



ADVICE-40-004-19	Species information in FSC Product Groups (amended)
Normative reference	FSC-STD-40-004 V3-0 Clause 7.3, INT-STD-40-004_40, INT-STD-40-004_41
Approval date	11 March 2020 Amended on: 12 August 2020
Effective date and transition period	Effective date: 12 August 2020 Organizations have up to 1 (one) year to update their product groups, as of the effective date of this Advice Note, unless species information is relevant for FSC, ASI or certification bodies investigations as stated in other CoC requirements.
Terms and definitions	Assembled product: Product that is constructed from two or more forest-based components (e.g. solid wood and particle board), assembled together to form another product (e.g. furniture, musical instruments, plywood, laminated products, and packaging or printed materials containing different paper components).
Background	FSC-STD-40-004 V3-0, clause 7.3 c) specifies that organizations shall provide information about species in product group lists, where the species information designates the product characteristics. The current wording of this requirement is being interpreted in different ways by certification bodies and certificate holders. Species information is relevant for the establishment of product groups for the control of FSC claims and may only be substituted by another species provided that they are equivalent and do not change the output product characteristics, according to Box 04 of FSC-STD-40-004 V3-0. Due to laws on timber legality and advancements in wood identification technologies, the importance of transparency of species and origin of FSC certified products has increased. This Advice Note has the objective of clarifying the requirement, by addressing the request of being more specific on whether and how species information needs to be specified in FSC product groups.
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Species information always designates the product characteristics and needs to be specified for all FSC product groups, including all packaging or printed materials containing different paper components (i.e. printed books and magazines). 2. Only the following cases are exempted from specifying the species information (unless this information is required by applicable timber legality legislation):



	<p>a) components or entire products that are made of pre-consumer reclaimed and/or post-consumer reclaimed materials (e.g. Laminated MDF and particle boards).</p> <p>b) paper components in assembled products (e.g. high- and low-pressure laminates)</p> <p>3. The Organization shall maintain the product group lists in their certification records and make them available during audits. It is not required that the lists are sent to certification bodies.</p> <p>4. Upon request by FSC, ASI or certification bodies, The Organization shall provide species information within ten (10) business days.</p> <p>5. Species information shall be determined by its scientific name (i.e. genus and species).</p> <p>6. The Organization shall maintain an up-to-date list of species information.</p> <p>7. For primary processors and organizations buying FSC material directly from a certified forest/ MU, The Organization shall maintain an accurate and complete list of species used in production.</p> <p>8. For secondary and tertiary processors (including printers etc.) and brokers/traders dealing in processed material, The Organization shall maintain an up-to-date list of species information based on information received from their certified suppliers. This information shall be made available during audits.</p> <p>9. The absence of species information and/ or inaccuracy of species information compared to source data (obtained from certified suppliers) shall be considered as a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of this Advice Note and shall, therefore, be considered as a major non-conformity.</p> <p>NOTE 1: The FSC wood identification program is a service that can support organizations in identifying the species in their products.</p> <p>NOTE 2: This Advice Note does not replace other FSC CoC certification requirements, such as clauses 1.7 or 6.1 in FSC-STD-40-004 V3-0.</p>
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