



Standard

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES

FSC-STD-20-001 V5-0 EN



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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
V 2-0	Major revision to include additional requirements related to transparency and stakeholder consultation.	1 April 2004
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: full alignment with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, updated system for the closure of nonconformities, a risk-based approach to apply specified evaluation activities. The procedure on transfers of certification is added as Annex 6.	01 March 2025

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This English version of this document shall prevail unless otherwise specified.

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 integrated an 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.

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

- a) ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services (ISO/IEC 17065:2012);
- b) Requirements specified by ASI and by the 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-specific requirements for all accredited and applicant certification bodies. These FSC requirements are specified in addition to ISO/IEC 17065:2012. The user of this standard can identify these types of requirements with the specific symbol added at the end of each requirement.

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

Ref. to ISO 17065:2012

For 'FSC addition to an existing ISO requirement' to ISO 17065:2012 requirements = [x][4.1.2.2 c) 3)]

Informative guidance: how to identify FSC additional requirements

ISO 17065:2012 does not require the organization to disclose its current or previous application/certification with FSC therefore the requirement 4.1.2.1 a) below is an 'FSC additional requirement [x]'. Whereas for participation of observers in audits, ISO 17065:2012 does require the organization to accept the participation of observers and FSC has extended the ISO requirement and specified the procedure for participation of the observers in the audits. Therefore, the requirement 4.1.2.1 b) below is 'FSC additional to an existing ISO requirement [x][4.1.2.2 c) 3)]'. 4.1.2.1 The certification agreement shall require the organization 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> [x][4.1.2.2 c) 3)];

¹ The term 'certification scheme' here refers to the ISO 17067:2012 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.

Appeal: request by the person or the organization to certification body for reconsideration of the decision that the certification body has made. (adapted from ISO/IEC 17000:2020).

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 day: the day on which the auditor conducts the audit. The length of an audit day varies and depends on the audit plan.

Audit team: 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 sets of requirements (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 is not yet concluded.

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

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

Suspended and blocked: a certification that is suspended and where the organization is blocked from the access to the FSC system.

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

Terminated and blocked: a certification agreement is terminated, and the organization is blocked from the access to the FSC system.

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

Withdrawn: certification that is revoked or cancelled.

Client (the organization): applicants for FSC certification and FSC certified organizations (adapted from ISO/IEC 17065:2012). The term 'client' is replaced with the term 'the organization' in this document.

Competence: the demonstrated ability to apply knowledge or expertise, skills and personal attributes 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 the organizations (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: immediate action to eliminate or correct a nonconformity.

NOTE: Intent of the correction is to take immediate action either to correct the nonconformity or to stop the activity that has led to the nonconformity.

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

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 global assurance provider "Assurance Services International" (ASI).

FSC accreditation requirements: all normative requirements applicable to 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 schemes.

Integrity risk: likelihood and/or severity of an incident(s) that can compromise the integrity and credibility of the FSC's system.

Low integrity risk: a conclusion by FSC, following a risk assessment or absence of evidence, that the likelihood and/or severity of an incident(s) affecting FSC's integrity and credibility is low.

High integrity risk: a conclusion by FSC, following a risk assessment, that the likelihood and/or severity of an incident(s) affecting FSC's integrity and credibility is high.

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

Licence Agreement for the FSC Certification Scheme (TLA): an agreement, that the organization has to enter into with FSC Global Development, in order to be eligible for FSC certification. Also known as Trademark Licence Agreement (TLA).

Nonconformity: non-fulfilment of a requirement.

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.

NOTE: This peer reviewer is different from the reviewer that is required to review the evaluation results as per 7.5 of ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

Personal attributes: characteristics that affect an individual's ability to perform specific functions.

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 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.

Voluntary Transfer: transfer of certification where the organization requests for transfer of certification to another certification body.

Non-voluntary Transfer: transfer of certification where the organization is forced to transfer due to the issuing certification body accreditation scope being either reduced, suspended or withdrawn (see Clause 2.6) or due to the issuing certification body terminating all FSC certifications in a specific country or region (see Clause 7.11.5).

NOTE: Migration of only the certification records for an expired, terminated or a withdrawn certification 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 Evaluation: 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 correction and/or corrective action and pre-condition verification evaluation, change of scope evaluations, certification transfer evaluation.

Unannounced evaluation: evaluation or part of an evaluation that is conducted without prior notice of date and time of the evaluation to the organization.

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
CoC	Chain of Custody
CB	Certification Body
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FM	Forest Management
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
TLA	Licence Agreement for the FSC Certification Scheme

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 and/or ASI 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 where there are intended or existing certification activities. [x]
- 2.5 The certification body shall include the country in its geographical accreditation scope, where the site or the management unit of the organization is located.
- NOTE: This does not require the certification body to have a physical presence in the country where the site or the management of the organization is located.
- 2.6 The certification body shall inform the affected organizations 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 affected organizations 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 (see Section 3, Annex 6 for the process of non-voluntary transfer of certification) . [x]
- NOTE: Clause 2.6 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.

