



Procedure

# AUDITOR TRAINING PROGRAMME

FSC-PRO-20-004 V2-0



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V 1-0	First version of the procedure approved by FSC Board of Director.	10 March 2016
V 1-1	An updated version of the procedure approved by FSC Director General. It is an identical version with an extension of the transition period by three months to 30 June 2017 due to a delay with the publication of the transition exam.	10 August 2016
V 1-2	An updated version of the procedure approved by FSC Policy Director. The transition date was revised due to interdependences with FSC-STD-20-001 V4-0 regarding training requirements.	14 September 2016
V2-0	Updated version to ensure the relevance of the procedure. Criteria for exceptions to allow online training is added and clarity provided on FM and CoC training content.	01 April 2025

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

## INTRODUCTION

This procedure specifies requirements for establishing and implementing an Auditor Training Programme and defining the content of the trainings. This procedure aims to equip an auditor auditing a management unit or a site against FSC certification requirements with the required knowledge and skills to achieve the audit objective. The objectives of this procedure are to:

- 1) ensure a professional implementation of the Auditor Training Programme; and
- 2) define the general content and duration of courses for an initial training on FSC (one component of the Auditor Training Programme).

This procedure is divided into two parts where Part 1 sets the implementation requirements for initial training of FSC auditor candidates and for on-going training of FSC auditors. Part 2 is only about initial training.

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## A. SCOPE

This procedure is for use by all entities implementing the Auditor Training Programme. It specifies FSC requirements for an initial training as part of the qualification requirements for auditor candidates, as well as for ongoing training as part of continuous qualification requirements for auditors already qualified for FSC in accordance with <FSC-STD-20-001 General Requirements for Certification Bodies>.

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, information/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:

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<b>FSC-STD-20-001</b>	General requirements for certification bodies
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## C. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions included in <FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms>, and the following apply:

**FSC auditors:** Auditors qualified for auditing a management unit or a site against FSC certification requirements.

**Auditor Training Programme:** A framework that encompasses implementation requirements (Part 1 of this procedure) and content requirements (Part 2) for 'FSC training'.

**Initial training:** Comprehensive training on the FSC system to qualify as an FSC auditor.

**Lecture:** The delivery of information or of a theory to a group of people.

**Ongoing training:** Training each qualified auditor undergoes on an annual basis. This training is about changes in the FSC normative framework or according to the needs of an individual auditor.

**Resource person:** An expert competent in a topic who complements a trainer or trainers in implementing the Auditor Training Programme. The topic may be a specific subject related to FSC certification requirements (e.g. High Conservation Value - HCV), more generic (e.g. history of FSC), or cover regional or cultural aspects relevant to auditing against FSC certification requirements. Resource persons are not necessarily qualified as trainers.

**Trainee:** Any person participating in a training course.

**Training:** Interactive (sequence of) session(s) delivered by at least one trainer. While lecture(s) may be part of training, it is only one of a set of varied methods (e.g. discussion rounds, role plays, case studies, or individual and group work) used for the active engagement of trainees for the development or improvement of their competence(s).

**Trainer:** An experienced auditor competent in auditing against FSC certification requirements with an additional competence in delivering the core content of the Auditor Training Programme.

**Training provider:** An entity that delivers part or all the Auditor Training Programme.

**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
- FM** Forest Management
- FSC** Forest Stewardship Council
- ISO** International Organization for Standardization
- ToT** Training of Trainers

# PART 1 IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AUDITOR TRAINING PROGRAMME

## 1. Approval and registration

- 1.1. The Auditor Training Programme may be implemented by an FSC-accredited certification body, or an external training service provider, or both. Throughout this document these two entities are referred to as 'training providers'.
- 1.2. Training provider shall get its Auditor Training Programme approved by Assurance Services International (ASI).

NOTE: ASI will assess the Auditor Training Programme on an annual basis. For an FSC-accredited certification body this may be part of annual office assessment.

- 1.3. Training providers shall be registered with ASI. Only a training provider approved and registered with ASI is eligible for providing training to FSC auditor candidates and FSC auditors.
- 1.4. Certain online courses delivered by FSC are mandatory as part of initial or ongoing training, when specified by FSC. The certificate(s) for this/these course(s) are valid proof of the respective part of the qualification within initial or ongoing training.

