

Strengthening the FSC Supply Chain - Charcoal

Fact Sheet

What is Supply Chain Integrity?

FSC is dedicated to providing a credible system for responsible forest products. In some supply chains, there are allegations that the FSC system is being misused or contaminated with non-FSC-certified materials. These assertions are taken very seriously, and FSC has enforced its processes to investigate the claims. Should risks be confirmed, FSC will implement additional actions to protect the system and ensure supply chain integrity.

FSC has a long-term plan to systematically address integrity risks in the supply chains of our certificate holders. As part of this plan, we are taking three immediate actions to address misuse of the system; by

- thorough investigation of product groups or species suspected of having an increased risk of misleading FSC claims;
- implementation of mandatory transaction verification to address inaccuracies of FSC transactions in confirmed high-risk supply chains; and
- randomized fibre tests of FSC-certified products to identify possible species used in the product, and potentially the country or region of harvest as a spot-check mechanism.

Why is FSC investigating charcoal?

Recently, we have received some questions about the integrity of FSC-certified charcoal.

These questions related to reports that supposed FSC-certified charcoal could be sourced from illegally harvested forests, and not from where it's claimed to originate; and to assertions that charcoal is being purchased from countries such as Nigeria (where there are no FSC-certified charcoal producers or forests), being repackaged in European countries and then sold as FSC-certified charcoal produced in Europe. Nigeria exports approximately 100,000 tons of charcoal into Europe annually.

What is FSC doing to address this?

FSC is working with Accreditation Services International to conduct a thorough investigation into whether or not there are problems within the charcoal supply chain, and where these problems are occurring.

In addition to this increased audit scrutiny, FSC is using traditional wood anatomy testing to determine species and region of harvest for FSC-certified lump charcoal. If any of the allegations are found to be conclusive, associated certificate holders will be immediately suspended or terminated. Furthermore, if substantial issues are discovered, transaction verification will be implemented throughout the affected supply chains.

The investigation, supply chain mapping and fibre testing is taking place throughout 2017, after which a decision on implementation of transaction verification requirements for all businesses trading in FSC-certified charcoal will be made.

Additional information

For additional information and even to have a discussion about charcoal supply chains, please contact Emily Crumley, the SCIP Manager at e.crumley@fsc.org.