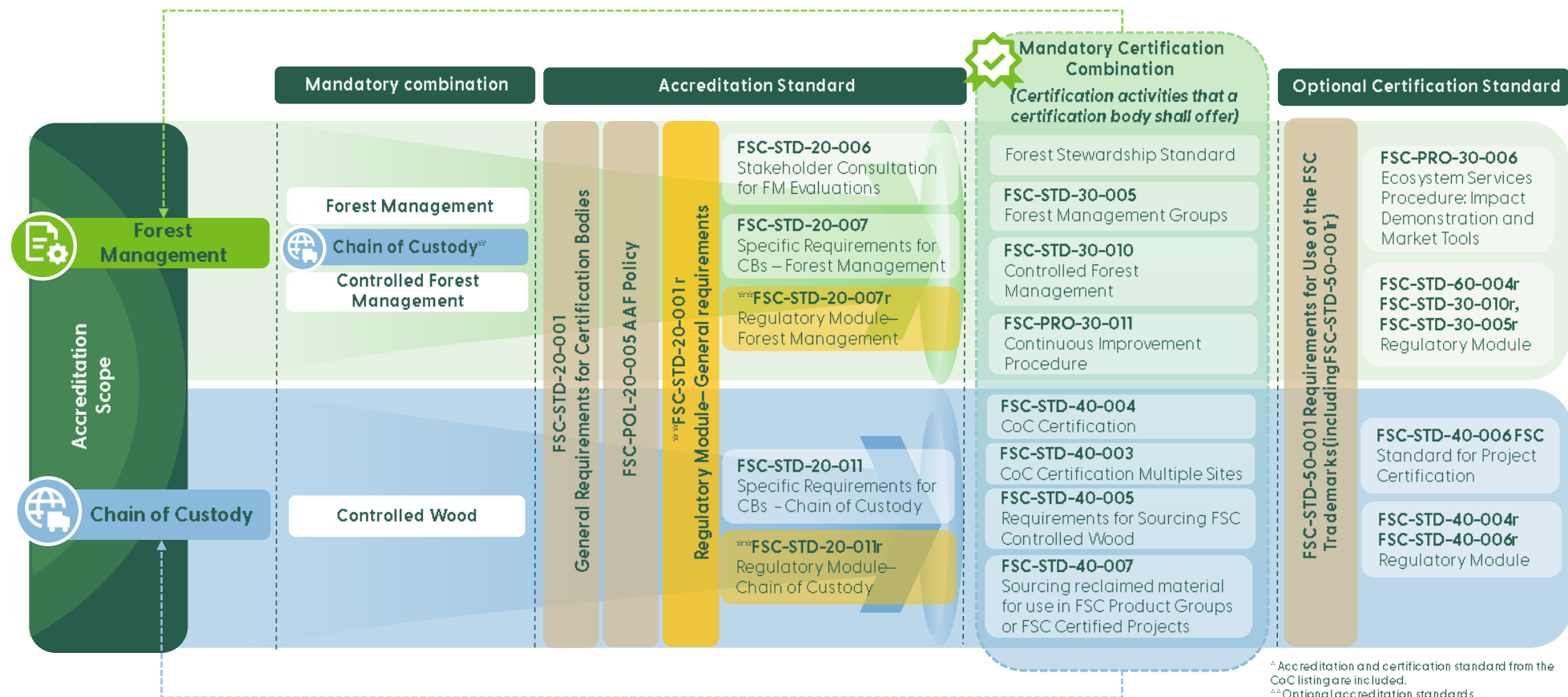


Figure 1 Technical accreditation scope and the corresponding mandatory certification standards.

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

- 3.1 The certification body shall perform the certification activities according to its technical and geographical accreditation scope and in conformity with ISO/IEC 17065:2012. [x]
- 3.2 The certification body shall operate its FSC scheme(s) in conformance with the:
- a) ISO/IEC 17065:2012;
 - b) FSC specific requirements included in this standard;
 - c) applicable FSC normative requirements as published on the FSC website (www.fsc.org);
 - d) requirements specified by the relevant participating accreditation body (if any) and by ASI;
 - e) 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 in addition to requirements from ISO/IEC 17065:2012. See introduction section (how to read this standard).

4. General requirements

Informative guidance on structure and numbering

To assist the 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. This excludes the numbering and titles of Annexes (as Annexes specify FSC additional requirements).

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, the 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 Agreements 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 organization comply at least, with the following to:

obligations of the organization

- a) disclose current or previous applications or certifications with FSC and/or other forestry certification schemes in the last five years; [x]

- b) agree to the evaluations at the required intervals, including the certification body's right to carry out unannounced evaluations; [x]
- c) agree to ASI compliance assessments and to close any identified findings within the specified timeline; [x]
- d) agree, that specified information is published, as indicated in the applicable FSC requirements; [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 Assessments>; [x][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; [x][4.1.2.2 j) 1)]
- g) not use its certification in such a manner as to bring FSC or ASI into disrepute; [x][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 affected organization(s) has six (6) months to find a new certification body.
 - i. the certification of the affected organization(s) will be terminated by the certification body after six (6) months from the date of reduction, suspension or withdrawal of the respective scope of FSC accreditation unless the affected certification is transferred to an accepting certification body or expired.
 - ii. in the absence of the certification body action to terminate the certification, FSC reserves the right to declare the certification of the affected organization as terminated; [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 organization 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 certification requirements 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 the organization; [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 organization 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 the certification with immediate effect if, in the sole opinion of the certification body, the organization 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; [x][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; [x][4.1.2.2 f)]
NOTE: Certified customers include the customers who a) have bought certified material; b) placed an order for certified products.
 - iii. cooperate with the certification body and with FSC to allow the certification body or FSC to confirm that these obligations have been met. [x][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; [x][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. [x][4.1.2.2 f)]

4.1.2.2 The certification agreement shall cite the relevant FSC requirements in its most recent version and shall explain where the organization 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. [x][4.1.3.1]
- 4.1.3.2 The certification body shall be responsible for the approval of the FSC trademark use by their organization according to <FSC-STD-50-001 Requirements for use of the FSC trademarks by certificate holders>, relating to both on-product and promotional uses. [x][4.1.3.1]
- 4.1.3.3 The certification body shall control the FSC trademark use by the organization, 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 the organization. [x][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]
- 4.1.3.5 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 the organization according to specific information as provided by FSC. [x]

4.2 Management of impartiality

Consultancy

- 4.2.1 The certification body shall conform with the requirements specified in Annex 1 to avoid conflict of interest in performing certification activities. [+] [4.2.6]
- 4.2.2 The certification body shall not use the entity or the personnel (including those acting in a managerial capacity) who have provided consultancy, or been employed by the organization, to review, make certification decisions or to review or approve the resolution of a complaint or appeal for the same organization within a minimum of 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 avoiding 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 document and implement an anti-corruption policy. [x]
- NOTE: The 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

- 4.3.1 The certification body shall be able to demonstrate that it has evaluated the risks arising from its certification activities. [+] [4.3.1]

4.4 Non-discriminatory conditions

[No additional requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

4.5 Confidentiality

- 4.5.1 The certification body shall maintain and implement the documented policies and procedures for maintaining 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 the organization is required to make publicly available and the information 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:

- a) information about the certification body's scope of FSC accreditation in accordance with Clause 2.1;
- b) a list of bodies providing outsourced services to the certification body for the relevant FSC certification schemes;
- c) a link to the FSC certification database (search.fsc.org);
- d) a link to the FSC requirements (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;

- a) 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.

