

**FSC® Advice Note**

Title:	Maximum timeline for certification decisions to be taken in order to maintain certification
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ADVICE-20-001-02	Maximum timeline for certification decisions to be taken in order to maintain certification
Normative reference	ISO Guide 65, Clause 4.6.2.a FSC-STD-20-001 V3-0, Clause 20.6
Effective date	01 January 2015
Background	ISO Guide 65 together with FSC-STD-20-001 requires the certification body to conduct annual surveillance evaluations to confirm the continued conformity of the certificate holder with applicable certification requirements in order to maintain the certificate. This Advice requires certification bodies to suspend and subsequently withdraw certificates when they cannot take certification decisions to maintain a certificate within a specified time period, for circumstances beyond the control of the certification body.
Advice	1. The certification body shall suspend a certificate at latest six (6) months after the closing meeting of an annual surveillance audit, if a certification decision to maintain the certificate cannot be taken due to circumstances beyond the control of the certification body. The decision to suspend a certificate may be taken earlier, if it is evident that the circumstances will not change within the maximum six (6) months' timeframe. 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 audit findings and/ or the delayed or declined acceptance of audit findings or the audit report by the client. 2. The maximum period that a certificate shall remain suspended for suspensions relating to Clause 1 (above) is twelve (12) months. After this period, the certificate shall be withdrawn, unless all nonconformities / circumstances leading to suspension have been addressed to the satisfaction of the certification body.