



Preferred by Nature Certification **add-on** for FSC CoC-certified operations

Discover a pathway to enhanced sustainability with Preferred by Nature.



30 years of
experience



100+ countries
where we
work



30+ million of certified
farm and forest
land



The Preferred by Nature Certification Standard undergoes rigorous benchmarking against other certification schemes to strengthen existing programmes by pinpointing and addressing deficiencies. Through a thorough comparison of the FSC CoC Standard with our own Sustainability Framework, we have identified additional indicators to propel your sustainability efforts forward. Opting for the Preferred by Nature Certification add-on seamlessly integrates these missing components into your routine audits, promoting operational efficiency and unlocking cost savings.

With **decades of experience in FSC certification**, Preferred by Nature has been a key player in advancing sustainable forest and supply chain management practices. Serving as an FSC certification body, we actively engage with the FSC community and participate in various technical working groups. As of January 2024, Preferred by Nature manages nearly 3,000 active FSC Chain of Custody (CoC) certificates and over 350 FSC Forest Management (FM) certificates, covering a vast forest area exceeding 30 million hectares. This represents the largest share of FSC-certified forest area globally among all FSC certification bodies.

Leveraging over three decades of experience with FSC and other leading certification schemes, we have developed the innovative **Preferred by Nature Certification**.

Crafted to address gaps in existing schemes, our programme offers a flexible and comprehensive solution for companies seeking to certify their sustainability efforts.

As part of our commitment to enhancing sustainability and regulatory compliance, we conduct **benchmarking of the Preferred by Nature Certification Standard**, known as the **Sustainability Framework**, against leading certification standards like the FSC Chain of Custody (CoC).

Our **benchmarking process** involves assessing the alignment of Sustainability Framework indicators with FSC CoC indicators at the indicator level. While we recognise variations in language usage and detailed treatment of sustainability topics, our objective is to ensure that the **intention** of the Sustainability Framework criteria is covered by FSC Standards.

Furthermore, we expand our evaluation to assess the alignment of the FSC Standard with the **EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)**. This comprehensive assessment utilises the Regulation’s definitions of legal timber harvesting, deforestation-free, degradation and sustainable forest management. Within the Sustainability Framework, specific indicators corresponding to these definitions are identified and utilised as a basis for our benchmarking process.

Benchmarking analysis and conclusion categorisation

Fully covered	Intent covered	Partly covered	Missing	Not applicable
<p>All indicators within the Sustainability Framework are thoroughly covered, ensuring alignment with their intended goals. However, discrepancies may persist in the wording and structure of how these topics are articulated.</p>	<p>The criterion's intention is adequately addressed. While variances or omissions may arise in individual indicators within a criterion, the overarching purpose of the relevant criterion is duly recognised in the benchmarked Standard.</p>	<p>Essential components necessary to fulfil the criteria's intent are absent and should be given further consideration. We have pinpointed specific Sustainability Framework indicators that must be incorporated into the FSC CoC Standard to ensure compliance.</p>	<p>The core topic of the criteria is not covered in the benchmarked Standard. It is essential to employ the indicators outlined in the Sustainability Framework to verify compliance.</p>	<p>The criterion is deemed not applicable to the sector or commodity covered by the benchmarked Standard. In certain cases, the topic may be pertinent only in exceptional circumstances, and in such instances, we may still classify it as not applicable.</p>
<p>Considered to be covered by the benchmarked Standard.</p>	<p>Considered to be covered by the benchmarked Standard.</p>	<p>Some aspects need to be verified in addition to the scheme requirements.</p>	<p>The topic needs to be verified in addition to scheme requirements.</p>	<p>Not applicable to the benchmarked Standard.</p>

It is important to note that the benchmark exercise aims to assess whether the overarching intentions of the relevant criteria in the Sustainability Framework have been incorporated into the benchmarked Standard rather than delving into the discrepancies at the individual indicator level.



Benchmark results

Below is a condensed overview of the outcomes derived from benchmarking the FSC CoC Standard. The summary is structured according to the criteria outlined in the Sustainability Framework, with an emphasis on identifying potential gaps.

