



## Fact check: FSC responds to allegations made in Arte documentary

ALLEGATION	FSC RESPONDS
<p>In the Congo Basin, FSC-certified concessions are either responsible for, or not taking action to reduce the suffering of Indigenous Peoples living around the forests.</p>	<p>We will investigate these accusations thoroughly. However, we have grounds to question the validity of these claims.</p> <p>We are aware of historic stigmatization and marginalization of Baka communities in the Congo Basin. The documentary fails to account for numerous sociopolitical elements and the ongoing efforts of FSC to address these issues.</p> <p>We have knowledge that in FSC-certified concessions of the Congo Basin, Indigenous Peoples and local populations are allowed to hunt to support their livelihoods. What is not allowed and strictly controlled within these concessions are poaching activities and illegal hunting tied to groups that seek to supply external markets.</p> <p>On the topic of the situation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the Congo Basin, independent research has verified that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several significant differences exist between certified and non-certified operations. Working and living conditions institutions, benefit-sharing and consideration of customary rights, in and around certified concession improved with certification, e.g. in <i>Iponga, D.M., et al. Agroforest Syst (2018) 92: 157.</i> <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/s10457-016-0022-0">https://doi.org/10.1007/s10457-016-0022-0</a> and Cerutti et al (2017) Social impacts of the Forest Stewardship Council certification in the Congo basin. <a href="#">International Forestry Review</a>, Vol. 19, Supp 2, Dec 2017, pp. 50-63(14) <a href="http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/articles/ACerutti1601.pdf">http://www.cifor.org/publications/pdf_files/articles/ACerutti1601.pdf</a></li> <li>• The hospital established by one of the concessions mentioned in the documentary is reputed as being the most efficient of all of northern Congo. <i>Karsenty, A. FAO Forestry Policy and Institutions Working Paper 34 (2016).</i> <a href="http://www.fao.org/forestry/45021-04023cd52f4619cd28fe747b7e42c167f.pdf">http://www.fao.org/forestry/45021-04023cd52f4619cd28fe747b7e42c167f.pdf</a></li> <li>• The child mortality rate around the other concession mentioned is three times lower than the national average. <i>Brouwer, M. (2016)</i> <a href="http://www.centralafricanforests.org">http://www.centralafricanforests.org</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-nomadic populations living around the workers' camp are also consulted and treated in FSC-certified concessions. See public audit report on CIB concession <a href="http://fsc.force.com/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00Pf300000p1n8dEAA">http://fsc.force.com/servlet/servlet.FileDownload?file=00Pf300000p1n8dEAA</a></li> <li>• FSC-certified companies in the Congo Basin provide communities with social benefits far superior to other companies. <i>Cerutti et. al, 2014</i> <a href="https://www.cifor.org/library/4487/social-impacts-of-the-forest-stewardship-council-certification-an-assessment-in-the-congo-basin/">https://www.cifor.org/library/4487/social-impacts-of-the-forest-stewardship-council-certification-an-assessment-in-the-congo-basin/</a></li> </ul> <p>The cited research also highlights numerous initiatives taken by FSC-certified concessions to ensure food security and provide education for communities around the concessions.</p>
<b>ALLEGATION</b>	<b>FSC RESPONDS</b>
<p>FSC-certification has not stopped deforestation or negative impacts on intact forest landscapes.</p>	<p>FSC has never pretended to be a stand-alone solution to combat deforestation. We recognize that this will only be accomplished through ongoing joint collaboration with multiple stakeholders.</p> <p>However, FSC has made it possible to establish dialogue between these different stakeholders -- companies, environmental organizations, public and governmental authorities -- to identify and conserve natural forests and the high conservation values inside them, including IFLs. For example, WWF-Russia has developed numerous guidelines that have become reference books for the certified companies and are being actively used to identify and conserve the most important biodiversity areas. Therefore, we know that we are making a difference in this regard.</p> <p>Independent research has confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSC certification requires forest management plans (FMP). The authors find that during 2000-2010 in North Congo, deforestation rates were higher in the seven main Forest Management Units (FMU) without FMPs (all of which were harvested during this time) than in the six harvested FMUs with FMPs.</li> </ul>

