



Standard

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

FSC-STD-20-001 V5-0 EN D1-2



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V 1-0	The standard is developed to specify the general requirements for all bodies operating FSC certification programmes.	1 July 2002
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V 2-1	Minor revision approved by the FSC Board of Directors.	1 December 2004
V 3-0	Major revision approved by the FSC Board of Directors.	01 January 2010
V 4-0	Major revision to ensure conformity with ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Assuring Compliance with Social and Environmental Standards V1-0 and compatibility with ISO/IEC 17065:2012.	15 December 2015
V 5-0	Major revision to ensure full alignment with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, updated system for the closure of nonconformities and a risk-based approach to apply specified evaluation measures.	DD Month YYYY

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INTRODUCTION

This standard specifies the requirements for certification bodies who intend to or are operating FSC certification schemes.¹ The objective of this standard is to ensure that these schemes are managed in a competent, consistent, impartial, transparent, rigorous, reliable and credible manner, thereby facilitating their acceptance on a national and international basis to further international trade and promote responsible forest management.

This standard is developed to ensure conformity with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Sustainability Systems and ISO 17065:2012 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services (ISO 17065:2012).

FSC assurance system

FSC has an integrated assurance programme that systematically oversees its certification bodies. This is done by FSC's global assurance provider Assurance Services International (ASI), as an independent third party.

In order to obtain and maintain FSC accreditation, a certification body needs to follow the ASI's Two Tier Assurance Program and has to fulfil the requirement specified in this standard together with:

- a) ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services (ISO 17065:2012);
- b) Requirements specified by ASI and by relevant Participating Accreditation Body (e.g., National Accreditation Body established under the framework of Regulation (EC) 765/2008 on Requirements for Accreditation and Market Surveillance).

How to read this standard

This standard presents the FSC specified requirements for all FSC accredited and applicant certification bodies. These FSC requirements are specified either in addition to or on top of requirements from ISO/IEC 17065:2012. The user of this standard can identify these two types of requirements with the specific symbol added at the end of each requirement.

Informative guidance: how to identify FSC additional and specific requirements

For FSC additional requirements to ISO 17065:2012 = [x]

For FSC specified requirements on top of existing ISO 17065:2012 requirements = [+][4.1.2.2 c) 3)]

EXAMPLE

Ref. to ISO 17065:2012

4.1.2.1 The certification agreement shall require the client at least to:

- a) disclose current or previous application or certification with FSC and/or other forestry certification schemes in the last five years [x];
- b) consider the participation of observers as specified in <FSC-PRO-01-017 Participation of External Observers in On-Site FSC Certification Audits and/or ASI Accreditation Assessments> [+][4.1.2.2 c) 3)];

¹ The term 'certification scheme' here refers to the ISO 17067:20212 Conformity assessment — Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes.

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A. SCOPE

This standard is for use by certification bodies applying for or operating schemes for FSC certification of forest management and chain of custody.

All aspects of this standard are considered normative, including the scope, effective and validity dates, references, terms and definitions, footnotes, graphics, tables and annexes, unless otherwise stated.

Notes, guidance boxes and examples are not considered normative.

As part of the FSC normative framework, this standard is subject to the review and revision requirements of <FSC-PRO-01-001 V4-0 The Development and Revision of FSC Requirements>.

B. REFERENCES

The following documents are indispensable for the application of this document.

For references without a version number, the latest version of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies:

ISO/IEC 17000:2020	Conformity Assessment - Vocabulary and general principles
ISO/IEC 17065:2012	Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services

C. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions included in <FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms>, ISO/IEC 17000:2020 Conformity Assessment - Vocabulary and general principles and the following apply:

Accepting certification body: the certification body that takes over the responsibility of maintaining the certification from the issuing certification body.

Application reviewer: the person(s) that is (are) responsible for the application review, prepares the audit process and checks if an applicant for FSC certification appears to be ready and prepared for an audit.

Audit: process for obtaining relevant information about processes and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which defined FSC requirements are fulfilled. In FSC, the term audit is used interchangeably to describe the evaluation via method(s) of inspection to examine processes (and audit of management system aspects) and to determine conformity with the FSC requirements (adapted from ISO/IEC 17000:2020).

Auditor: a person competent to conduct an audit.

Audit team: is made up of one or more auditors, one of whom is appointed to be the audit team leader. When necessary, audit teams are also supported by technical experts and/or further personnel (e.g. interpreter), who assist auditors but do not themselves act as auditors.

Certificate: a document issued under the rules of a certification system, indicating that adequate confidence is provided that a duly identified process is in conformity with a specific standard or other normative documents (adapted from ISO/IEC 17024:2012).

Certification decision: granting, maintaining, renewing, expanding the scope of, reducing the scope of, suspending, reinstating, or withdrawing certification.

Certification status:

Applicant: certification process has started but the certification decision has not yet concluded.

Expired: certification that reached the expiry date without having been renewed by the issuing certification body.

Suspended: certification that is temporarily invalidated for all or part of the specified scope.

Suspended and blocked: a certification that is suspended and the organization is blocked from the access to the FSC system in response to False Claims in accordance with [<ADVICE-40-004-18 Addressing false FSC claims on products/projects containing material from unacceptable sources>](#).

Terminated: certification agreement is revoked or cancelled either by the certification body or the client according to contractual arrangements.

Terminated and blocked: a certification agreement is terminated and the organization is blocked from the access to the FSC system in response to False Claims in accordance with [<ADVICE-40-004-18 Addressing false FSC claims on products/projects containing material from unacceptable sources>](#).

Valid: certification that is not suspended, withdrawn, terminated or expired.

Withdrawn: certification that is revoked or cancelled.

Client: applicants for FSC certification and FSC certified organizations (adapted from ISO/IEC 17065:2012).

Competence: the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge, skills and personal attributes in order to achieve intended results (adapted from ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015).

Complaint: expression of dissatisfaction by any person or organization presented to a certification body relating to the FSC activities of that certification body and/ or the FSC activities of their clients (adapted from ISO/IEC 17000:2020). In the context of FSC, a complaint includes the name and contact information of the complainant, a clear description of the issue and evidence to support each element or aspect of the complaint.

Conflict of interest: situation in which a party has an actual or perceived interest that gives, or could have the appearance of giving, that party an incentive for personal, organizational, or professional gain, such that the party's interest could conflict, or be perceived to conflict with, the conduct of an impartial and objective certification process.

Correction: action to eliminate a nonconformity.

Corrective action: action to eliminate the cause of a nonconformity and to prevent recurrence.

Nonconformity report (NCR): report including the request to apply correction and if applicable to implement corrective action to an identified nonconformity within the specified timeline.

Days: timelines mentioned in this standard in days refer to calendar days unless otherwise specified.

FSC: if used in this standard without any further designation such as "IC" or "GD", it is used as a general term referring to all operational entities under the ownership of Forest Stewardship Council A.C, excluding the FSC accreditation body "Assurance Services International" (ASI).

FSC accreditation requirements: all normative requirements applicable to FSC accredited certification bodies and to applicant certification bodies.

FSC certification requirements: all normative rules and regulations applicable to the certification of forest management organizations and/or chain of custody organizations.

FSC normative framework: comprises all the requirements to ensure the development, functioning, maintenance and integrity of the FSC certification and accreditation system.

Integrity risk: risk that a nonconformity may not be identified by a certification body, resulting in a threat to FSC's integrity and credibility.

Low integrity risk: a conclusion by FSC or absence of evidence, for risk that nonconformities cannot be identified is low or negligent.

High integrity risk: a conclusion by FSC, following a risk assessment, that a supply chain or certain certificate holders operate in an environment and that existing conditions prevent a certification body from detecting nonconformities.

Issuing certification body: the certification body that first granted the certification and is handing over the responsibility of maintaining the certification to another FSC accredited certification body. (formerly known as preceding certification body).

License Agreement for the FSC Certification Scheme (TLA): an agreement, that each applicant for FSC certification and/or FSC certificate holder has to enter into with FSC Global Development, in order to be eligible for FSC certification. Also known as Trademark and License Agreement (TLA).

Operational procedure: describes the processes used to effectively meet the objective of the activity (e.g. who, what, when, where, why).

Peer reviewer: an external person (auditor or technical expert) reviewing an audit report.

Surveillance: systematic repetition of conformity assessment activities as a basis for maintaining the validity of FSC certification (adapted from ISO/IEC 17000:2020).

Technical expert: a person supporting an audit team by providing specific knowledge or expertise about a specific sector, content, process or activity being audited. The person does not act as auditor.

Transaction verification: a method to allow certification bodies and/or Assurance Services International (ASI) to verify that the certificate holder's recorded FSC input and output transactions match with the records of their trading partners.

Transfer of certification: moving the responsibility for maintaining a valid FSC certification from one certification body to another within the period of validity of the certification without the need to start a new certification process.

- a) **Voluntary Transfer:** transfer of certification where a client voluntary request for transfer of certification to another FSC accredited certification body.
- b) **Non-voluntary Transfer:** transfer of certification where a client is forced to transfer due to issuing certification body accreditation scope is either reduced, suspended or withdrawn (see Clause 2.5) or issuing certification body terminating all its clients in a specific country or region (see Clause 7.47.11.4)

NOTE: Migration of certification records alone for an invalid certification (suspended, expired, terminated, withdrawn) is not considered transfer of certification.

Types of evaluation:

Pre-Evaluation: assessment to determine the applicant's readiness for their main evaluation.

Main Evaluation: assessment of an applicant for FSC certification.

Re-Evaluation: assessment for re-certification.

Surveillance Evaluations: see "surveillance"

NOTE: The certification body may also conduct other types of evaluations in addition to the ones listed, e.g., to verify the implementation of the corrective action and pre-condition verification evaluation, change of scope evaluations, certification transfer evaluation.

Unannounced evaluation: Surveillance evaluation or part of a surveillance evaluation that is conducted without prior notice of date and time of the evaluation to the client.

Witness audit: evaluation of the performance and verification of the competence of an auditor on-site by a third party who is not part of the audit team.

Wood Identification Testing: A suite of wood identification technologies used to identify the family, genus, species, and origin of solid wood and fibre based products.

Verbal forms for the expression of provisions:

[Adapted from *ISO/IEC Directives Part 2 Principles and Rules for the structure and drafting of ISO and IEC documents*]

- “shall”:
indicates requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform with the standard.
- “should”:
indicates that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required. A ‘should requirement’ can be met in an equivalent way provided this can be demonstrated and justified.
- “may”:
indicates a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.
- “can”:
is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or causal.

D.ABBREVIATIONS

ASI	Assurance Services International
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
NCR	Nonconformity report
TLA	License Agreement for the FSC Certification Scheme

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1. Accreditation process

- 1.1 The certification body shall obtain its FSC accreditation in accordance with ASI-PRO-20-126-TTAP ASI Two-Tier Assurance Procedure. [x]
- 1.2 The accreditation body may have accreditation requirements in addition to FSC accreditation requirements for certification bodies. [x]

2. Accreditation scope

- 2.1 The certification body shall define its accreditation scope in terms of the technical accreditation scope and the geographical accreditation scope. [x]
- NOTE: The final accreditation scope will be set by ASI based on the demonstrated competence of the certification body.

- 2.2 The certification body's technical accreditation scope shall be based on the following two (2) options:

- a) forest management (including controlled forest management) and chain of custody (including controlled wood); or
- b) chain of custody (including controlled wood). [x]

- 2.3 The certification body shall include the mandatory certification standards in its technical accreditation scope as specified in Figure 1 below. [x]

- 2.4 The certification body's geographical accreditation scope shall be based on the geographical area in which the certification activities are intended to or are being provided. [x]

NOTE: The certification body is required to have the countries where the sites are located included in its geographical accreditation scope, to maintain a multi-site client. This does not require the certification body to have a physical presence in all these countries.