- b) in the same language as the public summary report for forest management certification published by the certification body. [+][4.6. d)]

5. Structural requirements

5.1 Organizational structure and top management

[No additional requirements to [ISO/IEC 17065:2012](#) for this section].

5.2 Mechanism for safeguarding impartiality

5.2.1 The mechanism for safeguarding impartiality shall be formally documented and ensures the following:

- a) 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.

- b) members with no conflict of interest;
- c) at least one (1) annual meeting;
- d) its independence of the financial control of the organization;
- e) its independence of certification decision making;
- f) records of its discussions and recommendations;

- g) 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 requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

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 the certification process shall at minimum include:

- a) for the application reviewer, demonstrated competence to plan an evaluation;
- b) for an 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 decisions;
 - i. qualification as auditor in accordance with Annex 2;
 - ii. demonstrated knowledge and experience to assess an evaluation process, 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, qualification as 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 the 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 personnel involved in the certification process shall require the certification body to:

- a) identify individuals' 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. training need identified 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 assess 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]

NOTE: Means for the assessment of personal attributes may include personal interviews, assessment centres, psychometric tests and/or witnessing/supervision of personnel.

6.1.2.4 The certification body shall register the qualified auditors including freelance auditors 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 including freelance auditors shall require the certification body to:

- a) conduct 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 be used as substitute by the certification body to meet this requirement.

- c) consider the results of monitoring and evaluation to determine the need for further training;
- d) document the results of monitoring and evaluation results in the auditor performance appraisal report. [x][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 shall at minimum include the following:

- a) conformity with auditor qualification requirements as listed in Annex 2;
- b) conformity with certification bodies' operational procedures and guidelines including issues relating to conflict of interest, confidentiality and anti-corruption policy;
- c) a combination of on-site observation, review of evaluation reports and substantiated feedback from the organization. [x][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). [x][6.1.2.1 e)]

6.1.2.8 The certification body shall suspend the auditor's qualification if:

- a) the auditor has not fulfilled the continuous qualification requirements as concluded by the regular monitoring;
- b) the results of the performance evaluation conclude inadequate performance;
- c) the auditor has evidently violated the certification body's operational procedures and guidelines e.g., was involved in corruption activities such as bribery. [x]

6.1.2.9 In order to lift the suspension, the auditor shall close the nonconformity that has led to the suspension.

EXAMPLE 1: If the auditor has not received ongoing training in relation to changes in the FSC system, the suspension is lifted when the training has been successfully completed.

EXAMPLE 2: In case an auditor completes less than three (3) on-site audits days per calendar year, the auditor needs to be successfully witnessed again in order to lift the suspension.

EXAMPLE 3: If the auditor was not witnessed in 3 years, the suspension is lifted after being successfully witnessed.

6.1.2.10 The failure to close the nonconformity or to resolve the issues, that has resulted in the suspension, within the time specified by the certification body, shall result in withdrawal or reduction of the scope of auditor's qualification. [x]

6.1.3 Contract with the personnel

[No additional requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

6.2 Resources for evaluation

6.2.1 Internal resources

[No additional requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

6.2.2 External resources (outsourcing)

6.2.2.1 If the certification body outsource evaluation activities, it ensures the entity that provides the outsources services:

- a) is a legal entity;
- b) conforms with applicable requirements of this standard and other FSC normative documents. [+][6.2.2.1]

6.2.2.2 The certification body shall ensure that the legal entity that provides the outsourced services does not further outsource the work related to the evaluation activities to another legal entity. [+][6.2.2.1]

NOTE: The evaluation activities conducted by the subsidiary of a legal entity where the subsidiary is under the ownership and control of the legal entity that is providing outsourced services to the certification body, is not considered further outsourcing if the subsidiary is included in the legally enforceable agreement with the certification body.

6.2.2.3 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]

6.2.2.4 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 to at least:

- a) conform with applicable requirements of this standard (including relevant requirements from ISO/IEC 17065:2012) and of other FSC requirements;
- 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) conduct performance review of auditors as per Clause 6.1.2.6;
- 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 the organization access to information as specified in Clause 4.6.1;
- k) agree to a prohibition on 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 prohibit granting approval independently for the use of FSC trademarks to the organization, unless having been trained (see Clause 6.1.2.1f). [x][6.2.2.3]

6.2.2.5 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 at trademark@fsc.org. [x]

6.2.2.6 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 for forest management certification and chain of custody certification with specific requirements for each scheme. Each scheme follows the functional approach as defined in ISO/IEC 17000:2020. Scheme specific 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 the organization for forest management certification in accordance with <FSC-STD-20-007 Specific Requirements for Certification Bodies - Forest Management> and related sets of requirements. [x][7.1.2]
- 7.1.2 The certification body shall evaluate the organization for chain of custody certification (including project certification) in accordance with <FSC-STD-20-011 Specific Requirements for Certification Bodies - Chain of Custody> and related sets of requirements. [x][7.1.2]
- 7.1.3 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. [x][7.1.3]
- 7.1.4 The certification body may request a derogation to an FSC normative requirement (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 the organization exists. The certification body shall submit a derogation request in accordance with <PSU-PRO-10-201 Enquiry Procedure>. [x][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: If a derogation is granted to a requirement applicable to certification bodies, 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 address and mailing address;
- c) registration number or tax identification number;
- d) contact person;
- e) normative document/s for which the organization 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 and the corresponding product type according to <FSC-STD-40-004a FSC Product Classification>;
- m) number of sites;
- n) type of control system (transfer, credit, percentage) for each product group;

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. [x][7.2]

7.2.2 If applicable, the certification body shall obtain from the applicant the latest available FSC evaluation report from within the last five (5) years and consider it in the certification process. [x][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 organization to omit any evaluation activity. [+] [7.3.5]
- 7.3.2 The certification body shall reject the application for certification by an organization that has been blocked from the FSC system.

NOTE: The list of blocked organizations can be accessed at the FSC certification database (search.fsc.org). The blocked organizations' certification status is marked as 'Suspended and Blocked' or 'Terminated and Blocked'.