	<p>Karsenty, A. et al. (2016). Do Forest Management Plans in Congo Lead to Greater Deforestation? <i>Land Use Policy</i>, 52.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FSC reduces deforestation and has significant environmental benefits. <i>Burivalova Z. et al. (2017). Conservation Letters</i>, 10(1), 4-14. <a href="https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/conl.12244">https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/conl.12244</a></li> <li>• In Indonesia, a hot spot for deforestation, FSC reduced deforestation by an average of 5% over 8 years and reduced the incidence of air pollution by 31% in the same period. <i>Miteva DA, Loucks CJ, Pattanayak SK (2015) Social and Environmental Impacts of Forest Management Certification in Indonesia. PLoS ONE</i> 10(7): e0129675. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0129675">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0129675</a></li> <li>• In Chile, FSC certification resulted in better environmental performance than both industry driven certification and ENGO led moratoriums. <i>Heilmayr, Robert ; Lambin, Eric F.. Impacts of nonstate, market-driven governance on Chilean forests. In: Proceedings of the National academy of sciences of the United States of America</i>, Vol. 113, no.11, p. 2910-2915 (2016). <a href="https://dial.uclouvain.be/pr/boreal/object/boreal:18319/">https://dial.uclouvain.be/pr/boreal/object/boreal:18319/</a></li> <li>• FSC certification has a positive impact on biodiversity. <i>van Kuijk M. et al. (2009). http://www.fsc-deutschland.de/pre-view.fsc-und-biodiversitt-engl.a-175.pdf</i></li> <li>• In Brazil, FSC certification reduces forest disturbance. <i>Tritsch I. et al. (2016). Forests</i>, 7(2), 1-15. <a href="http://www.mdpi.com/1999-4907/7/12/315/pdf">http://www.mdpi.com/1999-4907/7/12/315/pdf</a></li> <li>• In Peru, FSC certification has proved to be beneficial for biodiversity. <i>WWF Peru (2017). https://news.mongabay.com/2017/12/camera-traps-reveal-surprises-in-peru/</i></li> </ul>
<b>ALLEGATION</b>	<b>FSC RESPONDS</b>

<p>In Vietnam and Cambodia, timber from illegal logging organizations is being sold to FSC-certified companies and makes its way to the European market. Human rights abuses are occurring.</p>	<p>We found the graphic images of human rights abuses very upsetting and we condemn any form of violence. As an organization committed to protecting forests and the people that live and work in them, we vehemently oppose violence in any form, including a disregard for human rights and life. Any violations of these rights carried out by FSC certificate holders result in stringent action taken against them.</p> <p>Concerning illegal timber and FSC certified companies, FSC will not tolerate any form of consumer deception involving fraud by businesses that hold FSC certificates.</p> <p>To this effect, FSC has requested Accreditation Services International to commence an investigation into the allegations of fraud with Cambodian illegal timber in the supply chains of several specific FSC-certified entities in Vietnam.</p>
<p><b>ALLEGATION</b></p>	<p><b>FSC RESPONDS</b></p>
<p>The documentary claims that most of the wood from a specific certified company in Peru originates from illegal logging and alleges that some of it is exported under an FSC label.</p>	<p>Contrary to the claim made by the filmmakers, FSC does not tolerate illegal logging in our system. We have a long and transparent history of disassociating with companies who are found to be in violation of our standards and principles.</p> <p>To complement FSC's already strict rules on illegal timber, FSC has a Policy for Association that strictly forbids any organization associated with FSC to be involved in unacceptable activities, which include illegal logging or the trade in illegal wood or forest products.</p> <p>FSC will investigate allegations of illegal logging in Peru entering the FSC system via falsified documents and take action on account of our investigations.</p>
<p><b>ALLEGATION</b></p>	<p><b>FSC RESPONDS</b></p>