- 2.5 The certification body shall inform affected clients within thirty (30) calendar days after the reduction, suspension or withdrawal of their scope of FSC accreditation, that their accreditation scope has been reduced, suspended or withdrawn. These clients shall be informed that they have to seek a new certification body within six (6) months to keep their certification valid unless the certification expires before the end of six (6) months. [x]

NOTE 1: Clause 2.5 also applies where the certification body has voluntarily reduced or terminated its accreditation scope. For example, due to lack of auditor, human resource or any other business decision.

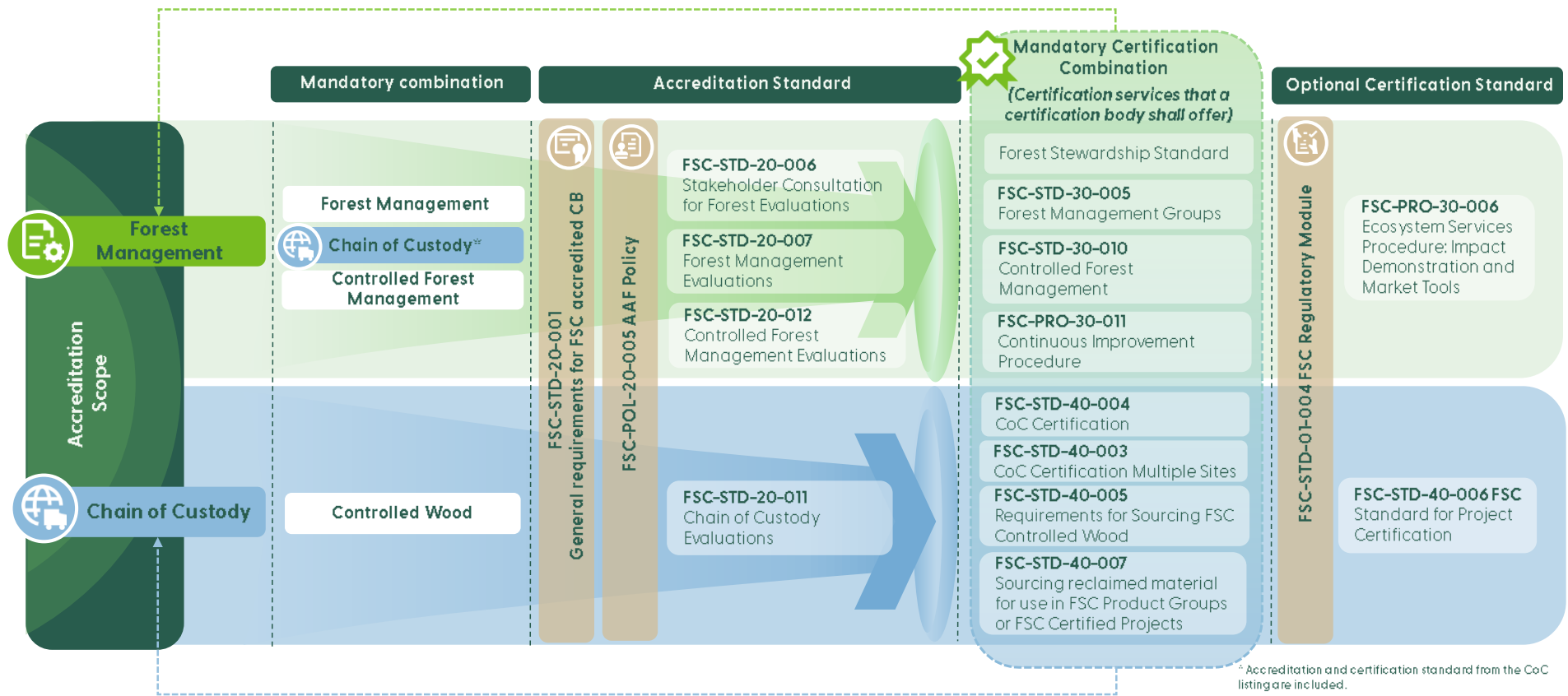


Figure 1 Technical accreditation scope and the corresponding mandatory certification standards.

3. Conformity with ISO 17065:2012 and relevant accreditation requirements

- 3.1 The certification body shall perform the certification activities according to its accredited technical and geographical accreditation scope and in conformity with ISO/IEC 17065:2012. [x]
- 3.2 The certification body shall operate in conformance with the:
- ISO/IEC 17065:2012;
 - FSC specific requirements included in this standard;
 - requirements of all applicable FSC normative documents as published on the FSC website (www.fsc.org);
 - requirements specified by the relevant participating accreditation body (if any) and by ASI;
 - certification body's accredited policies, operational procedures and instructions. [x]

NOTE: FSC has only listed FSC specific requirements in this standard. These FSC requirements are specified either in addition or on top of existing requirements from ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

4. General requirements

Informative guidance on structure and numbering

To assist users in identifying the specified FSC requirements in relation to ISO/IEC 17065:2012, from this section onwards, the numbering and the title of headings and subheadings are aligned with ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

For example '4 General requirements', '4.1 Legal and contractual matters', 4.1.1 **Legal responsibility** in this standard are identical to the numbering of headings and subheadings as in ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

The clause numbers however are not aligned with ISO/IEC 17065:2012. Thus, clause 4.1.2.1 in this standard is not identical to clause 4.1.2.1 in ISO/IEC 17065:2012. Where applicable, a reference to the corresponding requirement in ISO/IEC 17065:2012 is provided at the end of each clause.

4.1 Legal and contractual matters

4.1.1 Legal responsibility

- 4.1.1.1 The certification body shall sign Service and License Agreement with FSC. [x]
- 4.1.1.2 The certification body shall cooperate with FSC and ASI for integrity investigations. [x]

4.1.2 Certification agreement

- 4.1.2.1 The certification body shall ensure its certification agreement requires that the client comply at least, with the following to:

obligations of the client

- disclose current or previous applications or certifications with FSC and/or other forestry certification schemes in the last five years; [x]
- agree to the conduct of evaluations at the required intervals, including the certification body's right to carry out unannounced evaluations; [x]

- c) agree to assessments by ASI; [x]
- d) agree, that specified information is published, as indicated in the applicable FSC normative documents; [x]
- e) consider the participation of observers as specified in <FSC-PRO-01-017 Participation of External Observers in On-Site FSC Certification Audits and/or ASI Accreditation Assessments>; [+][4.1.2.2 c) 3)
- f) agree, that a complaint is first handled according to the certification body's dispute resolution procedure and if not resolved referred to ASI and ultimately to FSC, in case of disagreement with evaluation results related to FSC normative requirements; [+][4.1.2.2 j) 1)]
- g) not use its certification in such a manner as to bring FSC or ASI into disrepute; [+][4.1.2.2 e)]
- h) agree, that in case of reduction, suspension or withdrawal of the scope of the certification body's FSC accreditation, the certification of the affected clients will be suspended within six (6) months after the date of reduction, suspension or withdrawal of the respective scope of FSC accreditation unless the affected certifications are transferred to a new certification body or expire; [x]

rights of the certification body, ASI and FSC

- i) agree, that the certification body has the right to delay or postpone its decision on certification, in order to take account of new or additional information which has not already been considered in its evaluation report and which, in the sole opinion of the certification body, could affect the outcome of its evaluation; [x]
- j) agree, that the certification body shall not be obliged to grant or maintain certification, if activities of the client conflict with the obligations of the certification body as specified in its contract with ASI, or which, in the sole opinion of the certification body, reflect badly on the good name of the certification body; [x]
- k) agree, that the certification body and FSC have the right to revise the requirements of certification within the period of validity of the certification, including the revision of costs and fees; [x]
- l) agree, that the certification body has the right to access records related to non-FSC materials and products when this information is relevant to confirm organizations' conformity with the applicable certification requirements; [x]
- m) agree, that the certification body, FSC and ASI have the right to access confidential information, examine documentation deemed necessary, and access to the relevant equipment, location(s), area(s), personnel, and bodies providing outsourced services to clients; [x]
- n) agree, that the certification body has the right to use information which is brought to its attention, to follow up on misuses of the FSC trademarks and of the intellectual property rights held by FSC; [x]
- o) acknowledge the title of the FSC's intellectual property rights and that FSC retains full ownership of the intellectual property rights and that nothing shall be deemed to constitute a right for the client to use or cause to be used any of the intellectual property rights; [x]
- p) agree, that the certification body has the right to suspend and/or withdraw its certification with immediate effect if, in the sole opinion of the certification body, the client is not in conformity with the requirements specified for the maintenance of certification; [x]

actions relating to suspensions or withdrawal of certification

- q) meet the following obligations on suspension or withdrawal of certification:
- i. immediately cease to make any use of FSC trademarks, or to sell any products previously labeled or marked using the FSC trademarks, or to make any claims that imply that they conform with the requirements for certification; [+][4.1.2.2 f)]
 - ii. identify and inform all existing certified customers, of the suspension or withdrawal in writing within three (3) days of the suspension or withdrawal, and maintain records; [+][4.1.2.2 f)]
NOTE: certified customers includes the customers who a) has bought certified material; b) placed an order for certified products..
 - iii. cooperate with the certification body and with FSC in order to allow the certification body or FSC to confirm that these obligations have been met. [+][4.1.2.2 f)]
- r) meet the following additional obligations on withdrawal of certification:
- i. return the certificate to the certification body or destroy the original, and commit to destroy any electronic copies and printed copies in their possession; [+][4.1.2.2 f)]
 - ii. at its own expense remove all uses of FSC's name, initials, logo, certification mark or trademarks from its products, documents, advertising or marketing materials. [+][4.1.2.2 f)]

4.1.2.2 The certification agreement shall cite the relevant FSC normative documents and rules and regulations in its most recent version and shall explain where the client can obtain the most recent version online. [x]

4.1.3 Use of license, certificates and marks of conformity

4.1.3.1 The certification body shall conform with applicable FSC trademark requirements and any other requirements relating to the intellectual property of FSC. [+][4.1.3.1]

4.1.3.2 The certification body shall be responsible for the approval of the FSC trademark use by their clients according to <FSC-STD-50-001 Requirements for use of the FSC trademarks by certificate holders>, relating to both on-product and promotional uses. [+][4.1.3.1]

4.1.3.3 The certification body shall control the FSC trademark use by their clients, both on-product and promotional uses by:

- a) evaluating the trademark use at minimum at the time of surveillance evaluation and re-evaluation (sampling can be applied); and
- b) addressing cases of detected or reported trademark misuses by their clients. [+][4.1.3.2]

4.1.3.4 The certification body shall not promote standards of other forestry certification schemes as equivalent to FSC standards. [x]

NOTE: If a certification body offers certification services of other forestry certification schemes, the FSC schemes and standards shall clearly and accurately be differentiated relative to the other schemes in promotional media and communication to clients according to specific information as provided by FSC.

4.2 Management of impartiality

Consultancy

4.2.1 The certification body shall conform with requirements specified in Annex 1 to avoid the conflict of interest in performing certification activities. [+][4.2.6]

4.2.2 The certification body shall not use personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy, or been employed by a client, to review, make certification

decisions or to review or approve the resolution of a complaint or appeal for that client within three (3) years following the end of the consultancy or employment. [+][4.2.10]

Conflict of Interest

- 4.2.3 The certification body shall have, maintain and implement documented policies and procedures for avoidance of conflicts of interest in conformity with the requirements specified in Annex 1. These procedures shall include:
- a) the contractual obligation for all personnel involved in the certification process, to disclose in writing to the certification body all possible and actual conflicts of interest, at the time that the conflict or possibility of conflict becomes evident;
 - b) documented procedures for determining timely and appropriate responses to such declarations of conflict of interest as they arise, to ensure that the declared interests neither influence, nor are perceived to influence, the decisions of the certification body;
 - c) the maintenance of records of:
 - i. all declarations of potential conflicts of interest;
 - ii. every action which has been taken to resolve the possibility and actual occurrence of conflicts of interest. [x]

Anti-corruption Policy

- 4.2.4 The certification body shall have, maintain and implement a documented anti-corruption policy. [x]

NOTE: Certification body may consider 'ISO 37001:2016 Anti-bribery management systems — Requirements with guidance for use' to develop an anti-corruption policy.

