



# Supporting green initiatives

FSC certification provides customers with environmentally friendly solutions

**A**s part of its ongoing initiative to support environmentally friendly solutions, Checkpoint Systems has gone through a rigorous certification process with the Forest Stewardship Council and is now accredited for FSC certification on paper products, including tags and labels. This provides Checkpoint customers with the opportunity to enhance their own brands as being supportive of “green” solutions and it helps protect the environment because it supports environmentally friendly printing facilities, processes and practices.

FSC is a certification system that provides internationally recognized standard-setting, trademark assurance and accreditation services to companies, organizations and communities interested in responsible forestry. To learn more about the Forest Stewardship Council and the value of FSC certification, Point of View interviewed Alko Afman, a senior project manager at SGS,

which is an independent certification body that is accredited for FSC Chain of Custody (CoC) and Forest Management. Afman is based in the Netherlands and is responsible for managing the work of auditing CoC companies that contract with SGS. SGS Netherlands is accredited via SGS's South African affiliate, through the SGS Qualifor Program.

## **Can you tell us a little bit about the Forest Stewardship Council?**

FSC was established in 1993 as a response to concerns over global deforestation. The Forest Stewardship Council was founded as a legal entity in 1996 in Mexico and moved later on to Bonn. Leading social, environmental and economic players from the Global South and Global North joined in an international process with equal and equitable voices, decision-making powers and responsibilities and founded FSC. Its mission is to be an independent, non-governmental, not-for-

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profit organization to promote the responsible management of the world’s forests. FSC is quite successful and trustworthy due to their strict rules, accreditation system and stakeholders who are critical towards FSC itself.

**What are some of the requirements that a company such as Checkpoint needs to meet in order to be certified by FSC and use the FSC logo?**

The most important one is that a company like Checkpoint must be able to ensure that for all outputs sold as FSC and carrying an FSC label and/or which has been sold as FSC in sales documentation, eligible FSC inputs were used. Another requirement is that certified companies may only use the FSC label when the product is made of eligible FSC inputs. That means that FSC paper is used for the product. The paper can be traced down the chain to an FSC-certified forest.

**What does FSC certification mean for Checkpoint and its customers?**

FSC CoC certification means that if you buy an FSC-certified product as a consumer or as an organization, you have the guarantee that the product comes (partly) from FSC certified forest. All other non-FSC inputs must meet strict criteria and do not come from controversial sources. FSC also allows the use of post-consumer recycled inputs. By buying FSC-certified products, the end user knows he is supporting the continuation of one of the world’s most important ecosystems, forests.

**How many companies are FSC-certified?**

Worldwide there are 123.7 million hectares of forests FSC-certified and 16,235 CoC certificates as of February 2010.

**How does SGS work with companies such as Checkpoint to provide certification?**

Only FSC-accredited certification bodies like SGS are authorized to issue FSC certificates. SGS is the world’s leading inspection,

verification, testing and certification company. Recognized as the global benchmark for quality and integrity, we employ 59,000 people and operate a network of more than 1,000 offices and laboratories around the world. FSC has accredited SGS which means that we work and certify according to their standards for both Chain of Custody as well as Forest Management (FM) Certification.

**What message would you like to provide to our readers in terms of what they can do support environmentally friendly businesses?**

Consider where a product comes from before buying it. Still, a lot of our timber, especially hard wood timber, does not come from sustainable sources but are illegally harvested and/or the cuttings damage the local environment or local users of the forest

**Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?**

Be proud if your local Checkpoint office is FSC CoC-certified. This way you contribute to keeping our forests available for the next generations.■



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