

FSC TRADEMARK USE GUIDE FOR PROMOTIONAL LICENCE HOLDERS – PROMOTIONAL LICENCE HOLDERS (PLH) FAQ

1. OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Q: Why has the FSC Trademark Use Guide for PLHs been revised?

A: The Guide has been revised to:

- a) Align with FSC-STD-50-001 V3-0 standard
- b) align with anti-greenwashing regulations, including Empowering Consumers Directive
- c) incorporate stakeholder feedback, and
- d) streamline and simplify the requirements to enhance usability.

Q: What are the major changes introduced in the revised Guide?

A: There are three major changes:

1. Phase out of the Forest For All Forever (FFAF) mark
2. Phase out of the promotional panel arrangement
3. Updated promotional elements that must be included in promotional materials.

Q: From which date does the new guide become mandatory?

A: All PLHs must use the new guide published on 1st June for all new promotional materials.

Q: Is there a transition period and which version of the guide should PLHs follow?

A: From 1st June, the revised Guide should be used by all PLHs. FSC will introduce a “grace” period of three months for PLHs to revise and update existing promotional materials in line with the new guide requirements. Note that the updated promotional materials must be reviewed and approved by your TSP.

Q: When is the FFAF mark and promotional panel phase-out effective?

A: PLHs using the FFAF mark and/or promotional panel in any communication, digital or print, must remove them by 1 June 2026. Note: social media posts do not need to be updated or removed, but PLHs may not promote/boost/repost existing posts after 1 June.

Q: What happens if a PLH does not implement the required changes by 1 September 2026?

A: Non-compliance after 1st September 2026 will be treated as misuse of the FSC trademarks. TSPs should handle this in accordance with standard misuse procedure.

2. PROMOTIONAL ELEMENTS

Q: How often must the compulsory promotional elements be included?

A: The four promotional elements (FSC trademark(s), FSC licence code, a promotional statement, and the FSC website) must be included at least once per promotional material. What constitutes a single promotional material varies depending on the format (e.g. a printed brochure is one material; each product listing on an ecommerce site is one separate material). See *Part 3* of the guide for channel-specific guidance.

Q: Which FSC trademarks can PLHs use?

A: PLHs may use the FSC logo, the FSC initials ('FSC'), and the FSC full name ('Forest Stewardship Council') in their promotional materials. Further information is available in *Part 1. Promoting with FSC: General requirements*.

Q: Where can PLHs access the FSC logo?

A: The FSC logo can be downloaded from FSC Brand Hub. If PLHs require an FSC Brand Hub account, you should contact your TSP/local FSC contact.

Q: Must PLHs always use the FSC International website address (www.fsc.org), or can they link to a local TSP website?

A: PLHs must always include the FSC International website address www.fsc.org in their promotional materials. Local TSP website addresses may not be substituted. The requirement exists to ensure consumers are directed to the primary FSC information source, supporting transparency and consistency across all markets.

Q: Can the 'www.' be removed from the FSC website address?

A: Yes. PLHs may display the website address as fsc.org, without the 'www.'

Q: Can the FSC website be embedded as a hyperlink rather than displayed as text ?

A: Yes. The FSC website address may be embedded as a hyperlink, for examples, displayed as underlined text such as "learn more [here](http://www.fsc.org)", rather than written out in full as www.fsc.org. Both formats satisfy the requirements as the consumer is directed to fsc.org, ensuring that the FSC website remains accessible to consumers.

3. PROMOTIONAL STATEMENTS

Q: Which promotional statements can PLHs use?

A: Annex 1 of the revised guide provides the full list of promotional statements that PLHs can choose from.

Q: Must PLHs always choose a statement that refers specifically to the FSC label?

A: No. PLHs may choose the promotional statement that is most relevant to their intended communication. Annex 1 includes statements suited to a range of contexts, including those that describe FSC generally or the Promotional Licence itself, without referencing a specific product label.

Q: Can PLHs use more than one promotional statement?