## 2. Management and administrative requirements

### 2.1. Procedures

- 2.1.1. The training provider shall develop written procedures for the implementation of the Auditor Training Programme. Procedures shall be in place for:
  - a) the design and development of the Auditor Training Programme according to the requirements outlined in this procedure;
  - b) the collection of regular feedback from trainees and their trainers about the Auditor Training Programme and its implementation;
  - c) the integration of the feedback as per Clause 2.1.1b) and results of other evaluations into the revision of the course provided by the training provider, on at least an annual basis;
  - d) the integration of new requirements, interpretations or changes made by FSC to the normative framework into the content of the training provider's training courses and training materials;
  - e) the control of the Auditor Training Programme publicity, advertising, and the use of the FSC trademarks, if applicable;
  - f) the storage and management of records related to the fulfilment of the requirements for training as per Section 2.2;
  - g) the selection, monitoring, and evaluation of trainers;
  - h) the evaluation and certification of trainees;
  - i) the issuing and withdrawal of training certificates.

### 2.2. Records

- 2.2.1. The training provider shall maintain records related to the implementation of FSC requirements for at least ten (10) years, if not specified differently.
- 2.2.2. Records shall be accurate, complete, legible, and readily accessible for evaluation by ASI.
- 2.2.3. The records shall include:



- a) documentation showing the title, venue, and dates of each course and responsible trainer(s) within the Auditor Training Programme;
- b) a list of all trainers specifying;
  - i. their qualification;
  - ii. the results of monitoring and evaluating their performance as trainers;
- c) a list of all trainees specifying;
  - i. the course(s) attended;
  - ii. certificates granted, and the dates and places where the courses took place for which certificates were awarded;
- d) documentation demonstrating the qualification status of all trainees (i.e. results of monitoring and evaluation including pass/fail decisions, examination sheets filled in by trainees), which shall be available to ASI during relevant assessments;
- e) the course evaluation sheets filled in by the trainees for the Auditor Training Programme.

### 2.3. Trainers and training team

2.3.1. For the delivery of training on the FSC system, the training provider shall appoint the trainer(s) and – where necessary – select resource person(s).

2.3.2. The trainer(s) may be complemented by (a) resource person(s).

NOTE: A resource person(s) does not need to be a trainer but is required to be competent on its topic.

2.3.3. In appointing a trainer, the training provider shall ensure that this person:

- a) is qualified as auditor in accordance with Annex 2 of <FSC-STD-20-001 General Requirements for Certification Bodies> – depending on the content trained;
- b) has gained at least three (3) years of demonstrated professional experience as an auditor in the relevant FSC certification scope;
- c) has training competence proven by a tertiary degree in education or previous relevant training experience or by attendance (certificate with content description) of a 'Training of Trainers' (ToT) course, according to the content requirements of this procedure (see Part 2);
- d) has been witnessed by the training provider in delivering relevant content (or parts of content) before being appointed as trainer.

2.3.4. For quality assurance regarding the performance of their trainer(s) the training provider shall:

- a) monitor and evaluate their trainers through a review of the written feedback given by trainees (see Clause 2.1.1b) and, if necessary (e.g. due to repeated negative feedback by trainees), through witnessing a course session;
- b) ensure that their trainer(s) stay(s) updated about relevant changes and interpretations in the FSC normative framework;
- c) provide them with further training opportunities if necessary.

2.3.5. In cases where a trainer cannot cover content or cultural aspects specific to a region or country in which a group of trainees needs to be trained, the trainer shall be complemented by a resource person with the required competence.

2.3.6. In cases where the training cannot be held in one common language spoken by trainer(s) and trainees on a professional working level, the training provider shall provide an interpreter proficient in the relevant technical vocabulary and concepts for translation services. This interpreter may be a bilingual employee/contractor.

## **2.4. Certificates**

- 2.4.1. A certificate of successful completion shall be provided to each trainee who has passed a final written exam and obtained a positive training performance evaluation (see 3.6) for the Auditor Training Programme.
- 2.4.2. The certificate shall:
  - a) state that the respective training course is part of the Auditor Training Programme and approved by ASI;
  - b) clearly show the name of the training provider, as registered with ASI;
  - c) identify the content of the training with a title;
  - d) include the trainee's full name;
  - e) state that the trainee named has successfully completed the training;
  - f) state the date when the training was completed.
- 2.4.3. Certificates of 'attendance' may be issued to trainees who attend a full course, and who have not passed the written examination. Such certificates are not a valid proof of auditor qualification.

