



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In this document you will find frequently asked questions about the OCP, the functioning of the platform, its features, the relationship between FSC® and Historic Futures - the developers of the platform - and much more.

This document is designed to assist in answering questions and concerns you might have about the OCP. It also provides an insight to the extra features the OCP offers. This document is continuously updated with answers to new questions, both those that arise and those that are already known to us but still need final clarification.

On the next pages you will find an overview of questions. By clicking the questions you will be able to jump directly to the answer of that question. It is also possible to simply scroll down the pages.

Questions

Should you have any questions or questions you would like answered in the FAQ, please contact us through support@ocphelp.zendesk.com.

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About OCP

1. What is OCP?

OCP stands for Online Claims Platform. It is a platform for certificate holders, where transactions of FSC certified products are recorded. In short, the customer of FSC certified products enters the FSC claim from their supplier's invoice into the OCP. These entries are then confirmed by the supplier, ensuring that the claim is agreed as accurate by both parties.

Read more about how the OCP works in the FAQ category 'OCP Workflow: Basics'.

2. Why change the current system?

With thousands of companies, millions of hectares of forests and billions of dollars worth of certified products in the FSC system, it can be easy to forget a simple truth: FSC's collective success depends on the integrity of the FSC brand.

No system is foolproof and the FSC system is no different. We know that there have been cases where alleged FSC products have been found to not be FSC certified, causing financial and reputational problems for the companies selling these products.

To address this issue, FSC is moving forward to strengthen the FSC system. By introducing the OCP, FSC provides a more thorough way of auditing and confirming transactions are legitimate, thus providing a higher level of assurance that the products moving down the supply chain are in fact FSC certified.

2.1 What is the scale of this problem?

Measuring the scale of the problem is not possible without a system such as the OCP, making it unfeasible to obtain accurate, representative and quantifiable data from across the full spectrum of the FSC system.

However, inaccurate claims in the FSC system are not new to FSC and we know that in a number of cases they have caused significant issues and financial losses for the companies involved. It is important to stress that there is no legitimate, tolerable threshold for inaccurate claims of any type, as each and every one of them reduces the credibility of the FSC system and creates adverse impacts on legitimate certificate holders, undermining the value for all FSC stakeholders.

As with all systems, the FSC needs to evolve to address problems as they arise and seek effective solutions to keep the system strong. Ignoring these origination errors, or hoping that they are not widespread is not a credible strategy.

2.2 Will the OCP catch non-certified companies who are purchasing FSC materials from a certified supplier and then selling the materials using the COC number of the company they bought it from?

If non-certified organizations sell to organizations using the OCP and the buyer tries to connect

to the seller in the OCP – the first step to verify a claim - they will notice that the coc number's owner and information does not match the one of the non-certified seller, the supplier of the buyer. This means that the buyer will know immediately that their supplier cannot pass on to them a valid FSC claim and that the organization is committing fraud.

In the future, a purchasing organization will be able to subscribe to the OCP which will provide confirmation of the FSC claimed products they purchased.

The OCP will not catch non-certified organizations passing on FSC claims to other non-certified organizations as neither of them will be using the OCP system.

2.3 What happens if the supplier and customer collude to enter false claims into the OCP?

Collusion requires active coordination and effort across organisational boundaries and is therefore inherently less likely than organisations operating individually to deliberately introduce inaccurate product claims. However, when the OCP is fully implemented and being used by all certificate holders and certification bodies it will be extremely difficult to create origination errors even when two Certificate Holders work together to do so.

When a customer records a claim in the OCP, it creates a matching “output” record for the supplier, who will need to be able to balance this mass with their own inputs. Where this is possible using appropriate FSC materials at the supplier, it is not an “origination error”. Where it is not possible, the supplier will need to obtain the relevant materials from their own suppliers - meaning that the collusion would need to extend beyond the first two businesses - all the way back to the forest. When the colluding supplier is an Forest Management Unit (FMU) it may be simpler. However, this dramatically limits the scope of likely collusion (i.e. only between FMU's and their immediate customers) and confines it to the area of the supply-chain where auditing can likely identify the issue.

3. Why is FSC pursuing an internet-based solution?

As the number of FSC certificate holders and the amount of FSC Claims made increases, a more scalable method needs to be developed alongside the existing audit structure. Even if auditing were required to reconcile transactions between trading partners, it would be time consuming and costly for an auditor to review even a small percentage of the transactions between trading parties, whereas the OCP can verify all transactions, and does so almost in real time. FSC needs a scalable way of managing the information required to ensure that accurate claims are made by the more than 28,000 FSC certificate holders.

Furthermore, the solution must be accessible to all certificate holders, highly secure, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and able to provide data to the relevant parties through reporting tools. Only an internet-based solution is capable of meeting these requirements..

4. What options did FSC consider before implementing the OCP?

FSC considered several options before deciding on the OCP.

Option 1 : Do more and better auditing

This does not fix the problem with inaccurate claims since the claims made between supplier and customer are not compared with one another and are not verified. Further, this would cost

more money for certificate holders since audits are expensive. Even if more auditing were done, it would, at best, cover a slightly larger percentage of transactions, unless the auditor was present all the time.

Option 2 : Introduce paper-based transaction certificates

This option would solve the problem but would be both expensive and not scalable to meet the needs of over 27,000 certificate holders. The work and cost involved in printing and tracking certificates requires significantly more resources than an online solution, which is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Option 3 : Do nothing

For FSC, doing nothing was not a viable option. No inaccurate claims are acceptable in the FSC system because the credibility and integrity of our system must be upheld.

5. Would more and better audits be an alternative?

Audits are clearly an important aspect of the integrity of the FSC system, but as the number of FSC certificate holders and FSC claims made by the individual certified company increases, a more scalable method needs to be developed alongside the existing audit structure. Even if more auditing were done, it would, at best, cover a slightly larger percentage of transactions, unless the auditor is present all the time.