4.3 Liability and financing

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

4.4 Non-discriminatory conditions

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

4.5 Confidentiality

- 4.5.1 The certification body shall have, maintain and implement documented policies and procedures for maintenance of confidentiality, including:

- a) a policy statement on confidentiality;
- b) procedures for ensuring that personnel are aware of the policy and of their consequent obligations. [x]

NOTE: The information that a client is required to make publicly available and that FSC and ASI are entitled to access is not considered confidential. [+][4.5.1]

- 4.5.2 The certification body shall sign a confidentiality agreement with all personnel who have access to confidential information. Such personnel shall include but is not limited to:

- a) administrative staff;
- b) auditors, technical experts and audit observers;
- c) consultants and persons providing outsourced services;
- d) reviewers and certification decision makers;
- e) peer reviewers;
- f) committee members. [x]

4.6 Publicly available information

- 4.6.1 The certification body shall maintain, and make accessible on its website, the following:
- information about the certification body's scope of FSC accreditation in accordance with Clause 2.1;
 - a list of bodies providing outsourced services to the certification body for the relevant FSC certification schemes
 - a link to the FSC certification database (search.fsc.org);
 - a link to the FSC normative documents (connect.fsc.org/document-centre) for certification, according to the certification body's accreditation scope. [x]
- 4.6.2 The certification body and the body providing outsourced services shall maintain and make accessible information about the procedures for handling complaints and appeals on their websites. The information shall be available;
- in the local language of the country of operation;

NOTE: Country of operation for chain of custody and for forest management certification means the country where the sites or the management units in the scope of certification are located.
 - additional for forest management in the same language as the public summary certification report published by the certification body. [+][4.6. d)]

5. Structural requirements

5.1 Organizational structure and top management

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

5.2 Mechanism for safeguarding impartiality

- 5.2.1 The mechanism for safeguarding impartiality shall be formally documented and it shall ensure the following:
- a balanced representation that may be achieved by participation of parties with a variety of expertise, providing economic, social and environmental perspectives; [+][5.2.2 a)]

NOTE: FSC membership or FSC chamber balanced representation is not a precondition for the mechanism.
 - members with no conflict of interest
 - at least one (1) annual meeting);
 - its independence of the financial control of the organization;
 - its independence of certification decision making;
 - records of its discussions and recommendations;
 - records of the certification body's response(s) to its discussions and recommendations. [+][5.2.2]

6. Resource requirements

6.1 Certification body personnel

6.1.1 General

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

6.1.2 Management of competence for personnel involved in the certification process

6.1.2.1 The criteria for the competence of personnel involved in certification process shall minimum include:

- a) for the application reviewer, demonstrated competence to plan an evaluation;
- b) for a auditor, qualification in accordance with Annex 2;
- c) for a technical expert, demonstrated competence in the relevant field of expertise;
- d) for a peer reviewer, demonstrated competence in the relevant field of expertise;
- e) for personnel reviewing evaluation results and making certification decision;
 - i. qualified auditor in accordance with Annex 2;
 - ii. demonstrated knowledge and experience to assess an evaluation processes, evaluation report and associated evidence, recommendations made by the audit team, and peer reviewer (where applicable);
- f) the personnel approving the trademark use, demonstrated competence through the successful completion (certificate) of the FSC Trademark Training Module as specified in <FSC-PRO-20-004 General Requirements for an FSC Training Programme>;
- g) for an audit team leader, qualified auditor in the respective scope with the ability to manage the audit process and the audit team - including report writing, effective use of team resources, team management, external team representation during audit process, and management of stakeholder engagement including prevention or resolution of conflicts. [+][6.1.2.1 a)]

6.1.2.2 The procedure established to identify and provide trainings to the personnel involved in the certification process shall require the certification body to:

- a) identify individual initial and continuous training needs according to the respective function of the personnel;
- b) define the scope of initial and continuous training according to the;
 - i. findings mentioned under a) and/or monitoring;
 - ii. evaluation results against the applicable qualification requirements;
- c) conduct an in-house training covering all internal aspects of the certification body relevant to its certification activities;
- d) provide an initial training for auditors and ensure continuous training (see Annex 2);
- e) send at least one certification body representative to an annual international/national/ regional FSC calibration meeting - if provided - with a special focus on interpretation and application of Forest Stewardship Standards. [+][6.1.2.1 b)]

6.1.2.3 The certification body shall consider the personal attributes of auditors as described in Annex 2, Table 4 for the following activities:

- a) selection of auditor candidates;
- b) auditor qualification process;
- c) monitoring of auditors;
- d) evaluation of auditor performance. [x]

6.1.2.4 Qualified auditors shall be registered with ASI in accordance with ASI-PRO-20-112-ASI Auditor and Training Registry. [x]

6.1.2.5 The procedure for monitoring the performance of an auditor shall require certification body to:

- a) regular monitoring of auditors;
- b) conduct a performance evaluation at least once every three (3) years based on the monitoring results and a witness audit;

NOTE: Witness assessments conducted by ASI cannot substitute the certification body to meet this requirement.

- c) consider the results of monitoring and evaluation in need for further training;
- d) document the results of monitoring and evaluation results in the auditor performance appraisal report. [+][6.1.2.1 e]

6.1.2.6 The performance evaluation of an auditor as per Clause 6.1.2.5 b) shall be risk based and minimum include the following:

- i. a review of conformity with competence requirements as listed in Annex 2;
- ii. an assessment of conformity with certification bodies' operational procedures and guidelines including issues with conflict of interest and confidentiality requirements;
- iii. a combination of on-site observation, review of evaluation reports and substantiated feedback from clients. [+][6.1.2.1 e]

6.1.2.7 The certification body shall conduct a sample of on-site witness audits for auditors of the body providing outsourced services (see Clause 6.2.2). [+][6.1.2.1 e]

6.1.3 Contract with the personnel

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

6.2 Resources for evaluation

6.2.1 Internal resources

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

6.2.2 External resources (outsourcing)

6.2.2.1 The certification body shall only outsource evaluation activities to a separate legal entity. In such a case the certification body shall ensure that the body that provides the outsourced service conforms with applicable requirements of this standard and other FSC normative documents. [+][6.2.2.1]

6.2.2.2 The certification body shall not outsource the decisions for granting, maintaining, renewing, suspending, reinstating, or withdrawing certification, and expanding or reducing the scope of certification. [+][6.2.2.1]

6.2.2.3 The legally binding contract with the body that provides the outsourced service, shall include a description of the scope of outsourced activities (types of services and geographical coverage) and it shall require the body that provides the outsourced service at least to:

- a) conform with applicable requirements of this standard (including relevant requirements from ISO/IEC 17065:2012) and of other FSC normative documents;
- b) implement the outsourced services according to the accredited procedures of the certification body (see Clause 3.2 e);
- c) agree to the inclusion of any additional restrictions covered in the accreditation contract of the certification body;

- d) agree to a prohibition for subsequent outsourcing of certification activities covered by the accreditation of the certification body;
- e) use competent and qualified personnel as specified in this standard;
- f) performance review of auditor as per Clause 6.1.2.6 above;
- g) agree to periodic internal audits of the activities covered by the outsourcing agreement, conducted by a qualified and impartial representative of the certification body;
- h) agree not to make any claims which imply that it is accredited itself;
- i) agree to describe their services as being 'in association with [name of certification body]';
- j) agree, that its website (where available) includes a link to the certification body's website, to provide clients access to information as specified in Clause 4.6.1;
- k) agree to a prohibition for the use of the FSC trademarks in relation to the services offered under the outsourcing agreement without prior authorization by FSC;
- l) agree to a prohibition to independently grant approval for the use of FSC trademarks to clients, unless having been trained. [+][6.2.2.3]

6.2.2.4 It is at the discretion of the certification body to decide whether the body that provides the outsourced service should be entitled to use FSC trademarks. Applications for authorization shall be submitted to FSC by the certification body. [x]

6.2.2.5 The certification body shall notify and provide the following information to ASI within thirty (30) days of any new contracts or changes in the status of bodies providing outsourced services:

- a) name of the body providing outsourced service;
- b) contact information including: address, telephone and email;
- c) scope of the contract (geographic area, type of service etc.);
- d) date of signing of the contract;
- e) date of expiry of the contract. [x]

7. Process Requirements

7.1 General

Note: FSC maintains different schemes (forest management certification, chain of custody certification and controlled forest management certification) with specific requirements for each scheme. Each scheme follows the functional approach as defined in ISO/IEC 17000:2020. Specific scheme requirements are meant as additional requirements for each scheme to be met and do not replace the requirements formulated in this standard.

7.1.1 The certification body shall evaluate its client for forest management certification in accordance with <FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluation> and related normative documents. In countries with no Forest Stewardship Standard, the certification body can participate in the process of developing a Forest Stewardship Standard as specified in <FSC-PRO-60-006 Development and Transfer of National Forest Stewardship Standards to the FSC Principles and Criteria Version 5-1>. [+][7.1.2]

7.1.2 The certification body shall evaluate its client for chain of custody certification (including project certification) in accordance with <FSC-STD-20-011 Chain of Custody Evaluations> and related normative documents. [+][7.1.2]

- 7.1.3 The certification body shall evaluate its client for Controlled Forest Management Certification in forest management organizations in accordance with <FSC-STD-20-012 Controlled Forest Management Evaluations> and related normative documents. [7.1.2]
- 7.1.4 The certification body shall reach out to FSC if an explanation is required to FSC certification or accreditation requirements in accordance with <PSU-PRO-10-201 Enquiry Procedure>. In case of enquiries related to ASI findings, the certification body shall share the relevant ASI finding with FSC. [7.1.3]
- 7.1.5 The certification body may request a derogation from implementing an FSC specific requirement for certification bodies (this does not include the requirements specified in ISO 17065:2012), where exceptional and justified circumstances that are beyond the control of the certification body and its clients exists. The certification body shall submit a derogation request in accordance with <PSU-PRO-10-201 Enquiry Procedure>. [7.1.3]

NOTE 1: All derogations are subject to review and approval based on the actual request and rationale provided by the certification body.

NOTE 2: Derogation requests from implementing a FSC certification requirement is not allowed.

NOTE 3: If a derogation is granted, FSC will ask ASI to check the implementation of the derogation by the certification body in its next head office assessment.

7.2 Application

- 7.2.1 The certification body shall at minimum obtain the following information from the applicant of FSC certification:

General

- a) legal name (including local or trade name);
- b) registered and mailing address;
- c) registration number or Tax identification number;
- d) contact person;
- e) normative document/s for which client is seeking certification;
- f) the type of operation model (single, multi-site, group);
- g) current or previous applications or certifications with FSC or with other forest certification schemes in the last five (5) years;

For forest management and controlled forest management certification

- h) forest type
- i) type of ownership;
- j) number of management units and area in hectare (ha);
- k) for SLIMF and community forest, the eligibility criteria as per <FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF and Community Forest Eligibility Criteria>

For chain of custody certification

- l) product group/s according to <FSC-STD-40-004a FSC Product Classification>;
- m) number of sites;
- n) type of control system (transfer, credit, percentage);

For project certification

- o) name and location of the project(s);
- p) description of the project scope including full project claim, claim on specific components or percentage claim. [+][7.2]

7.2.2 If applicable, the certification body shall obtain the latest available FSC evaluation report of the last five (5) years from the applicant and consider it in the certification process. [+][7.2]

7.2.3 The certification body shall provide applicants with all the necessary information on the certification process and the applicable FSC certification requirements. [x]

7.2.4 If any document developed by the certification body (e.g., communication material, report templates) combines requirements from FSC and from other sources, this shall be made explicit in the document. [x]

7.3 Application review

7.3.1 The certification body shall not rely on the certification of other forestry schemes that it has granted to the client to omit any activity. [+][7.3.5]

7.3.2 The certification body shall reject applications for certification of management units or sites (to avoid the overlapping scope) that are already covered by a valid or suspended FSC certification, except where a certification transfer process according to <FSC-PRO-20-003 Transfer of FSC Certificates and License Agreements> is ongoing. [x]

7.3.3 For applicants of forest management certification except for small or low intensity managed forest and community forest, the certification body shall at minimum enter the following information in the FSC certification database (search.fsc.org) once the information is available and at latest thirty (30) calendar days before the main evaluation:

- a) forest type;
- b) total area in ha;
- c) anticipated evaluation timeframe;
 - i. the proposed dates of the pre-evaluation (if applicable) and of the main evaluation;
 - ii. as long as the dates have not been agreed with the applicant, then enter "not yet scheduled";
- d) evaluation contacts;
 - i. name of designated audit team leader;
 - ii. contact for stakeholder comments (name and e-mail address of the certification body's contact);
 - iii. link to the FSC section of the certification body's website. [x]

Informative box

The clause 7.3.3 above will be later moved to <FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluations>, as it is FM scheme specific requirement and not a requirement at system level.

