



Standard

# SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION BODIES - FOREST MANAGEMENT

FSC-STD-20-007 V4-1 EN



<b>Title:</b>	Specific Requirements for Certification Bodies - Forest Management
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#### Version control

<b>Publication date:</b>	1 April 2025	
<b>Version</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
V1-0	First version of the standard approved by the FSC Board of Directors.	05/03/2004
V2-0	Revision approved by the FSC Board of Directors.	26/11/2004
V2-1	Minor revision approved by the FSC Board of Directors.	30/11/2004
V2-2	Minor revision including additional requirements for evaluation against the FSC Principles and Criteria based on the FSC Modular Approach Program.	01/01/2005
V3-0	Major revision. This version clarifies the principles to be followed by certification bodies when sampling management units and sites for evaluation.	01/01/2010
V4-0	Major revision introducing new requirements on audit methods, reporting, Continuous Improvement Procedure Risk-Based Approaches concept, and alignment with the revised FSC-STD-30-005 V2-0.	01/02/2023
V4-1	Minor revision, aligning the standard structure with the revised FSC-STD-20-001, moving the peer review section and reporting section from FSC-STD-20-001, incorporating FSC-STD-20-012, the CB requirements of FSC-PRO-30-006 and FSC-PRO-30-011 as new	

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Annexes and amendments to Annexes 2, 3, and 6 to align with  
ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

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## INTRODUCTION

FSC has revised its specific requirements for the forest management scheme.

This revised version aims for increased consistency of requirements in the FSC system with ISO requirements and to harmonize structures within the different FSC schemes. Those changes are a result of EU-legislation (EC) No 765/2008 defining requirements for accreditation and market surveillance relating to the marketing of products.

## A. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this standard is to provide specific requirements for certification bodies for FSC's forest management scheme.

All requirements of <FSC-STD-20-001 *General requirements for certification bodies*> are fully applicable for all certification bodies granting FSC certification. The following requirements are therefore additional requirements and do not replace requirements formulated in FSC-STD-20-001.

### **Box 1 - Informative guidance on additional requirements in this standard and the relation to the functional approach of ISO.**

The following overview lists how additional requirements for the forest management scheme are embedded in the functional approach of ISO/IEC 17065:2012.

#### Part II Application

- General requirements
- Application of NFSS Risk Assessments in forest management evaluations

Within the functional approach ISO/IEC 17065:2012 includes requirements for application review. In FSC those are listed in FSC-STD-20-001, Section 7.3. with no further specific requirements for forest management.

#### Part III Evaluations

- Determination of the audit method
- Determination of preparation for pre-evaluation
- Determination of the audit requirements
- Requirements for sampling of management units (MUs) and selection of sites for evaluation
- Pre-evaluation
- Main evaluation
- Surveillance evaluation
- Re-evaluation
- Conflicts between laws and regulations
- Nonconformities and corrective actions

#### Part IV Review

- Peer Review

#### Part V Decision

- General requirements

Within the functional approach ISO/IEC 17065:2012 includes requirements for certification documentation. In FSC those are listed in FSC-STD-20-001, Section 7.7. with no further specific requirements for forest management.

Within the functional approach ISO/IEC 17065:2012 includes requirements for directory of certified products. In FSC those are listed in FSC-STD-20-001, Section 7.8. with no further specific requirements for forest management.

## B. SCOPE

This standard applies to certification bodies granting forest management certification<sup>1</sup> or controlled forest management certification, following assessment of conformity with the applicable FSC normative requirements.

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 boxes and examples are not considered normative.

## C. REFERENCES

The FSC normative requirements indispensable for the use of this standard are provided in the applicable Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS<sup>2</sup>). The requirements relevant for the use of this standard are provided in the reference documents listed below. For references without a version number, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

<b>FSC-POL-20-003</b>	<i>The Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification</i>
<b>FSC-POL-30-001</b>	<i>FSC Pesticides Policy</i>
<b>FSC-STD-01-001</b>	<i>FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship</i>
<b>FSC-STD-01-003</b>	<i>SLIMF and Community Forest Eligibility Criteria</i>
<b>FSC-STD-20-001</b>	<i>General requirements for certification bodies</i>
<b>FSC-STD-20-006</b>	<i>Stakeholder consultation for forest evaluations</i>
<b>FSC-STD-30-005</b>	<i>Forest Management Groups</i>
<b>FSC-STD-30-010</b>	<i>Controlled Forest Management</i>
<b>FSC-STD-60-004</b>	<i>International Generic Indicators</i>
<b>FSC-PRO-30-006</b>	<i>Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market Tools</i>
<b>FSC-PRO-30-011</b>	<i>Continuous Improvement Procedure</i>
<b>FSC-PRO-60-010</b>	<i>Development of a National Forest Stewardship Standard Risk Assessment</i>

### **FSC normative documents replaced by this version of the standard:**

<b>FSC-STD-20-012</b>	<i>Controlled Forest Management Evaluations</i>
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<sup>1</sup> This includes requirements for Ecosystem Services (Annex 8) and for Continuous Improvement (Annex 9) if those requirements apply.

<sup>2</sup> Including National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS), Regional Forest Stewardship Standards (RFSS) and Interim National Standards (INS).

## D. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this standard, the terms and definitions given in <FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms>, <FSC-STD-20-001 General Requirements for Certification Bodies>, and the following apply:

**Active management unit:** A management unit (MU) where site-disturbing activities have taken place since the last evaluation, or in the previous twelve months if there was no previous evaluation.

NOTE 1: The concept of active and inactive MUs is applicable for forest management group certification. The information about active/inactive MUs is provided by The Organization to the certification body.

NOTE 2: If information about active/inactive MUs is not provided by The Organization to the certification body, all MUs are by default treated as 'active'.

(Source: Adapted from FSC-STD-30-005 V2-0)

### Box 2. Examples of site-disturbing and non-site-disturbing activities

#### Examples of site-disturbing activities:

Commercial harvesting or collection of forest products; soil preparation; planting or seeding; seedling stand management; fertilization; thinning; ditching; post-harvest remediation activities; infrastructure development (e.g. forestry road construction); road decommission (closure); fuel management (e.g. manual clearing); quarrying; chemical pesticides use; prescribed burning; pruning; harvest layout activities (e.g. tree marking, riparian buffer demarcation, identification of environmentally sensitive areas and cultural values), development of recreational infrastructure and high use recreational trails.

#### Examples of non-site-disturbing activities:

Forest protection monitoring activities (e.g. fire patrols, surveillance for unauthorized activities); permanent sample plots establishment and/or monitoring; fire break maintenance; road side mowing; road grading (shaping); boundary line demarcation and maintenance; forest resource surveys/inventory; non-chemical invasive species management; developing/updating forest management plan; passive operational planning of a forest management activity (e.g. GIS activities, boundary demarcation, stand level reconnaissance).

**Community forest (CF):** A management unit may qualify as 'community forest' when the following tenure AND management criteria are met:

**Tenure:** The legal and/or customary right to manage a management unit (e.g., title, long-term lease, concession) is held at communal level, either located in a communal forest and/or on individually assigned plots.

**Management:** The community actively manages the management unit (e.g., under a communal forest management plan) OR the community authorizes management of the forest by others (e.g., resource manager, forestry contractors, forest products company).

If the community authorizes management of the forest by others, the following shall be met:

- a) The community has legal responsibility for the forest operations, AND
- b) has control over the forest management decisions and monitors the forest operations.

(Source: FSC-STD-01-003 V2-0 EN ).

**Days:** Any reference to “days” means calendar days unless otherwise specified.

**Local expert:** A person with proven knowledge and practical experiences of the specific local context, culture, language and living conditions of Indigenous or Traditional Peoples or smallholders who supports the audit team but does not act as auditor. This person participates in on-site and hybrid audits and their role is to collect information and evidence on behalf of the auditor and to contribute to the use of culturally adapted audit techniques and appropriate communication between, and the learning process of, the audit team and the auditee. The local expert may inform and advise The Organization about the content required to conform with the applicable FSC standard but is not allowed to provide consultancy and directly support activities to conform with the FSC standard requirements.

**NFSS Risk Assessment:** Assessments at national or sub-national level of the risks of nonconformity with a criterion or indicator of a National Forest Stewardship Standard (NFSS). See definition of ‘risk’.

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

**Remote audit method:** Audit method where the auditor employs Information Communication Technology (ICT) to remotely audit activities (e.g., harvesting, site-disturbing activities, verification of The Organization’s sites, processes, or systems) that would normally be audited on-site.

Examples of the use of ICT during audits may include:

- assessment of The Organization’s sites and facilities, as well as stakeholder interviews by means of telephone calls and/or teleconference, including audio, video, and data sharing;
- assessment of documents and records by means of remote access either synchronously (in real time during an audit) or asynchronously (before or after the audit); and
- verification of The Organization’s MUs through satellite imagery, aerial photograph, or videos (e.g., through drones, airplanes).

**Risk:** The probability of an unacceptable negative impact arising from any activity in the management unit combined with its seriousness in terms of consequences. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

NOTE: In the context of NFSS Risk Assessments, the term “risk” refers to a risk of nonconformity with a criterion or indicator of a National Forest Stewardship Standard, defined as a combination of the likelihood of nonconformity with the potential negative impact of nonconformity with this criterion or indicator.

**Low risk:** A conclusion, following a risk assessment, that there is a low probability of nonconformity with a specific criterion or indicator of a National Forest Stewardship Standard. (Source: Adapted from FSC-PRO-60-002a V1-0.)

**Scope of forest management certification:** The defined area and sites of a management unit in accordance with the FSC Principles and Criteria, as well as processes or activities that are included in an evaluation, together with the certification standard(s) against which these have been audited to ensure that process outputs from those areas and sites meet all applicable requirements. Through a FSC 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. In case of combined FM/CoC Certification The Organization is additionally allowed to sell the listed products with the FSC Claim.

**Scope of controlled forest management certification:** The defined area and sites of a management unit in accordance with FSC’s controlled forest management requirements, as well



as processes or activities that are included in an evaluation, together with the certification standard(s) against which these have been audited to ensure that process outputs from those areas and sites meet all applicable requirements.

Through an FSC 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.

**Scope of Ecosystem Services verification:** The defined area and sites of a management unit in accordance with FSC's Ecosystem Services Procedure requirements, as well as processes or activities that are included in an evaluation, together with the certification standard(s) against which these have been audited to ensure that process outputs from those areas and sites meet all applicable requirements.

Through an FSC Forest Management Certification with ecosystem services 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.

**SLIMF (Small or low intensity managed forest):** A forest management unit which meets specific FSC requirements related to size and/or intensity. (Source: FSC-STD-01-003 V 2)

**Specified risk:** A conclusion, following a risk assessment, that there is a specified risk of nonconformity with a defined criterion or indicator of a National Forest Stewardship Standard. The nature and extent of this risk is specified for the purpose of supporting National Forest Stewardship Standard implementation by Organizations and assurance planning by certification bodies. (Source: Adapted from FSC-PRO-60-002a V1-0)

**Undesignated risk:** A criterion or indicator that is not designated as low risk or specified risk in the NFSS Risk Assessment or has been changed to this classification by the certification body at The Organization level. (Source: Adapted from FSC-PRO-60-010 V1-0)

### **Verbal forms for the expression of provisions:**

[Adapted from *ISO/IEC Directives Part 2: Rules for the structure and drafting of International Standards*]

- “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.