More audits would cost more money for certificate holders since audits are expensive.

6. Would transaction certificates work?

FSC has considered using physical transaction certificates as part of the paper-based chain of custody system. However, because of the number of certificate holders and the volume of transactions, this has been deemed impractical from a scale and resources perspective.

7. Would doing nothing be acceptable?

To do nothing is simply not an option. Inaccurate claims are not acceptable in the FSC system because the credibility and integrity of our system must be upheld.

8. Are stakeholders consulted in the development of the OCP?

The OCP has been in development since 2011, and has to date included significant consultation with stakeholders from a variety of industries, different regions and at different scales of production. Large global companies to small group certificates have been consulted.

Many different needs must be met with the new system, which is why both consultations with different stakeholders and testing periods are highly important. The platform is still undergoing testing and seeking feedback from stakeholders in order to optimize and adapt the system to meet the needs of certificate holders.

We continue to want to hear your thoughts and opinions on the OCP as we know there are many questions. Help us build the OCP to help benefit everyone in the FSC system and protect and strengthen FSC connections.

Read more about the testing period [here](#).

9. How does the OCP improve accuracy and integrity?

As the OCP is an online system that can be accessed 24/7, new information entered into the system will appear immediately. This means that the status and scope of every FSC certificate constantly is up to date, thereby improving the accuracy of the data and thus also the integrity of the FSC system as a whole.

The OCP provides simple and sophisticated tools to provide all certificate holders the ability to:

- Maintain the accuracy of their certificate data;
- Maintain an accurate list of their approved FSC suppliers; and
- Systematically check the claims connected to all FSC inputs received, thus confirming the accuracy of the FSC claim for the product being delivered

These features will allow FSC certification bodies to review and confirm the accuracy between the suppliers records and the customers certified input from those suppliers. Without the OCP it is time consuming and costly for an auditor to review even a small percentage of the transactions between trading parties, whereas the OCP can verify all transactions, and does so almost in real time.

In addition, the platform will ensure that the FSC certified products received are truly FSC certified with the appropriate FSC claim in a manner that is scalable to cover the more than 27,000 certificate holders participating in the system.

10. Can the OCP bring new tools to my business?

Besides ensuring the credibility and integrity of the FSC system and thereby also your FSC certificate, the OCP brings other features with it, which are intended to reduce the administrative burden of Chain of Custody certification requirements:

- Certificate holders will automatically be notified of changes in the scope or status of FSC supplier certificates;
- Summary information will be available from the OCP to assist with annual audit processes, e.g. confirmed supplier list and information on the volume of FSC certified material bought and sold for each FSC product type;
- The supplier is able to identify which of their claims are important to their customers, potentially providing additional marketing opportunities;
- Information will be available to assist with trade regulation compliance (such as the Lacey Act and EU Timber Regulation), for example, by letting you automatically inherit information on country of harvest and species information. This happens without you or your customer being able to see the full supply chain.

Read more about additional features of the OCP [here](#).

11. Is there a cost?

To use the system itself will add no additional cost to your certification. This means there is no fee involved for FSC certified businesses to use the OCP.

However, we realize that for many businesses, there are costs to implement the system. There will be costs in human resources for many certificate holders to implement the system and set

up new internal workflows.

We also realize that the option of implementing OCP in some businesses' current IT system will, in many cases, come with external expenses to do so. The specific costs will be unique to each individual business depending on how the OCP is integrated into the work flow of that business.

Click [here](#) to read more about integrating the OCP into business processes.

12. When will OCP launch?

In the second quarter of 2014 all certificate holders will have access to the fully functioning system and will be able to register and start using the OCP to help manage FSC COC processes.

During 2014 the system will remain in beta mode allowing testing and feedback of the feature complete software, and users will have the option to choose between a "demo" account - where all claims and connections recorded will be deleted periodically - or a "live" version, where all claims and connections recorded will be saved permanently unless altered by the user. Read more about the beta period, the demo and live mode under the FAQ category 'Beta period'.

The extended beta period during 2014 is introduced to allow for further and more thorough testing to ensure that it can be integrated into business processes. Updates and new features are therefore to be expected. Read more about the testing of the OCP [here](#).

13. Will the OCP be available in multiple languages?

The OCP will be available in Croatian, Danish, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Simplified Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. These are the languages where companies have actively requested a translated version.

FSC will monitor other languages where translations are needed.

14. Will the OCP system be integrated into the Chain of Custody standard?

Yes, OCP will be included in the next draft for the CoC standard to be released for stakeholder consultation in early 2014.

Beta period

1. What is the beta period?

During late 2013, the OCP system has undergone thorough testing by selected companies around the world in a closed beta trial and the testing of the system will continue in 2014.

From January 2014 and until April 2014 additional companies, who have signed up during 2013, will be added to the trial, which is still in “demo” mode. Please note that the demo mode is also available for other certificate holders, please read more about the demo mode and how to get access under ‘What is the demo mode?’.

Soon, the beta version will open up for the live mode, which is fully operational, real-time OCP. When you register during the beta period and choose the live mode, you will activate your permanent OCP account. It is still possible to choose between testing a “demo” version of the OCP or start using the “live” version of the OCP. The difference between the two modes is that in the “live” version claims and connections are registered permanently and notifications are sent to external parties. In the demo version all data is deleted periodically.

The beta version will continue until certificate holders have a clear understanding of the effort required to integrate the OCP into their business processes.

1.1 What is the “demo” mode?

During the beta period, a “demo” mode will be offered to certificate holders.

In the demo mode, data entered is deleted periodically and email notifications are turned off. This means that your supplier will not get email notifications when connection requests are sent to them from you, unless they are part of the OCP demo beta themselves. A “beta test supplier” also exists for you to connect with and record claims against. These actions will not be audited or seen by any other organisations.

