@fsc.org)

Twitter: @CarstensenFSC



FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL® (FSC®)

Geschäftsführer / Managing Director: Kim Bering Becker Carstensen

Handelsregister / Commercial register: Bonn HRB 15990 USt.-Id Nr. / VAT No: DE258067376

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