

FSC® unites the yachting industry for more sustainable forestry

A new industry initiative launched by the FSC certification scheme – the Forest Stewardship Council® – focuses on the impact of the yachting industry on the world’s forests. The yachting sector uses large volumes of timber which makes it crucial to ensure that the industry helps set standards for the origin of its timber. A pact and a new platform have been launched to boost the initiative.

Starting with the luxury yachts sector, FSC is now focusing on urging the industry to support better sustainability by providing inspiration, business cases and help for developing responsible procurement policies.

FSC is also encouraging the yachting industry to sign up to a pact that will help the sector to set clear sustainability goals for its purchasing and use of materials sourced from the world’s forests.

As part of the initiative, the Yachting for Forests platform will also be launched at www.yachtingforforests.com

This platform contains information about the pact and provides inspiration for responsible solutions as well as a list of specific industry suppliers.

Expert advice and guidance on how to reach goals

On FSC’s role in the initiative, Kristian Jørgensen, technical advisor at FSC Denmark, states:

“Yachts are an extreme luxury product, but the industry is also an important sector in the innovation of new and greener solutions for the shipbuilding industry in general. We often see innovation in the areas of engine technology, energy efficiency, synthetic fibres, and the direct impact of different materials on the marine environment. But the time has come to pay more attention to the timber that is used.”

This initiative encourages businesses to set targets which FSC, with its wide-ranging experience, supports by providing guidance and expert advice. Both in terms of the practical implementation of policies and incorporating sustainability on a wider scale than just certification.”

FSC hopes that the luxury yachts initiative will spread throughout the industry, e.g. to the fleet of more than six million commercial ships and leisure craft found in European ports.

Where is the timber used?

People rarely think about the fact that large volumes of timber are used in the building of a yacht. Timber is often found in masts, booms and luxurious yacht decking, but also in the structure itself, the yacht’s interiors, in floors and as fine detail on rudders etc.

If the origin of the wood is known – and it is sustainable – the choice of timber as a material is both a responsible and climate-friendly solution. But if the origin of the timber is not known, there is a risk that the timber value chain has had a negative impact on the forests and on the people that live in them and make their living there. That is why it is vital to highlight the industry’s enormous potential for making a positive difference.

Focusing on alternatives to teak

The luxurious maritime look with its oil-finished brown or silvery-grey patina teak is very much an eye-catcher for the yachting industry. But timber regulations in e.g. the EU and the United States prohibit the import of natural teak from Myanmar which is the main country of origin for this particular species of timber.

On natural teak, Kristian Jørgensen, technical advisor at FSC Denmark, states:

“We cannot talk about this industry without talking about the sector’s historical dependence on teak from Myanmar. Yacht decking has shown itself to be the Achilles’ heel of the industry. The use of natural teak is not just justified by the luxurious look of the timber, but by the extreme technical quality of the wood.”

With this new initiative, FSC wishes to push forward to find excellent, responsible alternatives. The industry is in the process of adapting – but this also presents its own challenges. Fast innovation is required, innovation that can create new types of decking that is both durable and able to meet the industry’s aesthetic requirements.

“FSC can bring together operators and show the market what is possible,” says Kristian Jørgensen.

Invitation to suppliers

In order to highlight the possibilities of the existing market, all FSC-certified businesses offering materials or services to yacht building are invited to participate with a supplier’s profile on the website.

“When FSC works on the development of policies in a sector, our experience shows that the best way to motivate people is by being clear about the solutions that are easy and close at hand. Everyone can do something immediately by using the existing products on offer. But we also have to identify better and longer-term solutions to the more complex problems across supply chains,” says Kristian Jørgensen.

Contact details

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About FSC

FSC is the world’s most ambitious global certification scheme for sustainable forestry and your guarantee that timber and paper come from well-managed forests and other responsible sources. FSC works both for nature and humans living in the world’s forested areas.

About the project

The ‘Ensuring a higher uptake of timber from responsible sources in the yachting industry’ project is coordinated by FSC Denmark and supported by the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation (www.fpa2.org). Its aim is to ensure that the yachting industry sources more timber from responsibly managed forests around the world.

The project forms part of a wide variety of activities launched by FSC to promote sustainable forest management through certification and to use innovation to strengthen the business case for responsible forestry.