This setup allows two businesses in a supply chain, which are both testing the demo mode, to send connection requests and claims back and forth. While they will not receive email notifications, they will be able to see the notifications in OCP itself.

Please note that the demo mode will be refreshed periodically. This removes all of your account information. After a refresh, you will need to reregister and reconnect to suppliers. This will give you a fresh slate for entering claims.

Besides having the option to connect to suppliers participating in the demo mode, the OCP will also offer “dummy” accounts, which you will be able to connect to and enter fictitious data that no one will see.

When you choose to shift to the “live” version of the OCP, you will need to re-connect with your suppliers.

The demo mode is available from February 5, 2014 and onwards. To use the demo mode please send an email to support@ocphelp.zendesk.com. The demo site is available at ocp-demo.fsc.org.

1.2 What is the “live” mode?

The “live” mode is the fully operational, real-time OCP. When you register during the beta period and choose the live mode, you will activate your permanent OCP account. That means connection requests are permanent (unless you choose to delete specific suppliers yourself). In addition, all FSC claims entered remain in the system and your connected supplier will be able to see them. Furthermore, all notifications will be functional and email notifications will be sent out. The data entered in the live version during the beta period can be downloaded as reports and used during audits.

A “beta test supplier” also exists in the live mode for you to connect with and record claims against. Actions made against the “beta test supplier” will however not be audited or seen by any other organisations, as this function only allows you to test how to connect and submit (test) claims.

The live mode is a fully functioning version of the OCP. If you select this mode, the ending of the beta period will have no effect on your account and no data will be deleted when the system moves into full launch.

You will be able to register on the OCP and start using the live mode soon. If you wish to use the live mode please email: support@ocphelp.zendesk.com.

2. What happens if a certificate holder uses the “live” version but others in the supply chain do not?

The certificate holder using the live version will send a connection request to their suppliers. Regardless if the supplier accepts the connection request or not, the certificate holder can start entering claims into the OCP against their suppliers. Those claims entered will not be considered an OCP verified “handshake” between the two parties since the supplier has not accepted the connection request yet. However, the certificate holder can use this data for their volume summary report and preparing for audits.

2.1 Will the supplier need to approve the claims made against him before his account was activated?

Suppliers who activate their account after their customers are already entering FSC purchases into their OCP account will see the list of FSC sales in the suppliers account. These sales will not need to be approved and will be clearly marked as claims that were entered before the supplier activated the account.

3. Why test the system?

The OCP system is carefully tested to ensure an optimized platform for all certificate holders, no matter the industry or scale of business. Also, testing provides the opportunity to provide input on how the OCP can provide the most assistance when administering FSC Chain of Custody requirements.

Even though the system is being tested and changes may be implemented, the changes will only consist of additional features and functions. The core OCP platform will continue to function.

Safety

1. Who can see what, when?

Certificate holders will control who has access to their OCP account. Certification bodies gain access to their clients' accounts through permission of the certificate holder. The certificate holder will be able to view who has access to their account, and choose to remove those with access, or add others. If the certification body is not granted access to the certificate holder's account off-site, then the certification body will need to review the certificate holder's OCP account on-site during the annual audit.

If there has been a complaint filed against a company, and a formal investigation has commenced, Accreditation Services International (ASI) and the certification body of the business in question can request full access to the company data entered into the OCP. The company in question will control how ASI and the certification body gains access and reviews the OCP records in question.

FSC staff and other parties will not be able to view any data in the OCP including aggregated data; however, on request of the certificate holder, the FSC OCP Support Team and Historic Futures can be granted access to provide certificate holders any necessary support requested. This access is governed by the OCP Terms and Conditions of Use. Any proposed changes to the T&C will be circulated for stakeholder consultation and follow FSC LEG-PRO-10-001 'General Procedure for Contracting Parties'.

2. How secure is my data?

The OCP is hosted on Amazon's Web Service, which provides world-class security. More information on physical and infrastructure security can be found [here](#). In addition, the OCP software itself is periodically security tested by an [expert independent third party](#). The OCP is developed and maintained by Historic Futures Ltd (HF), who operate a comprehensive Information Security Management System (ISMS), with board-level oversight. HF's ISMS is designed according to the [ISO27001](#) standard and HF expect to be certified to this standard by April 2014.

3. What are the FSC Terms and Conditions of Use?

The Terms and Conditions of Use will be included in the beta version of the OCP and can also be found on the website ocp-info.fsc.org. From January 2014, these Terms and Conditions will be open for comments from stakeholders. They will be revised before the OCP goes live. Comments should be sent to e.crumley@fsc.org.

4. How is privacy / confidentiality upheld?

The OCP does not collect or store any personal or financial data. All the data certificate holders enter in the OCP belongs exclusively to them, and they control how it is shared. The OCP will not share data unless explicitly agreed to by the certificate holder unless a complaint filed against a company, and a formal investigation has commenced.

FSC does not have access to certificate holder's accounts or the data in the account, including any information about the certificate holder's supply chain. A certificate holder can grant the OCP Support Team access to their account to resolve problems. This will mean that the OCP Support Team will have access to data under strict guidance and knowledge of the certificate holder.

5. Is the company hosting the OCP secure?

The OCP application is hosted on Amazon's Web Services which provides world-class security and performance. Thousands of large international businesses use Amazon's hosting services, including Amazon itself. Many case studies can be found [here](#).

6. How are data privacy and anti-trust issues addressed?

Access to information will be limited to the current model in the FSC system, which means FSC will have no access to the data in the OCP. (Unless specifically granted by the certificate holder through the FSC OCP Support. Learn more in the FSC Terms and Conditions of Use, which can be found at ocp-info.fsc.org).

Certificate holders' customers and suppliers will only have access to information that certificate holders share with them, based on FSC claims and change of legal ownership.