## E. ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ASI</b>	Assurance Services International
<b>CF</b>	Community Forest
<b>CoC</b>	Chain of Custody
<b>FPIC</b>	Free Prior and Informed Consent
<b>ES</b>	Ecosystem Services
<b>ESR</b>	Ecosystem Services Report
<b>FM</b>	Forest Management
<b>FSC</b>	Forest Stewardship Council
<b>FSS</b>	Forest Stewardship Standard
<b>HCVs</b>	High Conservation Values
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communication Technology
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>MU</b>	Management Unit
<b>NFSS</b>	National Forest Stewardship Standard
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NTFPs</b>	Non-timber forest products
<b>RMU</b>	Resource Management Unit
<b>SLIMF</b>	Small or low intensity managed forest

# PART I GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

## 1. Basic Principles

- 1.1 To provide an assurance that there is no major failure in the conformity with the applicable FSC normative requirements in any management unit (MU) within the scope of certification, the certification body shall:
  - a. complete an analysis of the area included in the scope of certification in terms of discrete MUs;
  - b. complete an analysis of the management system in place and confirm that it is capable of ensuring that all the applicable FSC normative requirements are implemented within every MU in the scope of certification;
  - a. carry out sampling of sites, assess documents and records, conduct interviews with workers, consult stakeholders and make direct factual observations sufficient to verify that there are no major nonconformities with the performance thresholds and indicators specified in the applicable FSC normative requirements within any MU in the scope of certification.
- 1.2 The certification body shall evaluate The Organization for forest management certification against an approved Forest Stewardship Standard of the country or region where the MU is located.
- 1.3 In the case of forest management groups, the certification body shall, in addition to the requirements specified in this standard, evaluate The Organization against the group requirements according to FSC-STD-30-005 *Forest Management Groups*.
- 1.4 The certification body shall evaluate the applicable requirements of FSC-PRO-30-006 *Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market Tools* when The Organization wants to include ecosystem services claims in the scope of certification.
- 1.5 The certification body shall evaluate The Organization managing small and low intensity managed forest (SLIMF) or community forests against the applicable requirements of FSC-PRO-30-011 *Continuous Improvement Procedure* when The Organization has decided to apply that procedure (see Annex 9).
- 1.6 The certification body shall apply FSC-POL-30-001 *FSC Pesticides Policy* to evaluate The Organization's use of chemical pesticides, as applicable.
- 1.7 The certification body shall conduct stakeholder consultations in accordance with FSC-STD-20-006 *Stakeholder Consultation for Forest Evaluations Standard*.
- 1.8 Primary processing facilities within or adjacent to SLIMF or community forest MUs that are owned or managed by The Organization may be included in the scope of FM/CoC certification if:

all MUs in the scope of certification qualify as SLIMF or community forest; and  
100% of the inputs to the processing facilities come from these MUs.
- 1.9 Primary processing facilities included in the scope of certification as per Clause 1.8 shall be evaluated for conformity with the applicable chain of custody standard(s), and a report which meets the requirements of FSC-STD-20-011 *Specific requirements for certification bodies - Chain of Custody* shall be prepared.

- 1.10 Low intensity processing activities carried out by The Organization such as log cutting, debarking, woodchipping, initial processing of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) (e.g., selection and drying of nuts or mushrooms, cleaning of berries), and the use of portable charcoal kilns or small portable sawmills may be added to the scope of FM/CoC certification without conducting an evaluation against the applicable chain of custody standard(s).
- 1.11 Primary or secondary processing facilities not covered in Clause 1.8. shall not be included in the scope of FM/CoC certification.

## PART II APPLICATION AND INFORMATION COLLECTION

### 2. General requirements

- 2.1 The certification body may share its checklists (e.g., draft evaluation report) with The Organization prior to the evaluation asking it, for example, to pre-fill certification scope information and sources of evidence of conformity, which will then be reviewed by the certification body as part of the evaluation process.
- 2.2 The certification body shall request access to key documents and records of The Organization to be used in preparation for the evaluation, such as management plans, inventory results, management system documentation, maps, satellite images, GIS data, legal documents, etc.
- 2.3 In the case of group certification, in addition to the requirements of Clause 2.2, the certification body shall request the following documentation and records from the group entity prior to the evaluation:
- a. the group management system;
  - b. the updated list of group members;
  - c. the rate of membership changes within the group in relation to the specified maximum group size;
  - d. formal communication/written documents sent to group members by the group entity since the previous evaluation;
  - e. records of the internal monitoring carried out by the group entity (including specification of active and inactive MUs since the last evaluation, if applicable); and
  - f. records of any corrective actions issued by the group entity.
- 2.4 For applicants of forest management certification, except for small or low intensity managed forests and community forests, the certification body shall at minimum enter the following information in the FSC certification database once it is available and at latest thirty (30) calendar days before the main evaluation:
- a. forest type;
  - b. total area in hectares;
  - c. anticipated evaluation timeframe;
    - i. the proposed dates of the pre-evaluation (if applicable) and of the main evaluation;
    - ii. as long as the dates have not been agreed with the applicant, then enter "not yet scheduled";
  - d. evaluation contacts;

- i. name of designated audit team leader;
- ii. contact for stakeholder comments (name and e-mail address of the certification body's contact);
- iii. link to the FSC section of the certification body's website.

### 3. Application of NFSS Risk Assessments in FM evaluations

3.1 When an NFSS Risk Assessment developed according to FSC-PRO-60-010 *Development of a National Forest Stewardship Standard Risk Assessment* exists for the country or region where the MU is located, the certification body shall use the following information from the NFSS Risk Assessment when evaluating The Organization against the applicable requirements:

- a. the risk designations for criteria or indicators of the NFSS;
- b. the identified factors influencing the risk of nonconformities at The Organization level in the national or sub-national context;
- c. other means of verification and assurance techniques recommended in the NFSS Risk Assessment.

NOTE: The risk designation in an NFSS identifies the criteria or indicators that:

- a. the certification body needs to prioritize and actively seek evidence of conformity with during an evaluation (specified risk); and
- b. are less critical due to the lower risk of nonconformity (low risk).

3.2 If there are substantiated allegations or evidence of risk of nonconformity related to low-risk requirements, the certification body shall assess the need to change the risk designation.

3.3 If an upgrade to the risk designation is deemed necessary as per Clause 3.2, the certification body shall register the change and justification for it in the evaluation report according to Annex 4 (*Content of the evaluation report and public summary*).

3.4 After the first re-evaluation, the certification body may change the risk designated to any criteria or indicators in the NFSS Risk Assessment to a different risk at The Organization level based on its own risk assessment according to Annex 5 (*Certification body adaptation of the NFSS Risk Assessment at The Organization level*).

Table 1. Application of NFSS Risk Assessments in FM Evaluations

Pre-evaluation and Main Evaluation	Surveillance Evaluation	Re-evaluation <sup>3</sup>
<b>NOT APPLICABLE:</b> NFSS Risk Assessments are not applicable to these types of evaluations (see Clause 9.3).	<b>LOW RISK:</b> No need to actively seek evidence of conformity, unless substantiated allegations or evidence of nonconformity (see Clause 10.8).	<b>LOW RISK:</b> No need to actively seek evidence of conformity, unless substantiated allegations or evidence of nonconformity (see Clause 11.3).

<sup>3</sup> See Clause 3.4 and Annex 5

**SPECIFIED RISK:** Evaluate each surveillance in following cases (see Clause 10.12):

- Plantations larger than 10,000 ha\*
- Natural forests larger than 50,000 ha\*
- Sets of 'like' MUs containing HCVs\*

**UNDESIGNATED RISK:** at least once per certification cycle (see Clauses 10.9).

\* Except SLIMF or community forests

All **SPECIFIED RISK** and **UNDESIGNATED** requirements need to be evaluated by the CBs (see Clauses 11.2 and 9.3).

## PART III FOREST MANAGEMENT EVALUATIONS

### 4. Determination of the audit method

- 4.1 The certification body shall determine the appropriate audit method for each evaluation based on the type of Organization as specified in Table 2. Audit methods may vary between evaluations and may be used to complement each other or as stand-alone methods. The audit methods may include on-site audits, remote audits, or a combination of both.

Table 2. Default audit methods according to the type of Organization.

Organization Type	Default audit method
<b>Organizations <u>not</u> managing SLIMF or community forests</b>	<p>4.1.1. The certification body shall conduct an annual on-site audit of the relevant aspects for all types of evaluations.</p> <p>NOTE: Certain aspects of the evaluation (e.g., document review, stakeholder interviews, analysis of maps or satellite imagery, etc.) may be verified remotely provided that the eligibility criteria specified in Annex 1 are met.</p>
<b>Organizations managing a single SLIMF or a single community forest</b>	<p>4.1.2. The certification body shall conduct on-site audits at the main evaluation and in one surveillance evaluation during the five-year-period of validity of certification.</p> <p>4.1.3. The remaining surveillance evaluations shall be conducted remotely, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are outstanding corrective actions to be evaluated which may require on-site verification; or</li> <li>• complaints requiring on-site verification; or</li> </ul>

Organization Type	Default audit method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Organization requests an on-site audit; or</li> <li>• the certification body provides justification that an on-site audit is necessary to obtain objective evidence to verify conformity related to any aspect of the evaluation.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizations using the Continuous Improvement Procedure</b>	4.1.4. The certification body shall conduct audits following the rules in Annex 9.
<b>Organizations managing forest management groups or sub-groups of SLIMF and/or community forests</b>	<p>4.1.5. The certification body shall conduct on-site audits at the main evaluation, during the first surveillance evaluation, and at least one additional surveillance evaluation during the five-year-period of validity of certification.</p> <p>4.1.6. For Organizations managing forest management groups or subgroups with MUs that qualify as community forests of &lt;50,000 ha, or with less than 100 MUs that qualify as SLIMF, the remaining surveillance evaluations shall be conducted remotely, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are outstanding corrective actions to be evaluated which may require on-site verification; or</li> <li>• complaints requiring on-site verification; or</li> <li>• The Organization requests an on-site audit; or</li> <li>• the certification body provides justification that an on-site audit is necessary to obtain objective evidence to verify conformity related to any aspect of the evaluation.</li> </ul> <p>4.1.7. For Organizations managing forest management groups or subgroups with MUs that qualify as community forests of ≥50,000 ha, or with 100 or more MUs that qualify as SLIMF, the remaining surveillance evaluations may be conducted remotely, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there are outstanding corrective actions to be evaluated which may require on-site verification; or</li> <li>• complaints requiring on-site verification; or</li> <li>• The Organization requests an on-site audit;</li> </ul> <p>4.1.8. When a remote audit as per 4.1.7 is conducted, the certification body shall provide justification that an on-site audit is not necessary to obtain objective evidence to verify conformity related to any aspect of the evaluation.</p>

4.2 The justification for the selection of the audit method shall be included in the evaluation report and in the public summary.



4.3 All audits shall be performed by a qualified audit team. In the case of on-site audits, at least one qualified auditor shall be physically present on site.

NOTE: The team may be supported by technical experts and/or further personnel (e.g., interpreter), who support the auditors but do not themselves act as auditors.

4.4 In the case of a demonstrated security risk for the life or health of auditors, the certification body may apply for a derogation from the Policy and Performance Unit to replace an on-site audit by a remote audit.

NOTE: Derogation applications will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Table 3. Determination of audit methods during a five-year certification cycle.

Organization Type	Main and Re-evaluation	Surveillance 1	Surveillance 2	Surveillance 3	Surveillance 4
Non-SLIMFs or CF MU(s) (see Clauses 4.1.1 & 11.2)			On-site		
Single SLIMF or a single CF MU (see Clauses 4.1.2, 4.1.3 & 11.2)	On-site				One surveillance evaluation shall be carried out on-site, the remaining surveillance evaluations shall be carried out remotely <b>unless</b> required to be on-site as per 4.1.3
	On-site				Surveillance evaluations shall be carried out as defined in Annex 9 of this Standard. .
Groups or subgroups with CF of < 50,000 ha, or with < 100 MUs that qualify as SLIMF (see Clauses 4.1.5 & .1.6)	On-site	On-site			One surveillance evaluation shall be carried out on-site, the remaining surveillance evaluations shall be carried out remotely <b>unless</b> required to be on-site as per 4.1.6
Groups or subgroups with CF of ≥ 50,000 ha, or with ≥ 100 MUs that qualify as SLIMF (see Clauses 5.1.5, 5.1.7 & 5.1.8)	On-site	On-site			One surveillance evaluation shall be carried out on site, the remaining surveillance evaluations may be carried out remotely <b>unless</b> required to be on-site as per 4.1.7

NOTE: On-site audits allow for parts of an FM evaluation to be carried out with remote audit methods as per Annex 1.



## 5. Determination of preparation for pre-evaluation

- 5.1 The certification body shall conduct a pre-evaluation in accordance with the requirements in Section 9 of this standard prior to the main evaluation of any sets of 'like' MUs of the following categories:
- plantations larger than 10,000 hectares; or
  - natural forests larger than 50,000 hectares, unless the whole area of the sets of 'like' MUs qualifies as a "low intensity managed forest" (see FSC-STD-01-003 *SLIMF and Community Forest Eligibility Criteria*).

NOTE: Pre-evaluations can take place using the FSC-STD-60-004 *International Generic Indicators* or early drafts of an Interim Forest Stewardship Standard (IFSS) if there is no approved Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS).

