



Standard

# FOREST MANAGEMENT EVALUATIONS

FSC-STD-20-007 V4-0 EN DRAFT 2-0

Public consultation between 18/05/2022 and 16/07/2022



<b>Title:</b>	Forest Management Evaluations
<b>Dates:</b>	<b>Approval date:</b> TBD
<b>Timeframes:</b>	<b>Transition period:</b> TBD
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### Version control

Publication date:	TBD	
Effective date:	TBD	
Version	Description	Date
V1.0	First version of the Standard approved by the FSC Board of Directors.	05/03/2004
V2.0	First revision approved by the FSC Board of Directors on the 26th of November of 2004.	26/11/2004
V2.1	Minor revision approved by the FSC Board of Directors on 30th November 2004.	30/11/2004
V2.2	Minor revision became effective from 1st January 2005. This version includes additional requirements for evaluation against the FSC Principles and Criteria based on the FSC Modular Approach Program.	01/01/2005
V3.0	Major revision approved by the FSC Board of Directors on 31st August 2009, and became effective on the 1st January 2010. This version clarifies the principles to be followed by certification bodies when sampling MUs and sites for evaluation.	01/01/2010
V4.0	Major revision approved by the FSC Board of Directors on [DATE] to introducing new requirements on audit methods and reporting, aligning with the results of the Risk Based Approaches Technical Working Group for forest management certification and with the revised FSC-STD-30-005 V2-0, among others.	TBD

## INTRODUCTION

FSC is revising its Forest Management Evaluations Standard as part of streamlining the FSC normative framework.

This draft of the revised version aims for the increased transparency and efficiency of outcome-oriented and risk-based forest management evaluations. For example, it introduces different audit methods for certification bodies to use in their evaluation of The Organization's conformity with the requirements of the applicable FSC normative documents.

The standard was last revised in 2009 and it is being updated to ensure consistency in the normative framework. Such consistency includes reflecting terminology changes in FSC-STD-01-001 *FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship*.

This alignment includes incorporating the concept of active and inactive management units for selecting management units and sites for evaluation, which was introduced in FSC-STD-30-005 *Forest Management Groups*. It also introduces requirements for risk-based evaluations and provides links with FSC-PRO-60-010 *Incorporating a risk-based approach in National Forest Stewardship Standards* to allow the risk-based approach concept to be implemented across the FSC system.

Additionally, the structure of this standard has been revised to facilitate its implementation. In particular, former addenda have been incorporated directly into the main standard. Relevant advice notes and interpretations have also been incorporated and redundancies with requirements in FSC-STD-20-001 *General requirements for FSC accredited certification bodies* have been removed to avoid duplications.

Moreover, the [FSC Global Strategy 2021-2026](#) requires that the social, environmental, and economic impacts of FSC are monitored, evaluated, reported on, widely communicated, and used to inform decision making (e.g., Strategy 1). For that purpose, the content of forest management evaluation reports is being revised and new tools have been incorporated for digitization to ensure standardization and relevance of data gathered during certification process.

Finally, this revision aims to increase consistency of evaluations by different auditors.

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## OBJECTIVE

The objective of this standard is to provide the requirements for FSC-accredited certification bodies to assess conformity of The Organization against applicable requirements of the FSC normative framework with regards to forest management certification, as well as reporting and decision making.

## SCOPE

This standard applies to certification bodies assessing conformity with the applicable FSC normative requirements during all forest management evaluations including pre-evaluations, main evaluations, surveillance and re-evaluations of single management units (MUs), forest management groups, and single legal entities managing multiple MUs.

This international standard shall also be used as a normative document for FSC accreditation for forest management certification.

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 (e.g., as examples). The content of information boxes and notes are not normative.

## REFERENCES

The FSC normative requirements relevant for the use of this standard are provided in the applicable Forest Stewardship Standards (FSS<sup>1</sup>) and in the reference documents listed below. For references without a version number, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

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FSC-POL-20-003 *The Excision of Areas from the Scope of Certification*

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FSC-POL-30-001 *FSC Pesticides Policy*

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FSC-PRO-30-006 *Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market Tools*

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FSC-PRO-60-007 *Structure, Content and Development of Interim National Standards*

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FSC-STD-01-001 *FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship*

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FSC-STD-01-002 *FSC Glossary of Terms*

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FSC-STD-01-003 *SLIMF eligibility criteria*

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FSC-STD-20-001 *General requirements for FSC accredited certification bodies*

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FSC-STD-20-006 *Stakeholder consultation for forest evaluations*

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FSC-STD-30-005 *Forest Management Groups*

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### **FSC normative documents replaced by this standard:**

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FSC-STD-20-007a *Forest Management Evaluations Addendum – Forest Certification Reports*

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FSC-STD-20-007b *Forest Management Evaluations Addendum – Forest Certification Public Summary Reports*

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### **Notes for stakeholders for the consultation of the draft**

In parallel to this revision process, FSC has revised FSC-PRO-60-010 Incorporating a risk-based approach in National Forest Stewardship Standards and its Guideline which provides the process steps for incorporating a risk-based approach (RBA) in National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS) or Regional Forest Stewardship Standards (RFSS). The revised FSC-PRO-60-010 was approved with conditions at the FSC Board of Directors meeting in March 2022 and may be applied by Network Partners for testing subject to initial agreement with FSC. The procedure will be aligned (as necessary) with the final draft FSC-STD-20-007 and will be published and become effective at the same time.