By default, a certification body will be able to view the same type of information that they are currently allowed to access through audits, namely FSC claims sent to customers and those received from suppliers. However, the information can only be accessed after agreement between the certificate holder and the certification body.

FSC will have no access to transactional information or to the data in the platform.

Access and registration

1. How do I access the OCP?

The OCP can be accessed through the internet with most common web browsers or through integration with other IT systems. No additional software is required to use the browser-based user interface.

A business without a computer or internet access can have their claims entered into the OCP on their behalf by their FSC certified customer or other party that the business deems can do the job (e.g. group manager, data entry firm or consultant).

2. What if I have a computer, but limited internet access?

If you have limited or no internet access, you can have your claims entered into the OCP through use of the spreadsheet processor, which allows an Excel file to be emailed into the OCP. This method is viable for companies with limited internet access. If you have no access to the Internet, you will have the possibility to allow another party to upload your data for you. This can either be your FSC certified customer or another party that you find fit to do the job (e.g. group manager, data entry firm or consultant).

3. How do I register?

You can register at ocp.fsc.org. This site will be open for registration soon.

All of your data is automatically transferred from info.fsc.org, which means that the first time you use the OCP, you will be asked to verify all your current information found in info.fsc.org.

Should some of your data be incorrect, you will have the chance to update and correct your certificate data. Any changes will be shared with your certification body, who will need to approve them, before the data is updated on both ocp.fsc.org and info.fsc.org.

Once your data is correct, you are ready to start testing or using the OCP.

Please note that you can choose between two different modes: The “live” mode and the “demo” mode. The demo mode is available from February 5, 2014, and the live mode will be available soon. If you wish to use the live mode you register and login at ocp.fsc.org. If you want to try the demo mode please send an email to support@ocphelp.zendesk.com. The demo site is available at ocp-demo.fsc.org. The demo mode will have the link to the live mode and vice versa. Learn more about the different modes [here](#).

3.1 Why might my profile data be incorrect?

In the current FSC system certificate holders have to contact their certificate body to alter their

information on info.fsc.org in case of personal changes, added product group, added species etc.

Updating FSCs internal databases through your certification body might not be the first thing you think of, when facing personal changes, and the data on the info.fsc.org therefore is not always fully up to date.

Once you are registered on the OCP, you will be able to revise and update your certificate data whenever a change is required. The OCP will in other words make it easier and more efficient for you in the future to update your certificate holder information. Today you have to call or email your certification body to have it altered; a process which at times is not very effective for either party. From the launch of the OCP, certification bodies will automatically be notified about changes and will be required to review and update them at info.fsc.org. As soon as the data is updated at info.fsc.org it will be picked up by the OCP.

Note that certification bodies still need to verify the new information before it is updated.

4. When can I register?

As of 1 April 2014, the OCP platform will be open for registrations. Please note that as of February 5 the OCP will be available in a demo mode allowing companies to test the system without starting using it for real. Read more about the launch of the OCP [here](#) and learn more about the live and demo modes under '[Beta period](#)'

5. In the case of a group certificate, will each company of the group have their information kept separately, or will they be combined as one company since they all share one certificate number?

This will be up to the group manager to decide. In some cases, the group manager may want to update the OCP for all members of the group. In other cases, each group member may want to manage their own account. All group members with a subset number (eg. XX-COC-000000A) will be granted their own secure access to the OCP. At the moment, not all group members have subset numbers assigned to them. If you do not have your own subset number and you wish your own access to the OCP, you will need to ask your group manager to set up subset numbers through their certification body. With the introduction of the new multiple-site standard, this situation is anticipated to be fixed as subset numbers are expected to become a requirement for all group certificates.

6. For multi-site certificates, will each facility have a log in or will it be a company wide log in?

This will be up to the multi-site manager to decide. In some cases, the multi-site manager may want to update the OCP for all members of the certificate. In other cases, each multi-site member may want to manage their own account. Multi-site members have a subset number (eg: XX-COC-000000A) and that subset number allows each individual member to have their own secure access to the OCP. Some members in multi-site certificates may be within the same supply chain and/or competitors so only the individual multi-site member and multi-site manager will have access to the individual members information.

7. When is use of the OCP required?

The OCP demo system is currently available for testing. Registration, connection and the use of OCP is expected to become mandatory when testing has been completed successfully, and once consultation with stakeholders has drawn to a close. The final decision on this will be made by the FSC Board of Directors and will be determined at one of the Board's meetings in 2014. Should registration and connection become mandatory, all certificate holders will be notified at least six months in advance.

8. What will happen if I am not registered should OCP become mandatory?

At this time, FSC is currently consulting with stakeholders who have concerns about the mandatory nature of the OCP. These consultations have not yet been completed, and therefore – at this time – we cannot confirm whether mandatory registration, connection and use will be required. However, the OCP is expected to become mandatory when testing has been completed successfully, and once consultation with stakeholders has drawn to a close.

Should registration and connection become mandatory, all certificate holders will be notified at least six months in advance. If registration is mandatory, and businesses fail to register, a minor non-conformance request will be issued during the annual audit.

OCP workflow: Basics

1. How do I enter data?

There are three ways certificate holders can enter FSC claims into the OCP.

- User Interface (UI), where each transaction is entered directly on the site (good for low volume of sales or consolidated claims)
- Spreadsheet Processor (SSP), a formatted spreadsheet, where FSC claims will automatically be updated into your specific account through upload of the spreadsheet or via an email address which is specifically assigned to each OCP account user (good for high volume sales).
- Direct integration of your current IT system to the OCP system (good for companies with high volume sales that already have an integrated IT system for their FSC claims).

1.1 How does User Interface (UI) work?

By using the User Interface you enter your claims directly into the system by logging in to the OCP website and following [this guide](#).

You will have the option to consolidate or lump multiple invoices from the same supplier into one entry if you buy the same product from the same supplier often.