## **2.5. Confidentiality**

- 2.5.1. The training provider shall have adequate arrangements to safeguard the confidentiality of all information provided by trainees.
- 2.5.2. The training provider shall not disclose information about a trainee to a third party without the written consent of the trainee, or unless specified differently (see Clause 2.2.3d).

NOTE 1: Certificates are excluded from this requirement.

NOTE 2: Communicating relevant information about trainee performance during (a) training course(s) with their human resource manager is not subject to this requirement of confidentiality.

- 2.5.3. The training provider shall have adequate arrangements that confidential issues revealed in the training are not disclosed to a third party.

## **2.6. Changes to the Auditor Training Programme**

- 2.6.1. The training provider shall ensure that the training stays up to date. To this end, the training provider shall incorporate all relevant changes made to the FSC system in particular, including all relevant revisions, interpretation(s) of FSC's normative framework, and newly developed normative requirements.
- 2.6.2. Following a decision on, and publication of, changes in the FSC normative framework, the training provider shall implement all necessary adaptations in a timely manner. Depending on the extent of changes, these adaptations shall be carried out as soon as possible, but before the effective date of the changes in the FSC normative framework.
- 2.6.3. The changes to training require verification by ASI at the latest through the next upcoming annual office assessment of the training provider. This may be the annual assessment of the following year, if there is not adequate time for a three-month phase for the implementation of major changes.
- 2.6.4. The training provider shall ensure that each trainer is able to carry out any necessary adjustments to their training following the incorporation of changes.
- 2.6.5. The training provider shall notify ASI of any change of address or any significant changes in organizational structure or provision of services.

### **3. Requirements for the delivery of training**

#### **3.1. Learning objective(s)**

- 3.1.1. The training provider shall define (a) learning objective(s) of the training delivered that is adapted to the level of competence of the trainees.
- 3.1.2. Achievement of the learning objective(s) shall be verified by the training provider (see section 3.6.).

#### **3.2. Training content**

- 3.2.1. The title and the arrangement/sequence of the required content is flexible, but the overall content frame and the total duration of the Auditor Training Programme, shall fulfill the requirement as defined in Part 2 of this procedure. Exceptions to this need to be justified in writing.
- 3.2.2. Before the start of the course, trainees should be provided with an overall training schedule including title, outline of content, learning objective(s), and a timetable.
- 3.2.3. A detailed description shall be available for each course, which includes the following elements:
  - a) title and overall duration;
  - b) description and focus;
  - c) learning objective(s);
  - d) list of topics to be addressed;
  - e) schedule and teaching methods/techniques to be employed;
  - f) list of resources: hand-outs if relevant, supporting documents/normative documents and background readings list as needed, and links to outside resources if the training provider deems that this is necessary.

#### **3.3. Training methods**

- 3.3.1. Training methods shall seek to involve and engage trainees and encourage them to exchange knowledge and experiences throughout the course.
- 3.3.2. Training techniques shall be appropriate to the content delivered and to the learning objectives to be achieved.
- 3.3.3. The training courses shall have a practical orientation by providing trainees with realistic examples, case studies, simulations, or field visits.
- 3.3.4. Each trainee shall be provided with adequate training materials. These might include reading material, relevant FSC normative document(s), instructions for activities, or handouts, as relevant.
- 3.3.5. Lecture(s) may be presented online but the training shall have in-person session(s) with sufficient practical exercises for the development of competences to ensure that the learning objective(s) are achieved.
- 3.3.6. In the following exceptional cases, the training may be conducted fully online, in such cases the training provider shall take measure to ensure the effectiveness of an online training:
  - a) travel restrictions are in place for any of the registered trainees or the trainer(s) due to the circumstances beyond the control of the registered trainees or the trainer(s) e.g. pandemic, armed conflict etc.;
  - b) the content is not very comprehensive and complex e.g. information about interpretations.

### Informative guidance on conducting training online

Following are some examples to ensure the effectiveness of an online training.

