



Strengthening the FSC Supply Chain - **White Oak**

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 trans-actions 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.



We need you!

Contact your nearest network partner in the US, Europe and Russia if you can help us by collecting reference samples from FSC-certified forests.

We also need white oak products which were manufactured in Asia to contribute to our testing. All product types in any manufacturing stage from raw material to finished product are appreciated, but please note that we are specifically focused on flooring products manufactured in Asia.

We also encourage network partners to offer complimentary testing of white oak products manufactured in Asia to any certified businesses interested in investigating their supply chains and the origin of their products.

What are we doing about it?

Alongside its partners Agroisolab, Kew Gardens and the US Forest Service, FSC has initiated fibre testing on white oak. The aim of this testing is to identify whether the oak originates from Russia, China, Europe or North America; and where possible, if it's from FSC-certified forests.

The results of these tests will determine the risk of false claims in FSC-certified products containing white oak and will help FSC determine whether immediate and decisive action (including transaction verification) is required to maintain the credibility of the supply chain.

These fibre tests are scheduled to commence in 2017 and throughout 2018. White oak reference samples have already been collected in Asia, Europe and North America, and additional samples from FSC-certified forests in the United States, Europe and Russia are sought.



Why is FSC investigating white oak?

Almost all Russian-origin Mongolian oak is exported to China, and from there a proportion of it is manufactured and sold into major western markets as white oak. Only a fraction of this oak is FSC-certified.

Analysis of Russian Customs Data showed that the volume of logged Mongolian oak that is actually exported exceeds the volume that is authorized by the government for logging, demonstrating a straightforward case for illegal logging. Additionally, DNA tests have revealed some false claims in this product type.

This is a clear indication that this timber is high-risk and that the supply chain needs to be investigated to ensure the integrity of products with the FSC label containing white oak.

Additional information

For additional information and to submit products for sample testing, please contact Emily Crumley, the Supply Chain Integrity Manager at e.crumley@fsc.org



Photo by Daniel Hansson