This method of entering claims is ideal if your volume of sales is low or if you consolidate or lump claims.

1.2 How does the formatted spreadsheet upload (SSP) work?

When using the Spreadsheet Processor (SSP), your suppliers claims are entered by using a personalized spreadsheet that is then uploaded onto the OCP or sent to a unique SSP inbox email, which is listed under the purchases tab.

Once uploaded, the information is automatically reviewed by the OCP and any claims containing flaws, will be returned via email. These errors could for example be a claim type or product group, which the supplier is not accredited for, or other similar mistakes. If the file contains no problems, the claims will be uploaded and the suppliers notified for verification.

This is a good option if you have a high volume of purchases. Click [here](#) to download a guide explaining how to step by step use the SSP.

1.2.1 Where can I download the spreadsheet?

The spreadsheet is available for download in your OCP account.

1.2.2 What is the time turn around for the spreadsheet upload?

The spreadsheet will be processed within 15 minutes after upload to the OCP system.

1.2.3 How often does the spreadsheet need to be uploaded to the OCP?

Claims can be entered in real time, weekly, or monthly. After receiving the invoice from your supplier, you have a maximum of six weeks to enter the data in the OCP.

Please note that the OCP will not block trade, so you can resell your FSC certified product before your supplier approves the FSC claim you entered.

1.2.4 How does the spreadsheet upload prevent accidental / deliberate duplication of uploaded data?

The system will look for duplicated “transaction identifiers” and not upload the same transaction twice. The invoice # (or other identifier) should be unique to a supplier. An invoice will contain multiple line items which should be unique per invoice.

1.3 How does Applications Programming Interface (API) work?

If you already have a computer system in which you enter your supplier’s FSC claims, the Applications Programming Interface (API) is for you. The API is a bridge between your computer system and the OCP, which allows the two to send data back and forth.

The API can be viewed as similar to a power plug socket in a wall. The shape of the pins is defined by certain written standards and people make the plugs so they fit the standard. The other end of the wire can have any device you like. The same principle applies for the API. It has a defined set of methods which can be called and have to be connected to using standard web protocols. The other end of the connector can be someone else’s system. The connection between the two is entirely up to the customer to design.

Once the bridge between your computer system and the OCP is built and in place, all your supplier’s FSC claims will automatically be entered into your OCP account.

1.3.1 How much will the API cost me?

The API has no fee to use, however, the implementation cost will be variable from company to company depending on the complexity of the computer system in place and the amount of in-house capacity to do the actual bridging between the two systems.

As businesses start using the API, FSC will collect case studies on costs and benefits of implementation, and share these with all certificate holders via our OCP and FSC International websites.

2. What is my task as a Chain of Custody (CoC) certificate holder?

Once OCP becomes mandatory it is your obligation - as a FSC CoC certificate holder - to enter the claims of the goods you receive from your suppliers and verify that the claims made to you from your customers are correct.

2.1 What is the workflow involved in entering claims (CoC certificate holder)?

After you are connected to your suppliers, the workflow is as follows:

1. You buy an FSC certified product from your supplier. With that you receive an invoice.
2. Enter your supplier's invoice into the OCP system.
3. The system automatically notifies your supplier that their invoice has been entered into the system.
4. Your supplier reviews the entered data based on their invoice and either approves it or marks it as a problem.
5. If your supplier **approves** the entered data you are notified that this claim has been accepted. If your supplier marks the entered data as **a problem**, you will be notified and the disagreement will have to be resolved between you and your supplier before your purchase data is accepted and recorded.

This work flow also applies to your customers, meaning that you as a supplier will need to approve the data that your customers enters into the OCP based on your invoices.

Please note that the OCP will not block trade, so you can resell your FSC certified product before your supplier approves the FSC claim you entered.

3. What is my task as a Forest Manager (FM), Controlled Wood (CW), FM/CoC or CW/FM certificate holder?

As a FM, FM/CoC, or CW/FM certificate holder you are the first link in the supply chain. Due to the claims on the OCP moving backwards from customer to supplier, you will therefore not be required to enter supplier claims, but only verify the claims that your customers enter into the system on the basis of your invoices.

3.1 What is my work flow of entering claims (FM/CoC or CW/FM certificate holder)?

The work flow will be as follows:

1. You sell a product to a customer. With this you send an invoice or some sort of transaction identifier.
2. Your customer enters the claims made on your invoice/transaction identifier into their OCP account.
3. The system automatically notifies you when your customer has entered your FSC sales claims into the system.
4. You then verify this entry. If the entry is correct, you approve it. If the data does not match your invoice/transaction identifier, you mark it as a problem. Note you can choose to automatically accept claims after 14 days.
5. If you **approve** the entered data your task is done. If you mark the data as **a problem**, then your customer will be notified and the disagreement will have to be resolved between you and your customer.

4. Why must I enter my supplier's claims and not the claims I send out to my customers?

It is required by the chain of custody (CoC) standard that certificate holders, not customers, keep records of all FSC certified suppliers. Therefore many certificate holders do not know if their customers are FSC certified or not.

The OCP is designed to be in line with the CoC standard. Customers already have to verify that the purchases they make with FSC claims come from certified suppliers. Using the OCP to do this ensures that those claims come from genuine suppliers.

Many certificate holders have fewer suppliers than customers so the burden is reduced by requiring FSC purchases to be entered versus sales.

However, some certificate holders may prefer to enter their FSC sales, so this is an option in the OCP. If you wish to enter your FSC sale, this requires consent from both trading parties where the customer checks a box in their OCP account allowing their suppliers to enter sales claims.

If the supplier agrees to record the sales, the customer is able to check and reject the claims recorded in the system for 14 days before the claim becomes accepted as an agreed record in the system.