- 5.2 The certification body shall take a precautionary approach to the likelihood that an MU may include High Conservation Values (HCVs). The certification body should request this information from The Organization in the application phase and check for the presence of HCVs in the MU on FSC's Geographic Information System Portal or other HCV maps (e.g., [www.globalforestwatch.org](http://www.globalforestwatch.org) for Intact Forest Landscapes).
- 5.3 If an MU contains HCVs or if it is not known if they are present, a pre-evaluation shall be conducted, unless the MU qualifies as SLIMF or community forest (see FSC-STD-01-003 *SLIMF and Community Forest Eligibility Criteria*).
- 5.4 The pre-evaluation may be waived for MUs or sets of 'like' MUs which are already certified according to FSC-STD-30-010 *Controlled Forest Management*.
- 5.5 A pre-evaluation may be conducted for any MU not meeting the criteria specified in Clause 5.1. or Clause 5.2., at the discretion of the certification body or upon request by The Organization, prior to any main evaluation.
- 5.6 Pre-evaluations are not required in the case of re-evaluations.
- 5.7 The results of pre-evaluations are valid for a period of 24 months from the date of presenting the report on the findings of the pre-evaluation to The Organization. After this period, a new pre-evaluation is required if a main evaluation has not been concluded resulting in certification.

NOTE: Pre-evaluations may be conducted by one certification body, and the main evaluation by another certification body as long as the second certification body has access to the results of the pre-evaluation and these results are still valid.

## 6. Determination of the audit requirements

### **Box 3 Informative guidance: Means for evaluation in FSC certification**

FSC forest management certification is a process certification evaluating FSC's requirement for forest stewardship on a defined forest area against the FSC Principles and Criteria.

Therefore, the main part of the FSC evaluation consists of the FSC audit, being the central part of the FSC-certification. Means of evaluation in forest management audits are document review, on-site inspections and interviews depending on the processes and structure of the management unit.

- 6.1 The certification body shall include documentations and records in the audit process as listed in Annex 2.
- 6.2 The certification body shall include sites in the audit as listed in Annex 3.
- 6.3 The certification body shall maintain a procedure for determining an appropriate minimum audit time for the evaluation according to Annex 6. This calculation shall consider, but not be limited to, the aspects listed in Annex 6.
- 6.4 The audit planning should also reflect appropriate audit methods to evaluate all requirements including considerations of specified or undesignated risks in the audited sector and geographical region (see section 3 and related risk assessments according to FSC-PRO-60-010 for NFSS).
- 6.5 Based on this procedure, the certification body shall record and justify the audit time in person days for each audit in the evaluation report.

## 7. Requirements for sampling of MUs and selection of sites for evaluation

### 7.1 General requirements

- 7.1.1. For each evaluation, the certification body shall classify the MUs included in the scope of certification as sets of 'like' MUs for the purpose of sampling. The sets shall be selected to minimize variability within each set in terms of:
  - a. forest types (e.g., natural forest vs. plantation);
  - b. size of the MU (see sub-section 7.4.);
  - c. whether the MU has been classified as active or inactive (applicable to FM group certification);
  - d. MUs added since the last evaluation; and
  - e. other factors as may be defined in the applicable FSS.

NOTE: Forest management groups or multiple MUs may consist of one or more sets of 'like' MUs.

- 7.1.2. The certification body shall select specific MUs for evaluation within each set of 'like' MUs to reach the required sample size. The certification body should include a random element in the selection process.
- 7.1.3. The sample selected shall be representative in terms of:
  - a. geographical distribution (ensuring that the full geographical distribution within the scope of certification is covered within the certification cycle), and
  - b. the personnel responsible for operational management of the selected MUs.
- 7.1.4. The certification body shall implement the requirements in the following sub-sections as applicable to determine the minimum number of MUs to be audited at each evaluation:

- a. multiple MU certification: sub-section 7.2.;
  - b. group certification: sub-section 7.3.;
  - c. group certification with more than 5,000 SLIMF MUs: sub-section 7.4.; and
  - d. sampling for contractors included in the scope of group certification: sub-section 7.5.
- 7.1.5. If new MUs have been added to the scope of certification since the last evaluation, they shall be sampled at the rate of a main evaluation.
- 7.1.6. If the MUs that have been added to the scope of an existing group or multiple MU certification have been FSC certified within the last six months, they may be sampled at the rate of an annual surveillance.
- 7.1.7. If there are existing risk factors, substantiated allegations of nonconformities or major nonconformities resulting in negative social or environmental impacts, the certification body shall increase the number of MUs included in a sample in relation to the calculated minimum.
- 7.1.8. The certification body shall audit a sufficient variety and number of sites within each MU selected for evaluation to make factual observations of conformity with the requirements of the applicable FSS.
- 7.1.9. The certification body shall select the sites to be audited based on an analysis of the critical points of risk of nonconformity in the management system.

## **7.2 Sampling for multiple MU certification**

- 7.2.1. During main and re-evaluation, for each set of 'like' MUs identified, the certification body shall select a minimum number of MUs for evaluation ( $x$ ) by applying the formula  $x = 0.8 * \sqrt{y}$  for each set of 'like' MUs ( $y =$  number of all MUs within the set of 'like' MUs). The number of MUs calculated ( $x$ ) shall be rounded to the upper whole number to determine the number of MUs to be audited.
- 7.2.2. The number of MUs to be audited in a surveillance evaluation shall be at least half the number of MUs audited during the main evaluation.

## **7.3 Sampling for group certification**

- 7.3.1. The certification body shall determine the number of sets of 'like' MUs to be audited ( $x$ ) in the main evaluation, surveillance evaluation and re-evaluation according to the Table 4. The number of sets of 'like' MUs calculated ( $x$ ) shall be rounded to the upper whole number to determine the number of sets of 'like' MUs to be audited.

Table 4. Number of sets of 'like' MUs to be audited (x) from the total number of sets of 'like' MUs (y).

	Size class of set of 'like' MUs	Main evaluation	Surveillance and re-evaluation
<b>Active MUs</b>	> 10,000 ha	$X = y$	$X = y$
	1,000 – 10,000 ha	$X = y$	$X = 0.5 * y$
	< 1,000 ha	$X = 0.8 * \sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$
	<b>SLIMF and community forest</b>	$X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.3 * \sqrt{y}$
<b>Inactive MUs</b>	<b>All size classes</b>	All MUs are considered 'active' and shall therefore be sampled like active MUs above	$X = 0.1 * \sqrt{y}$

NOTE: If inactive MUs are not specified by The Organization, all MUs are treated as 'active'.

- 7.3.2. In the case of forest management groups comprised of SLIMF/community forest MUs and MUs that do not qualify as such, the certification body may apply the 'SLIMF and community forest' formula in Table 4 to sets of 'like' MUs that only comprise of SLIMF or community forest MUs.
- 7.3.3. For each set of 'like' MU, the certification body shall determine the minimum number of MUs to be audited according to the formula in Table 5. The number of MUs calculated (x) shall be rounded to the upper whole number to determine the number of units to be audited.

Table 5. Minimum number of MUs to be audited (x) from all MUs (y) within each set of 'like' MUs (x).

	Size class	Main evaluation	Surveillance and re-evaluation
Active MUs	> 10,000 ha	$X = y$	$X = 0.8 * y$
	1,000 – 10,000 ha	$X = 0.3 * y$	$X = 0.2 * y$
	< 1,000 ha	$X = 0.8 * \sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$
	SLIMF <sup>4</sup> and community forest	$X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.3 * \sqrt{y}$
Inactive MUs	All size classes	All MUs are considered 'active' and shall therefore be sampled like active MUs above	$X = 0.1 * \sqrt{y}$

NOTE 1: If inactive MUs are not specified by The Organization and accepted as such by the certification body, all MUs are treated as 'active'.

NOTE 2: The certification body can decide to group MUs to higher size class provided the total sample is not reduced.

- 7.3.4. For the purposes of sampling, MUs qualifying as SLIMF or community forest within an RMU (Resource Management Unit) may be considered equal to one MU. MUs managed by a Resource Manager that do not qualify as SLIMF or community forest shall be sampled in accordance with Tables 4 and 5 (above).

NOTE: The RMU concept is defined in FSC-STD-30-005 *Forest Management Groups* and can only be applied if the Group Entity and Resource Manager conform with the applicable requirements.

- 7.3.5. The sample of MUs selected for the evaluation shall include MUs that were part of the most recent internal monitoring of the forest management group.

#### 7.4 Group certification with more than 5,000 MUs qualifying as SLIMF

- 7.4.1. For forest management groups or sets of 'like' SLIMF MUs with more than 5,000 MUs, the certification body may sub-stratify the group or sets of 'like' MUs according to the level of risk in relation to presence of HCVs, land use or tenure disputes, or length of harvesting cycles.
- 7.4.2. The certification body may reduce the sampling size determined according to Table 5 for MUs within a set of 'like' MUs by a maximum of 50%, in the demonstrated absence of:

<sup>4</sup> For countries or regions with an FSC-approved SLIMF size limit above 100 ha this may be used as the threshold for these size classes.

- a. High Conservation Values; and
- b. land use or tenure disputes.

**7.5 Sampling process for forestry contractors included in the scope of group certification**

7.5.1. The minimum number of forestry contractors to be audited (x) out of the total number of forestry contractors (y) in a forest management group shall be calculated according to the formula in Table 6. The calculated number of forestry contractors shall be rounded to the upper whole number to determine the actual size of the sample.

Table 6. Minimum number of forestry contractors to be audited (X) from the total number of forestry contractors (y).

Main evaluation	Surveillance evaluation and re-evaluation
$X = 0.3 * y$	$X = 0.2 * y$

- 7.5.2. The sample should include forestry contractors that performed activities within the existing sample of MUs during the evaluation period (e.g., previous 12 months).
- 7.5.3. If new forestry contractors have been added to the scope of certification since the last evaluation, the new forestry contractors shall be sampled at the rate of a main evaluation.
- 7.5.4. Each forestry contractor within the group should have been audited by the certification body at least once within the certification cycle.

**8. Pre-evaluation**

- 8.1 Pre-evaluation shall include a review and discussion with The Organization of the requested scope of certification to determine the full range of applicable FSC normative requirements to be used for the evaluation, such as the applicable FSS, the group certification standard, the ecosystem services procedure, pesticide use requirements, stakeholder consultation etc.
- 8.2 In the case of group or multiple MU certification applicants, the certification body shall:
  - a. carry out an analysis and description of the MUs proposed for inclusion within the scope of certification;
  - b. define the certification body's approach to sampling of MUs within the scope of certification;
  - c. carry out an initial analysis of The Organization's management systems and capacity to administer the requirements of those systems; and
  - d. carry out an explicit review of conformity with the requirements for group entities according to FSC-STD-30-005, as applicable.
- 8.3 Based on information provided by The Organization, the certification body shall identify major gaps or likely problem areas in respect to The Organization's conformity with any of the requirements of the applicable FSC normative requirements.
- 8.4 The certification body shall prepare a written report on the findings of the pre-evaluation, which should be made available to The Organization. A summary of the findings shall subsequently be included in the main evaluation report.
- 8.5 Key stakeholders shall be identified and consulted during the pre-evaluation.

## 9. Main evaluation

- 9.1 The certification body shall use the results of pre-evaluations in the preparation of a subsequent main evaluation.
- 9.2 Preparation for a main evaluation shall include:
  - a. identification of the applicable FSS;
  - b. an analysis of the responsibility for full conformity with the applicable FSC normative requirements (e.g., by The Organization, group entity, resource manager) as well as an analysis of the delegated responsibilities for the implementation of selected requirements (e.g., by contractors).
- 9.3 The certification body shall evaluate and actively seek evidence of conformity of The Organization against all applicable FSC normative requirements within the scope of certification.
- 9.4 The certification body shall ensure that there is sufficient audit time and an appropriate audit method is chosen to evaluate all requirements with specified or undesignated risks from the applicable FSS and other applicable FSC requirements. (see section 6 “Determination of the audit requirements”)
- 9.5 In the case of evaluations of multiple MUs, forest management groups or sets of ‘like’ MUs in which all MUs are qualifying as SLIMF or community forest, the certification body may audit each defined set of ‘like’ MUs as a whole against the requirements of the applicable FSS, but it is not necessary that each sampled MU is audited by the certification body against all the requirements of the applicable FSS.
- 9.6 In the case of evaluations of forest management groups, the certification body shall audit the requirements of the applicable FSS in accordance with the division of responsibilities as specified in the group’s management system (see FSC-STD-30-005).
- 9.7 For MUs not covered by Clause 9.5, the certification body shall audit each MU against the full set of requirements of the applicable FSS.
- 9.8 The certification body shall complete an explicit analysis of the critical aspects of management control required to ensure that the applicable FSC normative requirements are implemented over:
  - a. the full geographical area in the scope of certification; and
  - b. the full range of management activities.
- 9.9 The certification body shall evaluate the capacity of The Organization to implement its management system consistently and effectively as described. This evaluation shall include explicit consideration of:
  - a. the technical resources available (e.g., the type and quantity of equipment); and
  - b. the human resources available (e.g., the number of people involved in management, their level of training and experience; the availability of expert advice if required).
- 9.10 The evaluation shall include an assessment of the documentation and records applicable to each level of management, sufficient to confirm that management is functioning effectively and as described.