- A. Avoid participants distraction:** ask participant to
  - i. keep camera always on;
  - ii. keep microphone switched-off unless participant wants to intervene;
- B. Risks of exam falsification:** ask participant to
  - i. keep camera always on;
  - ii. show the entire room before exam;
- C. Exercises and group work:**
  - i. set up break-out rooms;
  - ii. facilitators (trainers/resources person) in each room to kick-start and facilitate discussions;
  - iii. group participants into similar time zones;
  - iv. small working groups;
  - v. interactive exercises with sufficient time to work together;
- D. Time zones:**
  - i. schedule training time to avoid very early/late sessions;
  - ii. ensure enough breaks and a maximum number of sessions each day;
- E. Increase participants focus:**
  - i. Maintain engagement through interaction;
  - ii. Involve participants into discussion;
  - iii. Include the score for level of engagement in the final assessment;
- F. Connection issues can make course delivery deficient:** ask participants to
  - i. have sufficient bandwidth and uninterrupted internet connection;
  - ii. test to the internet connection beforehand.

### 3.4. Class size and attendance

- 3.4.1. The number of trainees in a group should not exceed twenty (20). Exceptions are possible for lectures with large groups if these are followed by smaller group activities for developing competence.
- 3.4.2. Trainees shall be required to be present for the full duration of the training. Failure to do so shall be reflected in the trainee's continuous and final evaluations.

### 3.5. Number of trainers

- 3.5.1. Throughout the training, at least one trainer should take the lead for the instruction and management of the group of trainees.
- 3.5.2. Groups that are larger than ten (10) should be accompanied by two (2) trainers.

### 3.6. Evaluation of trainees

- 3.6.1. Training provider shall evaluate each trainee during initial training as well as during ongoing training.
- 3.6.2. Trainees shall take a final written exam at the end of the initial and ongoing training. The minimum score to pass the exam is 70%.
- 3.6.3. For ongoing training, a written exam may not be required if the training is about minor changes in the FSC normative framework (e.g. interpretations to normative documents).

- 3.6.4. The training provider may develop its own exam(s). Complexity and duration shall be aligned to the duration and relevance of the overall training.
- 3.6.5. The exam(s) may be open book exams, allowing trainees to consult FSC's normative documents, their notes, and hand-outs provided during the training.

### **3.7. Grading and pass/fail decisions**

- 3.7.1. The overall grading shall be based on evaluating the trainee according to their achievement of the learning objective(s), and their ability to apply audit principles and practices against the requirements of the relevant FSC normative requirements by using the following two independent elements, both of which shall be satisfied if the trainee is to successfully complete the training:
  - a) monitoring by the trainer(s) of each trainee's performance throughout the whole training;
  - b) an evaluation through a written exam that tests the trainees' learning progress against the defined learning objective(s) as specified under 3.6.2.

### **3.8. Re-examination**

- 3.8.1. A trainee who fails the written exam, but whose performance throughout the training is classified as 'passed', shall be allowed one re-examination within twelve (12) months. A different examination paper shall be used for the re-examination.
- 3.8.2. A trainee whose performance throughout the training is classified as 'failed' shall take the complete Auditor Training Programme again before being eligible to receive a certificate of successful completion.
- 3.8.3. A trainee who fails the re-examination must take the complete Auditor Training Programme again before being eligible for another examination.

## PART 2: CONTENT AND DURATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AUDITOR TRAINING PROGRAMME

### 4. Content and duration

- 4.1. The duration requirement refers to in-person training. Two hours of in-person training are seen as equivalent to one hour of online training.
- 4.2. Duration and content requirements for ongoing training are not addressed in this section. These are subject to changes in the FSC normative framework and should also be defined according to the needs of an already-qualified FSC auditor.
- 4.3. Training providers shall include any additional training material into the training content that FSC has developed and provided to the training provider.

### 5. Generic FSC training

- 5.1. All auditor candidates shall complete training about generic aspects of the FSC system.
- 5.2. The content of generic training shall include:
  - a) The history and objectives of FSC;
  - b) structures and relationships within the FSC system relating to its main stakeholders (members, ASI, FSC, regional and national offices, certificate holders, license holders, and certification bodies);
  - c) FSC and other forestry certification schemes (Sustainable Forestry Initiative, Canadian Standards Association, Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification etc.);
  - d) roles and responsibilities in certification according to FSC's requirements;
  - e) potential effects and impacts of certification;
  - f) overview of FSC's normative framework and its structure;
  - g) the FSC dispute resolution system management system;
  - h) FSC and timber legality legislation;
  - i) conflict of interest definitions and requirements.
- 5.3. Generic FSC training may be delivered as wholly online training, with a duration of two (2) hours. If delivered as wholly in-person training, it shall last at least four (4) hours.