<p>The FSC Mix label is deceptive and the wood may come from unsustainable sources.</p>	<p>We acknowledge that controlled wood is a controversial subject and we have been working hard at improving the standard for controlled wood.</p> <p>The FSC Mix label ensures that sourcing is originating only from acceptable non-controversial harvesting, including material from FSC certified forests, recycling and/or controlled wood.</p> <p>FSC controlled wood is material from acceptable sources that can be mixed with FSC-certified material in products that carry the FSC Mix label. The term controlled wood describes wood products that are not made up of any sources considered unacceptable.</p> <p>FSC is committed to improving our communication around these topics and this is part of the Controlled Wood strategy that is currently underway.</p>
<p><b>ALLEGATION</b></p>	<p><b>FSC RESPONDS</b></p>
<p>An FSC-certified company in Brazil has forcefully displaced a local community.</p>	<p>FSC-certified companies must adhere to FSC's criteria and indicators [in Principles 3 and 4] on Free, Prior and Informed Consent pertaining to communities and Indigenous Peoples.</p> <p>Since 1994, FSC does not tolerate conversion of natural forests and therefore plantations from converted areas after that date are not allowed to receive FSC certification.</p> <p>As with any other forest operations, certified plantations have to comply with strict FSC requirements. Certified plantations have to respect a range of social indicators, including the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities, respect for Indigenous Peoples and worker's rights.</p> <p>FSC-certified plantations in Brazil are in continuous dialogue with landless people and local communities living near plantations and this dialogue equally involves local authorities.</p>

	<p>Audits on plantations regularly check on the situation of local populations and any infringements on the rights of local communities are duly reported and penalties imposed.</p>
<b>ALLEGATION</b>	<b>FSC RESPONDS</b>
<p>The practice of certifying plantations is not in line with sustainable forestry.</p>	<p>It is correct that plantations are a controversial and complex issue.</p> <p>Plantations are often necessary to meet consumer demand for forest products and avoid turning to natural forests as a source. Well managed plantations provide renewable resources that are far advantageous to fossil fuel-based materials.</p> <p>As a main element of our policy to avoid deforestation, FSC does not certify any plantation established on converted natural forests after 1994.</p>
<b>ALLEGATION</b>	<b>FSC RESPONDS</b>
<p>Certification bodies and certificate holders have close ties leading to conflicts of interests and corrupt practices.</p>	<p>FSC has a strong accreditation system through Accreditation Services International, that oversees the work of certification bodies. For example:</p> <p>ASI Office Audits to certification bodies ensure overall quality and impartiality of their work.</p> <p>ASI witness audits of individual auditors observe auditors during an audit to ensure the enforcement of the quality and impartiality during their audits.</p> <p>Compliance audits check audit quality and impartiality by “repeating” an audit and compare their own results with the auditor’s results.</p> <p>There are calls for stakeholder input prior to ASI audits to receive external input.</p>

	<p>There are a higher number of ASI audits compared to other certification systems.</p> <p>FSC is an open system which accepts stakeholder inputs regarding grievances in the FSC system at several levels (certification body, ASI and FSC levels).</p> <p>CBs are suspended by ASI in case of insufficient audit quality</p>
<b>ALLEGATION</b>	<b>FSC RESPONDS</b>
<p>FSC certifies clear cutting in the boreal, which is damaging to the forest.</p>	<p>It is true that FSC has certified forest operations practicing clear cutting within specific and controlled parameters.</p> <p>We acknowledge and understand that this is also a controversial issue with many complexities. In certain types of forests, such as boreal forests, clear cutting is a widely accepted practice by foresters and environmentalists alike, though it is still hotly debated even in their ranks.</p> <p>We take all concerns very seriously and we are continuously adapting our approach, taking all scientific research into consideration.</p> <p>With regards to products from Swedish forests, consumers should be aware that FSC certification in Sweden has led to considerable benefits for biodiversity. Lagerqvist (2013). <a href="https://se.fsc.org/preview.the-contribution-of-fsc-certification-to-biodiversity-in-swedish-forests.a-661.pdf">https://se.fsc.org/preview.the-contribution-of-fsc-certification-to-biodiversity-in-swedish-forests.a-661.pdf</a></p> <p>In Russia, WWF-Russia works with FSC-certified companies to identify HCV forests and areas most critical for conservation and almost 2.5 million hectares of HCVF are conserved within the framework of agreements between the companies and WWF-Russia. Due to certification, it became possible to begin a dialogue with certified companies, environmental organizations, public and governmental</p>

	authorities to identify and conserve the most valuable parts of intact forests in the region of Archangelsk.
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