

FSC's recommendations on the EU Strategy for Sustainable Textiles

Textiles is a sector in which the European Union (EU) can pave the way towards a carbon-neutral and circular economy. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) can support the EU Commission's Green Deal Agenda by ensuring that forest-based textiles are sustainably sourced – and recommends the following:

1. Promoting sustainably sourced fibre types

A thriving sustainable circular economy starts with **sustainably sourced raw materials**. Sustainable sourcing ensures that resources are managed in a way that respects people, animals, and the environment. Sustainable sourcing is therefore a [precondition for an effective sustainable circular economy](#) because it considers environmental and social aspects already at the sourcing level in the supply chain. In the context of textiles, promoting sustainably sourced and renewable materials means [reducing the volume of synthetic fibres made from fossil fuels](#).

2. Employing robust voluntary sustainability standards to promote the use of sustainably sourced/produced fibre types in the EU and globally

One easy way to foster sustainably sourced fibres is employing voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) embedding both **environmental** and **social** criteria. For instance, [FSC certification](#) ensures that forest-based products come from sustainably managed forests respecting **environmental, social, and economic considerations** - hence, in line with the EU Green Deal's ambition. When they include [robust credibility principles](#), VSS can effectively **complement** legislative measures because they can i) offer an easy way for authorities to verify compliance with specific sustainability principles, ii) make firms accountable to consumers, iii) support the public and the private sector meeting the SDGs and going beyond them. FSC therefore recommends the EU Commission to **employ robust VSS as a proxy to demonstrate compliance with sustainable sourcing principles**, as per option already adopted under the EU Ecolabel.

3. Ensuring synergies between the EU Ecolabel and VSS for consumers' benefits

The [EU Ecolabel](#) is a label that is awarded to products and services meeting high environmental standards throughout their life-cycle. VSS instead focus on selected aspects of the life-cycle, for instance making sure that resources are sustainably managed in line with strict environmental criteria. The EU ecolabel is already using VSS (FSC and others) in the [criteria for the label for Textiles](#) and for the [textile part of Footwear](#). The combination of robust VSS and the EU Ecolabel can maximize benefits as it give consumers the certainty that products are both **sourced sustainably** and **produced with fewer negative environmental impacts**. FSC recommends the EU Commission to keep employing robust VSS such as FSC within the EU Ecolabel for Textiles.

4. Including sustainable sourcing in the EU Green Public Procurement criteria for textiles

The [EU Green Public Procurement \(GPP\)](#) Criteria for Textile Products and Services are a voluntary instrument for all EU Member States and public authorities, with the goal of facilitating the inclusion of environmental criteria into public tenders. The EU GPP textile criteria are specifically designed to address the environmental issues along the life cycle of textile products. According to the recent [guidance on EU GPP Criteria for Textile Products and Services](#), fibre sourcing is among the main environmental issues to be addressed. Hence, FSC recommends the EU Commission to include among the GPP criteria that forest-based textiles should be sourced according to the [sustainable forest management standards as defined by the FAO](#) – and that **robust voluntary schemes, such as FSC, can be used as a proxy to demonstrate compliance with this principle**.

About FSC

As the pioneer of forest certification, FSC has 25 years of experience in sustainable forest management and is widely regarded as the world's most trusted forest certification system. FSC uses its expertise to promote the responsible management of the world's forests, bringing together experts from the environmental, economic, and social spheres. FSC develops the standards that define how forests can be managed sustainably and provides a label for businesses to show their products originate from these certified forests. FSC standards are based on ten core principles designed to prevent deforestation and degradation, and safeguard biodiversity, water quality, carbon storage, and Indigenous Peoples' and workers' rights, among other key environmental and social values. More [here](#).

Contacts and queries

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