7.4 Evaluation

7.4.1 The certification body shall assign an audit team in conformity with the requirements specified in Annex 3. [+][7.4.2]

- 7.4.2 For forest management evaluations, the following auditor rotation requirements shall be applied based on number of certificate holders per certification body per country:
- a) with more than twenty (20) certificate holders: no auditor shall serve as a member of the audit team for more than three (3) consecutive audits of the same client;
 - b) with eleven (11) to twenty (20) certificate holders: no auditor should serve as a member of the audit team for more than three (3) consecutive audits of the same client. Where a client is audited by the same auditor on more than (3) consecutive audits, the certification body shall provide a justification why it was not possible, or feasible to rotate the auditor and shall demonstrate how an impartial and objective evidence-based audit has been ensured;
 - c) with less than ten (10) certificate holders: auditor rotation after three (3) consecutive audits is recommended. [+][7.4.2]
- 7.4.3 For all other types of evaluations, the certification body should ensure that no client is audited by the same auditor on more than three (3) consecutive audits. Where a client is audited by the same auditor on more than (3) consecutive audits, the certification body shall provide a justification why it was not possible, or feasible to rotate the auditor and shall demonstrate how an impartial and objective evidence-based audit is ensured. [+][7.4.2]
- 7.4.4 The certification body shall only use the evaluation results related to certification, conducted prior to the application or transfer of certification, where the certification body conforms with relevant requirements from Annex 6. [+][7.4.5]
- 7.4.5 In case of high integrity risk, the certification body shall implement the specified evaluation measures in accordance with Annex 4. [x]

Nonconformities and nonconformity report (NCR)

- 7.4.6 If the certification body comes across indications of a potential conformity issue, the certification body shall investigate the matter to secure evidence of conformity or lack thereof. [x]
- 7.4.7 The auditor may identify the early stages of a problem which does not yet constitute a nonconformity, but which the auditor considers may lead to a future nonconformity if not addressed by the client. Such observations shall be recorded in the evaluation report as 'observations' for the benefit of the client. [x]
- 7.4.8 The certification body shall present the nonconformities and observations during the audit closing meeting. [+][7.4.6]
- 7.4.9 The certification body shall evaluate each nonconformity identified in the audit to determine whether it constitutes a minor or major nonconformity. [x]
- 7.4.10 Nonconformities shall be graded as follows:
- a) a nonconformity shall be considered minor if:
 - i. it is a temporary lapse, or
 - ii. it is unusual/non-systematic, or
 - iii. the impacts of the nonconformity are limited in their temporal and organizational scale, and
 - iv. it does not result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant requirement.
 - b) a nonconformity shall be considered major if, either alone or in combination with further nonconformities, it results in, or is likely to result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant requirement within the scope of the evaluation. Such fundamental failures may be indicated by major nonconformities which:

- i. continue over a long period of time, or
- ii. are systematic, or
- iii. affect a wide range of the production, or
- iv. affect the integrity of the FSC system. [x]

7.4.11 The certification body shall document a nonconformity and transform it into a nonconformity report (NCR) which shall at a minimum include:

For minor and major nonconformities

- a) a description of the nonconformity;
- b) the objective evidence on which the nonconformity is based;
- c) timeline to apply the correction;

For major nonconformities only

- d) the timeline to implement the corrective action. [x]

7.4.12 The NCR timelines commence from the moment when they are presented to the client in the audit closing meeting. NCR shall have the following timelines:

For main evaluation

- a) until the certification decision (see Clause 7.47.6.2 for certification decision timeline) to apply correction for all nonconformities and implement the corrective action for major nonconformities);

For Surveillance evaluation

- b) maximum three (3) months to apply correction for all open nonconformities (minor and major, see Clause 7.4.10);
- c) maximum fifteen (15) months to implement the relevant corrective action/s for major nonconformity. [x]

7.4.13 The certification body shall treat the absence of a valid 'License Agreement for the FSC Certification Scheme (TLA)' as a major nonconformity, and:

- a) the timeline to apply correction for this nonconformity shall be a maximum of four (4) weeks;
- b) failure to close this nonconformity shall lead to the suspension of certification. [x]

7.4.14 The certification body shall verify whether corrective action requests have been evidently implemented within their timelines i.e. corrections are applied for all open nonconformities and corrective actions are implemented for major nonconformities (see Clause 7.4.12). If the action taken is not considered adequate, then:

- a) for main evaluation and re-evaluation, it shall lead to a decision to not grant or renew the certification;
- b) for surveillance evaluation it shall lead to a decision to suspend the certification. [x]

NOTE: See the Annex 5 for the process flow for the closure of nonconformity.

7.4.15 Major nonconformities shall not be downgraded to minor nonconformities. [x]

7.4.16 The certification body shall document the results of the evaluation activities prior to review and decision making in a certification report in conformity with the report writing requirements specified in:

- a) <FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluations> for forest management evaluation reports and public summary;
- b) <FSC-STD-20-011 Chain of Custody Evaluations> for chain of custody and project evaluation reports;
- c) <FSC-STD-20-012 Controlled Forest Management Evaluations> for controlled forest management evaluation reports. [x]

NOTE: The reporting requirements for evaluation on FSC Regulatory Module are listed in Part IV of <FSC-STD-01-004 FSC Regulatory Module>

7.5 Review

Peer review of forest management evaluation report

Informative box

FSC has specified additional peer review process for forest management evaluation report. This is on top of ISO 17065:2020 review requirement.

The clause 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 below will be later moved to <FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluations>, as it is more of FM scheme specific and not a requirement at system level.

- 7.5.1 Draft forest management evaluation reports of main evaluations shall be submitted to a formal peer review process unless the management unit(s) under evaluation meet the specification of a small or low intensity management unit or community forest in accordance with <FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF and Community Forest Eligibility Criteria> in the country in which the evaluation takes place. [x]
- 7.5.2 The formal peer review process for draft forest management evaluation reports shall be conducted as following:
 - a) the report shall be reviewed by at least one (1) independent peer reviewer with the experience and technical knowledge necessary to evaluate the adequacy of the report and the validity of the proposed certification decision and should be reviewed by additional peer reviewers with specialist knowledge (e.g. concerning Indigenous Peoples rights or High Conservation Values), where necessary;
 - b) in the case of evaluated management units that meet the eligibility criteria for mandatory pre-evaluations as defined in <FSC-STD-20-007 Forest Management Evaluations>, the report shall be reviewed by a second peer reviewer, who shall be selected according to the knowledge related to the eligibility category, i.e. knowledge about plantation management, boreal or tropical forest management, or high conservation values (as applicable);
 - c) the peer reviewer(s) shall operate according to terms of reference, which shall include the requirement to comment explicitly on:
 - i. the adequacy of the field work as the basis for making a certification decision;
 - ii. the clarity of presentation of the audit findings as the basis for a certification decision;
 - iii. whether the proposed certification decision is justified by the audit findings presented.
 - d) peer reviewer(s) shall not be full or part-time employees of the certification body, and shall be subject to the same requirements relating to independence and confidentiality as other personnel with input into the certification decision;

- e) the peer reviewer(s) shall take account of the local and national context with regards to forest management, and shall consider environmental, social and economic perspectives;
- f) the comments of the peer reviewer(s) shall be attributed and documented;
- g) the certification body shall respond in writing to the peer reviewer(s)' comments, and provide the peer reviewers with a copy of its response;
- h) the certification body shall finalize the evaluation report taking the comments of the peer reviewer(s) into account. [x]

7.6 Certification decision

7.6.1 The certification body shall ensure the following for the person or group of persons responsible for making certification decisions:

- a) clear rules to participate in the certification decision making, including requirements for qualification, experience and impartiality;
- b) none of the individuals have any conflicts of interest, in particular financial or other commercial interest in the outcome of the certification decision. [x][7.6.2]

7.6.2 The certification body shall make the certification decision according the following maximum timelines and requirements:

For main evaluation

- a) within six (6) months of the audit closing meeting in the case of chain of custody and project evaluations;
- b) within twelve (12) months of the audit closing meeting in the case of forest management and controlled forest management evaluations,
- c) up to eighteen (18) months from the audit closing in exceptional and justified cases for forest management evaluations, where due to major nonconformities a positive certification decision cannot be made within twelve (12) months. Between twelve (12) months and (18) months an on-site evaluation shall be conducted to verify the validity of the main evaluation results and to evaluate any changes to the management system;

For surveillance evaluation

- d) within three (3) months of the audit closing meeting;
- e) in case of occurrence of five (5) or more major nonconformities, within thirty (30) days of the audit closing meeting;
 - i. the auditor shall inform the client in the audit closing meeting about its recommendation for suspension of certification to the certification decision making body or person; and
 - ii. the certification body shall suspend the certification within ten (10) days of the certification decision being taken. [x]

NOTE 1: It is regardless whether these nonconformities relate to new or significantly changed requirements.

NOTE 2: It is permissible to consider additional evidence from the client that address identified nonconformities until the certification decision is formalized by the certification body.

7.6.3 The certification body shall only grant (re)certification when their client has:

- a) entered into and holds a valid and most recent version of the TLA, applicable to the operation model (single, multi-site or group) and where the right to use the FSC trademarks is not suspended;
- b) applied correction to all open nonconformities;

- c) evidently implemented the corrective action for major nonconformity;
- d) signed a certification agreement with the certification body. [x]

7.6.4 The period of validity of certification shall not exceed five (5) years. [x]

7.6.5 The period of validity of certification may exceptionally be extended once up to a maximum of six (6) months in order to permit re-evaluation to be completed, when justified by circumstances beyond the control of the certification body and their client. The certification body shall take the following steps:

- a) record the circumstances;
- b) update the entry in the FSC certification database (search.fsc.org). [x]

NOTE 1: Justifiable circumstances for an extension exclude problems in planning or scheduling an evaluation.

NOTE 2: Clause 7.6.5 does not apply in the context of Chain of Custody Project Certification.

7.6.6 Recertification shall only be granted after a positive certification decision as a result of a re-evaluation.

7.7 Certification documentation

7.7.1 The certification body shall register all forest management and chain of custody certifications in the FSC certification database with the following information:

NOTE: FSC certification database is considered a formal certification document.

- a) legal name (including local or trade name); [+][7.7.1 c)]
- b) registered and mailing address; [+][7.7.1 c)]
- c) a description of the scope of certification including; [+][7.7.1 d)]
 - i. certification type in accordance with Table 1;
 - ii. the type of operation model (single, multi-site or site group);
 - iii. in case of joint forest management and chain of custody certification, process/activity e.g. production, import, processing, storage, transport, trade etc. and public summary certification report;
 - iv. in case of chain of custody certification, process/activity (see Clause 7.7.1 a) iii above) control system(s) used for making FSC claim (transfer, percentage, credit) and product group in accordance with <FSC-STD-40-004a FSC Product Classification>;
 - v. in the case of chain of custody project certification, full project certification claim or claim(s) on specific components of a project or a percentage claim;
 - vi. reference to the normative document(s) that the client has been evaluated against;

NOTE: It is acceptable to omit the reference to the version numbers of normative documents.

