

## ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION SHEET

## Securing Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification

### **How to get FSC**

Increasingly printers, designers and publishers are being asked by their clients to secure sustainably sourced materials and, more specifically, paper which is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified. Organisations are also realising that having chain of custody, and being able to offer FSC certified material, is a real business opportunity. Only those organisations that have FSC chain of custody certification can legally use FSC labelling on their products.

Achieving chain of custody is possible for most organisations with some investment of time and effort. The scale and cost of this investment depends on the size and complexity of the business and whether other management systems, such as ISO14001 or ISO 9001, are already in place.

The Howard Smith Paper Group has developed with a partner organisation, The Print Circle, a web site tool for printers, designers and publishers to understand the process and opportunities of becoming FSC certified. Importantly, this is a competitive and simple solution.

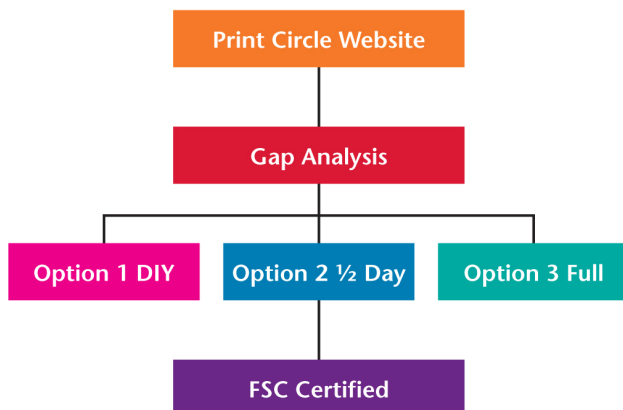
Equally important, having made the investment and secured FSC certification, this tool can then help you remain compliant.

This information sheet explains the process, gives guidance on cost, and how to access the web site tool and consultant support as required.

### **The website solution**

Using this tool, with sufficient resources and time investment, an organisation could reach the point of readiness for FSC audit themselves. Our experience, however, is that most organisations will require some level of further support.

The following flow diagram helps graphically explain the process for 3 key options and level of support.



#### **Print Circle registration**

In the 1st instance you must register and receive a password to use the web based tool. There is no obligation or cost in registering or using the on-line tool. [www.theprintcircle.co.uk](http://www.theprintcircle.co.uk). From the home page click on "Join".

#### **Gap Analysis**

On registering and opening the FSC template, a free 'readiness assessment' is available to give you an instant feel for the amount of work that will be required. There is an option to submit this to The Print Circle for direct feedback. This Gap analysis can also be supplied to you by your regional Howard Smith Paper team without registering to the site.

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(FSC) Certification**Option 1 - DIY**

An organisation can get to the point of readiness for an FSC audit by themselves using this web tool, with the appropriate resource and time investment. There are templates and flow diagrams to assist this process which can be used to develop policies and procedures. All documents are stored in a secure password protected area and can be amended as required. There is no cost in using this on-line tool.

**Option 2 - ½ day consultancy**

The Print Circle can provide a ½ day training @ £250 + VAT (plus travel expenses) which is an introduction to this tool and how this resource can be used effectively. They will also provide a list of critical points of compliance and an action plan. It will still require an appropriate level of resource and time commitment. Used in conjunction with the readiness assessment, organisations should be confident of knowing all the key elements they will need to put in place to achieve certification.

**Option 3 - Full consultancy**

Full consultancy of circa £500 per day + VAT (plus travel expenses) is available through The Print Circle in achieving FSC certification. The consultancy required is dependent on the nature and complexity of the business but, typically ranges from 1½ - 3 days.

**FSC chain of custody certification**

Once procedures are in place, organisations can only be certified by an accredited FSC auditing body, typically charging between £800 - £1,500 + Vat depending on the size and complexity of the business. The full certificate remains valid for 5 years but will require an annual audit check for £600 - £700 + Vat. Additionally there is an FSC annual accreditation fee, which varies depending on the organisation's turnover.

**Note** – These costs should be considered as a guide only as it depends on the size and complexity of the business.

To assist smaller print companies with 15 employees or less, who may find the cost of gaining FSC certification prohibitive, a group FSC Chain of Custody scheme is run by The Process Group. The cost is £700 per annum, or £65 per month using The Process Group's monthly payment scheme. The cost includes all assessment and membership fees, expenses and the FSC's annual accreditation fee.

For more details contact The Process Group on 07920 098797, email: [john@theprocessgroup.co.uk](mailto:john@theprocessgroup.co.uk) or visit [www.theprocessgroup.co.uk](http://www.theprocessgroup.co.uk)

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Print and Media Certification: 01827 64471  
[www.printcertification.co.uk](http://www.printcertification.co.uk)

BM Trada: 01494 569700  
[www.bmtrada.com](http://www.bmtrada.com)

SGS: 0121 521 3708  
[www.sgs.com](http://www.sgs.com)

Woodmark, Soil Association: 0117 914 2435  
[www.soilassociation.org/forestry](http://www.soilassociation.org/forestry)

**Additional benefits of using The Print Circle tool**

In addition to helping organisations secure FSC accreditation, The Print Circle on-line tool provides some significant additional benefits. Many of which are critical to maintain on-going compliance. They include;

- On-line reconciliation at any time of all FSC products procured from the Howard Smith Paper Group. This is critical at the annual audit to substantiate inventory of FSC products.
- Definitive guidance on which FSC labels to use when using paper ordered from Howard Smith Paper Group
- Update of changes to FSC standard from The Print Circle as they occur
- Updated Howard Smith Paper Group Product Group Schedule.
- Members discussion forum

**Useful contact websites**

Howard Smith Paper Group Sustainable paper website: [www.sustainablepaper.co.uk](http://www.sustainablepaper.co.uk)  
Forest Stewardship Council (UK) website: [www.fsc-uk.info](http://www.fsc-uk.info)

If you require further information please contact your local Howard Smith Paper Group regional sales office.