- 9.11 The certification body shall evaluate the tracking and tracing of forest products up to the forest gate or point of sale, and the procedures for the identification of products coming from the MUs in the scope of certification.
- 9.12 At each MU selected for auditing, the certification body shall identify and assess a sufficient variety and number of records including management documentation as to make factual observations to verify conformity with all requirements of the applicable FSS.

NOTE: Requirements for such documentation and records are further defined in in Annex 2.

## 10. Surveillance evaluation

- 10.1 Surveillance evaluations shall take place at least once per calendar year, unless specified differently in the scope specific requirements (see Annex 9 for Continuous Improvement Procedure application ).

NOTE: The evaluation of corrections and corrective actions to close major nonconformities may require on-site audits at shorter intervals.

- 10.2 For a certification that has a five-year validity, at least four surveillance evaluations shall take place before the certification expires.
- 10.3 Surveillance evaluation shall include:
- b. evaluation of The Organization's conformity with corrective actions, if any;
  - a. review of any complaints or allegations of nonconformity with any aspect of the applicable normative requirements; and;
  - b. evaluation of a sample of sites and records, and interviews with affected stakeholders sufficient to verify that management systems (documented or undocumented) are working effectively and consistently in practice, in the full range of management conditions present in the MUs selected for auditing.
- 10.4 The certification body shall assess the following aspects during surveillance evaluation:
- a. any changes to the forest area included in the scope of certification, including additions, exclusions, or MU boundary changes;
  - b. changes to The Organization's management system;
  - c. complaints received;
  - d. harvesting records;
  - e. chemical use records, including records of quantitative data on the pesticides use;
  - f. records of sales of FSC certified products (copies of invoices, bills, shipping documents).
- 10.5 The certification body shall evaluate the capacity of The Organization's management system to manage any changes affecting certification, including any increase in size, number or complexity of MUs.
- 10.6 Timing of the audit in a surveillance evaluation shall take into account all management activities and conditions affecting forest management activities, such as seasonal forest management operations, harvesting and collection of NTFPs, etc.

NOTE: Audits may be planned according to seasonal activities of The Organization to enable an on-site audit by auditors when these activities take place (e.g., when harvesting



activities are influenced by seasonal conditions such as snow, rain or the seasonal harvesting or collection of NTFPs).

10.7 Where there is an approved NFSS Risk Assessment, the certification body shall prioritize the evaluation of requirements designated as specified risks of nonconformity in the NFSS.

10.8 The certification body is not required to actively seek evidence of conformity of The Organization against requirements designated as low risk in the approved NFSS Risk Assessment or changed to this designation by the certification body at The Organization level (see Annex 6), unless there are substantiated allegations from stakeholders or evidence of nonconformity about the low-risk designation for The Organization.

NOTE: For low-risk indicators, the conclusion of conformity in the evaluation report can be based on a statement that “no evidence of nonconformity was observed”.

10.9 For requirements with undesignated risk in the NFSS Risk Assessment, the certification body shall evaluate conformity against those requirements at least once per certification cycle.

10.10 In the absence of an NFSS Risk Assessment, the certification body may focus its evaluation on specific indicators of the applicable FSS (e.g., those pertaining to particular FSC Principles or to particular aspects of management) with the provision that all requirements of the applicable FSS shall be evaluated during surveillance evaluations within a certification cycle.

10.11 In the absence of an NFSS Risk Assessment, the certification body shall at minimum evaluate at each surveillance evaluation all indicators of the following criteria from the applicable FSS for the following types of sets of ‘like’ MUs:

- a. plantations larger than 10,000 hectares:
  - FSC Principles & Criteria (P&C) V5: Criteria 1.6; 2.3; 4.4; 4.5; 7.6; 6.9; 6.10; 10.2; 10.3; 10.6; 10.7 and 10.12
  - P&C V4: Criteria 2.3; 4.2; 4.4; 6.7; 6.9; 10.6; 10.7 and 10.8.
- b. natural forests larger than 50,000 hectares, unless the whole area meets the eligibility criteria for SLIMF (see FSC-STD-01-003) and/or community forest:
  - P&C V5: Criteria 1.4; 1.6; 2.3; 3.2; 3.4; 4.4; 4.5; 5.2; 6.4; 6.6; 6.9; 6.10; 7.6; 8.2 and 9.4.
  - P&C V4: Criteria 1.4; 1.5; 2.3; 3.2; 4.2; 4.4; 5.6; 6.2; 6.3; 8.2 and 9.4
- c. sets of ‘like’ MUs containing HCVs, unless the whole area meets the eligibility criteria for SLIMF (see FSC-STD-01-003) and/or community forest.
  - P&C V5: Criteria 6.4; 6.6; 6.9; 6.10; 9.4 and 10.3
  - P&C V4: Criteria 6.2; 6.3; 6.9 and 9.4

10.12 When there is an approved NFSS Risk Assessment providing criteria or indicators designated as specified risk, the certification body shall evaluate at minimum these requirements at each surveillance evaluation instead of the criteria listed in Clause 10.11 for these types of sets of ‘like’ MUs.

10.13 When there is an approved NFSS Risk Assessment, for sets of ‘like’ MUs not meeting any of the thresholds listed in Clause 1011, the certification body is not expected to evaluate all requirements with specified risk at each surveillance evaluation but shall evaluate all undesignated and specified risk requirements at least once per certification cycle.

## 11. Re-evaluation

- 11.1 The certification body shall complete a re-evaluation prior to the expiry of certification as a prerequisite for granting re-certification.
- 11.2 Re-evaluation shall follow the same procedures as for main evaluation, with the following exceptions:
- pre-evaluation is not required;
  - the certification body is not required to submit the evaluation report for peer review; and
  - the certification body is not required to prepare a full, new evaluation report. The original report may be updated to take account of any new findings but shall include the complete set of observations made during the re-evaluation and on which the decision to grant re-certification is based.
- 11.3 The certification body is not required to actively seek evidence of conformity of The Organization against requirements designated as low risk in the approved NFSS Risk Assessment or changed to this designation by the certification body unless there are substantiated allegations from stakeholders or evidence of nonconformity about the low-risk designation for The Organization.
- NOTE: For low-risk indicators, the conclusion of conformity in the evaluation report can be based on a statement that “no evidence of nonconformity was observed”.
- 11.4 In the case of a lapse in certification beyond 6 months after the expiry of certification, a main evaluation process without the peer review is required to renew certification. After a lapse in certification of 2 years or more after the expiry of certification, The Organization shall be treated as a new applicant for certification.

## 12. Conflicts between laws and regulations

- 12.1 The certification body shall identify and evaluate any conflicts between laws and/or regulations and certification requirements of the applicable FSS on a case-by-case basis, considering involved or relevant parties. The identified conflicts shall be registered in the evaluation report.
- 12.2 If there is a conflict between FSC certification requirements and applicable legislation that prevents The Organization from fulfilling one or more requirements of the applicable FSS, the certification body shall attempt to resolve the conflict between the relevant parties within 90 days of identifying the conflict, involving FSC Policy and Performance Unit and FSC Network Partners at the Policy and Performance Unit's discretion.
- 12.3 If the conflict cannot be resolved, and the nonconformity with the requirement(s) results in, or is likely to result in a fundamental failure, the certification body shall issue a major nonconformity.
- 12.4 The certification body shall follow a precautionary approach in cases where there are:
- Conflicting, contradictory, or otherwise inconsistent requirements for The Organization within or between applicable laws, regulations, and administrative requirements; and/or
  - Differing interpretations of the above listed legal instruments by public authorities.
- 12.5 A precautionary approach as per Clause 12.4 implies that:

- a. the more or most restrictive requirements shall be applied as constituting the relevant legal basis;
  - b. the more or most rigorous interpretation by public authorities shall be used to determine the practical implementation of relevant requirements.
- 12.6 The certification body shall have a procedure for evaluating any conflicts between laws and/or regulations, including the precautionary approach.
- 12.7 In above cases where the most restrictive requirements or most rigorous interpretation cannot be determined, the certification body shall seek clarification through a formal interpretation by the FSC Performance and Standards Unit.

## 13. Nonconformities

### 13.1 General requirements

- 13.1.1. All nonconformities that are identified by the certification body during an evaluation shall be recorded in the evaluation report and associated checklists.
- 13.1.2. Nonconformities with FSC normative requirements shall be recorded and addressed even if these are not in the scope of a particular evaluation.
- 13.1.3. Each nonconformity against indicators of the applicable FSS shall be evaluated to determine whether it constitutes a minor or major nonconformity at the level of the associated FSC criterion.
- 13.1.4. Each nonconformity against other applicable FSC normative requirements (e.g., FSC-STD-30-005) shall be evaluated to determine whether it constitutes a minor or major nonconformity at the level of the individual requirement.
- 13.1.5. A single nonconformity shall not include requirements that relate to two or more criteria from the applied FSS.
- 13.1.6. If a nonconformity is related to indicators from more than one criterion, the nonconformity should be raised against the criterion with closest association to the root cause of the nonconformity.
- 13.1.7. A nonconformity shall be considered major if, either alone or in combination with other nonconformities, it results in, or is likely to result in a fundamental failure:
- a. to achieve the objectives of the relevant FSC criterion of the FSS, or
  - b. in a significant part of the applied management system.

NOTE 1: The cumulative impact of a number of minor nonconformities may result in a failure to achieve the overall objectives of the FSS and thus constitute a major nonconformity.

NOTE 2: Information about the grading of nonconformities can be found in the FSC-STD-20-001.

- 13.1.8. The certification body shall consider the potential impact of a nonconformity when evaluating whether a nonconformity results in or is likely to result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant FSC criterion.

13.1.9. If the certification body receives specific information of particular instances or allegations of nonconformity with aspects of the applicable FSC normative requirements at specific MUs (for example, information received from stakeholder consultation), the certification body shall evaluate them to determine if the allegations are valid. If valid, the certification body shall evaluate whether they constitute major or minor nonconformities with the FSC normative requirements.

### **13.2 Nonconformities in Forest Management Groups**

13.2.1. The certification body shall explicitly define the methodology by which the certification body determines 'failure' of a forest management group at an evaluation. The specification of 'failure' shall also distinguish between 'group failure' and 'member failure' or 'forestry contractor failure'.

NOTE: Forestry contractor failure can only occur when forestry contractors have been included into the scope of a group certification (see FSC-STD-30-005).

13.2.2. 'Group failure' shall lead to nonconformities, suspension, or withdrawal of certification, and may be caused by:

- a. failure to fulfil a 'group entity' responsibility, such as administration, management planning, records, monitoring, etc.;
- b. failure of the group entity to ensure that group members conform with a condition or corrective action issued by the certification body; and/or
- c. failure to fulfil group member responsibility(s), sufficient in number, extent and/or consequences to demonstrate that the group entity's responsibility for monitoring or quality control has broken down.

NOTE: The number as well as the seriousness of member failure or forestry contractor failures may each contribute to a group failure. Many minor nonconformities or few major nonconformities may suggest a breakdown in the group system for quality control and may be considered sufficient reason to suspend or withdraw certification.

13.2.3. Depending on the number and seriousness 'member failure' or 'forestry contractor failure' shall lead to nonconformities, suspensions or expulsion of a group member or forestry contractor, respectively.

## **PART IV REVIEW**

### **14. Peer Review**

14.1 After the review (see FSC-STD-20-001, section 7.5.), the certification body shall conform with the following requirements through an additional peer review.

14.2 Draft forest management evaluation reports of main evaluations shall be submitted to a peer review process unless the management unit(s) under evaluation meet the specification of a small or low intensity management unit or community forest in accordance with <FSC-STD-01-003 *SLIMF and Community Forest Eligibility Criteria*> in the country in which the evaluation takes place.