5. Can I register claims on behalf of my customers?

In some supply chains it is more pragmatic for the supplier to enter the claim. To accommodate this, it is possible for companies to alter the default route for entering of claims from buyer to supplier to the supplier recording their sales claims.

To record sales claims, consent from both trading parties is required. This is done through a check of a box in the OCP account of the customer allowing their suppliers to enter sales claims. From that point forward it is the customer's responsibility to review and approve the claims or report them as a problem.

6. What guards a seller against a buyer making a purchase claim against their inventory while they are for example out of town and not able to reject the claim?

The seller can reject a claim at any point in time if the invoice claim did not match the OCP entry.

7. What if I have made a purchase, received it, and then file the claim only to find out that the supplier is not a valid certificate holder?

The OCP will not allow for entering a claim if the supplier is not a valid certificate holder. This means that you will be notified immediately if your supplier does not hold an FSC certificate.

OCP workflow: Entering claims

1. When is the deadline for entering a claim?

Claims can be entered in real time, weekly, or monthly. After receiving the invoice from your supplier, you have a maximum of six weeks to enter the data in the OCP.

Please note that the OCP will not block trade, so you can resell your FSC certified product before your supplier approves the FSC claim you entered.

2. If I buy the same thing from the same supplier over and over, do I have to enter each claim separately or can I consolidate those claims?

You can choose to consolidate or lump similar claims. This means, that if you buy the same product from the same supplier multiple times, you can consolidate all of those claims into one monthly entry.

3. What happens if supplier and buyer enter the same claim?

The OCP is able to recognize this as a duplicate entry and not accept the second entry.

4. Who enters species into the OCP?

Species and country of harvest needs to be entered for a claim, when the product(s) you buy come from a FM/CoC or CW/FM certificate holder or from a supplier with a Controlled Wood Risk Assessment, who has sold you a product that contains wood from their risk assessment.

5. With product type being so important and the reporting providing benefit why is it optional? Can we make it mandatory?

We are only requiring information to be entered into the OCP that is currently required to be on invoices. However, we have heard strong support for adding “product type” to the OCP so this will be available and optional.

6. How do we handle material that is bought as FSC and is used for both FSC project and non-FSC projects?

All FSC certified purchases need to be entered into the OCP. The purchases you enter will be included in the “volume summary report” which is available in your OCP account.

The FSC sales you made, which your certified customers entered into the OCP will appear in your “volume summary report” as FSC sales. If you sell products with FSC invoice claims

to non-certified customers, you can choose to enter those sales to a bucket “non-certified customer” account. Then all of your FSC sales will appear in your “volume summary report” in the OCP.

Remember, the only requirement is to enter your FSC purchases into the OCP.

7. How do I handle sales of FSC certified products that are sold without any FSC claim on the invoice (i.e sold as non FSC products)?

As no claim is being made on these products, they are outside the scope of the CoC standard for both supplier and customer. They will therefore not need to be entered on the OCP.

8. What do I do if I buy certified products, enter the claim, but find out that they are unfit for me to re-sell, for example because of damage?

You can edit the claim showing that the product was returned or a different quantity was actually received. The claim in OCP must match the invoice and any associated documentation of the transaction.

9. How will the system handle material returns, reversals and corrections?

Material returns, reversals and corrections will be dealt with the same as you deal with them now. If you return a product, then that must be taken out of your credit account, or amount of product available to sell as FSC certified. You will have a way to adjust the purchase/receipt if there are returns, reversals, corrections, etc. via the OCP. Mechanisms are in OCP to enable corrections to claims. This will be visible to both parties (seller and buyer) as well as the auditor.

OCP workflow: Claim types

1. Does recycled fiber need to be entered into the OCP?

Only purchases with an FSC invoice claim are required to be entered into the OCP. So, if you purchase “FSC-Recycled” fiber, it must be entered into the OCP. If you purchase post or pre-consumer material without an FSC claim, that you classify as FSC-Recycled does not need to be entered into the system as an FSC purchase. If you’d like, you can choose to enter this non-certified material into your OCP account under a “non-certified recycled wood supplier” bucket.

2. Does wood that I verify as Controlled Wood through my own risk assessment need to be entered into the OCP?

Only purchases with an FSC invoice claim are required to be entered into the OCP. So, if you purchase “FSC Controlled Wood”, it must be entered into the OCP. Virgin wood that you verify as controlled wood through your own controlled wood risk assessment does not need to be entered into the system. If you’d like, you can choose to enter this virgin wood under a “non-certified virgin wood supplier” bucket.

3. How do I handle particle board and other board material, which will have all possible species in them?

If the particle board contains wood from your supplier’s Controlled Wood Risk Assessment, then the species and country of harvest is required. The supplier is required to notify you of this information (species and country of harvest). They can choose to enter their FSC sales or you will need to enter the FSC purchase and include the species and country of harvest. Certificate holders will be able to group species, eg, “mixed hardwood”, then group which species are in that specific group. This means that you do not have to type in each species individually every time.

OCP workflow: Other invoice data

1. Can credit notes be used for entering claims instead of invoices?

Yes, invoices are not always used. Whatever type of documentation you use that currently meets your FSC audit will work for the OCP.

2. Can an order number be used rather than an invoice number?

Yes, the policy in regards to this question will be exactly the same as it is currently. Per the FSC CoC 40-004 standard, invoice numbers are required. However, in cases where invoices numbers are not used, other supplemental information can be used, per the CoC standard.

3. What about the fact that on electronic invoices we do not have to provide the claim or CoC number? The OCP seems to assume a printed invoice.

Yes, the policy in regards to this question will be exactly the same as it is currently. Per the FSC CoC 40-004 standard the FSC claim and CoC number are required. However, in cases where the FSC claim and FSC CoC code can be passed on another way, other supplemental documentation can be used, per the CoC standard.

4. How do you link multiple line items to invoice references?

Each FSC claim (purchase) is tied to the invoice ID, and the invoice IDs will be the reference when multiple invoices are consolidated into a weekly or monthly claim.