- 7.3.3 The certification body shall reject applications for certification of management units or sites that are already covered by a valid or suspended FSC certification, except where a certification transfer process according to Annex 6 is ongoing. [x]

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 organization;
 - 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 organization. Where the organization 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 the organization is not audited by the same auditor on more than three (3) consecutive audits. Where the organization 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 transfer of certification, where the certification body conforms with relevant requirements from Annex 6. [+] [7.4.5]
- NOTE: This applies to transfer of certification where the issuing certification body conducts the evaluation prior to the transfer.
- 7.4.5 In case of high integrity risk, the certification body shall implement the additional evaluation activities in accordance with Annex 4. [x]
- 7.4.6 Where the certification body identifies infringements of the <FSC-POL-01-004 Policy for Association>, it shall inform FSC International at dispute.resolution@fsc.org. [x]
- 7.4.7 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]

Nonconformities and evaluation report

7.4.8 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]

7.4.9 The auditor shall present the audit findings including preliminary minor and/or major nonconformities and observations during the audit closing meeting. [x][7.4.6]

7.4.10 The auditor shall document a nonconformity which shall at a minimum include:

- a) a description of the nonconformity;
- b) the objective evidence on which the nonconformity is based;
- c) grading of a nonconformity (minor or major);
- d) the timeline to implement the correction;
- e) the timeline to implement the corrective action. [x]

7.4.11 Nonconformities shall have the following maximum timelines:

- a) Major nonconformity: correction and corrective action to be implemented before the certification decision (see Clause 7.6.2 for certification decision timeline);

NOTE: A major nonconformity may require immediate action to be taken by the organization e.g., immediate cessation of use of a highly hazardous pesticide, violation of a legal obligation, nonconforming product, risk to the integrity of the system or activities causing serious environmental damage.
- b) Minor nonconformity: correction to be implemented before the certification decision (see Clause 7.6.2 for certification decision timeline) and corrective action to be implemented until next surveillance evaluation.

7.4.12 The certification body shall consider a nonconformity closed when the organization has:

- a) implemented correction and corrective actions for a major nonconformity;
- b) implemented correction for a minor nonconformity.

NOTE: Corrective action for a minor nonconformity can be implemented at maximum until next surveillance evaluation. [x]

- 7.4.13 The certification body shall treat the absence of a valid TLA as a major nonconformity, and the timeline to implement the correction for this nonconformity shall be a maximum of thirty (30) days from the date of the absence of the TLA, provided that the TLA has not been terminated with or without cause. [x]
- 7.4.14 The certification body shall verify whether an identified nonconformity has been closed within its timelines (see Clause 7.4.11 and 7.4.12). If the identified nonconformity is not closed within its specified timeline, then:
- a) for main (re)evaluation, it shall lead to a decision to not (re)grant the certification;
 - b) for surveillance evaluation, it shall lead to a decision to suspend the certification. [x]
- NOTE: See Annex 5 for the process flow for the closure of nonconformities.
- 7.4.15 The certification body shall verify the implementation of the corrective actions for minor nonconformities in the next evaluation and if the corrective actions are not implemented adequately then the certification body shall consider it as a major nonconformity.
- 7.4.16 A major nonconformity shall not be downgraded to a minor nonconformity. [x]
- 7.4.17 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 organization. The certification body shall record such observations in the evaluation report as 'observations' for the benefit of the organization. [x]
- 7.4.18 The certification body shall document the results of the evaluation activities prior to review and decision making in the evaluation report in conformity with the report writing requirements specified in:
- a) <FSC-STD-20-007 Specific Requirements for Certification Bodies - Forest Management > for forest management evaluation reports and public summary;
 - b) <FSC-STD-20-011 Specific Requirements for Certification Bodies - Chain of Custody > for chain of custody and project certification [x]
- 7.4.19 The certification body shall share the preliminary evaluation report that shall at minimum include the identified nonconformities (see Clause 7.4.10) with the organization within ninety (90) days from the audit closing meeting. [x]
- 7.4.20 The certification body shall share the final evaluation report including the certification decision as per the certification decision timeline (see Clause 7.6.2). [x]

7.5 Review

[No additional requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

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, including but not limited to 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 to 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 from 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 and re evaluation

- d) within six (6) months of the audit closing meeting;

NOTE: This timeline also applies to a nonconformity identified in between evaluations for example because of a false claim or an investigation. In such a case the audit closing meeting may be replaced with the identification of the nonconformity.

- 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 organization 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 of whether these major nonconformities relate to new or significantly changed requirements.

NOTE 2: It is permissible to consider additional evidence from the organization 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 the organization 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) closed all nonconformities;
- c) 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 the organization. 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 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 c) 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 organization has been evaluated against;

NOTE: It is acceptable to omit the reference to the version numbers of normative documents on paper certificates. The FSC certification database is considered the formal certification document and main source of information on the certification status.

- d) a statement of certification according to the relevant certification type; [+][7.7.1]
 - i. forest management certification: [the organization] is allowed to use the FSC trademarks to communicate responsible forest stewardship according to FSC's Principles and Criteria on the management unit(s) included in the certification scope;
 - ii. forest management certification with ecosystem service in the scope: [the organization] is allowed to use the FSC trademarks to communicate responsible forest stewardship and verified ecosystem services impacts/claims according to FSC's Principles and Criteria on the management unit(s) included in the certification scope;
 - iii. joint forest management and chain of custody certification: [the organization] is allowed to use the FSC trademarks to communicate responsible forest stewardship according to FSC's Principles and Criteria on the management unit(s) included in the certification scope, and to sell the listed products with FSC claims;
 - iv. controlled forest management certification: [the organization] is allowed to communicate the Controlled Forest Management on the management unit(s) included in the certification scope and to sell the listed products with FSC claims;
 - v. chain of custody certification: [the organization] is allowed to communicate its status as FSC certified with the FSC trademarks and to sell the listed products with FSC claims, and to promote listed products as supporting responsible forest stewardship;
 - vi. chain of custody project certification: [the organization] is allowed to communicate its status as FSC certified with the FSC trademarks, to sell the listed projects with the FSC claim, and to promote the listed projects as supporting responsible forest stewardship;
- 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. [7.7.1 e)]

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	XXX-CFM-#####
Chain of Custody	Chain of custody certification	XXX-COC-#####-***
	Controlled wood chain of custody certification (<i>against FSC-STD-40-005</i>)	XXX-CW/COC-#####-***
	NOTE 3: This controlled wood certification 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.
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- 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 may 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 the organization, 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, 7.7.2]
- 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 certificate 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, to be included on certificates in addition to the information as required in Clause 7.7.1 d) above is subject to prior written approval by FSC. [x]
- 7.7.9 The certification body shall register the certification granted temporarily as result of a pilot test, in the FSC certification database, unless otherwise specified.