A: Yes. PLHs may use several promotional statements, combine them, and adapt the language to suit their material and communication goals, provided the resulting statements remain accurate, clear, and truthful. Guidance on how to combine and adapt statements is provided in Annex 1.

Q: Must PLHs always use the full-form version of a promotional statement?

A: No. PLHs may choose between a full-form statement and a concise version, depending on the space available and the intended message. Both options are provided for most statements in Annex 1.

Q: Some full-form promotional statements allow PLHs to mix and match sentences. May PLHs choose only one sentence?

A: No. Where “and” is used, PLHs may not choose to use only one part of the statement.

Q: Can the text 'FSC-certified product' be used as a standalone promotional statement?

A: No. FSC conducted a legal assessment and concluded that 'FSC-certified product' as a standalone statement carries a high level of risk as it lacks specificity and does not provide adequate supporting information to be considered compliant with legislation. It will not be accepted as a substitute for any statement listed in Annex 1.

PLHs may use 'FSC-certified product' as a product descriptor (e.g. in a product title or description), in addition to a full promotional statement from Annex 1.

Q: Can PLHs use on-product label text, such as 'supporting responsible forestry' as a standalone promotional statement?

A: No. On-product label text cannot be used as a standalone promotional statement. It must always be accompanied by a promotional statement from Annex 1.

Example promotional statement that includes the text “supporting responsible forestry” that may be used.

Our FSC Promotional Licence means we are authorized to promote FSC-certified products. The FSC label on the products we [use/sell] shows our commitment to supporting responsible forestry. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) provides solutions to help protect the world’s forests and tackle deforestation, climate, and biodiversity challenges.

Q: Can PLHs use the text “mark of responsible forestry” as a standalone promotional statement?

A: No. PLHs cannot use the text as a standalone promotional statement or combined with any other promotional statement.

Q: Can clarifying statements such as 'look out for our FSC-certified products' be used as a promotional statement?

A: No. Clarifying statements do not meet the requirements for a compliant promotional statement. Their purpose is to draw consumer attention to specific FSC-certified products within a broader material, not to explain what FSC is, what the licence means, or what makes a product FSC-certified. Used in isolation,

they lack the specificity and supporting context required under anti-greenwashing legislation and would be considered generic environmental claims.

PLHs must always include an approved promotional statement from Annex 1 alongside any clarifying statement. The two serve different functions and are not interchangeable.

4. USE OF FSC TRADEMARKS BY CHANNEL

Ecommerce and online shops

Q: Must all promotional elements appear on each individual product listing?

A: Yes. Each product listing on an ecommerce platform or online marketplace is treated as a separate promotional material. All four promotional elements must therefore be displayed on each listing. Where platform text fields restrict the amount of text, elements may be embedded within a product image or graphic. Alternatively, PLHs can include these elements in the website footer. If used in the footer, ensure that a clarifying statement (e.g. Look out for our FSC-certified products) is used if the webshop includes both FSC-certified and non-certified products.

Q: Can a product listing include a link to a separate page where all promotional elements are displayed, rather than including them directly on the listing?

A: No. For ecommerce product listings, all promotional elements must appear directly on the listing itself. Linking to a separate page where elements are displayed is not sufficient for individual product listings. PLHs can embed the compulsory elements in the footer of the website and include a clarifying statement.

Q: If a website lists products or product types but does not include a shop or ecommerce feature, is the whole website treated as a single promotional material?

A: Yes. A website that describes or lists products but does not include a transaction/shop function is treated as a single promotional material. The promotional elements need appear only once across the site.

Social media

Q: Does linking to a page, such as social media account bio, where all promotional elements are displayed satisfy the requirement for posts from that account?

A: No. The bio section should not be relied upon to provide mandatory promotional elements for posts in the feed. The connection between a bio and individual posts may be broken by bio updates, meaning the link to compliant content cannot be guaranteed at the time a post is viewed.

If the bio section itself contains FSC-related promotional content, it is treated as an independent promotional material and must include all compulsory elements (which may be provided via a URL/link, as bio sections typically support text only).