5. What happens if my suppliers use different quantity units on the same invoice?

It is not a problem if your supplier uses different units for different products placed on the same invoice. The system allows you to choose the quantity unit for each item on the invoice.

6. What happens if my supplier uses different units than I do?

The units recorded on the claim in OCP will be those of your supplier, as entered on the invoice. However, if you wish to use the OCP to create volume summaries, you are able to insert conversion factors for each claim in the “volume summary” report that can be downloaded from your OCP account. This will allow you to align all units and calculate your total volume coming into your company.

7. Can the product description be the vendor's item number?

Yes.

8. Will product type mismatches be a concern where the supplier and customer have defined a product at a different product type level? For example, supplier scope lists W5.1 while customer enters W5 for a purchase.

This type of product type mismatch is acceptable and anticipated. There will be red flags raised if the product types are claimed as different categories, eg: W4 & W5.

9. What if conversion factor is determined after output volume is subtracted from input volume, as in custom job orders?

Conversion factors are not entered into the OCP. The volume summary report has a column for conversion factors, if the CH would like to use the report as their volume summary report for their audit.

10. When wood and chips are received at a scalehouse, they are not accompanied by an invoice. Often invoicing happens at a later time. Is there a recognition that there is a time lag between wood receiving and invoicing?

Yes, there may be a lag time between wood receiving & invoicing. The OCP is to be updated when the invoice is received or upon receipt of the product, per the current policy under the FSC COC 40-004 standard.

OCP workflow: Approving claims

1. How much time do I have to approve claims coming to me from my customers?

You have two weeks to go through claims sent to you and mark them as a problem if needed. After two weeks an entered claim will be automatically accepted.

1.1 If claims are automatically accepted, why should I bother approving them?

It is your obligation as an FSC certified company to verify that the claims sent from you to your customer are correct. The OCP supports this obligation.

It is correct that the claims will automatically be accepted after two weeks. However, it is in your interest to verify the claims made by your customer, as incorrect claims will affect your volume summary. Inconsistencies in volume summaries will lead to corrective action requests during your audit.

2. What happens if my products are ready to ship but my supplier has not approved the claim yet?

The OCP will not block trade, so you can resell your FSC certified product before your supplier approves the FSC claim you entered. Just like today, if your products are ready to ship before the entered claim has been approved, and the FSC claim is found to be incorrect, the advice note ADV-40-004-08 (“non-conforming products”) should be applied.

OCP workflow: Industry specifics

1. Will FSC certified wood producers be required to provide an invoice number for every truck load of wood they produce?

The policy in regards to this question will be exactly the same as it is currently. Per the FSC CoC 40-004 standard, invoice numbers are required. However, in cases where invoice numbers are not used, other supplemental information can be used, per the CoC standard. Also, it is the invoice that needs to be entered. So, if you have an invoice that covers 6 months of monthly receipts, just that one invoice needs to be entered including volumes of all FSC purchases.

2. Will customers of the printing industry, the end users of the printed material, be required to log in and confirm the sales?

No, the end user of the material isn't required to do so unless they are certified or have a subscription to the OCP. However you may find it useful to enter this information yourself to help with production of volume summary reports and material account records for your audit. There will be a "non-certified customer" bucket where you can enter your FSC certified sales to non-certified customers.

3. What happens when customers that are not FSC certified receive certified products?

Non-certified companies are not required to record the claims their suppliers make and do not have access to the platform. If you supply non-certified companies then you are not required to enter your sales in OCP.

However, if you would like to use the OCP as a volume summary tool and enter your FSC sales to non-certified customers, click [here](#) to read more.

4. For printed products, there may be multiple certified inputs for each individual project (e.g. cover stock, text pages, end sheet, liner, etc). How can multiple suppliers be added for a single certified project?

You will enter in the FSC claims of the FSC certified products that you buy. Many certificate holders will buy a specific amount of different components from multiple suppliers for a specific sale. Many other certificate holders will buy stock of different components from multiple suppliers that will go into multiple sales. Regardless of the scenario, the FSC certified purchases will need to be entered into the OCP and not tied to a specific job or order. Your auditor will verify that you used x units of y product for z end product and the conversion factors that go along with that. The OCP will not track those specifics.

5. Do companies without an FSC certificate need to account for the input purchases the supplier documents as a certified sale?

No, only certificate holders need to enter their FSC purchases into the OCP.

OCP and current FSC certificate working procedures

1. Does the notification to notify buyers when a supplier drops certification mean companies no longer need to verify suppliers on info.fsc.org?

Yes, once you start using the OCP it will notify you automatically and immediately if one of your suppliers drops their certificate or get suspended/terminated. There will still be a requirement in the 40-004 COC standard to ensure your suppliers are FSC certified with the appropriate product types in their scope. However, the OCP will notify you of problems in this area as well if you attempt to make claims towards a supplier which does not match their scope of certification.

2. Must we still log trademark approvals in our records and retain PDF copies of the items we print?

The FSC trademark standard is not changing so you will still need to get your promotional and on-product trademark reviewed and approved by your certification body.

3. Will I still need to keep paper records of invoices and shipping documents both from our suppliers and the ones that we send out to our customers? And will the OCP replace our credit tracking system?

The OCP is being built in conjunction with the FSC COC 40-004 standard. The standard currently requires FSC claims to be notated on invoices (or supplemental documentation) so that will still be required for certificate holders. FSC is investigating how the OCP could act as supplemental documentation so that printed documentation could be reduced or made unnecessary.

4. Will we be able to reduce the off-product labeling and claims on bills and invoices?

No. FSC claims still need to be on invoices and shipping documentation per the FSC-STD-40-004; however, FSC is investigating how the OCP could act as supplemental documentation so that printed documentation could be reduced or made unnecessary.

