



FSC Advice Note

Title	FSC-ADV-30-502 FSC certification of bamboo
Date	13 May 2004
Status	Approved by Head of PSU, May 13 th 2004.
Advice sought on	Can certification bodies certify/label bamboo?

FSC Advice

1. Where bamboo occurs within the matrix of an FSC-certified natural forest or plantation it may be certified/labelled as a non-timber forest product (NTFP) following FSC's general guidance for NTFPs.
2. If bamboo is itself grown as a plantation crop, or is itself the principal component of a 'natural forest' it may or may not be possible to certify under the FSC system, depending on the specific situation. The key question is whether the area of bamboo is within FSC's definition of a 'natural forest' or 'plantation', and then whether the management of the area meets the requirements of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship. Potential applicants for certification are advised to request a 'scoping visit' from an FSC accredited certification body to seek advice on this before proceeding to a full evaluation.

Basis for advice

1. Within the FSC system a forest or a tree plantation may be considered for certification if it meets either the definition of 'natural forest' or a 'plantation' (see glossary to FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship). If an area of bamboo can be considered natural forest or part thereof, or a plantation, can be managed in compliance with the *FSC P&C*, and maintain the ecological functions and values required by the *FSC P&C*, then it may be evaluated and certified within the FSC system. Satisfaction of these requirements depends on the particular production system in question rather than on the product type, or the tree/bamboo species as such.
2. There are many species of bamboo, the larger of which may be considered treelike. Larger areas of such bamboo are often referred to as 'bamboo forests'. Such areas may be considered as 'natural forests' within FSC's definition, and may be evaluated for certification based on the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship.
3. Bamboo of any size may also occur naturally as patches within a natural forest or plantation matrix. In this case the bamboo may be considered as a non-timber forest product, and be certified as such within the FSC system.
4. In the case of plantation grown bamboo a decision would need to be made by the certification body as to whether it comes within the FSC definition of 'plantation', and whether the management system can meet the FSC Principles and Criteria. This decision may be based on such factors as the size of the bamboo stems, the length of the rotation, the presence or absence of other trees within the matrix, and the extent to which ecological functions are maintained.

References

FSC-STD-01-001 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship

FSC Guidelines for Certification Bodies – Subject 2.1 “Scope of forest certification”