No.	Sustainability Framework Principles and Criteria	Status	Remarks on coverage in FSC CoC (FSC-STD-40-004 V3-1 EN)
1	Management and business practices are responsible.		
1.1	Land tenure and management rights are secure.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
1.2	Management planning and operations are conducted responsibly.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
1.3	Taxes and fees are paid.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
1.4	Corruption, fraud and conflict of interest are avoided.		<p><i>The indicator concerning bribery and corruption is not covered in the FSC CoC Standard.</i></p> <p>Additional verification indicator: 1.4.2 All forms of bribery and corruption are avoided.</p>
1.5	Trade and procurement are responsible.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
1.6	Buildings, infrastructure and activities are developed and maintained in a responsible manner.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
1.7	The quality of customers' and visitors' experience is continuously improved.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
2	People's well-being and human rights are respected.		
2.1	Human rights are respected.		<i>All the applicable requirements of this criterion are completely covered.</i>
2.2	Child labour is not present, and the employment of young workers is responsibly managed.		<i>All the applicable requirements of this criterion are completely covered.</i>
2.3	Modern slavery, forced or compulsory labour do not occur.		<i>All the applicable requirements of this criterion are completely covered.</i>
2.4	Workers' rights are respected.		<p><i>Most of the applicable requirements specified by this criterion have been addressed. However, it is important to note that one specific indicator pertaining to migrant workers has not been covered.</i></p> <p>Additional verification indicator: 2.4.12 Migrant workers are ensured equal opportunities and no less favourable treatment than local workers.</p>

No.	Sustainability Framework Principles and Criteria	Status	Remarks on coverage in FSC CoC (FSC-STD-40-004 V3-1 EN)
2.5	Discrimination does not occur.		<i>All the applicable requirements of this criterion are completely covered.</i>
2.6	Workers are remunerated in a responsible manner.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
2.7	Facilities, operations and activities are safe.		<p><i>Critical aspects of this criterion are partly covered.</i></p> <p>Additional verification indicators:</p> <p>2.7.2 Equipment, vehicles, machinery and utilities are safe and in good working order, and relevant safety features are complete and functioning.</p> <p>2.7.5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and tools are available to and used by workers, are in good condition and are appropriate for the specific activity.</p> <p>2.7.8 Emergency exits, fire detection, emergency alarms and fire suppression equipment are in place, visible and in working order, and workers are competent to handle equipment and react to emergencies.</p> <p>2.7.9 Workers have access to appropriate first-aid equipment and medical services in case of emergencies.</p>
2.8	Employer-provided housing is safe and hygienic.		<p><i>The requirements outlined in this criterion are not covered. Specifically, the topic of employer-provided housing is not addressed in the FSC COC requirements.</i></p> <p>Additional verification indicators:</p> <p>2.8.4 Employer-provided accommodation is safe and hygienic.</p>
2.9	Gender equality is maintained and protected.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
2.10	The rights of Indigenous Peoples are known and respected.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
2.11	Communities are supported and their rights respected.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
2.12	Culture is respected and valued.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
3	Nature and the environment are protected.		
3.1	Forests and other ecosystems are not converted.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
3.2	Natural forests and other ecosystems are not degraded.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
3.3	Ecosystems and biodiversity values are identified and protected.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
3.4	Chemicals are used responsibly with minimal negative impacts.		<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>

No.	Sustainability Framework Principles and Criteria	Status	Remarks on coverage in FSC CoC (FSC-STD-40-004 V3-1 EN)
3.5	Waste is reduced and managed responsibly.	●	<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
3.6	Pollution is minimised or prevented.	●	<i>This criterion does not apply to FSC CoC.</i>
3.7	Water resources are protected and used efficiently.	●	<i>The criterion is considered not applicable to FSC CoC.</i>
3.8	Soil is conserved and managed appropriately.	●	<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
3.9	Animal welfare and health is secured.	●	<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
4	Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.		
			<i>The requirements outlined in this criterion have not been addressed. Specifically, the FSC CoC requirements do not include provisions related to indirect land use change.</i>
4.1	Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.	●	Additional verification indicator: 4.1.3 If there is a risk that sourcing activities may cause significant indirect land use change through conversion or destruction of forests or natural ecosystems elsewhere, steps are taken to mitigate such risk.
4.2	Climate change adaptation efforts are implemented proportionate to the risks.	●	<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>
4.3	Efforts are taken for GHG removal and ecosystem restoration as appropriate.	●	<i>This criterion does not apply to processing.</i>

For **European Union Deforestation Regulation**, there are no additional indicators that need to be considered.