- d) a statement of certification according to the relevant certification type; [+][7.7.1]
 - i. forest management certification: [the client] receives the right to promote responsible forest stewardship according to FSCs Principles and Criteria on the management unit(s) included in the certification scope;
 - ii. forest management certification with ecosystem service in the scope: [the client] receives the right to promote responsible forest stewardship according to FSCs Principles and Criteria, and use verified ecosystem services impacts/claims on the management unit(s) included in the certification scope";

- iii. joint forest management and chain of custody certification: [the client] receives the right to promote responsible forest stewardship according to FSCs Principles and Criteria on the management unit(s) included in the certification scope, and to sell the listed products with FSC claim;
 - iv. controlled forest management certification: [the client] receives the right to promote controlled forest management on the management unit(s) included in the certification scope, and to sell products with the FSC claim;
 - v. chain of custody certification: [the client] receives the right to promote the responsible forest stewardship and sell the listed products with FSC claim;
- NOTE: Central offices in group certification can only make promotional claims for the FSC certification and not for products.
- vi. chain of custody project certification: [the client] receives the right to make claims and promote the listed projects with FSC claim;
- e) registration number or Tax identification number; [+][7.7.1]
 - f) certification status; [+][7.7.1]
 - g) the certification registration code issued by the certification body in accordance with the Table 1. [+][7.7.1]

NOTE: The expiry date requirement does not apply for Project Certification.

Table 1 Certification registration codes for the different types of certifications ()

Certification scheme	Certification type	Certification registration code
Forest Management	Forest management certification	XXX-FM-#####-***
	NOTE 1: This type of certification is granted to applicants that do not intend to sell any forest products according to their management objectives, e.g. in the case of National Parks, conservation areas, water protection areas.	
	Joint forest management and chain of custody certification	XXX-FM/COC-#####-***
	NOTE 2: This type of certification is required when The Organization intends to sell forest products as FSC certified and has included them in their scope of certification.	
	Controlled forest management certification (against FSC-STD-30-010 V3-0)	XXX-CFM-#####
Chain of Custody	Chain of custody certification	XXX-COC-#####-***
	Controlled wood chain of custody certification (against FSC-STD-40-005)	XXX-CW/COC-#####-***

	NOTE 3: The controlled wood is not a standalone certification. The controlled wood code issued within a chain of custody certification shall have the same 6 digits as the chain of custody code.	
	Chain of custody project certification	XXX-PRO-#####-***
	NOTE 4: XXX are the initials of the certification body agreed with ASI, ##### is a unique six digit number or combination of numbers and letters, and *** is a sub-certification code issued only to the members of group or multi-site certification and may be numbers, or upper case letters or a combination of numbers and upper case letters.	
	NOTE 5: If certification is withdrawn and later granted again to the same legal entity, the original certification registration code may be used.	

- 7.7.2 The certification body should not use the same code number for valid certifications granted to different legal entities (i.e. the certification body should not grant a chain of custody certification XXX- COC-123456 to company A, and an FM certification XXX-FM-123456 to company B). [x]
- 7.7.3 The certification body shall only issue a certificate to a registered legal entity after all the relevant information has been registered in the FSC certification database (see Clause 7.7.1 above). [x][7.7.3]
- 7.7.4 If the certification body issues a certificate to its client it shall include the following:
- a) the FSC logo, which shall be no smaller than the logo of the certification body;
 - b) a reference to the FSC certification database (search.fsc.org) for the full list of product groups and sites covered by the certification;
 - c) a clear statement to the effect that the certificate shall remain the property of the certification body that issued it, and that the certificate and all copies or reproductions of the certificate shall be returned or destroyed if requested by the certification body;
 - d) a disclaimer stating: "The validity of this certification shall be verified on (search.fsc.org)";
 - e) a disclaimer stating: "This certificate itself does not constitute evidence that a particular product supplied by the certificate holder is FSC certified [or FSC Controlled Wood]. Products offered, shipped or sold by the certificate holder can only be considered covered by the scope of this certificate when the required FSC claim is clearly stated on sales and delivery documents";
 - f) an issue number (for re-issued or renewed certificates);
 - g) requirements specified in Clause 7.7.1 and 7.7.2 of ISO 17065:2012. [x][7.7.1]
- 7.7.5 The scope specified on the chain of custody group or multi-site certificate shall make clear that the covered products and processes/ activities are performed by the network of Participating Sites, and not necessarily by each of them. [x]
- 7.7.6 For each certification only one (1) group or multi-site certificate shall be issued to the central office / group entity with a list of all Participating Sites either on the certificate itself or in an appendix or as otherwise referred to in the certificate. [x]
- 7.7.7 The certification body may issue a to Participating Sites of a group or multi-site certificate. Where issued, sub-certificates shall include:

- a) a clear reference to the group or multi-site organization holding the certificate;
- b) a reference to the scope of the Participating Site (which needs to be covered by the scope of the main certificate);
- c) the sub-certificate code issued to the Participating Site.

7.7.8 Any wording, including the statement of certification, to be included on certificates in addition to the information as required in Clause **Error! Reference source not found.** d) above is subject to prior written approval by FSC. [x]

7.7.9 Wherever specified by FSC, the certification body shall register in the FSC certification database, the certification granted temporarily as result of a pilot test.

NOTE 1: Testing is an activity conducted to learn about the likely outputs of the implementation of the requirements or concepts under development. Pilot test is an implementation of the whole standard (under development) which may result in temporary use of FSC trademarks in the labelling and promotion of FSC-certified products.

NOTE 2: FSC specify the requirement for application, evaluation, review, decision making and certification documentation as part the scope of testing.

7.8 Directory of certified products

7.8.1 The certification body shall register all forest management and chain of custody certifications in the FSC certification database in accordance with the Cause 7.7.1 above. [x][7.8]

NOTE: This fulfills the requirement specified in ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Clause 7.8.

7.8.2 In the case of FSC announcing a malfunction of the FSC certification database (search.fsc.org), the certification body shall inform ASI and FSC that certification or recertification has been granted within ten (10) days of the certification decision. [x][7.8]

7.8.3 Certification bodies are responsible for keeping their data entries and public summary certification reports accurate and up-to-date. [x][7.8]

7.9 Surveillance

7.9.1 Surveillance evaluation of a client shall take place at least once per calendar year and at least four (4) surveillance evaluations shall take place within five (5) years of a certification validity. [x][7.9.1]

7.9.2 The surveillance evaluations may be more frequent depending on factors such as:

- a) the scale of the operation (e.g. the area of an management unit, the quantity of production in the case of a manufacturer, or the value and/or volume turnover in the case of a trader);
- b) the intensity of resource management in the case of a management unit (e.g. the frequency and level of timber harvest);
- c) the complexity of the management system (e.g. the chain of custody control system);
- d) results of risk assessment;
- e) the ecological or social sensitivity of the resource base to management intervention;
- f) the experience and track record of the operators involved (managers and personnel, contractors);
- g) the number and nature of any nonconformities identified by the certification body;
- h) the number and nature of any complaints submitted by stakeholders. [x][7.9.1]

NOTE: FSC and ASI reserve the right to request higher surveillance frequencies and/or for specified evaluation measures from certification bodies for certain geographical areas or

certification services that are deemed “challenging” or are linked to “high” as the result of an internal risk assessment (see Annex 4).

- 7.9.3 The certification body shall only approve to maintain the certification when their client:
- a) conforms and continues to conform with all the certification body's and FSC's requirements for maintaining certification;
 - b) conforms with all the certification body's and FSC's requirements regarding claims, logos, certification marks or trademarks;
 - c) applies correction to all open nonconformities and implement corrective action for major nonconformities identified in the last surveillance evaluation within the specified timeline in accordance with Clause 7.4.12;
 - d) continues to pay all specified fees and costs in a timely manner;
 - e) undergoes surveillance as determined by the certification body and as required by FSC;
 - f) holds a valid version of the TLA applicable to the corresponding operation model (single, multi-site, group), where the right to use the FSC trademarks is not suspended. [+][7.9.3]
- 7.9.4 The certification body shall record the certification decision following each surveillance evaluation. [×]

7.10 Changes affecting certification

- 7.10.1 The certification body shall inform all affected clients of changes to FSC certification requirements or its own requirements affecting certification requirements, within thirty (30) calendar days from the publication. [+][7.10.1]
- 7.10.2 Clients that were certified prior to the effective date of a new or revised FSC certification requirements shall be evaluated in accordance with the applicable transition requirements. [+][7.10.3]

7.11 Termination, reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification

- 7.11.1 The certification body shall implement the requirements specified in this standard from Clause 7.4.6 to Clause 7.4.15 when a nonconformity to FSC certification requirements is identified. [+][7.11.1]
- 7.11.2 The conditions necessary for the certification body to change the scope of certification shall include the following requirements:
- a) the change of scope shall not include or result in an extension of the certification's expiry date beyond the time period for which it was originally granted;
 - b) the certification body shall reserve the right to inspect the site of the certified operations before deciding whether or not to grant a change to the scope of the certification;
 - c) if the certification body considers that a change in scope is significant in terms of area, management or operational implications then the certification body shall inspect the site before the change of scope is granted;
 - d) if the change of scope results into a change in operation model (single, multi-site, group) to which the TLA held by the client is not applicable;
 - i. the certification body shall initiate the process of signing the TLA according to the certification type;
 - ii. change of scope of the certification shall not take effect unless and until the client holds the most recent version of the TLA applicable to the operation model (single, multi-site, group);

- e) where applicable, the old certificate shall be returned to the certification body or destroyed by the client, and a new certificate issued reflecting the change of scope.

NOTE 1: An increase or decrease in the Participating Sites of a group certification is not considered a change of scope unless, in the opinion of the certification body, the change requires significant changes to the group certification holder's management systems.

NOTE 2: A change of scope may be necessary as a result of changes in ownership, structure of the organization, or management systems. [+][7.11.1]

7.11.3 The certification body may terminate certification by revocation or cancellation of the certification agreement with its client following its contractual requirements. [+][7.11.3]

7.11.4 If the certification body terminates the certification of all clients in a specific country or region, it shall give these clients notifications of a minimum of six (6) months before termination to seek a new certification body. [+][7.11.3]

7.11.5 The certification body shall suspend certification at latest three (3) months from the closing meeting of a surveillance evaluation, if:

- a) the correction has not been applied for all open nonconformities;
- b) the corrective actions are not implemented for major nonconformities identified in the last surveillance evaluation within specified timeline as per Clause 7.4.12;
- c) a certification decision to maintain the certification cannot be taken due to circumstances beyond the control of the certification body. [+][7.11.3]

NOTE: Circumstances may not include a shortage of the certification body personnel.

NOTE: Circumstances beyond the control of the certification body may include, but are not limited to, the client or other parties preventing the use of evaluation results and/ or the delayed or declined acceptance of evaluation results or the evaluation report by the client.