NOTE 1: Pilot testing is an activity conducted to learn about the likely outputs of the implementation of the requirements or concepts under development. Pilot testing may result in a temporary use of FSC trademarks in the labelling and promotion of FSC-certified products.

NOTE 2: Process requirements for pilot certification including application, evaluation, review, decision making, and certification documentation depends on the scope of the testing and hence specified separately.

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. [+][7.8]

NOTE: This fulfils 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. [+][7.8]
- 7.8.3 The certification body shall keep the data entries in FSC certification database and public summary certification reports accurate and up to date. [+][7.8]

7.9 Surveillance

- 7.9.1 The certification body shall conduct the surveillance evaluation of the organization periodically and in accordance with the frequency specified in the relevant scheme evaluation standards. [+][7.9.1]
- 7.9.2 The certification body may increase the frequency of the surveillance evaluation depending on factors such as:
- a) the scale of the operation (e.g. the area of a 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. [+][7.9.1]

NOTE: FSC may request higher surveillance frequencies and/or for specified evaluation activities from certification bodies for certain geographical areas or certification services that are specified as “high integrity risk” 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 the organization:
- 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) closes all identified nonconformities in accordance with Clause e);
 - 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. [x]

7.10 Changes affecting certification

7.10.1 The certification body shall inform all the affected organizations of changes to FSC certification requirements or its own requirements affecting certification requirements, within thirty (30) calendar days from the publication of the certification requirements. [+][7.10.1]

7.10.2 The organizations that were certified prior to the effective date of 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 7.4.8 to Clause 7.4.20 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 in a change in operation model (single, multi-site, group) to which the TLA held by the organization is not applicable;
 - i. the certification body shall initiate the process of signing the TLA according to the certification type;
 - ii. the change of scope of the certification shall not take effect unless the organization 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 organization, 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 the organization following its contractual requirements. [+][7.11.3]

7.11.4 For instances where the TLA has been terminated, the certification body shall terminate the affected certification within three (3) days of notification from FSC.

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

NOTE: This clause only applies when a certification body terminates the organization without reducing its accreditation scope as per Clause 2.6.

- 7.11.6 The certification body shall suspend the certification at latest six (6) months from the audit closing meeting of a surveillance evaluation, if:

- a) open nonconformities have not been closed within the specified timeline;
- b) a certification decision to maintain the certification cannot be taken due to circumstances beyond the control of the certification body. [+][7.11.3]

NOTE 1: Circumstances may not include a shortage of the certification body personnel.

NOTE 2: Circumstances beyond the control of the certification body may include, but are not limited to, the organization 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 organization.

NOTE: This requirement also applies to nonconformities identified in between evaluations for example because of a false claim or an investigation. In this case the timeline refers to 6 months from the identification of such nonconformity.

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

- 7.11.8 For instances where the granted rights to use the FSC trademarks are suspended, the certification body shall suspend the affected certification within three (3) days of notification from FSC. [+][7.11.3]

- 7.11.9 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 organization to close 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]

- 7.11.10 In the event that the certification body suspends or withdraws certification, the certification body shall update the certification status in the FSC certification database (search.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]

- 7.11.11 The certification body shall issue a letter of notification to organizations 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 withdraw 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) and that after this period certification will be withdrawn. [+] [7.11.4]
- 7.11.12 The certification body shall keep evidence that the organization has received the letter of notification (e.g. organization's written acknowledgement of receipt, delivery receipt from the mail service). [+] [7.11.4]
- 7.11.13 The certification body may reinstate certification after suspension if the organization has closed the identified nonconformity in accordance with Clause 7.4.12. [+] [7.11.6]
- 7.11.14 If the certification body has conducted the main evaluation of the organization within a period of twelve (12) months from the expiry, termination or withdrawal of the organization's former certification, then the certification body shall consider any major or minor nonconformities which had not been closed at the time of expiry, termination or withdrawal of certification. [x]
- 7.11.15 The certification body may grant an FSC certification to the organization at any time after expiry or termination of the organization'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 the FSC certification database records instead of creating a new entry. [x]
- 7.11.16 Prior to the date of migration of records, the certification body shall submit a request to FSC (database@fsc.org) containing the certification code they would like to allocate to the organization. [x]

NOTE: License codes cannot be migrated with the records.

7.12 Records

- 7.12.1 The certification body shall keep accurate, complete and legible records related to implementation of FSC requirements, following applicable data protection regulations and the records shall be readily available for evaluation by the accreditation body and ASI, 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 the organizations 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 the affected organizations. [+] [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, evidence to support each element or aspect of the complaint or appeal, and the name and contact information of the submitter. [x][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. In the event that the FSC complaints management 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 once per calendar year during the first (1) quarter of the following calendar year, 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 organization, 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 complaints 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]

NOTE: Exceptions to the timelines may apply in case of persistent or vexatious complaints as per Clause 7.13.7.

- 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 requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

8.1.2 Option A

FSC requirements in addition to ISO 17065:2012 are specified in Clause 8.2.1 below.

8.1.3 Option B

FSC requirements in addition to ISO 17065:2012 are specified in Clause 8.2.1 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 requirements;
- 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 the organizations;
- 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 requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

8.4 Control of records (Option A)

[No additional requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

8.5 Management review (Option A)

8.5.1 General

[No additional requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

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 requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

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 FSC requirements. [+] [8.6.4 a)]
- 8.6.2 Internal audits shall consider all new or revised FSC requirements 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 the organizations, complaints) where on-site audits of bodies providing outsourced services are required. [+] [8.6.4]

8.7 Corrective actions (Option A)

[No additional requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

8.8 Preventive actions (Option A)

[No additional requirements to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for this section].

Annex 1. Avoidance of conflict of interest

- 1.1 The certification body may explain its evaluation results or clarify the requirements but shall not give prescriptive advice or consultancy as part of an audit or training.
- 1.2 The certification body shall ensure the following to avoid conflict of interest in each of the categories:
- a) Training: the training does not provide company-specific solutions and is not conducted one-on-one with the organization.
 - 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 organization to conform with FSC requirements;
 - iv. use is voluntary.