14.3 The peer review process shall include the following:

- a) the report shall be reviewed by at least one (1) independent peer reviewer with the experience and technical knowledge necessary to evaluate the adequacy of the report and the recommendations for a certification decision. The report should be reviewed by additional peer reviewers with specialist knowledge (e.g. concerning Indigenous Peoples rights or High Conservation Values) where necessary;
- b) in the case of evaluated management units that meet the eligibility criteria for mandatory pre-evaluations as defined in this standard the report shall be reviewed by a second peer reviewer, who shall be selected according to the knowledge related to the eligibility category, i.e. knowledge about plantation management, boreal or tropical forest management, or High Conservation Values (as applicable);
- c) the peer reviewer(s) shall operate according to a clear terms of reference, which shall include the requirement to comment explicitly on:
  - i. the adequacy of the field work as the basis for making a certification decision;
  - ii. the clarity of presentation of the audit findings as the basis for a certification decision;
  - iii. whether the proposed certification decision is justified by the audit findings presented.
- d) peer reviewer(s) shall not be full or part-time employees of the certification body, and shall be subject to the same requirements relating to independence and confidentiality as other personnel with input into the certification decision;
- e) the reviewer(s) shall take account of the local and national context with regards to forest management, and shall consider environmental, social and economic perspectives;
- f) the comments of the peer reviewer(s) shall be attributed and documented;
- g) the certification body shall respond in writing to the peer reviewer(s)' comments, and provide the peer reviewers with a copy of its response;
- h) in cases where peer reviewer(s) are questioning the recommendations for a certification decision of the review process, those aspects need to be reviewed again (see FSC-STD-20-001, section 7.5.).

## PART V CERTIFICATION DECISION

### 15. General requirements

- 15.1 The certification body shall make certification decisions based on their evaluation of The Organization's conformity with the applicable FSC normative requirements and in accordance with FSC-STD-20-001 *General Requirements for Certification Bodies*.
- 15.2 Joint forest management/chain of custody certification (FM/CoC) shall only be granted if the certification body is satisfied that the system of tracking and tracing implemented by The Organization is sufficient to provide assurance that all products invoiced with an FSC claim by The Organization originate from the MUs in the scope of certification.

## PART VI REPORTING

### 16. Evaluation report

- 16.1 The certification body shall complete the evaluation report for each evaluation, using the applicable reporting template(s) provided by FSC.

NOTE 1: Annex 4 specifies the minimum mandatory content of the evaluation report.

NOTE 2: Any changes to the reporting requirements, including changes to the reporting templates, are subject to FSC-PRO-01-001 *The Development and Revision of FSC Requirements*.

- 16.2 Once the certification body has made a certification decision and finalized the evaluation report, it shall submit the evaluation report and communicate the certification decision to The Organization as defined in FSC-STD-20-001 (for reporting nonconformities see section 7.4., for decisions see Clause 7.6.2).
- 16.3 The certification body may provide the evaluation report to The Organization in a language convenient to The Organization and the people involved in the certification body's technical review and decision-making process.
- 16.4 The certification body shall submit the evaluation report to FSC in one of the official languages of FSC within 30 days of submitting the evaluation report to The Organization. The checklists with the audit findings at the indicator level are not required to be translated.
- NOTE 1: All fields in the FSC digital reporting template are mandatory unless otherwise stated in the template.
- NOTE 2: FSC digital template will serve as a data collection tool for implementing the FSC Global Strategy.
- 16.5 The certification body shall use data for reporting that is up to date no longer than 120 days prior to the submission of the evaluation report to FSC.

### 17. Public summary

- 17.1 The certification body shall complete the public summary in one of the official languages of FSC for each evaluation, using the applicable template(s) provided by FSC. The mandatory content of the public summary is provided in Annex 4 (*Content of the evaluation report and public summary*).
- 17.2 For a certification scope covering a forest area of 1,000 ha or more, the certification body shall make the public summary available in at least one of the official language(s) of the country in which the certified MU(s) are located, or the most widely spoken language of the Indigenous Peoples in the area in which the certified MU(s) are located.
- 17.3 The certification body shall submit the public summary and its translated version(s) to FSC as soon as the translated version(s) is ready, but latest 30 days after the submission of the evaluation report to The Organization.
- 17.4 No public summaries shall be removed from the FSC database by the certification body.
- NOTE: FSC reserves the right to archive the published reports and data.



# ANNEX 1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR APPLYING REMOTE AUDIT METHOD FOR PARTS OF AN FM EVALUATION OF ORGANIZATIONS NOT QUALIFYING AS SLIMF OR COMMUNITY FORESTS

Below are considerations the certification body shall take into account when considering the remote audit method for parts of an FM evaluation of Organizations not qualifying as either SLIMF or community forests. The list of criteria assumes a risk-based approach to efficient audit planning and requires the certification body to evaluate possibilities to apply remote audit techniques in applicable circumstances. The considerations guide the certification body to evaluate critical aspects that affect the ability to conduct an evaluation of conformity, but the certification body may use additional considerations when evaluating which parts of a particular evaluation need to be conducted on-site.

1. If the criteria in Table 7 below are met, then the respective aspect may be audited remotely at the discretion of the certification body.

Table 7. Eligibility criteria for applying remote audit method for parts of an FM evaluation of organizations not qualifying as SLIMF or community forests.

Topic	Criteria	Criteria met
<b>Document review</b>	<p>It is possible to access information securely and confidentially from The Organization remotely (e.g., inventory data, maps, shape files, satellite imagery).</p> <p>The Organization is able to share securely and confidentially real-time (immediately while the audit is taking place) documents and systems remotely with the certification body.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Nonconformities</b>	There are no open nonconformities requiring on-site evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Workers Interviews</b>	<p>The Organization and the auditors have communication tools and technologies that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sufficient for videoconference;</li> <li>• accessible to all relevant workers included in the scope of the audit without having to use The Organization’s facilities and accessible throughout the full range of The Organization’s MUs included in the scope of the audit.</li> </ul> <p>The Organization is able to ensure the availability of key staff at the times defined for the audit.</p> <p>It is possible to interview workers securely and confidentially in remote audits.</p> <p>The Organization is able to provide disclosure of all workers and their respective roles included in the scope of the audit prior to the audit.</p> <p>The application of information and communication technology (ICT), for example videoconferencing, is a stakeholder</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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engagement method that is considered in harmony with the customs, values, sensitivities, and ways of life of workers.

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**Stakeholder interviews**

The Organization and the auditors have communication tools and technologies that are:

- sufficient for videoconference;
- accessible to all relevant stakeholders included in the scope of the audit without having to use The Organization's facilities; and
- accessible and throughout the full range of The Organization's MUs included in the scope of the audit.

It is possible to interview external stakeholders securely and confidentially in remote audits.

The application of information and communication technology (ICT), for example videoconferencing, is a stakeholder engagement method that is considered in harmony with the customs, values, sensitivities, and ways of life of stakeholders included in the scope of the audit.

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**Complaints and issues in the public domain**

There are no substantiated complaints related to the scope of The Organization's certification submitted to the certification body since the last evaluation that require on-site evaluation.

The certification body is not aware of any significant issues in the public domain (e.g., NGO reports, media articles, ASI incidents), court cases or legal proceedings related to management activities of The Organization that would require on-site evaluation.

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**Disputes**

The certification body is not aware of any unresolved disputes related to land tenure with affected stakeholders (e.g., Indigenous Peoples, local communities).

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**Scope and management system**

There are no significant changes in the scope or management system – include examples e.g., change of forest manager, outsourcing activities, etc.

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## ANNEX 2 LIST OF DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS IN FOREST MANAGEMENT

### Box 4 Informative guidance

The list below provides references to requirements as included in FSC-STD-60-004. References are put in brackets at the end of each requirement. The first part of the list provides a list of documentation requirements in connection to the references of the relevant criteria level. The second part of the list below provides references to requirements at the level of indicators. References are put in brackets at the end of each requirement. Some FSS may have adapted indicators requiring additional documentations or not requiring specific aspects of the following list. In these cases, the documentation requirements apply as formulated in the applicable FSS (see clause 1.2). In cases where the adaptation has resulted in the indicator numbering not corresponding with the FSC-STD-60-004, the references in brackets should be treated as indicative.

This is not an exhaustive list, nor is the certification body required to limit the audit to the documents and records listed here. The list does not prescribe that each document or record needs to be audited in each audit/surveillance; this is regulated in the main body of this standard based on the applicable standards with related documents and locations to be considered during evaluation. The list of documents and records to be audited are contingent with the selected criteria to be included in the evaluation.

1. The following list provides documents and records that shall be audited (where applicable) to assess conformity with FSC normative requirements:

NOTE: Some records may not be accessible in written format.

- a) management plan containing various central elements as formulated in FSC-STD-60-004 (7.1., 2.5., 5.3., 5.5., 7.2., 7.3., 7.4., 7.6., 8.1.)
- b) ownership documentation or concession agreements (1.1.)
- c) public commitment to not offer or receive bribes (1.7.)
- d) public policy, endorsing long-term commitment to forest management practices consistent with FSC Principles (1.8.)
- e) binding FPIC agreements (3.3., 3.6., 4.8.)
- f) binding agreements between The Organization and traditional people through FPIC in the event of delegation of control over management activities (4.)
- g) publicly available summary of the management plan (7.5.)
- h) publicly available monitoring results (8.4.)
- i) records of High Conservation Value assessment (9.1.)

2. The following list provides a list of documents and records that should be audited to assess conformity with FSC normative requirements if applicable for The Organization:

- a) documentation showing tenure or land-use rights (1.2.1.)
- b) boundaries of all Management Units are documented and clearly shown on maps. (1.2.3.)

- c) harvest and trade with CITES species (1.5.2.)
- d) public dispute resolution process (1.6.1.)
- e) documentation of disputes related to issues of applicable laws or customary law (1.6.3.)
- f) documentation of collective bargaining agreements where they exist (2.1.4.4.)
- g) health and safety practices including accident rates and lost time to accidents (2.3.4.)
- h) documentation, that health and safety practices are developed and implemented for all forest workers including contractors and subcontractors (see 2.3.1)
- i) documentation of outsourcing processes and subcontractor contracts.
- j) training records are kept for all relevant workers (2.5.2.)
- k) workers grievances related to workers loss or damage of property, occupational diseases or injuries (2.6.3.)
- l) documentation (and/or mapping) of engagement with the Indigenous Peoples (3.1.2.).
- m) in case of evidence that rights, customs and culture of Indigenous Peoples, as defined in UNDRIP and ILO Convention 169, have been violated by The Organization, the situation is documented (3.4.2.)
- n) documentation (or mapping) of sites with special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance for Indigenous Peoples (3.5.2.)
- o) documentation (and/or mapping) of local communities affected through management activities (4.1.2.)
- p) documentation of record of grievances related to the impacts of management activities to local communities (4.6.3.)
- q) documentation (or mapping) of sites which are of special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance for local communities (4.7.2.)
- r) annual harvest for timber (5.2.3.) and non-timber forest products (5.2.4)
- s) documentation of costs related to preventing, mitigating or compensating for negative social and environment impacts of management activities in the management plan (5.3.1.)
- t) approved records of stakeholder meetings (7.6.2.)
- u) procedures for monitoring the implementation of the management plan (8.1.1.)
- v) all products sold (8.5.2.)
- w) sales invoices (8.5.3.)
- x) fertilizers used (10.6.3.)
- y) records of pesticide usage (10.7.6.)
- z) use of biological control agents (10.8.3.)
- aa) payments of royalties, fees, or taxes
- bb) payments to workers
- cc) monitoring of workers exposure to highly hazardous pesticides (10.7.21)
- dd) documentation of interviews with employees focusing on proving training measures, health and safety implementation, and compliance with core labour requirements.
- ee) promotional use of FSC's trademark.

## ANNEX 3 LIST OF LOCATIONS AND SITES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT

### Box 5 Informative guidance

This is not a complete list, nor is the certification body required to limit the audit to the locations listed below. The FSC GIS Portal may provide the certification body with useful information on which sites to include into the evaluation.

The list indicates locations to be considered in the auditing process. Sampling approaches for specific situations still apply (see section 7).

The list does not prescribe that each location or site needs to be audited in each audit/surveillance; this is regulated in the main body of this standard based on the applicable standards with related documents and locations to be considered during evaluation. For choosing specific locations in the evaluation process, CBs may focus on locations with forest management processes reflecting and reflecting a representative size of forest area within the scope as well as different levels of risk for conformity

1. The following list provides locations for FSC audits that shall be audited (where applicable) to assess conformity with FSC normative requirements:

- a) production forest areas in a sufficient variety of conditions (e.g. on steeper slopes; different soil conditions; different silvicultural systems, plantations) and variety in forest practices (e.g. seed orchards, nurseries, locations marked for harvesting, recently harvested, one year after harvesting, five years after harvesting, ten years after harvesting, sites with regeneration activities, production sites for NTFPs).
- b) sites with typical habitat features for forest stand attributes and structures in the management unit (see definition of “habitat features” in FSC-STD-60-004).
- c) worker accommodation and amenities.
- d) sites where machinery is used and associated safety requirements are required.
- e) documented sites of affected Indigenous People with FPIC agreements and affected sites of local communities.
- f) identified sites of special cultural, ecological, economic, religious or spiritual significance for local communities.
- g) watercourses of different sizes, within and downstream of the forest area.
- h) roads and forest roads of different sizes affected by the forest management.
- i) sites where chemicals, fertilizers or biological control agents have been applied or stored.
- j) buffer zones and other measures to protect natural watercourses.
- k) pesticide buffer zones, and pesticide exclusion zones.
- l) protected areas (e.g., Conservation Areas Network, Representative Sample Areas, Buffer zones) and HCV areas.
- m) converted areas as defined in the Policy to Address Conversion (FSC-POL-01-007 V1-0).
- n) storage areas for forest products (i.e. wood, NTFPs).
- o) boundaries between MU and Indigenous Peoples or local communities.