7.11.6 In the event of the certification body receiving evidence of a breach of the client's certification agreement requirements as specified in Clause 4.1.2.1e) and m) from FSC or ASI, the certification body shall suspend the client until the requirements are met by the client (i.e. information or access is granted). [+][7.11.3]

7.11.7 The maximum period that certification may remain suspended is twelve (12) months (upon justification and at the discretion of the certification body the timeline may be increased to eighteen (18) months to allow the client to correct nonconformities). After this period, the certification shall be withdrawn. The certification body shall conduct a surveillance evaluation in case the timeline of suspension exceeds twelve (12) months. [+][7.11.3]

7.11.8 In the event that the certification body suspends or withdraws certification, the certification body shall update the certification status in the FSC certification database (info.fsc.org), together with the effective date and reason of suspension or withdrawal within three (3) days of the suspension or withdrawal. [+][7.11.3]

7.11.9 The certification body shall issue a letter of notification to clients whose certification has been suspended or withdrawn. The notification letter shall include:

- a) a clear statement about the status of certification (suspended or withdrawn);
- b) the date from which the changed status of certification is official;
- c) the rationale supporting the changed status of certification which shall include, but is not limited to, the details of the breach of the certification agreement or the demonstration of nonconformities with applicable certification requirements;

- d) the requirement to withdrawal of all uses of the FSC trademarks;
 - e) the requirement to stop making FSC claims;
 - f) in the case of suspended certification, the information that the maximum duration of suspension is twelve (12) months (or in exceptional cases up to eighteen (18) months, see Clause 7.11.6) and that after this period certification will be withdrawn. [+][7.11.4]
- 7.11.10 The certification body shall keep the evidence that the client has received the letter of notification (e.g. client's written acknowledgement of receipt, delivery receipt from the mail service). [+][7.11.4]
- 7.11.11 The certification body may reinstate certification after suspension if their client has:
- a) applied correction to all open nonconformities;
 - b) evidently implemented the corrective action for major nonconformity. [+][7.11.6]
- 7.11.12 The certification body may grant an FSC certification to a new client at any time after expiry or termination of the client's existing certification with another certification body, based on a full evaluation according to FSC certification requirements. In such a case the certification body shall request the migration of FSC certification database instead of creating a new entry. [x]
- 7.11.13 If the main evaluation of the client as per Clause 7.11.12, is conducted within a period of twelve (12) months from the expiry, termination of the former certification, the accepting certification body shall consider any major or minor nonconformities which had not been closed at the time of expiry, termination. [x]

7.12 Records

- 7.12.1 Accurate, complete and legible records related to implementation of FSC requirements shall be kept following applicable data protection regulations and be readily available for evaluation by the accreditation body, including for example the following:
- a) certification body personnel records including CVs, qualifications, confidentiality agreements, training records and declarations of potential conflicts of interest;
 - b) auditor performance appraisals;
 - c) list of bodies providing outsourced services and related agreements;
 - d) operation of certification body committees;
 - e) certification applications;
 - f) certification agreements;
 - g) certification evaluation reports and summaries;
 - h) stakeholder and peer review comments and certification body responses;
 - i) certification decisions;
 - j) register of clients and their certified products;
 - k) certification complaints or appeals, including minutes or notes of committee meetings responsible for reviewing such complaints or appeals;
 - l) the implementation of internal audits and management reviews;
 - m) approvals for use of FSC trademarks;
 - n) communication of new or revised FSC certification requirements to affected clients. [+][7.12.1]

7.13 Complaints and appeals

- 7.13.1 The certification body's procedure to receive, evaluate and make decisions on complaints and appeals shall at least include the following elements:

- a. to allow the aggrieved party the opportunity to present the complaint or appeal to an entity (person(s), group or committee) which shall be within the certification body's contractual (e.g. employee) or organizational control (e.g. committee);

NOTE: The term 'present' does not refer to the possibility for the complainant(s)/ appellant(s) to have a meeting remotely or in person with the certification body personnel handling complaints and appeals.

- b. to require the complainant or appellant to include a clear description of the complaint or appeal, objective evidence to support each element or aspect of the complaint or appeal, and the name and contact information of the submitter. [+][7.13.1]

7.13.2 The certification body may develop a process for handling persistent and vexatious complaints. When developing such a process, the certification body shall conform with the relevant requirements from < FSC-PRO-10-008 Processing Complaints in the FSC Certification Scheme >. [x]

7.13.3 The certification body shall register all complaints with FSC, provided that FSC guarantees the availability of a complaints management system for this purpose. In the event that such a system is not available;

- a) the certification body shall provide FSC with an annual overview of the complaints received according to a template provided by FSC.
- b) the certification body shall submit the annual overview summary to FSC at dispute.resolution@fsc.org. [x]

7.13.4 The certification body shall respond to complaints and appeals in the same language that is used in the public summary certification report, or shall agree with the complainant on the language used. [x]

7.13.5 The certification body shall retain the anonymity of the complainant in relation to the client, if this is requested by the complainant. [x]

7.13.6 The certification body shall treat anonymous complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction that are not substantiated as stakeholder comments and address these during the next evaluation. [x]

7.13.7 The certification body shall seek a timely resolution of complaints and appeals, in particular to:

- a) acknowledge receipt of a complaint or appeal;
- b) provide an initial response, including an outline of the certification body's proposed course of action to follow up on the complaint or appeal, within two (2) weeks of receiving a complaint or appeal;
- c) keep the complainant(s)/ appellant(s) informed of progress in evaluating the complaint/ appeal;
- d) investigate the allegations and specify all its proposed actions in conclusion to the complaint or appeal within three (3) months of receiving the complaint or appeal. [x]

7.13.8 The certification body shall notify the complainant when the complaint is considered to be closed, meaning that the certification body has gathered and verified all necessary information, investigated the allegations, taken a decision on the complaint and responded to the complainant. [+][7.13.7]

7.13.9 A complainant(s)/ appellant(s) shall be offered the opportunity to refer their complaint to ASI, if the issue has not been resolved through the full implementation of the certification body's own procedures, or if the complainant(s)/ appellant(s) disagrees with the conclusions reached by the

certification body and/ or is dissatisfied by the way the certification body handled the complaint/appeal. As the ultimate step, the complaint(s)/ appellant(s) may be referred to FSC.
[x]

8. Management system requirements

8.1 Options

8.1.1 General

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

8.1.2 Option A

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

8.1.3 Option B

FSC requirements in addition to ISO 17065:2012 are specified in Clause 7.48.2.1 below.

8.2 General management system documentation (both for Option A and Option B)

8.2.1 The certification body shall document the operational procedures for:

- a) handling of applications;
- b) preparing and conducting evaluations (in pre-evaluation, main evaluation, surveillance and re-evaluation processes) according to the applicable FSC normative documents;
- c) conducting unannounced or short notice audits according to specified criteria and conditions;
- d) report reviewing and finalizing evaluation reports, (including public summary evaluation reports and surveillance reports);
- e) identification, management and tracking of nonconformities of clients;
- f) all types of certification decision making;
- g) registering the certification status and issuing of certificates;
- h) the review and approval of requests to use the FSC trademarks;
- i) managing conflicts of interest;
- j) managing complaints and appeals;
- k) control of internal and external documents;
- l) identification, management and tracking of nonconformities of the certification body's operations and related preventive and corrective actions;
- m) other procedures as necessary to conform with applicable FSC requirements. [+][8.2.1]

8.3 Control of documents (Option A)

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

8.4 Control of records (Option A)

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

8.5 Management review (Option A)

8.5.1 General

[No additional (FSC specific) requirement].

8.5.2 Review inputs

8.5.2.1 The input to the management review shall include an analysis of the effectiveness of the internal audit and internal audit plan to ensure consistent conformity with ISO/IEC 17065:2012 and FSC requirements. [+][8.5.2]

8.5.3 Review outputs

[No additional (FSC specific) requirement].

8.6 Internal audits (Option A)

8.6.1 The certification body shall ensure that internal audits are conducted by personnel knowledgeable in the applicable requirements of FSC normative documents. [+][8.6.4 a)]

8.6.2 Internal audits shall consider all new or revised FSC normative documents and guidelines, to ensure that the certification body's policies and procedures continue to be in conformity with all applicable FSC requirements. [+][8.6.4]

8.6.3 The internal audit program shall include all bodies providing outsourced services. [+][8.6.4]

8.6.4 Each body providing outsourced services shall be subject to at least one (1) annual audit. At least one (1) on-site audit shall be conducted by the certification body every three (3) years. Furthermore, the internal audit procedure shall specify criteria and conditions (e.g. risk assessment results, internal corrective actions requests, number of clients, complaints) where on-site audits of bodies providing outsourced services are required. [+][8.6.4]

8.7 Corrective actions (Option A)

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

8.8 Preventive actions (Option A)

[No additional (FSC specific) requirements].

Annex 1. Avoidance of conflict of interest

- 1.1 The certification body may explain its evaluation results or clarify the requirements of normative documents, but shall not give prescriptive advice or consultancy as part of an audit or training.
- 1.2 The following conditions shall be met for each of the categories:
- a) Training:
 - i. where the training relates to FSC requirements, it may only cover generic information that is freely available in the public domain;
 - ii. the training does not provide company-specific solutions and is not conducted one-on-one with the certification client.
 - b) Templates:
 - i. are publicly available;
 - ii. do not provide company specific solutions;
 - iii. include a disclaimer, specifying that the template is no guarantee for conformity with FSC requirements. It is the responsibility of the client to conform with FSC requirements;
 - iv. the use is voluntary.

NOTE: Such templates may include sample procedures, which can be created for specific industry sectors or types of clients, as long as they only contain generic information and fictional examples. The development of company specific procedures, manuals and handbooks is not allowed.

Informative guidance on managing conflicts of interest

General

That an individual or organization possesses an interest does not necessarily mean that the interest will result in a conflict, or that it is beyond management.

It is only when a conflict of interest, either at an institutional or individual level, is not acknowledged and managed that it runs the risk of compromising the integrity of decisions and of the organization.

Identifying where potential conflicts of interest are likely to arise and managing for these conflicts before they arise can help to strengthen the organization as a whole.

Threats to impartiality

The following types of threats to impartiality can occur at the level of the certification body and/ or certification body personnel:

- a) self-interest/personal benefit (such as financial or other personal self interests): threats that arise from acting in one's own interest;
- b) institutional benefit
- c) self review/assessing one's own work: threats that arise from reviewing own work or work done by colleagues;

- d) over-familiarity of parties involved in audits/personal loyalty: threats that arise e.g. from auditors being influenced by a close relationship with an auditee;
- e) intimidation: threats that arise from e.g. auditors being (or believing that they are being), openly or secretly coerced by auditees or by other interested parties;
- f) advocacy: a body or its personnel acting in support or in opposition of an auditee, which is at the same time its customer in e.g. the resolution of a dispute;
- g) competition: e.g. between auditee and contracted auditor.

Safeguards for auditor impartiality

The certification body is recommended to have in place safeguards that mitigate or eliminate threats to auditor impartiality through:

- h) prohibitions, restrictions, disclosures, policies, procedures, practices, standards, rules, institutional arrangements, and environmental conditions. These should be regularly reviewed to ensure their continuing applicability;
- i) preventive safeguards, for example, an induction program for newly hired auditors that emphasizes the importance of impartiality;
- j) safeguards that relate to threats arising in specific circumstances — for example, prohibitions against certain employment relationships between auditors' family members and the certification body's clients and;
- k) safeguards whose effects are to deter violations of other safeguards by punishing violators.

Safeguards for self review threat

- l) staff abide by a conflict-of-interest procedure that defines when they are required to excuse themselves from discussions or decision-making;
- m) the procedure includes criteria on the time period, if allowed, between involvement with a client and participating in an audit or decision affecting the client;
- n) conflict of interest declarations list relevant employment history, including unsuccessful job applications, when this may be a source of contention;
- o) declarations of interest and the decision taken for managing them (removal of individual from discussion and/or decision) are included in meeting minutes;
- p) clients have the ability and right to object to a member of the audit or decision team.