NOTE: Such templates may include sample procedures, which can be created for specific industry sectors or types of the organizations, 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 organization and;
- k) disciplinary mechanism in place to deter violations.

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 the organization and participating in an audit or decision affecting the organization;
- 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) the organization 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

- 1.1. The certification body shall require the auditor candidates to disclose their current or last FSC qualification and the status of the auditor's qualification in the ASI register if applicable (see Clause 6.1.2.4).
- 1.2. The auditor candidate and the qualified auditor shall meet the requirements in Table 2 and Table 3 in accordance with the scope of their qualification (see 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 (6) years professional experience (e.g. forest management, consultancy, research) in a relevant discipline (e.g. ecology, forestry, sociology, economics, anthropology).
Auditor and FSC training:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Successful completion (with certificate) of an IRCA² registered "ISO management standard auditor course" or an ISO 19011 course on auditing techniques as described in <FSC-PRO-20-004 Auditor Training Programme>. 4. Successful completion (certificate) of an FM auditor training as specified in <FSC-PRO-20-004 Auditor Training Programme> . 5. Attendance as an auditor in training in at least four (4) third-party FM audits in a three (3) year period, whereas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) at least one (1) shall be a main or re-evaluation; b) at least one (1) shall be a surveillance evaluation c) 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; d) two (2) may be as an observer. <p>NOTE: This requirement refers to participation in the full audit. Participation in part of the audit does not count towards meeting this requirement.</p> 6. During all four (4) evaluations a supervising qualified auditor shall attend and an overall supervision report including a recommendation on

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

	professional performance written by the supervising auditor shall be available.
1.2 Continuous qualification requirements for auditors	
FSC training:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Successful completion of ongoing training every calendar year dependent on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> changes in the FSC system relevant to the respective scope due to new or revised requirements, or other relevant amendments such as interpretations; and/or results of the individual monitoring, the organization feedback and/or evaluation process.
Continuous professional experience:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> At least three (3) on-site audit days every calendar year per qualification scope and no later than by the end of March of the following calendar year. Auditors involved in reviewing the evaluation results and making certification decision may replace the above listed requirement in point 2 for continuous professional experience by the attendance of at least one (1) on-site audit as an observer every calendar year per qualification scope.
Auditor performance evaluation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Witness audit: one (1) witness audit every three (3) calendar 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 system. Auditors involved in reviewing the evaluation results and making the certification decision may replace the listed requirement in point 4 for the auditor performance evaluation by the attendance of at least one (1) on-site audit as an observer every calendar year per qualification scope.

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. The following professional experience is considered equivalent to experience in the forest product sector (list is not exhaustive): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> personnel of certification systems with ISEAL membership (e.g. internal or external auditor, reviewer or decision maker); or registered ISO management standard (ISO 9001, ISO 14001 or ISO 45001) auditor/lead auditor with CQI/IRCA, Exemplar Global, ICA and CCAA in China. Maximum one (1) year of full-time work experience may be replaced by four (4) additional supervised audits.
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 <FSC-PRO-20-004 Auditor Training Programme>. Successful completion (certificate) of a CoC auditor training as specified in <FSC-PRO-20-004 Auditor Training Programme>.

	<p>7. Attendance as an auditor in training in at least four (4) third-party CoC audits in a three (3) year period, whereas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) at least one (1) shall be a main or re-evaluation; b) at least one (1) shall be a surveillance evaluation; c) 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; d) two (2) may be as observer. <p>NOTE: This requirement refers to participation in the full audit. Participation in part of the audit does not count toward meeting this requirement.</p> <p>8. During all four (4) evaluations a supervising qualified auditor shall attend and an overall supervision report including a recommendation on professional performance written by the supervising auditor shall be available.</p>
2.2 Continuous qualification requirements for auditors	
FSC training:	<p>1. Successful completion of ongoing training every calendar year dependent on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) changes in the FSC system relevant to the respective scope due to new or revised requirements, or other relevant amendments such as interpretations; and/or b) results of the individual monitoring, the organization feedback and/or evaluation process.
Continuous professional experience:	<p>2. At least three (3) on-site audit days every calendar year per qualification scope and no later than by the end of March of the following calendar year.</p> <p>3. Auditors involved in reviewing the evaluation results and making the certification decision may replace the above listed requirement in point 2 for continuous professional experience by the attendance of at least one (1) on-site audit as an observer every calendar year per qualification scope.</p>
Auditor performance evaluation:	<p>4. Witness audit: one (1) witness audit every three (3) calendar years, with a supervision report including a recommendation written by the supervising auditor.</p> <p>NOTE: Witness audits are scope specific. Witness audits for other certification schemes are not applicable for the FSC system.</p> <p>5. Auditors involved in reviewing the evaluation results and making the certification decision may replace the listed requirement in point 4 for the auditor performance evaluation by the attendance of at least one (1) on-site audit as an observer every calendar year per qualification scope.</p>

Table 4 Personal attributes for forest management and chain of custody auditor candidates and auditors (normative)

Personal attributes for auditor candidates and auditors:

- a) ethical, i.e. fair, truthful, sincere, honest and discreet;
- b) open-minded, i.e. willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view;
- c) diplomatic, i.e. tactful in dealing with people;
- d) collaborative, i.e. effectively interacts with others;
- e) observant, i.e. actively aware of physical surroundings and activities;
- f) perceptive, i.e. instinctively aware of and able to understand situations;
- g) versatile, i.e. adjusts readily to different situations;
- h) tenacious, i.e. persistent and focused on achieving objectives;

- i) decisive, i.e. reaches timely conclusions based on logical reasoning and analysis;
- j) self-reliant, i.e. acts and functions independently;
- k) professional, i.e. exhibits a courteous, conscientious and generally business-like demeanour in the workplace;
- l) 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;
- m) culturally sensitive, i.e. able to understand behaviour rooted in cultural differences;
- n) organized, i.e. exhibits effective time management, prioritisation, planning, and efficiency.

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 organization under evaluation; or
 - c) fluent in the corporate language, if the organization 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.

NOTE: An audit team may include more than one person from this listing depending upon the competency needed to achieve the objective of the audit.

- 1.4 The competence of an audit team may be supplemented by one or more 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 organization.