### 6. The FSC trademark system and its requirements

- 6.1. All auditor candidates involved in approval of trademark use shall complete training about the FSC trademark system.
- 6.2. The content of the trademark training shall include:
  - a) roles and responsibilities in the licensing, use, and control of FSC trademarks;
  - b) general requirements for FSC trademark use;
  - c) requirements for use of the FSC label on products;
  - d) promotional use of FSC trademarks;
  - e) graphic requirements for trademark use;
  - f) requirements for specific situations or certification types.

- 6.3. Training on trademarks may be delivered as wholly online training with a duration of one (1) hour. If delivered as wholly in-person training, it shall last at least two (2) hours.

## **7. FSC auditing in relation to ISO 19011**

- 7.1. All auditor candidates who are not in possession of a formal IRCA<sup>1</sup> registered “ISO management standard auditor course” certificate shall complete training on ISO 19011.
- 7.2. The content of an ISO 19011 course shall include:
- a) principles of auditing;
  - b) managing an audit programme;
  - c) audit programme objectives and extent;
  - d) audit programme implementation;
  - e) audit programme records;
  - f) audit programme monitoring and reviewing;
  - g) audit activities: initiating the audit; conducting document review; preparing for the audit activities; conducting audit activities; preparing, approving and distributing the audit report; completing the audit; and conducting audit follow-up;
  - h) practical audit examples from the FSC context.
- 7.3. If delivered as wholly in-person training, a course on ISO 19011 shall last at least eighteen (18) hours.

## **8. ‘Training of Trainers’ Course**

- 8.1. The content of a ToT course shall include:
- a) principles of adult learning and education (i.e. categories of competence: knowledge, skills and attitude; adult learning circle);
  - b) customization of course design;
  - c) basics of training and teaching (i.e. facilitation of training sessions, guidance of learning processes);
  - d) development and/or selection of customized course material;
  - e) interactive training methods.
- 8.2. If delivered as wholly in-person training, this course shall last at least twelve (12) hours.

## **9. Forest Management**

- 9.1. All auditor candidates intending to qualify as an auditor against FSC’s Forest Management (FM) scheme shall complete training on forest management and controlled forest management (CFM) .
- 9.2. The content shall include:
- a) the FSC Principles and Criteria;
  - b) Forest Stewardship Standards and the role of the international generic indicators (IGIs);

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<sup>1</sup> IRCA - the International Register of Certificated Auditors ([www.irca.org](http://www.irca.org)) – is an auditor registration scheme.

- c) overview of general requirements for FM application (quality management system, scope, certification database information etc.);
- d) evaluation methods;
- e) the determination of the audit time;
- f) social requirements within certification;
- g) legal and customary rights of Indigenous peoples, as addressed in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, national laws, and Indigenous laws;
- h) evaluation of high conservation values;
- i) FSC's stakeholder consultation process and its application;
- j) FM certification report writing.
- k) the FM certification process and certification decision making;
- l) Non-timber forest products;
- m) ecosystem services;
- n) group certification for forest management;
- o) certification of small and low-intensity managed forest and community forest;
- p) CFM evaluation and certification;
- q) FSC's pesticides policy and its implementation;

9.3. If delivered as wholly in-person training, this course shall last at least forty (40) hours.

## 10. Chain of Custody

10.1. All auditor candidates intending to qualify as auditor against FSC's Chain of Custody (CoC) scheme shall complete training on CoC.

10.2. The content shall include:

- a) overview of general requirements for CoC application (CoC management system, scope, concept of product groups, material sourcing/handling/accounting, systems for controlling FSC claims, certification database information etc.);
- b) evaluation methods;
- c) the determination of the audit requirements;
- d) CoC certification report writing.
- e) certification process and decision making;
- f) FSC core labour requirements;
- g) sourcing of reclaimed material;
- h) controlled wood in the context of CoC;

NOTE: a certificate of successful completion of the online training on FSC controlled wood (see <https://etraining.fsc.org>) may be considered as covering the CW part of the initial auditor training on CoC.

- i) group and multi-site certification;
- j) project certification;

10.3. If delivered as wholly in-person training, this course shall last at least eighteen (32) hours.





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