Annex 2. Qualification requirements for Forest Management and Chain of Custody auditor candidates and auditors

The following tables provide specifications to requirements set for auditors and auditor candidates under Clause 6.1.2.1

Table 2 Qualification requirements for Forest Management (FM) auditor candidates and auditors (normative)

1.1 Initial qualification requirements for auditor candidates	
Education and professional experience:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tertiary education (college or university qualification) in a relevant discipline (e.g. ecology, forestry, sociology, economics, anthropology, environmental sciences); and 2. Three (3) years of professional experience (e.g. forest management, consultancy, research) in a relevant discipline (e.g. ecology, forestry, sociology, economics, anthropology); NOTE: Ph.D. in forestry (or equivalent) is considered as 1 year equivalent of work experience. <p>OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secondary education (high school certificate); and 2. Six (06) years professional experience (e.g. forest management, consultancy, research) in a relevant discipline (e.g. ecology, forestry, sociology, economics, anthropology).
Auditor and FSC training:	3. Successful completion (with certificate) of an IRCA ² registered “ISO management standard auditor course” or an ISO 19011 course on auditing techniques as described in FSC-PRO-20-004;
	4. Successful completion (certificate) of a FM auditor training as specified in FSC-PRO-20-004;
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Attendance as an auditor in training in at least four (4) complete third-party FM audits in a three (3) year period, whereas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least one (1) shall be a main or re-evaluation; • at least one (1) shall be a surveillance evaluation • at least two (2) shall be as an active member of the audit team with one of these two as audit team leader – if the auditor candidate is expected to perform such a role in the future; • two (2) may be as an observer. <p>During all four (4) evaluation a supervising qualified auditor shall attend and an overall supervision report including a recommendation written by the supervising auditor shall be available.</p>
1.2 Continuous qualification requirements for auditors	

² IRCA - the International Register of Certificated Auditors (www.irca.org) – is an auditor registration scheme.

FSC training:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Successful completion of annual ongoing training dependent on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes in the FSC system relevant to the respective scope due to new or revised normative documents, or other relevant amendments such as interpretations; results of the individual monitoring, client feedback and/or evaluation process;
(Continuous) professional experience:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> At least three (3) on site audit days every year; NOTE: An auditor registered for FM and CoC needs to perform at least six (6) audit days per (calendar) year, three (3) for each scope.
Auditor performance evaluation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Witness audit: one (1) witness audit every three (3) years, with a supervision report including a recommendation written by the supervising auditor. NOTE: Witness audits are scope specific. Witness audits for other certification schemes are not applicable for the FSC scheme.
<p>NOTE: For maintaining their qualification, auditors involved in certification decision making may replace the above listed requirements for (continuous) professional experience and for the auditor performance evaluation by the attendance of at least one (1) on-site audit as an observer every year.</p>	

Table 3 Qualification requirements for Chain of Custody (CoC) auditor candidates and auditors (normative)

2.1 Initial qualification requirements for auditor candidates	
Education and professional experience:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Tertiary education (college or university qualification); and Two (2) years of professional experience in the forest products sector. <p>OR</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary education (high school certificate); and Four (4) years of professional experience in the forest products sector. <p>NOTE 1: The professional experience for certification systems with ISEAL membership (e.g. MSC, UTZ, RSPO) i.e., internal or external auditor, standard developer etc. and experience as registered ISO 19001 auditor/lead auditor is accepted as equivalent to experience in the forest product sector.</p> <p>NOTE 2: Maximum one (1) year of full-time work experience may be replaced by four (4) additional supervised audits – as listed below.</p>
Auditor and FSC training:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Successful completion (certificate) of an IRCA registered “ISO management standard auditor course” or an ISO 19011 course on auditing techniques as described in <i>FSC-PRO-20-004</i>; Successful completion (certificate) of a CoC auditor training as specified in <i>FSC-PRO-20-004</i>; Attendance as an auditor in training in at least four (4) complete third-party CoC audits in a three (3) year period, whereas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least one (1) shall be a main or re-evaluation; at least one (1) shall be a surveillance evaluation; at least two (2) shall be as an active member of the audit team with one of these two as audit team leader – if the auditor candidate is expected to perform such a role in the future; two (2) may be as observer.

	During all four (4) evaluation a supervising qualified auditor shall attend and an overall supervision report including a recommendation written by the supervising auditor shall be available.
2.2 Continuous qualification requirements for auditors	
FSC training:	1. Annual ongoing FSC training dependent on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes in the FSC system relevant to the respective scope due to new or revised documents, or other relevant amendments such as interpretations; • results of the individual monitoring, client feedback and/or evaluation process;
(Continuous) professional experience:	2. At least three (3) on-site audit days every year; NOTE: An auditor registered for FM and CoC needs to perform at least six (6) audit days per (calendar) year, three (3) for each scope.
Auditor performance evaluation:	3. Witness audit: one (1) witness audit every three (3) years, with a supervision report including a recommendation written by the supervising auditor. NOTE: Witness audits are scope specific. Witness audits for other certification schemes are not applicable for the FSC scheme.
NOTE: For maintaining their qualification, auditors involved in certification decision making may replace the above listed requirements for (continuous) professional experience and for the auditor performance evaluation by the attendance of at least one (1) on-site audit as an observer every year.	

Table 4 Personal attributes for Forest Management and Chain of Custody auditor candidates and auditors

<p>NOTE: Personal attributes are characteristics that affect an individual's ability to perform specific functions. Knowledge about personal attributes of individuals enables a certification body to take advantage of their strengths and to minimize the impact of their weaknesses.</p> <p>Appropriate means for the assessment of personal attributes are personal interviews, assessment centers, psychometric tests and/or witnessing/supervision of personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethical, i.e. fair, truthful, sincere, honest and discreet; • open-minded, i.e. willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view; • diplomatic, i.e. tactful in dealing with people; • collaborative, i.e. effectively interacts with others; • observant, i.e. actively aware of physical surroundings and activities; • perceptive, i.e. instinctively aware of and able to understand situations; • versatile, i.e. adjusts readily to different situations; • tenacious, i.e. persistent and focused on achieving objectives; • decisive, i.e. reaches timely conclusions based on logical reasoning and analysis; • self-reliant, i.e. acts and functions independently; • professional, i.e. exhibits a courteous, conscientious and generally business-like demeanour in the workplace; • morally courageous, i.e. willing to act responsibly and ethically even though these actions may not always be popular and may sometimes result in disagreement or confrontation; • culturally sensitive – i.e. able to understand behaviour rooted in cultural differences; • organised, i.e. exhibits effective time management, prioritisation, planning, and efficiency.
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Annex 3. Audit teams

- 1.1 The certification body shall have a process for selecting and appointing the audit team, taking into account the competence needed to achieve the objectives of the audit.

For all type of audits

- 1.2 An audit team shall always include a qualified auditor and audit team leader.
NOTE: The 'team' may consist of a single qualified auditor who is then also the leader of the 'team'.
- 1.3 At least one (1) audit team member shall be:
- a) fluent in the main language of the area in which the audit takes place such as audit language/dialect; or
 - b) a designated independent interpreter, who is not an employee or consultant of the client under evaluation; or
 - c) fluent in the corporate language, if the client provides a written declaration that confirms that all of the following criteria are met:
 - i. all relevant records and procedures relating to FSC requirements are written and understood in the corporate language; and
 - ii. all management staff and those with FSC responsibilities can communicate fluently in the corporate language.
- 1.4 The competence of an audit team may be supplemented by a technical expert(s). In this case the following requirements shall apply:
- a) the time spent by technical experts shall be specified separately in the audit plan;
 - b) their participation in the audit shall be limited to the task they are requested to do and each technical expert shall be assigned to the responsibility of a specific auditor in the audit team;
 - c) the technical expert(s) should be accompanied by the auditor to whom they are assigned;
 - d) if deemed necessary, the technical expert(s) may be allowed to perform interviews and other specified tasks unaccompanied, as instructed by the audit team leader;
 - e) technical expert(s) shall neither make conclusions on the conformity with certification requirements nor communicate them to the client.

For forest management audits

- 1.5 The forest management audit team shall include members with expertise to audit all aspects of the FSC Principles and Criteria, taking account of the scale and complexity of the area to be assessed.
- 1.5.1 The audit team shall include members with experience in forest management of the size and complexity under evaluation.
EXAMPLE: To audit large plantation, including the members who have themselves managed operations of a similar type or who have professional experience, for example as paid consultants or advisors to similar kinds of operations.
- 1.5.2 The audit team shall have social expert or expertise (expertise could be in the auditor or a separate expert) where the evaluation of the following is included: Principle 3 (Indigenous Peoples Rights); Principle 4 (Community Relations); Principle 9 (High Conservation Values) for HCV 5 and 6; complaints and disputes related to social aspects and when specified by FSC.
- 1.5.3 The audit team shall include members with knowledge and capacity to evaluate workers' rights such as health and safety aspects and application of employment legislation in the region.

1.5.4 The audit team shall include members with knowledge of the economic implications of forest management decisions in the country concerned (e.g., the economic implications of changes to silvicultural systems, set aside areas, etc.).

1.5.5 The audit team shall include members with knowledge in evaluating aspects relating to the economic performance of the client (e.g. understanding budgets, financial planning and financial reports) and have the ability to assess the economic viability of the forestry operation.

For forest management audits and controlled forest management audits at forest level

1.5 The audit team shall include at least one (1) team member who is a resident in the country in which the audit takes place or in a nearby country with similar forest conditions.

NOTE: Controlled wood audits at forest level may relate to FSC-STD-30-010 Controlled Forest Management or to FSC-STD-40-005 Requirements for Sourcing FSC Controlled Wood.

For controlled forest management audits at forest level

1.6 The audit team shall include:

a) at least one (1) team member with the experience and qualifications to audit relevant aspects of the controlled forest management standard taking into account the scale and complexity of the area to be assessed.

b) at least one (1) team member who is a qualified forest management auditor.

For chain of custody audits

1.7 The audit team shall include at least one (1) team member who has knowledge of the critical characteristics of the operational processes under evaluation including verifying financial information and FSC core labour requirements.

Annex 4. Risk-based approach to apply specified evaluation measures

Informative box: Risk identification and assessment by FSC

Introduction

A Risk-based approach is to be used for a supply chain or for certificate holders operating in an environment where existing conditions prevent a certification body from detecting nonconformities. To manage such risks, FSC has introduced specified evaluation measures. Specified evaluation measures apply for evaluating both forest management and chain of custody certification requirements in cases where FSC has confirmed the integrity risk as 'high'.

This annex serves as a basis for the implementation of specified evaluation measures to mitigate the integrity risks that may be identified by FSC. This annex does not replace or supersede any of other evaluation measures specified by FSC. The sections below present the process for identification and communication of such risks by FSC, and specified evaluation measures to be applied by certification bodies to help FSC mitigate the risk.

Risk identification

1. For identification of the integrity risk, FSC considers the following input from the:
 - a) results of transaction verification investigations, for cases of discrepancy between FSC certified wood volumes harvested and available on the market; or
 - b) other sources such as but not limited to:
 - i.results of FSC or ASI investigations;
 - ii.information from ASI assessments and ASI activities on overseeing certification bodies;
 - iii.ASI or FSC incident reports and incident trend data;
 - iv.data and conclusions obtained from FSC digital auditing reports;
 - v.GIS observations;
 - vi.Blockchain data analysis;
 - vii.FSC certification database analysis;
 - viii.wood sample testing results ;
 - ix.results of the statistical risk calculation model;
 - x.evidence from certification bodies;
 - xi.inputs, including complaints from stakeholders.

Risk assessment

2. For assessing the risk FSC analyses the following factors:
 - a) likelihood of the nonconformity not to be identified during evaluation,
 - b) scale and magnitude of the identified risk.

FSC defines the level of risk as:

'Low integrity risk'	when scale and magnitude of integrity risks are low and effective evaluation measures are in place.
'High integrity risk'	when scale and magnitude of integrity risks are higher and existing evaluation measures are insufficient to control the risk.

Communication of risk assessment results

3. FSC will announce on its website, when the high integrity risk is concluded as result of risk assessment.
4. FSC informs certification bodies by providing the description of the nature of risk, sources that confirmed it and supply chains that are subject to the risk, including:
 - a) geographical location of certificate holders;
 - b) product type according to FSC classification;
 - c) species common and latin name;
 - d) business activity of affected certificate holder.

1. Risk mitigation: application of specified evaluation measures by the certification body

- 1.1 The certification body shall identify the clients affected by 'high integrity risk' designations after notification by FSC.
- 1.2 Unless communicated by FSC differently, the certification body shall start to apply specified evaluation measures not later than three (3) months from the notification.