FSC CoC add-on certification

We have identified **8 specific indicators for the CoC add-on certification**, exclusively focusing on areas outlined in the Preferred by Nature Certification. You can seamlessly incorporate these into upcoming audits, improving efficiency and reducing disruptions. Alternatively, you can choose a separate add-on audit to customise the certification process according to your preferences.

The Sustainability Framework requirements apply to both forest managers and supply chain companies. For an FSC-certified product to be deemed **compliant with the Framework**, these **conditions** must be met:

- **FSC-certified forest managers**, from whom the **product originates**, must follow the Sustainability Framework add-on requirements specified for FSC-certified forest management operations.
- **Supply chain companies** handling FSC-certified products with a **100% claim** must meet the Framework add-on requirements for FSC-certified supply chain companies, outlined in this document.
- For **FSC Mix products**, in addition to the aforementioned criteria, compliance with the Framework add-on requirements for Controlled Wood is necessary.

Preferred by Nature **add-on indicators** for FSC-CoC-certified companies transferring a 100% claim

Principle 1 Management and business practices are responsible.	
Criterion 1.4 Corruption, fraud and conflict of interest are avoided.	1.4.2 All forms of bribery and corruption are avoided.
Principle 2 People’s well-being and human rights are respected.	
Criterion 2.4 Workers’ rights are respected.	2.4.12 Migrant workers are ensured equality of opportunities and no less favourable treatment than local workers.
Criterion 2.7 Facilities, operations and activities are safe.	2.7.2 Equipment, vehicles, machinery and utilities are safe and in good working order, and relevant safety features are complete and functioning.
	2.7.5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and tools are available to and used by workers, are in good condition and are appropriate for the specific activity.
	2.7.8 Emergency exits, fire detection, emergency alarms and fire suppression equipment are in place, visible and in working order, and workers are competent to handle equipment and react to emergencies.
	2.7.9 Workers have access to appropriate first-aid equipment, as well as medical services in case of emergencies.
Criterion 2.8 Employer-provided accommodation is safe and hygienic.	2.8.4 Employer-provided accommodation is safe and hygienic.
Principle 4 Climate impacts are reduced and mitigated.	
Criterion 4.1. Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.	4.1.3 If there is a risk that sourcing activities may cause significant indirect land use change through conversion or destruction of forests or natural ecosystems elsewhere, steps are taken to mitigate such risk.

To initiate the add-on verification process, simply reach out to your **dedicated task manager**, who will promptly assist in planning the next steps.

The Preferred by Nature Hummingbird Seal

The Preferred by Nature Certification offers the opportunity to attain the Hummingbird Seal, provided specific conditions are met. Complying with the Framework indicators missing in your existing certification allows you to demonstrate your commitment through claims and display the Hummingbird Seal on your website and in promotional materials. Moreover, you can utilise it for segregation marking, distinguishing verified products as they progress through the supply chain. This can include direct application on product packaging, task orders, shipping documents and invoices (note: segregation marking is not accessible to end users).

Use the Seal to demonstrate your commitment to practices that benefit **people, nature** and the **climate**.



EXPLORE

Preferred by
Nature Certification



Searching for a partner with global experience and local presence?



Preferred by Nature is an international non-profit organisation working to support better land management and business practices that benefit people, nature and the climate.



Our approach combines sustainability certification services, projects, awareness-raising and capacity building.



With nearly **400 staff** and a network of consultants, we have operations on **six continents** and have the know-how and capacity to carry out **5,000+ audits per year**.



We have certified over **1 million farms and forest units** and contributed to the establishment of **100+ protected areas**.



We work with small businesses, large corporations, communities, Indigenous People, state forests and environmental NGOs - all of them are equally important to us.

Reach out to us to discuss your needs
and together we will explore the
possibilities:

<https://preferredbynature.org/contact-us>



www.preferredbynature.org