- p) areas being covered through the Excision policy (FSC-POL-20-003).
- q) monitoring sites.

# ANNEX 4 CONTENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT AND PUBLIC SUMMARY

## Box 6. Evaluation reports and public summaries

Evaluation reports are of particular importance. They are more than a simple vehicle for presenting the certification decision. Evaluation reports are used by:

- a. certification bodies to compile the audit findings of the forest management evaluation to guide and demonstrate the accuracy and plausibility of certification decisions;
- b. The Organization to be informed about their performance against the applicable standards;
- c. Assurance Services International (ASI) in evaluating certification bodies' performance;
- d. FSC to monitor and evaluate the effects of FSC certification as well as for system integrity purposes; and
- e. stakeholders to be informed about the performance of The Organization (through public summaries).

Depending on the scope of certification (e.g., certification type, Ecosystem Services, NTFPs) and the type of evaluation (e.g., main evaluation, surveillance evaluation), different scope of data is collected in the evaluation report.

In addition to evaluation reports, certification bodies are required to prepare public summaries. These contain key information about each Organization's evaluation and are made publicly available on the FSC database of registered certificates. The public summaries have the objective of providing transparency about forest management evaluations, enabling all interested or relevant parties to obtain information on certification decisions. The size and complexity of the forest operation influences the extent of the information contained in public summaries (i.e., public summaries for SLIMF and community forests are typically shorter than the reports of large forest operations).

1. The certification body shall use a default timeframe of 'since the last evaluation' for compiling reporting data, if not otherwise specified.

Table 8. Minimum mandatory content of the evaluation report and public summary.

Information elements	Evaluation Type <sup>5</sup>			For SLIMF and community forests	Public Summary
	ME	SE	RE		
<b>CERTIFICATION BODY INFORMATION</b>					
1. Certification body name and contact details.	x	x	x	x	x
2. Names, roles and expertise of the auditor(s), technical experts, local experts and any other personnel (e.g., interpreter) involved in the evaluation.	x	x	x	x	

<sup>5</sup> The evaluation types have been abbreviated as follows: Main Evaluation (ME), Surveillance Evaluation (SE) and Re-Evaluation (RE).

Information elements	Evaluation Type <sup>5</sup>			For SLIMF and community forests	Public Summary
	ME	SE	RE		

### CERTIFICATE HOLDER INFORMATION

3. Information identifying The Organization (including the name and contact details).	x	x	x	x	x
4. General certificate information, including: a. Certificate and license codes and relevant dates (initial certification issue and expiry dates); b. Certification type (FM, FM/CoC) and specification as single or multiple MU, group certificate and whether implementing Ecosystem Services or Continuous Improvement Procedure.	x	x	x	x	x

### EVALUATION PROCESS

#### Description of evaluation

5. Evaluation type (Pre-evaluation, Main evaluation, Surveillance evaluation, Re-evaluation).	x	x	x	x	x
6. Dates of the evaluation report and the public summary.	x	x	x	x	x
7. Codes of normative documents used in the evaluation.	x	x	x	x	x
8. Audit itinerary with dates and duration.	x	x	x	x	x
9. The person's days spent on auditing The Organization - excluding time spent on preparatory work, travelling to and from The Organization, report writing and decision making.	x	x	x	x	x
10. Justification for the audit time.	x	x	x	x	x
11. Specification of the audit method(s) employed for the evaluation (full on-site audit, remote audit or a combination of both) and justification for the selected audit method(s).	x	x	x	x	x
12. In the case of full or partial remote auditing, the tools and methods employed for the remote evaluation of The Organization.	x	x	x	x	x
13. Process and results of sampling, including: a. list of MUs selected for evaluation; b. sites audited within each selected MU. *optional for SLIMF and community forest MUs.	x	x	x	x	x
14. Rationale for selecting MUs for evaluation.	x	x	x	Optional	x

NOTE: In the case of multiple MU evaluations the report shall include an analysis and description of the area in terms of discrete MUs and conformity with the requirements about sampling system employed.

#### Stakeholder input

15. A description of the consultation process with stakeholders.	x	x	x	Optional	x
16. Stakeholders who were interviewed by auditors or who provided information in writing.	x	x	x	Optional	

NOTE: Personal data (including names of individuals) are not required to be stated in the evaluation report (nor in the public summary report). It is

Information elements	Evaluation Type <sup>5</sup>			For SLIMF and community forests	Public Summary
	ME	SE	RE		
<p>only required to include a general description of the stakeholder who was interviewed or who shared information with the auditors in writing, such as “forest worker”; “employee of a contractor”; “inhabitant of a community adjacent to the MU”; “representative from the local administration”.</p> <p>Where the identification of individuals is deemed necessary to follow up on communication with the stakeholder, the certification body may record personal data for internal use, but only upon prior and informed consent of the stakeholder. Certification reports and public summary reports shall not violate applicable data protection legislation.</p>					
17. Anonymized summary of the stakeholders’ comments and the corresponding action and conclusions from the certification body.	x	x	x	Optional	x
18. Information related to the review and resolution of any complaints raised by stakeholders with The Organization, or with the certification body, since the previous evaluation that is not gathered through the normative stakeholder consultations. The corresponding action and conclusions from the certification body shall also be included in the evaluation report.		x	x	Optional	
NOTE: The certification body may not include details about the complaint and complainant in the evaluation report and maintain this information in a separate file if this is necessary to protect privacy and confidentiality of the complainant.					
19. Identified conflicts between laws and/or regulations with certification requirements.	x	x	x	x	
<b>MANAGEMENT SYSTEM</b>					
<b>Information on Management Units in the scope of certification</b>					
20. List of MUs, including the following information for each MU:	x	x	x	x	x
a. Name, cadastral number or other means of identification for each MU;					
b. Eligibility for SLIMF and community forest;					
c. Type of tenure ownership;					
d. Type of tenure management.					
e. Forest zone (boreal, temperate, subtropical, tropical).					
f. Geographical location of the geometric centre of the MU. For forest management groups of SLIMF and/or community forests, the geographical location of the geometric centre of the group. NOTE: Requirement will be superseded by the requirement to provide spatial data of MUs according to the decision by FSC General Assembly (Motion 61/2021).					
g. Certified area of the MU					
h. Area of production forest, natural forest, plantation, restored areas, conservation areas, and area covered by ecosystem claims					
i. Stage/year of applying the Continuous Improvement Procedure (if applicable)					
j. Data necessary to calculate the AAF (Annual Administration Fee).					
21. An explanation of how MUs meet the eligibility criteria as a SLIMF or community forest (FSC-STD-01-003), if applicable.	x	x	x	x	
22. Description and area of the MUs or parts of an MU that have been excised from the scope of certification according to FSC-POL-20-003.	x	x	x	x	x

### Forest Management Plan

Information elements	Evaluation Type <sup>5</sup>			For SLIMF and community forests	Public Summary
	ME	SE	RE		
23. A summary of the legislative, administrative and land use contexts in which The Organization operates, including the roles of responsible government agencies involved in aspects of forest management (e.g., harvest, monitoring, protection, health and safety, infrastructure, and other uses).	x		x	Optional	x
24. A description of the ownership and use of the lands and forest included in the scope of the scope of certification, including: a. ownership and use-rights (both legal and customary) of parties other than The Organization; b. non-forestry activities being undertaken within the area evaluated, whether they are undertaken by The Organization or by some other party (e.g., mining, industrial operations, agriculture, hunting, commercial tourism, etc.).	x		x	x	
25. A summary of the management plan, including a description of: a. the management objectives; b. the forest resources (land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, forest composition, profile of adjacent lands); c. the management structures (e.g., management structure, division of responsibilities, use of contractors, provision of training, etc.) implemented by The Organization; d. the silvicultural and/or other management systems being implemented (incl. harvesting techniques and equipment, rationale for species selection); e. the environmental safeguards; f. the management strategy for the identification and protection of rare, threatened, and endangered species and High Conservation Values; g. The Organization's procedures for monitoring growth, yield, and forest dynamics (incl. changes in flora and fauna), environmental and social impacts, and costs, productivity, and efficiency.	x		x	x	x <sup>6</sup>
26. Annual allowable cut (AAC) for each MU, including estimate of the maximum sustainable yield for the main commercial species including: a. explanation of the assumptions (e.g., silvicultural) on which estimates are based; b. reference to the source of data (e.g., inventory data, permanent sample plots, yield tables) on which estimates are based.	x	x	x	x	x
27. Investments and measures taken for the prevention and control of natural hazards (fires, storm, flood, disease, pests, pathogens etc.).	x		x	x	
28. Categories of High Conservation Values present, including: a. area per category of HCV; b. any changes to the previously existing areas.	x	x	x	x	
29. The following elements shall be included in all reports for FM/CoC certificates: a. an evaluation of the risk of products from non-certified sources (including any areas specifically excluded from the scope of the certificate) being mixed with products from the forest area evaluated; b. a description of the control (tracking and tracing) systems in place that address the risk identified in a) above (If the evaluation does not include all the forest areas in which The Organization is involved, the report shall include an explicit statement explaining the special controls that are in place to ensure that there is no risk of confusion as to which activities or products are certified, and which are not);	x	x	x	x	

<sup>6</sup>If there are any significant changes to any of the items in the list presented under requirement #25, this shall be captured in the public summaries for surveillance evaluation reports.



Information elements	Evaluation Type <sup>5</sup>			For SLIMF and community forests	Public Summary
	ME	SE	RE		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. a description of the final point or forest gate (e.g., log yard or depot) at which the certification body certifies that a product is sourced from the certified forest area;</li> <li>d. a description of the documentation or marking system that allows products from the certified forest area to be reliably identified as such at the point specified in c) above.</li> </ul>					
<b>Pesticides</b>					
30. List of pesticides (active ingredient and trade name) used, including the restricted, highly restricted and the prohibited highly hazardous pesticides (the prohibited pesticides are only allowed in emergency situations or by governmental order).	x	x	x	x	x
31. Location and area of use of chemical pesticides as per #30 above.	x	x	x	x	x
32. Quantity, number, period of use and frequency of applications and reason for use.	x	x	x	x	x
33. A summary of Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESRA).	x		x	x	x
34. Valid HHP derogation (if any).	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Personnel</b>					
35. Number of personnel (including contractors) working within the scope of certification (differentiated by gender).	x	x	x	x	
36. Total number of worker and contractor related accidents in the past calendar year differentiating between serious and fatal accidents.		x	x	x	
<b>Commercial timber species and non-timber forest products</b>					
37. Species, product codes and trade names of timber and non-timber forest products currently included in the scope of certification.	x	x	x	x	x
38. Harvested quantities per species/species group in the past calendar year.	x	x	x	x	x
39. Quantities sold with FSC claim in the past calendar year.		x	x	x	x
<b>Forest Management Groups</b>					
40. Total number of group members.	x	x	x	x	x
41. Description of division of responsibilities with entities included into the scope of certification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. group entity;</li> <li>b. resource manager;</li> <li>c. group member;</li> <li>d. forestry contractor.</li> </ul>	x	x	x	x	
42. Demonstration that any responsibilities for implementation of the applicable standard(s) at the group entity level (e.g., management planning, inventory, monitoring) are conformed with.	x	x	x	x	
43. Number of members sampled by group entity since the last evaluation.		x	x	x	
44. The maximum number of members according to FSC-STD-30-005 Clause 5.1.	x	x	x	x	

Information elements	Evaluation Type <sup>5</sup>			For SLIMF and community forests	Public Summary
	ME	SE	RE		
45. For each Group member <sup>7</sup> :					
a. name	x	x	x	x	x
b. contact details	x	x	x	x	
c. certified area	x	x	x	x	x
d. specification of whether the member is a contractor	x	x	x	x	x
e. the date of entering the group and, where relevant, the date of leaving the group NOTE: this requirement applies to both members and forestry contractors included in the group	x	x	x	x	x
<b>NFSS Risk Assessment</b>					
46. NFSS Risk Assessment code (if applicable)	x	x	x	x	x
47. Justification for changes in risk designations done by the certification body from low-risk to undesignated or undesignated to specified-risk		x	x	x	
48. Justification for changes in risk designations done by the certification body from specified-risk to undesignated or undesignated to low-risk		x	x	x	x
<b>Ecosystem Services</b>					
49. Date of the evaluation of the verified or validated ES impact in accordance with FSC-PRO-30-006.	x	x	x	x	x
50. Valid Ecosystem services claims with ES impact.	x	x	x	x	x
51. Name of the MU(s) covered by each claim.	x	x	x	x	x
52. For group certificates: a. the separation of responsibilities to demonstrate impact between the group entity level and the group member level; AND b. to which group members the verified or validated ecosystem services impact applies.	x	x	x	x	x
53. Date of verification or validation of the impact.	x	x	x	x	x
54. Date of approval of ESCD(s) (Ecosystem Services Certification Document).	x	x	x	x	x
55. Date ESCD valid until.	x	x	x	x	x
56. Name of the ES sponsors (if applicable).	x	x	x	x	x
57. Contact details of the ES sponsors (if applicable).	x	x	x	x	
58. Ecosystem Service Impacts sponsored.	x	x	x	x	x
59. MUs where the sponsored ES Impacts are located.	x	x	x	x	x
60. Start of sponsorships.	x	x	x	x	x

<sup>7</sup> The elements of the reporting requirement #45 are not required to be registered in the public summary for members whose all MUs classify as SLIMF or community forests.