5. Will the OCP replace the need to keep a volume credit account?

No, the OCP is not being developed to manage specific products group and credit accounts. However, creating volume summary reports is possible in the OCP system. Click [here](#) to read more.

Additional features of the OCP system

1. Can I use the OCP for anything other than entering claims?

The OCP system has several features that allows you to benefit from the system in other ways than living up to the chain of custody standard.

- Notifications - by using the OCP to just “connect” to your suppliers you can use the power of online networking to keep informed of your suppliers’ FSC certificate status. Once connected, OCP will send you notifications whenever any of your suppliers’ certificates change in any way. This notification will be within 24 hours of the information being updated on info.fsc.org by the certification body, meaning that you are always up to date and don’t need to spend time checking supplier certificates.
- Validation - all claims you enter will be instantly checked against the scope and validity of your suppliers’ FSC certificates, giving you assurance that your FSC inputs are correct.
- Compliance - collecting the data required to demonstrate regulatory compliance for country of harvest and species can be difficult and time consuming. OCP manages this information for you.
- Reporting - managing the information required for FSC audit procedures or for internal reporting of FSC volumes can be simplified through OCP. OCP can provide an FSC-approved supplier report (including full, up-to-date certificate details) and a volume summary report showing total certified volume by supplier over a given period. Additional reports may be added in future.

2. How do I use OCP for my volume summaries?

In the “Reports” Tab of your OCP account, you will find a “volume summary” report.

Consider including “product types” for each claim that you enter to have a more comprehensive volume summary tool.

If you sell FSC certified products to non-certified customers, consider entering those FSC sales into your OCP account into a bucket labelled “non-certified customer” account for a more comprehensive volume summary tool.

3. How can OCP help me obtain information on country of harvest and species information?

For many certificate holders it has become a legal requirement to obtain and hold information on species and country of harvest in order to comply with trade regulations such as the EUTR and the Lacey Act. Public authorities are increasingly requiring this information in order to block the trade of illegally harvested wood. The OCP will make it easier for FSC certified companies

to obtain this information for their certified goods.

When wood or wood fiber is introduced to an FSC supply chain for the first time, information about country of harvest and the species of the wood is required. Certificate holders that buy from a forest manager (FM) or FM/chain of custody (CoC) certificate will need to enter the species and country of harvest of the specific material purchased, as provided on their invoice.

Certificate holders that buy a product that contains wood from their suppliers' controlled wood risk assessment will also need to enter species and country of harvest. Again, this information should be provided by the supplier (as per the CoC standard).

The OCP will use this information to produce a "logical source map", that shows the list of possible species and possible countries of harvest for a specific product at any point in the supply chain. The greater the number of possible inputs routes, the greater this possible species and origin list may be.

No information is passed through the supply chain and neither you nor your customer will be able to see the full supply chain or from what specific forest(s) the product originates.

Download case study [here](#).

4. How do I access information on country of harvest and species?

In the "Reports" tab of your OCP account you will be able to download a report listing the species and possible countries of harvest, which have passed through your company.

About Historic Futures

1. Who is Historic Futures Ltd?

Historic Futures is the company developing the Online Claims Platform. Historic Futures is a British company specializing in value-chain management and product integrity with a specific focus on collecting, managing and storing data from supply chains in an efficient and scalable way.

Go to Historic Futures' website [here](#).

2. Why has FSC chosen to partner with Historic Futures Ltd?

FSC has chosen to partner with Historic Futures Ltd (HF) as they are experts in value-chain management and product integrity with a specific focus on collecting, managing and storing data from supply chains in an efficient and scalable way. HF designed and delivered String, the foundation on which the OCP is built. The flexibility of the String platform and HF's expertise in handling this kind of complex transaction data made them a natural partner choice for FSC.

3. What is the relationship between FSC and Historic Futures Ltd?

Historic Futures is contracted by FSC to develop the OCP system. FSC works closely with Historic Futures in all stages of the process and maintains all rights to the OCP system.

Questions about the OCP should be directed to FSC. See who to contact [here](#).

4. Historic Futures is a small company. What happens if it stops trading, changes ownership or shifts focus?

The OCP is hosted using Amazon's web services and FSC maintains all rights to the OCP system. The system could therefore continue to be operated even without Historic Futures.

5. What assurances are there that Historic Futures will respect the confidentiality of the data entered into the OCP?

Historic Futures has a partnership agreement with FSC that stipulates that data is protected and controlled by the certificate holder entering the data which will keep any data confidential. Further, use of the system will require acceptance of Terms and Conditions of Use, which covers data ownership, data security and confidentiality. The Terms and Conditions of Use can be found at ocp-info.fsc.org.

Support

1. How do I get help or training?

Quick guides on how to use the OCP are available [here](#). On this site you can also ask questions and receive feedback via the [help desk](#).

The OCP itself and the quick guides will be available in Croatian, Danish, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. FSC will monitor whether translation into other languages are needed.

2. Who can I contact?

If you cannot find the answer to your question within the OCP support site, you can contact the support team who will guide you through the problem via email.

There are three ways to raise your questions to the support team:

1. Submit a ticket at: https://ocphelp.zendesk.com/anonymous_requests/new
2. Send an email to: support@ocphelp.zendesk.com
3. Submit a ticket from your OCP account.

You can also contact your [National Partner](#).

3. Are there any consultants that have been part of the process and can help with the implementation?

Yes, we have engaged with several consultants and will be hiring multiple consultants who will be based globally in order to educate certificate holders on how to use the OCP. If you are interested in learning more, please contact us [here](#).

4. Why haven't I received any replies from the help desk?

You will receive an auto-response containing a tracking code of your ticket soon after you raise a help request. The help desk staff will respond your question within two working days. If you haven't received any replies after 48 hours, please check your spam folder or contact Janet at j.zhang@fsc.org directly.