For forest management audits

- 1.5 The audit team shall include at least one (1) team member who is a qualified forest management auditor.
- 1.6 The audit team shall include at least one (1) team member who is a resident of the country in which the audit takes place or a resident of a nearby country with similar forest conditions.
- 1.7 The forest management audit team shall have the competence to audit all aspects of the FSC Principles and Criteria, taking account of the scale, intensity and risk of the management unit to be audited (see Clause 1.7.1 – 1.7.4 for social, environmental, and economic competency requirements).
- 1.7.1. The audit team shall have the relevant social competence to evaluate the organization for the applicable criteria including but not limited to the following principles: Principle 3 (Indigenous

Peoples Rights); Principle 4 (Community Relations); Principle 9 (High Conservation Values) for HCV 5 and 6.

1.7.2. The audit team shall have the relevant social competence to evaluate the organization for the applicable social aspects including but not limited to the following: workers' rights such as health and safety aspects, application of employment legislation, and complaints and disputes related to social aspects.

1.7.3. The audit team shall have the relevant environmental competence to evaluate the organization for the applicable criteria including but not limited to the following principles: Principle 6 (Environmental Values and Impacts); Principle 9 (High Conservation Values).

NOTE: Expertise in the area of forest ecology for the forest ecosystems under evaluation (whether natural or planted) is likely to be of key importance. General knowledge of the management of rare or endangered species that are likely to be present in the management unit, or knowledge about key environmental impacts such as those on hydrology or soils may also be required.

1.7.4. The audit team shall have the relevant economic competence to evaluate the organization for the applicable criteria including but not limited to the following principles: Principle 5, 7, 8 and 10.

For controlled forest management audits

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

1.9 The audit team shall include at least one (1) team member who is a qualified forest management auditor.

For chain of custody audits

1.10 The audit team shall include at least one (1) team member who is a qualified chain of custody auditor.

1.11 The audit team shall have the competence to evaluate of the critical characteristics of the operational processes under evaluation including verifying financial information and FSC core labour requirements.

1.12 For a controlled wood audit at forest level, the audit team shall include:

- a) at least one (1) team member who is a resident of the country in which the audit takes place or a resident of a nearby country with similar forest conditions;
- b) at least one (1) team member who is a qualified forest management auditor.

Annex 4. Risk-based evaluation activities

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 risk-based evaluation activities, these activities apply for evaluating both forest management and chain of custody certification requirements in cases where FSC has concluded and communicated high integrity risk.'

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

Risk identification

1. For identification of the integrity risk, FSC considers 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. FSC Trace data analysis (aggregated data per region or supply chain);
 - vii. FSC certification database analysis;
 - viii. wood identification testing results;
 - ix. evidence from certification bodies;
 - x. inputs, including complaints from stakeholders.

Risk assessment

2. FSC assesses the integrity risk as:
 - a) likelihood of not identifying nonconformities during the evaluation,
 - b) scale and magnitude of the identified risk.

FSC defines the level of risk as: 'Low integrity risk' and 'High integrity risk (see Section C Terms and Definitions)

Communication of risk assessment results

3. In case of high integrity risk, FSC publishes the results of risk assessment on January 1st or July 1st.
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 scientific name;
- d) business activity of affected certificate holder.

1. Risk mitigation: application of risk-based evaluation activities by the certification body

- 1.1 The certification body shall identify the organizations affected by high integrity risk designations after notification by FSC.
- 1.2 The certification body shall start to apply risk-based evaluation activities to the next evaluation, unless communicated otherwise by FSC.
- 1.3 The certification body shall apply the following risk-based evaluation activities to the affected organization until FSC has confirmed that the risk is mitigated:

To both forest management and chain of custody certifications

- a) conduct at least one unannounced surveillance evaluation per certification cycle;

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](#).

To chain of custody certification

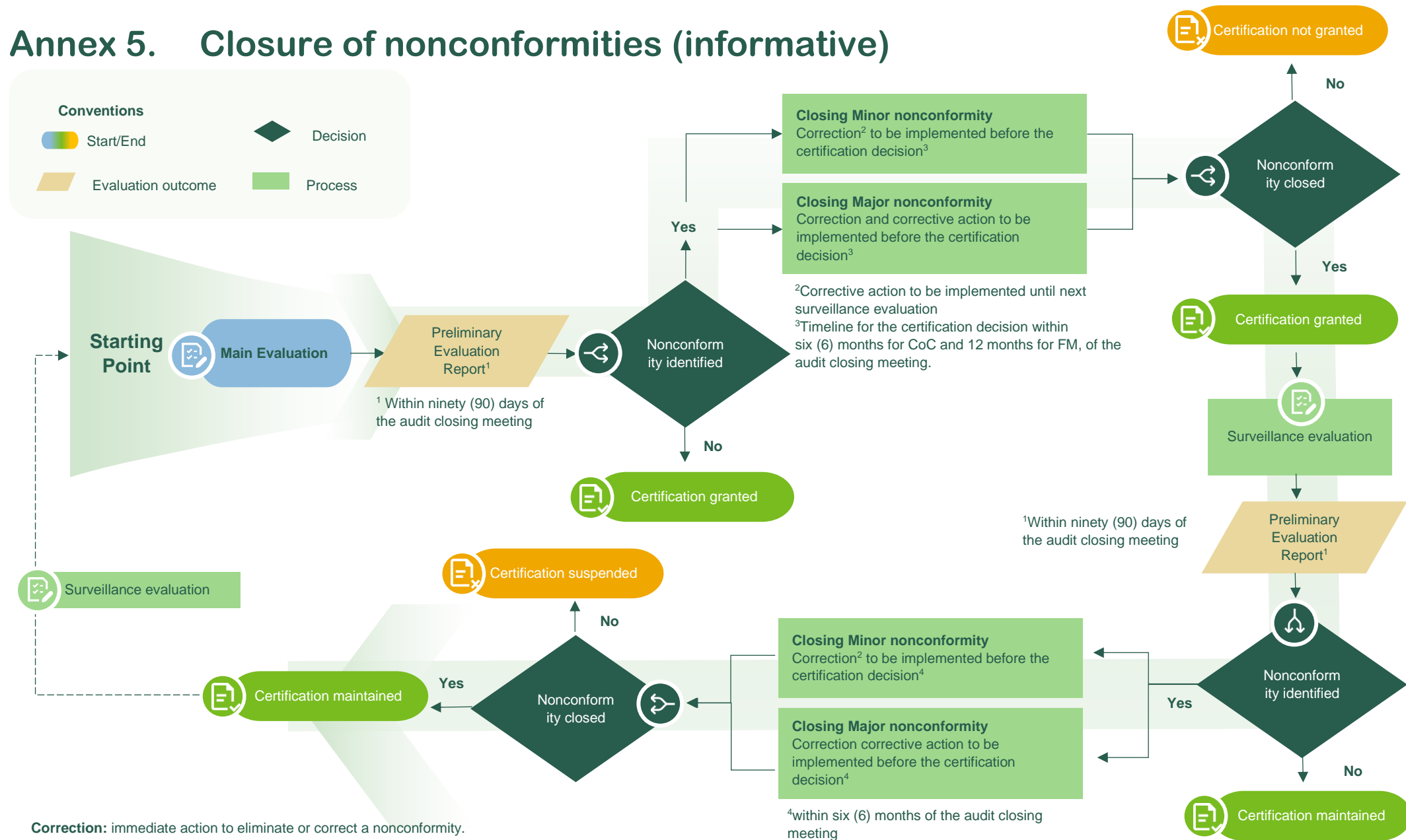
- c) not waive the chain of custody surveillance evaluation in case of zero sales.