Information elements	Evaluation Type <sup>5</sup>			For SLIMF and community forests	Public Summary
	ME	SE	RE		
61. End of sponsorships.	x	x	x	x	x
<b>AUDIT FINDINGS AND NONCONFORMITIES</b>					
62. A systematic presentation of the audit findings (including summarized findings from the pre-evaluation if applicable) on which the certification decision is based at the level of the indicators defined in the applicable standard(s), and whether the finding implies a nonconformity. a. for forest management groups, findings shall be presented separately for each MU evaluated, unless all the MUs within the scope of certification meet the eligibility criteria as SLIMF or community forest according to FSC-STD-01-003. b. for SLIMF and community forest groups and multiple MUs, findings for different MUs may be combined provided that the information about which site a particular finding relates to is maintained.	x	x	x	x	
63. A summarized presentation of findings with clear information to enable the reader to make an easy correlation between the requirements of each of the criteria of the FSC normative document used and the performance of the certified operation.	x		x	Optional	x
64. Description of any issues that were hard to assess (e.g., because of contradictory evidence, divergent stakeholder opinion, difficulty in interpreting the requirement), and explanation of the conclusion reached.	x	x	x	x	x
65. A description of any documented nonconformities (see FSC-STD-20-001, 7.4.11)	x	x	x	x	x
66. In cases where one or more stakeholders have alleged a nonconformity, but the auditors have concluded that certification should be granted, the report shall explain why the auditors concluded there was no nonconformity, or what action was taken to close the nonconformity' prior to certification decision to grant certification.	x		x	x	x
67. A recommendation from the auditor regarding: a. Whether or not The Organization is in continued conformity with the certification requirements. b. Whether or not the certification should be maintained, or if any corrective actions shall be taken.		x		x	x
68. Description of potential infringements of the FSC Policy for Association if the certification body has identified any during the evaluation.	x	x	x	x	
<b>REVIEW</b>					
69. Review finalization date.	x	x	x	x	
70. Review type (Simple report review or Peer review).	x	x	x	x	
71. Reviewer name.	x	x	x	x	
72. Reviewer expertise.	x	x	x	x	
73. Auditor response.	x	x	x	x	
<b>CERTIFICATION DECISION</b>					

Information elements	Evaluation Type <sup>5</sup>			For SLIMF and community forests	Public Summary
	ME	SE	RE		
74. Certification decision.	x	x	x	x	x
75. Certification decision date.	x	x	x	x	x
76. Name of the decision maker.	x	x	x	x	

## ANNEX 5 CERTIFICATION BODY ADAPTATION OF THE NFSS RISK ASSESSMENT AT THE ORGANIZATION LEVEL

1.1. After the first re-evaluation, the certification body may review and change the risk designations of the NFSS Risk Assessment for The Organization if there are justified reasons for this.

NOTE: The certification body may conduct periodic review of all risk designations from the NFSS Risk Assessment or focus on individual risk designations if there is evidence suggesting a specific risk designation could be changed.

1.2. To change the risk designation according to Clause 3.2, the certification body shall at minimum use the risk factors provided in the applicable NFSS Risk Assessment (see Clause 3.1 b).

1.3. A change to the risk designation together with its justification shall be evidence-based and the changes shall be registered in the evaluation report (Annex 4).

1.4. The changes in risk designations from specified-risk to undesignated risk or from undesignated risk to low-risk shall be registered in the public summary (Annex 4).

### Box 7. Examples of factors that could be used to adapt and change the NFSS Risk Assessment after the first re-evaluation at the level of The Organization

This information box illustrates some examples of what type of risk factors could be considered by the certification body when assessing whether a change in a risk designation is justified at the level of The Organization. The examples provide a Criterion from the FSC-STD-01-001 *FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship* and relevant risk factors that could be used to justify a change the risk designation with either an upgrade or downgrade related to the risk designation provided in the applicable NFSS Risk Assessment.

#### Example 1. Protecting the MU from unauthorized or illegal activities (Criterion 1.4)

*The Organization\* shall develop and implement measures, and/or shall engage with regulatory agencies, to systematically protect the Management Unit\* from unauthorized or illegal resource use, settlement and other illegal activities.*

Potential risk factors for the certification body to consider:

- Ability to prevent and implement measures to control unlicensed recreational use resulting in illegal activities (unauthorized campfire, littering etc.).
- Demonstrated cooperation with relevant regulatory bodies or governmental agencies to control unauthorized or illegal activities within the MU.
- Existence of personnel and resources to detect and control illegal activities.

#### Example 2. Health and safety (Criterion 2.3)

*The Organization\* shall\* implement health and safety practices to protect workers\* from occupational safety and health hazards. These practices shall\*, proportionate to scale, intensity and risk\* of management activities, meet or exceed the recommendations of the ILO Code of Practice on Safety and Health in Forestry Work.*

Potential risk factors for the certification body to consider:

- Turnover of forest workers or contractors.
- Internal monitoring system and findings from internal monitoring.
- Investment into training of forest workers and contractors.
- Demonstrated access and uptake of relevant training and guidance related to health and safety.

## ANNEX 6 DETERMINATION OF AUDIT TIME

1. The certification body procedure for calculating audit time (see clause 6.3) shall consider the following audit aspects:

- a) conducting the opening meeting (including scope confirmation and any possible changes);
- b) conducting culturally appropriate stakeholder consultations;
- c) conducting the audit with the following elements:
  - i. Forest management systems (procedures, responsibilities, complaints, labelling, analysis of open nonconformities, etc.);
  - ii. Resource management (H&S, CLR, training, infrastructures, etc.);
  - iii. Production (from material reception to dispatch);
  - iv. Commercialization (sourcing, sales, material accounting);
- d) tracking and tracing system demonstrating source and volume in proportion to output of all products marketed as FSC certified.
- e) conducting the closing meeting;
- f) consideration of travelling to and between locations and sites;
- g) collecting and verifying information;
- h) review of open corrective actions; and
- i) reviewing, analysing and compiling audit findings.

2. The certification body procedure for calculating audit time shall at minimum consider the following factors:

- a) total forest area and area distribution of forests;
- b) structure of management unit (area, number of employees, production volumes, and/or annual turnover of forest product sales);
- c) experience and track record of the operators involved (managers and personnel, contractors);
- d) growth rate of sites and group members;
- e) results of risk assessments (see Section 3 Application of NFSS Risk Assessments in FM evaluations and Clause 6.4);
- f) distance between forest areas / management units (travelling to and between sites);
- g) open corrective actions (former audit findings);
- h) number and nature of complaints and remarks from stakeholders.

3. The determination of the audit time is the responsibility of the certification body. Typical factors to consider when calculating audit duration include:

NOTE: It remains the responsibility of the certification body to decide to carry out on-site visits where and when necessary to ensure confidence in certification.

- a) main evaluation and expansion of area: additional time for opening and closing meetings
- b) size of forest and distribution
- c) complexity of forest ecosystems and silvicultural methods
- d) communication effectiveness (i.e. language)
- e) quality of forest management unit preparation, e.g. documentation
- f) number of deviations/nonconformities from the previous audit
- g) issues during the audit that require further investigation
- h) additional storage facilities, locations

- i) all MUs in the scope of certification are SLIMF, community forests or both
- j) the certification only covers NTFPs

# ANNEX 7 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTROLLED FOREST MANAGEMENT

## PART 1 - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### 1 General Provisions

- 1.1 The certification body shall conduct evaluations against FSC-STD-30-010 V3-0 (and subsequent versions) following the requirements in this standard.

NOTE: The term forest management/chain of custody certification (FM/CoC) in this standard is to be read as controlled forest management certification (CFM) in connection with controlled forest management certification.

- 1.2 The certification body shall reject applications for CFM certification of management units or sites that are or were covered by a CFM certification.

### 2 Basic Principles

- 2.1 Superseding Clause 1.3

The certification body shall evaluate the applicable requirements of <FSC-PRO-30-006 Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market Tools> when The Organization wants to validate ecosystem services claims. The use of <FSC-PRO-30-006 Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market Tools> is restricted to the validation option. The certification body shall not use that standard for the verification option.

- 2.2 Clause 1.5 and Clause 1.6 shall not be applied.

## PART 2 - Application

### 3 Application of NFSS Risk Assessments in CFM Evaluations

- 3.1 Superseding Clause 3.4

After The Organization has successfully stepped up to the full set of requirements of the applicable locally adapted Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS), the certification body may change the risk designated to any criteria or indicators in the NFSS Risk Assessment to a different risk at The Organization level based on its own risk assessment according to Annex 5.

## PART 3 - CONTROLLED FOREST MANAGEMENT EVALUATIONS

### 4 Determination of preparation for pre-evaluation

- 4.1 Superseding FSC-STD-20-007 Clause 5.1

The certification body may conduct a pre-evaluation prior to the main evaluation. In that case, the certification body shall use the requirements in section 9.

- 4.2 In case of a pre-evaluation, the certification body shall either use <FSC-STD-30-010 V3-0 *Controlled Forest Management*> or the applicable locally adapted FSS, where available.

- 4.3 Clauses 5.4 and 5.7 shall not be applied.



## 5 Pre-evaluation

5.1 In case pre-evaluation is conducted, it shall follow the requirements in section 9.

5.2 Superseding Clause 8.5

Key stakeholders shall be identified and may be consulted during the pre-evaluation.

5.3 FSC-STD-20-007 Clause 8.4 shall not be applied.

## 6 Surveillance Evaluation

6.1 Superseding Clause 10.10

In the absence of an NFSS Risk Assessment, the certification body shall at minimum evaluate at each surveillance evaluation all indicators of the following criteria from the applicable FSS for the following types of sets of 'like' MUs:

a) plantations larger than 10,000 hectares:

FSC Principles & Criteria (P&C) V5: Criteria 1.6; 2.3; 7.6; 6.9; 6.10; 10.2; 10.3; 10.7 and 10.12

b) natural forests larger than 50,000 hectares, unless the whole area meets the eligibility criteria for Small or Low Intensity Managed Forest (SLIMF) (see FSC-STD-01-003) and/or community forest:

P&C V5: Criteria 1.4; 1.6; 2.3; 3.2; 3.4; 5.2; 6.4; 6.6; 6.9; 6.10; 7.6; 8.2 and 9.4.

c) containing High Conservation Values (HCVs), unless the whole area meets the eligibility criteria for SLIMF (see FSC-STD-01-003) and/or community forest.

P&C V5: Criteria 6.4; 6.6; 6.9; 6.10; 9.4 and 10.3

## 7 Re-evaluation

7.1 Requirements for re-evaluation refer to step-up evaluation requirements in the context of controlled forest management.

7.2 Superseding Clause 11.1

The certification body shall complete the step-up evaluation prior to the expiry of CFM certification as a prerequisite for granting forest management certification.

7.3 Superseding Clause 11.2

Step-up evaluation shall follow the same procedures as for forest management main evaluation, with the following exceptions:

a) pre-evaluation is not required;

b) the certification body is not required to submit the evaluation report for peer review; and

c) the certification body shall prepare a full, new evaluation report based on forest management evaluation. The original report may be updated to take account of any new findings but shall include the complete set of observations made during the step-up evaluation and on which the decision to grant forest management certification is based.