Q: What if the social media platform does not allow hyperlinks?

A: The FSC website address does not need to be a hyperlink. Displaying 'www.fsc.org' or 'fsc.org' in plain text is acceptable.

Q: If a PLH uses both the FSC logo and in-text mentions of FSC in a social media post, do the standard flexibility provisions still apply?

A: No. The flexibility provisions, which allow omission of the registration symbol and, in some cases, the licence code and website, apply when FSC initials or the FSC full name are used, but only when the FSC logo is not present. When the FSC logo appears in a post, all promotional elements must be displayed, and the trademark registration symbol must accompany the logo.

5. SUPPLIER DOCUMENTATION

Q: The guide states that self-declarations and written statements from the PLH's organisation or supplier are not accepted. Does this mean all written statements from suppliers are now prohibited? What documents are acceptable?

A: The prohibition applies specifically to self-declarations and unverified written statements, such as documents that assert FSC certification without being tied to a formal supply document. The following are acceptable:

- Invoices issued by the FSC-certified supplier, showing the supplier's Chain of Custody (CoC) certification number and the relevant FSC claim
- Delivery documents or other formal sales documents from the FSC-certified supplier that include the required CoC and FSC claim information
- Supplier letters, provided they are formal documents on company letterhead that include all required information (CoC number, supplier name and address matching the CoC certificate, FSC claim, and clear identification of which products are FSC-certified).

6. TRAINING, TOOLS AND RESOURCES

E-training

Q: When will the updated PLH e-training be available, and who can access it?

A: The revised PLH e-training will be available on academy.fsc.org in early June. The training is available to all PLHs.

FSC Brand Hub

Q: When will assets on FSC Brand Hub be updated to reflect the new guidance?

A: All existing static and customisable assets will be available in their revised form on FSC Brand Hub from 1 June 2026.

Q: Who should TSPs or PLHs contact if they experience issues with FSC Brand Hub?

A: Issues with FSC Brand Hub should be reported to the Connect inbox: connect@fsc.org.

Q: When will the FFAF mark and promotional panel be removed from FSC Brand Hub?

A: Both the FFAF mark and the promotional panel will be removed from FSC Brand Hub on 1 June 2026. Promotional Licence Holders have until 1 September 2026 to remove them from all existing materials.

Supporting materials

Q: What supporting materials are available and where can they be accessed?

A: FSC developed the following materials to support with the implementation of the PLH Guide:

- What to do now + Promotional material approval checklist
- PLH FAQ document
- PLH Guide summary
- Retailers and brands eligibility

Please contact your TSP for further information.

7. OTHER INFORMATION

Eligibility criteria

Q: Where can prospective clients find information about eligibility for an FSC Promotional Licence?

A: FSC will publish all eligibility information and supporting materials for prospective clients on [fsc.org](https://www.fsc.org).

Approval

Q: Do PLHs have to resubmit all previously approved materials for approval once the changes are implemented?

A: Yes. Any promotional material updated to reflect the new requirements is considered a new use and must be submitted to the TSP for approval before it is published or printed. This applies to all materials produced or revised after 1 June 2026.

Q: Will the approval process change under the new guide, for example, will a digital tool be introduced for online approvals?

A: No. The approval process remains unchanged. PLHs continue to submit materials to their TSP for review and approval in the same way as up until now.

PLH claims on FSC-certified products/packaging for (sale)

Q: Can a PLH include their company name in a promotional statement placed on an FSC-certified product or its packaging (intended for sale) by their supplier, for example, '[Company name] supports responsible forestry'?

A: No. Only FSC-certified organisations (CoC certificate holders) are permitted to display their brand name directly on an FSC-certified product or its packaging. PLHs are not permitted to do so because placing a company name directly on a product could create the false impression that the PLH is FSC-certified or is an active participant in the certified supply chain, which would be misleading to consumers.

PLHs may use their company name in promotional materials that are not applied directly to the product (e.g. catalogues, websites, in-store displays), provided the overall communication clearly reflects the scope of their Promotional Licence