NOTE: Specified evaluation measures are of two types a) specified evaluation measures and b) additional specified evaluation measures that apply on case-by-case basis upon FSC's request.
- 1.3 The certification body shall apply the following specified evaluation measures to the affected client:
 - a) conduct at least one unannounced surveillance evaluation per certification cycle, until the risk is mitigated;

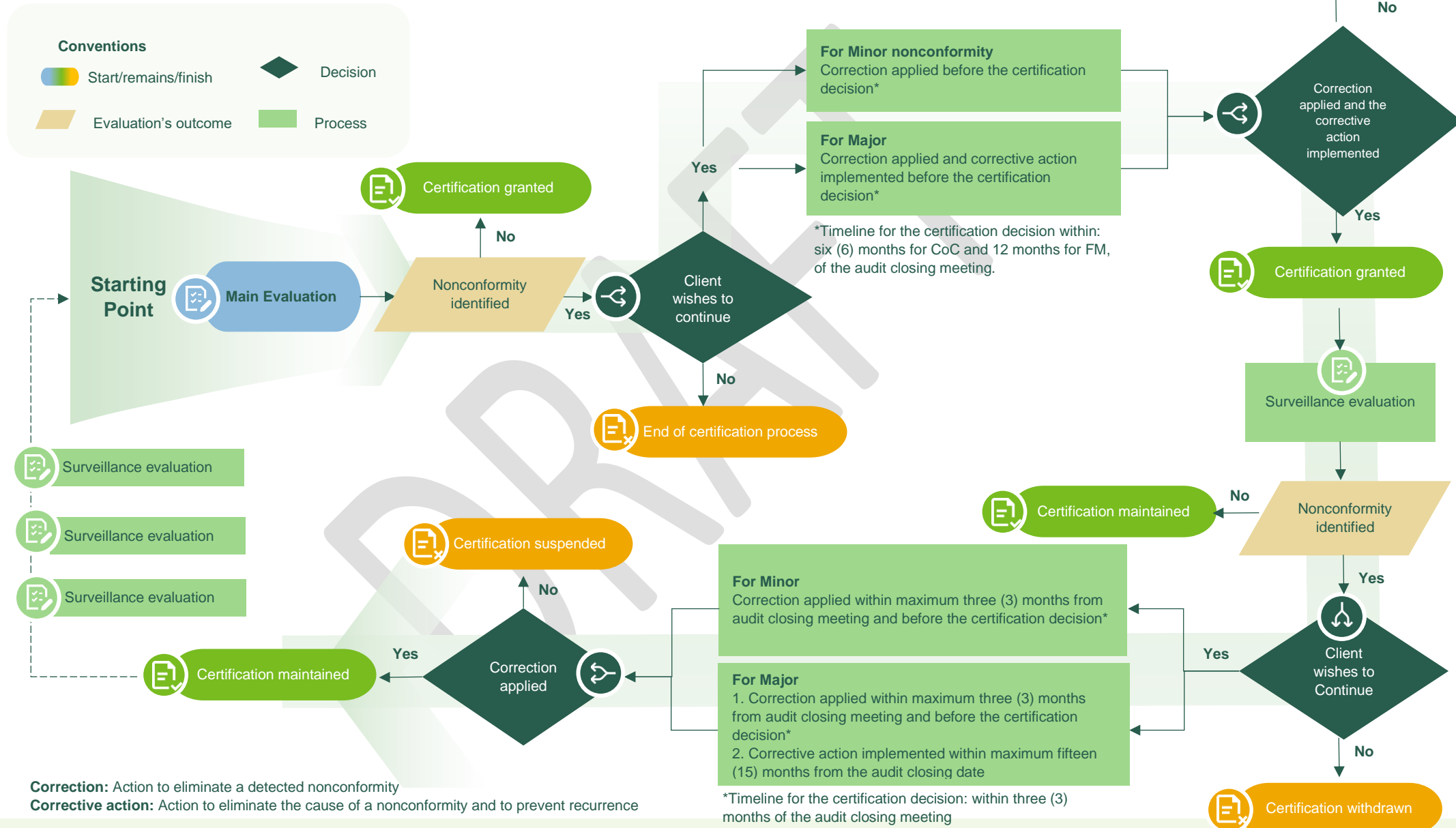
NOTE: This is not an additional evaluation.
 - b) apply additional due diligence measures prior to, granting certification, scope extensions, or approving outsourcing to non-FSC CoC-certified sub-contractors;

NOTE: For the development of additional due diligence requirements, the certification body may use the guideline developed by FSC International [here](#).
 - c) not waive the surveillance evaluation in case of zero sales.
- 1.4 The certification body shall apply the following additional specified measures to mitigate certain types of risk only upon the request by FSC:
 - a) confirmation of origin for FSC-certified products;
 - b) check non-FSC invoices during evaluation audits;
 - c) mandatory use of FSC Trace by affected CHs and verification of annual volume summaries and transaction matches in FSC Trace;
 - d) wood sample collection for Wood ID tests;
 - e) any additional measure as specified by FSC (e.g. audit team composition, auditor qualification, audit frequency, auditor rotation etc.).

2. Deactivation of the specified evaluation measures

- 2.1 The certification body may stop implementing the specified evaluation measures upon FSC's confirmation that the integrity risk has been mitigated.

Annex 5. Closure of the nonconformities (informative)



Annex 6. Procedure for transfer of FSC certification and license agreement for the FSC certification scheme

Introduction

This procedure specifies the requirements for certification bodies when transferring a FSC certification from one certification body to another within the period of validity of that certification. The procedure is based on the principle of the recognition agreement to transfer the FSC certification between FSC-accredited certification bodies.

FSC does not encourage the transfer of certification between certification bodies but recognizes that there may be circumstances in which such a transfer is legitimate and appropriate. FSC's objective in such cases is to ensure that clients are treated fairly and objectively, whilst ensuring that the transfer of certification does not become a tool by which clients can evade or avoid their obligations to conform with FSC certification requirements or any contractual obligations.

Scope

The procedure is applicable to all FSC-accredited certification bodies involved in the transfer of FSC certification. This procedure covers requirements for voluntary and non-voluntary certification transfers.

This procedure does not apply to a change of operation model (single, multi-site and group) and it does not cover the transfer of certification records for expired, terminated, and withdrawn certification.

1. Fundamental principles for a transfer of certification

- 1.1. The certification body can only transfer a certification once within the five (5) year period of validity of a certification.

NOTE: Non-voluntary transfer does not count towards the allowable limit to transfer once within the five (5) years validity of a certification.

Informative guidance: Transfer once within the five (5) years period of a certification cycle

Scenario	1 st certification cycle					2 nd certification cycle				
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Evaluations	Main	S1	S2	S3	S4	Re-eva	S1	S2	S3	S4
Scenario 1	CB 1		CB 2			CB 3			CB 4	
	Certification cycle starts		Allowable limit is used.			Transfer at recertification: counted as an allowable limit in new cycle.			Allowable limit is used. Another transfer is only possible at recertification. To move to another CB, a new certification process shall start by terminating the certification with issuing certification body (CB3)	

Scenario 2	CB 1		CB 2		CB 3
	No transfer of certification in a cycle		Transfer at recertification: counted as an allowable limit in new cycle		Allowable limit is used. See Scenario 1
Scenario 3	CB 1		CB 2	CB 3	CB 4
	Certification cycle starts	Allowable limit is used.	New certification cycle starts so that the new limit to transfer once per certification cycle.	Allowable limit is used	Allowable limit is used. See Scenario 1

- 1.2. The certification body shall only transfer a certification if:
- a) the certification is valid (not suspended, terminated, expired or withdrawn);
 - b) corrections for identified nonconformities have been applied to the satisfaction of the issuing certification body before the transfer;

NOTE: the clause 1.2 b) does not apply in case of non-voluntary transfer, see the Clause 3.2 below.
 - c) issuing certification body and accepting certification body agrees on the transfer date;

NOTE: The agreement on transfer date is not required in cases of non-voluntary transfer of certification.
 - d) relevant documentation about the certification (history of nonconformities, false claim, open complaints etc.) is made available.

NOTE: The TLA stays valid in case of a certification transfer and therefore is not required to be signed again. By migrating the FSC certification database entry (see below), the TLA will be transferred automatically.
- 1.3. The issuing certification body shall not suspend, terminate or withdraw the client's certification following the notification that the client is transferring to the accepting certification body if the client continues to satisfy the requirements of certification.
- 1.4. The period of validity of a FSC certification shall not exceed five years. Thus, the expiry date of the succeeding certification shall be the same as the expiry date of the preceding certification.
- 1.5. The scope of the client's certification shall be the same as the scope of the certification prior to transfer of certification. If the client is requesting a change in scope, the accepting certification body shall evaluate this request in line with the Clause 7.11.2.
- 1.6. All corrective actions (for major nonconformities) that are applicable to the client prior to the transfer shall remain applicable to the client after the transfer of certification, and the accepting certification body shall evaluate them according to the defined timelines.
- 1.7. The results of any ASI surveillance assessment or spot audit regarding the conformity of the client to the certification requirements prior to transfer are applicable to the client after the transfer and the accepting certification body shall evaluate them according to the defined timeline.

- 1.8. The accepting certification body is responsible for the open complaints against the client prior to the transfer and shall resolve them in accordance with Section 7.13 above.

2. Transfer process for voluntary transfer of certification

- 2.1 The accepting certification body shall propose a transfer date to the issuing certification body using FSC certification database and to the client on which all rights and obligations for maintaining the certificate shall be passed from the issuing to the accepting certification body.
- 2.2 The accepting certification body and issuing certification body shall keep a record of the agreed date for transfer of FSC certification.

NOTE: Transfer request on FSC certification database does not replace the requirement for both certification bodies to keep the record of the agreed date.

- 2.3 The accepting certification body shall give a minimum of thirty (30) days' notice to the issuing certification body to respond to the transfer request.
- 2.4 The issuing certification body may accept or reject the certification transfer request. A reason for rejection could be, for example, when the contractual requirements are not fulfilled.

NOTE: No response from the issuing certification body to the certification transfer request within the specified time will lead to the transfer of certification to the accepting certification body.

- 2.5 The accepting certification body shall carry out a transfer audit within three (3) months of the agreed transfer date according to the requirements for a surveillance evaluation. This audit shall include a review all pending corrective actions which were issued by the issuing certification body.

NOTE: The term "within" defines a period from 3 months before to 3 months after the transfer date.

- 2.6 If the on-site transfer audit is conducted in a way that satisfies all the formal requirements for a re-evaluation, the accepting certification body may grant a new five (5) year certification to the client.

3. Transfer process for non-voluntary transfer of certification

- 3.1 The accepting certification body shall request the transfer of certification using FSC certification database.
- 3.2 The accepting certification body shall review the status of open nonconformities and verify the implementation of correction and relevant corrective actions according to the defined timeline.

4. Migrating the FSC certification database records

- 4.1 Prior to the date of transfer, the issuing certification body shall remove all data from the certificate holder's entry in the FSC certification database (search.fsc.org) that they consider to be confidential.

NOTE 1: Public summary reports are not considered confidential.

NOTE 2: All objects, files/attachments and associated history records that are not removed by the transfer date will be transferred to the accepting certification body.

- 4.2 Prior to the date of transfer, the issuing certification body shall submit a request to FSC (database@fsc.org) containing the new certification registration code they would like to allocate

to the transferred client. This request shall be submitted to FSC no later than thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled transfer date.

4.3 On the date of transfer, FSC updates:

- a) the ownership of records to the accepting certification body;
- b) the certification registration code and number to the requested code;
- c) the certification status history with a status of 'Transferred' and in the comments field will be included the old certification registration code and the new certification registration code. The date from field will be the date of transfer, the date to field will blank.

NOTE: The old certification registration code will appear in a separate field on the certification record which can be searched after the transfer from the FSC certification database (search.fsc.org).

4.4 Following the transfer of certification, the accepting certification body shall check the FSC certification database entry for correctness and completeness.

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