7.4 Clauses 11.3 and 11.4 shall not be applied.

## **PART 5 - REPORTING**

### **8 Evaluation Report**

8.1 Clause 16.4 shall not be applied.

### **9 Public Summary**

9.1 Superseding Clause 17.2

The certification body shall make the public summary available in at least one of the official language(s) of the country in which the certified Management Units (MUs) are located, or the most widely spoken language of the Indigenous Peoples in the area in which the certified MU(s) are located.

9.2 Superseding Clause 17.3

The certification body shall submit the public summary to FSC within 30 days after the submission of the evaluation report to The Organization.

9.3 Clause 17.1 shall not be applied.

### **10 Applicability of Annexes for Controlled Forest Management**

10.1 Annexes 1, 2, 3 and 6 are applicable without changes.

10.2 Adoptions for Annex 4

1. Requirements of re-evaluation refer to step-up evaluation requirements in the context of Controlled Forest Management.
2. Requirements for Ecosystem Services shall only be reported for validation and not for verification.
3. FSC-STD-20-007 Annex 4 Clauses 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34 and 63 shall not be applied.

10.3 Adoptions for Annex 5

This annex shall be applicable only after the step-up evaluation.

# ANNEX 8 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

## 1 Frequency and timing of evaluations

- 1.1 The certification body shall conduct a main evaluation on-site to assess conformity of The Organization with all applicable requirements in this procedure.
- 1.2 The certification body may use the remote or on-site audit method to evaluate Clauses 1.3 and 1.5.
- 1.3 The certification body shall evaluate conformity of The Organization with the requirements in the clauses/sections specified below at least once per rolling year within the period of validity of the Ecosystem Services (ES) impact:
  - a) FSC-PRO-30-006 V2-0, Clause 2.4-2.8 (related to a geographical overlap with ES assets or claims generated under external frameworks or standards);
  - b) FSC-PRO-30-006 V2-0, Clauses 4.6 and 4.7, identifying whether an event has occurred that calls for the implementation of the risk management plan;
  - c) changes related to FSC-PRO-30-006 V2-0, Section 10 (revenue sharing agreement), including any ongoing revenue sharing agreement negotiations,
  - d) requirements applicable to The Organization in FSC-PRO-30-006 V2-0, Section 11 when new sponsorships have been concluded based on verified or validated ES impacts; and
  - e) requirements applicable to The Organization in FSC-PRO-30-006 V2-0, Part IV when The Organization decides to make ES claims.
- 1.4 If The Organization manages SLIMF or CF, the certification body may evaluate 1.3 a) to d) at least during every FSC FM evaluation.
- 1.5 The certification body shall carry out an additional evaluation in any of the following cases:
  - a) to assess significant changes in part I of the Ecosystem Services Report (ESR), which include:
    - i. the addition of a new ES impact;
    - ii. the addition of a new MU;
    - iii. significant changes to the theory of change, e.g. a change in management practices;
    - iv. changes to the selected outcome indicator(s); or
    - v. changes to the methodologies used to measure the outcome indicator(s);
  - b) to assess complaints received related to the verified or validated ES impact; and
  - c) to assess the implementation of the risk management plan, when a disturbance event has happened that affected the verified/ validated ES impact.
- 1.6 The certification body shall carry out an additional evaluation to assess the inclusion of new group members to an ESR with already validated or verified ES impacts, in case the number of new group members being added to the ESR exceeds a 100% increase.

NOTE 1: See FSC-PRO-30-006 V2-0, Clause 1.18.

NOTE 2: For growth lower than 100%, the certification body is able to approve new group members to an ESR without an additional evaluation.

- 1.7 The certification body should conduct the ES evaluation(s) in conjunction with the scheduled forest management evaluation(s).

## 2 Preparation for evaluation

- 2.1 The certification body shall take into account the selected ecosystem services and the requirements in Clause 1.1 in:
  - a) the stakeholder consultations conducted as per Clause 1.7. of this standard
  - b) the audit planning; and
  - c) the sampling carried out as per Section 7 of this standard.
- 2.2 At least one member of the audit team shall have demonstrated competence and skills to evaluate The Organization's conformity with this procedure and the ES impact(s).

NOTE: This requirement builds on Annex 3 (Audit teams) of <FSC-STD-20-001 General requirements for certification bodies>.

## 3 Evaluation, review and decision making

- 3.1 Audit findings and granting of a verified or validated ES impact shall be evaluated in accordance with <FSC-STD-20-001 General Requirements for certification bodies>.

NOTE 1: '(Re)certification' is to be interpreted as the verification or validation of an ES impact.

NOTE 2: In the context of FSC-PRO-30-006 V2-0, a requirement is considered to be at the clause level (e.g. 1.2, 5.6), which may include several sub-clauses.

- 3.2 The certification body shall evaluate and make decisions on each proposed ES impact individually.
- 3.3 For each verified ES impact, the certification body shall:
  - a) include the term 'ecosystem services' in the scope of the FSC FM or FM/CoC certification; and
  - b) include the verified ES impact in the formal certification documentation (e.g. the certificate).
  - c) nonconformities identified in relation to this procedure shall not affect the FSC FM, FM/CoC or CFM certification status.
  - d) a verified ES impact is valid for a period of five years from the date of verification, as long as The Organization maintains FSC FM or FSC FM/CoC certification.
  - e) a validated ES impact is valid for a period of five years from the date of validation, as long as The Organization maintains FSC FM, FSC FM/CoC or CFM certification.
  - f) When The Organization's FSC FM, FM/CoC or CFM certification is suspended, withdrawn or terminated, all verified and validated ES impacts and ES claims related to that certification shall be suspended or withdrawn within 3 days in the FSC Registry.

#### 4 Reporting requirements

4.1 The certification body shall fill in part IV of the ESR in the template provided by FSC.

NOTE: Annex A specifies the minimum mandatory content of the ESR.

4.2 The certification body shall upload the ESR to the FSC Registry as soon as possible following the certification decision and latest within the following timelines:

- when the ecosystem services evaluation is combined with the main FSC FM or FM/CoC evaluation: 13 months from the closing meeting;
- when the ecosystem services evaluation is not combined with the main FSC FM or FM/CoC evaluation: 4 months from the closing meeting.

4.3 The certification body shall review and, if needed, upload the updated part III of the ESR to the FSC Registry at least once per calendar year.

# ANNEX 9 SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

## 1 General requirements

1.1 The audit team shall include a local expert in all on-site and hybrid evaluations.

1.2 The local expert shall conform with the following requirements for local experts.

- a) Prior and proven knowledge and practical experiences of the specific local context, culture and living conditions and on governance and territorial interrelationship of Indigenous Peoples, traditional communities, or smallholders whose management unit will be evaluated.
- b) Knowledge of the local language is desirable but not mandatory.
- c) Experience in forest management, FSC requirements and FSC audits is desirable but not mandatory.
- d) Be able to work independently.
- e) Have access to the required technology.
- f) Have sufficient technical skills to use the required technology, including capabilities to share documents and participate in meetings online.

1.3 The local expert may perform interviews, gather information and other specified tasks unaccompanied on behalf of the audit team leader.

1.4 The certification body shall make use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as much as possible to minimize costly site inspections.

1.5 When The Organization has been supported by a third person (consultant, NGO, etc.) for the conformity with a requirement from the applicable FSC standard and if The Organization agrees, the certification body should address this third person during the evaluation of such requirement.

## 2 Application

2.1 Certification bodies shall proactively offer the option to be evaluated as a user of this procedure to all Organizations managing SLIMF or community forests when applying for FSC Forest Management Certification.

## 3 Main evaluation

3.1 The certification body should use the following sources of information (not excluding others) to prepare for the main evaluation, if available:

- a) Initial Conformity Self-Check results.
- b) Action Plan, including criteria/indicator applicability check and the list of site-disturbing activities identified for the management unit.

3.2 During the main evaluation, the certification body shall evaluate:

- a) Whether The Organization conforms with all Core Criteria of the applicable FSC standard;

NOTE: When no site-disturbing activities are planned before the surveillance evaluation in year three (3), Core Criteria designated as low-risk are not applicable.

- b) The Action Plan for conformity with the requirements of Section 3 of this procedure;
- c) Site-disturbing activities identified by The Organization for accurate classification in line with the FSC definition of site-disturbing activities.

#### 4 Surveillance evaluation

4.1 In year three (3) of the Action Plan cycle, a surveillance evaluation shall be conducted on-site.

4.2 During the surveillance evaluation the certification body shall verify that The Organization:

- a) Conforms with the Continuous Improvement Criteria allocated to the first three (3) years of the Action Plan, and
- b) Conforms with Core Criteria designated as low risk when site-disturbing activities are planned before the re-evaluation.

4.3 The certification body shall conduct additional surveillance evaluation in years one (1), two (2) or four (4) in the following situations:

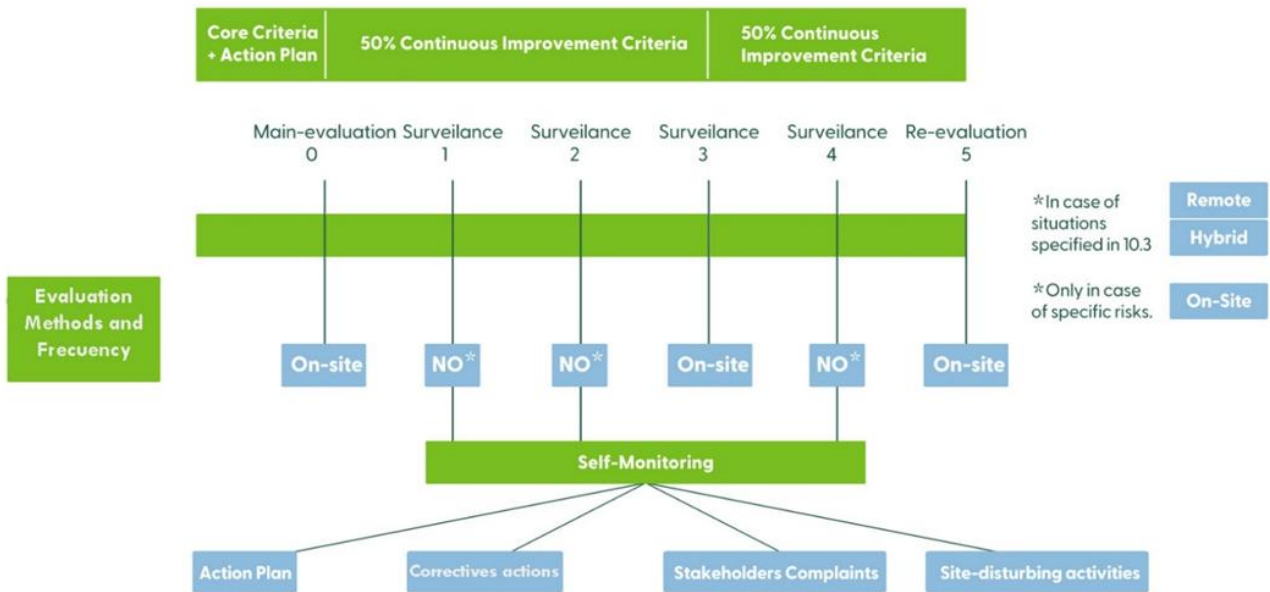
- a) Site-disturbing activities that were not initially planned in the Action Plan have been announced by The Organization for the following year.
- b) The Organization has not been implementing the Action Plan and the certification body has not been properly informed to agree to an adaptation of the plan.
- c) Presence of stakeholder complaints with a risk of escalation, and The Organization is not implementing the mechanism for resolving grievances to address the complaints.
- d) The Self-Monitoring results have not been delivered by The Organization as agreed.
- e) The Self-Monitoring results raise concerns regarding the performance of The Organization.

4.4 Any additional surveillance evaluation shall be conducted as a hybrid or remote assessment unless justified by a specific risk where the certification body deems it necessary to obtain objective on-site evidence to verify conformity.

4.5 When the certification body conducts additional surveillance evaluations the certification body shall verify that The Organization:

- a) Conforms with the Continuous Improvement Criteria allocated up to the respective year in the Action Plan.
- b) Conforms with criteria designated as low-risk when site-disturbing activities are planned to be conducted during the next 12 months.

Figure 2: Evaluation methods and frequency for The Organization applying this procedure.



## 5 Auditing of Organizations using the Continuous Improvement Procedure in a forest management group

5.1 The users of this procedure who are members of a forest management group shall be audited during the main, surveillance and re-evaluation of the group according to this procedure and against the requirements according to their Action Plan.





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