- 1.4 The certification body shall apply the additional evaluation activities to mitigate certain types of risk on a case-by-case basis as required by FSC. Such measures may include but are not limited to:
 - a) confirmation of origin of harvested wood used in FSC-certified products;
 - b) check non-FSC invoices related to the scope of identified risk during the evaluation;
 - c) verify the mandatory use of FSC Trace by the affected organization and verification of annual volume summaries and transaction matches in FSC Trace;
 - d) wood sample collection for Wood ID tests;
 - e) 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 nonconformities (informative)



Annex 6. Procedure for transfer of FSC certification

Introduction

This procedure specifies the requirements for certification bodies when transferring an FSC certification from one certification body to another within the period of validity of that certification. The procedure builds on the mutual recognition of FSC certification between certification bodies.

Scope

The procedure is applicable to all certification bodies. This procedure covers the requirements for voluntary and non-voluntary certification transfers.

This procedure does not apply when changing the scope of the certification (e.g., adding or removing sites) or the operation model (single, multi-site and group).

1. Fundamental principles for a transfer of certification (applicable to both voluntary and a nonvoluntary transfer)

- 1.1. The issuing certification body shall not suspend, terminate or withdraw the organization's certification following the notification that the organization is transferring to the accepting certification body if the organization continues to satisfy the requirements of certification.
- 1.2. The accepting certification body shall maintain the expiry date of the certification set by the issuing certification body.
- 1.3. If the organization is requesting a change in scope during a transfer of certification, the accepting certification body shall evaluate this request in line with the Clause 7.11.2.
- 1.4. All pending corrective actions for minor nonconformities shall remain applicable to the organization after the transfer of certification, and the accepting certification body shall evaluate the implementation according to the defined timelines.
- 1.5. The accepting certification body shall evaluate the findings from any ASI compliance assessment according to the defined timeline.

NOTE: The certification body may contact ASI to identify the relevant finding from ASI compliance assessment.




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

NOTE: For transfer of certification, the timeline to resolve a complaint (open prior to transfer) as per Clause 7.13.7 starts from the date of transfer of certification.

2. Transfer process for voluntary transfer of certification

- 2.1 The voluntary transfer of certification is only allowed for once within the five (5) year period of validity.

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

Scenario	1 st certification cycle					2 nd certification cycle				
Years	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 certification body 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 apply.		Allowable limit is used		 Allowable limit is used. See Scenario 1

- 2.2 The voluntary transfer of certification by the certification body shall only be conducted if:
- the certification is valid (not suspended, terminated, expired or withdrawn);
 - identified nonconformities have been closed (see Clause 7.4.12);
 - issuing certification body and accepting certification body agree on the transfer date;
 - relevant documentation about the certification (history of nonconformities, false claim, open complaints etc.) is made available.

NOTE: The TLA (and thus the licence number) stays valid in case of a certification transfer and therefore is not required to be signed again. By migrating the FSC certification database entry the TLA and the licence number will be transferred automatically.

- 2.3 The accepting certification body shall propose a transfer date, with minimum thirty (30) days' notice, to the issuing certification body using the FSC certification database in accordance with Clause 4.2 below.

- 2.4 The accepting certification body and issuing certification body shall keep a record of the agreed date for transfer of FSC certification.

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

- 2.5 The issuing certification body shall respond to the transfer request within thirty (30) days of the transfer request in the FSC certification database.

- 2.6 The issuing certification body may accept or reject the certification transfer request.

NOTE 1: A reason for rejection could be, for example, when the contractual requirements are not fulfilled.

NOTE 2: 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.

- 2.7 The accepting certification body shall conduct the transfer evaluation after the agreement on the transfer date with the issuing certification body.

- 2.8 The accepting certification body shall conduct the transfer evaluation within 3 months before to 3 months after the agreed transfer date according to the requirements for a surveillance evaluation.

- 2.9 The transfer evaluation shall include a review of all pending corrective actions for minor nonconformities which were issued by the issuing certification body.

- 2.10 If the transfer evaluation 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 organization.

3. Transfer process for non-voluntary transfer of certification

- 3.1 For non-voluntary transfer of certification, the following exceptions are applied:

- a) a transfer audit is not needed;
- b) an agreement between issuing and accepting certification body is not needed;
- c) the limit of transfer once per certification cycle does not apply;
- d) a transfer with open major nonconformities and/or suspended certification status is permitted.

- 3.2 The accepting certification body shall request the transfer of certification using the FSC certification database in accordance with the Clause 4.2 below.

- 3.3 The accepting certification body shall review the status of suspension and open nonconformities and verify the implementation of correction and relevant corrective actions according to the defined timeline.

4. Migrating the FSC certification database records (applicable to both voluntary and a nonvoluntary transfer)

- 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 accepting 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 organization. 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;
- c) the certification status history with a status of 'Transferred' and both old and new codes will be included in the. The 'date from' field will be the date of transfer, the 'date to' field will be expiry.

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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