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<sup>1</sup> Including National Forest Stewardship Standards (NFSS), Regional Forest Stewardship Standards (RFSS) and Interim National Standards (INS)

## 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 FSC Accredited 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 (12) months if there was no previous evaluation.

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

NOTE 1: The concept of active and inactive MUs is applicable for forest management groups and multiple MU 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'.

### Box 1. Examples of active management unit

Examples of active management:

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 inactive management:

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).

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**NFSS Risk Assessment:** assessments at national or sub-national level on the risks of non-conformity with the requirements of an National Forest Stewardship Standard (NFSS).

**Organization Profile:** Compilation of information about The Organization that is annually updated by the certification body to determine the appropriate audit methods and, where applicable, to designate and justify changes to the risk designation of criteria and/or indicators of an NFSS Risk Assessment at The Organization level.

**Remote audit:** Audit method, also referred to as desk-audit, 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:

- evaluation of The Organization's sites and facilities, as well as stakeholder interviews by means of teleconference, including audio, video, and data sharing;
- evaluation of documents and records by means of remote access either synchronously (in real time during an audit) or asynchronously (before or after the audit);
- 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 MU combined with its seriousness in terms of consequences. (Source: FSC-STD-01-001 V5-2)

NOTE: In the context of this document, the term "risk" refers to a risk of non-conformity with an indicator or criterion of a National Forest Stewardship Standard, defined as a combination of the likelihood of non-conformity with the potential negative impact of non-conformity with this indicator or criterion.

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

**Specified risk:** A conclusion, following a risk assessment, that there is a specified risk of non-conformity 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. (Adapted from FSC-PRO-60-002a V1-0.)

**Undesignated risk:** A conclusion, following a risk assessment, which is reached either because the criterion or indicator was not included in the scope of the risk assessment (default designation), or no conclusion on risk designation was reached.

### 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.



## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>FSC</b>	Forest Stewardship Council
<b>INS</b>	Interim National Standard
<b>NF</b>	Normative Framework
<b>NFSS</b>	National Forest Stewardship Standard
<b>NRA</b>	National Risk Assessment
<b>PSU</b>	Performance and Standards Unit
<b>QMS</b>	Quality Management System

## PART I GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Basic Principles

- 1.1. Forest management certification granted by an FSC-accredited certification body provides a credible 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. In order to provide such an assurance, the certification body shall:
  - a. Analyse and describe the forest area to be evaluated, including the presence of one or more MUs;
  - b. Confirm that there is a management system in place that is capable of ensuring that all the applicable FSC normative requirements are implemented within every MU in the scope of certification;
  - c. Carry out sampling of sites, documents, management records, conducting interviews, consultation with stakeholders and direct factual observations sufficient to verify that there are no major non-conformities with the performance thresholds and indicators specified in the applicable FSC normative requirements within any MU in the scope of certification.
- 1.2. In the case of forest management groups, beyond the requirements specified in this standard, the certification body shall evaluate The Organization against the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS) and the group requirements according to FSC-STD-30-005.
- 1.3. When evaluating The Organization for conformity with FSC-PRO-30-006 *Ecosystem Services Procedure: Impact Demonstration and Market Tools*, the certification body shall evaluate the requirements according to that procedure.
- 1.4. The certification body shall conduct stakeholder consultations in accordance with FSC-STD-20-006 *Stakeholder Consultation for Forest Evaluations Standard*.
- 1.5. Primary or secondary processing facilities within or adjacent to the MU that are owned or managed by The Organization shall not be included in the scope of the FM/CoC certification. The certification body shall grant a separate CoC certification to these facilities when they have passed a successful CoC evaluation according to the requirements of FSC-STD-20-011 *Chain of Custody Evaluations*.

NOTE: Low intensity activities carried out in the forest such as log cutting, de-barking, 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 within the MU may be evaluated as part of the scope of the FM/CoC certification.

### 2. Data access and collection

- 2.1. The certification body may share its checklists (e.g., draft certification report) with The Organization prior to the evaluation asking it to pre-fill information 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 or records of The Organization that may 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;
  - f. Records of any corrective action requests issued by the group entity.

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

- 3.1. When an NFSS Risk Assessment developed according to FSC-PRO-60-010 applies to the country 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 applicable NFSS;
  - b. the identified factors influencing the risk of non-conformities 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 non-conformity (low risk).

- 3.2. The certification body may change the risk status designated to criteria and/or indicators in the NFSS Risk Assessment to a different risk at The Organization level based on its own risk assessment.
- 3.3. To change the risk status according to Clause 3.2, the certification body shall use the risk factors provided in the NFSS Risk Assessment (See Clause 3.1 b) and note them in the Organization Profile (see Annex 1).

NOTE: This assessment might develop over time due to the context, the performance of the certified organization and the certification body's knowledge.

- 3.4. The changed risk designation together with its justification shall be evidence-based and the deviations shall be included in the evaluation report (Annex 4).
- 3.5. The changes in risk designations from specified-risk to low-risk shall be included in the public summary (Annex 4).

### **4. Determination of the audit time**

- 4.1. The certification body shall maintain a procedure for calculating audit times needed to execute complete and effective audits considering the activities below:
- a. conducting the opening and closing meeting;

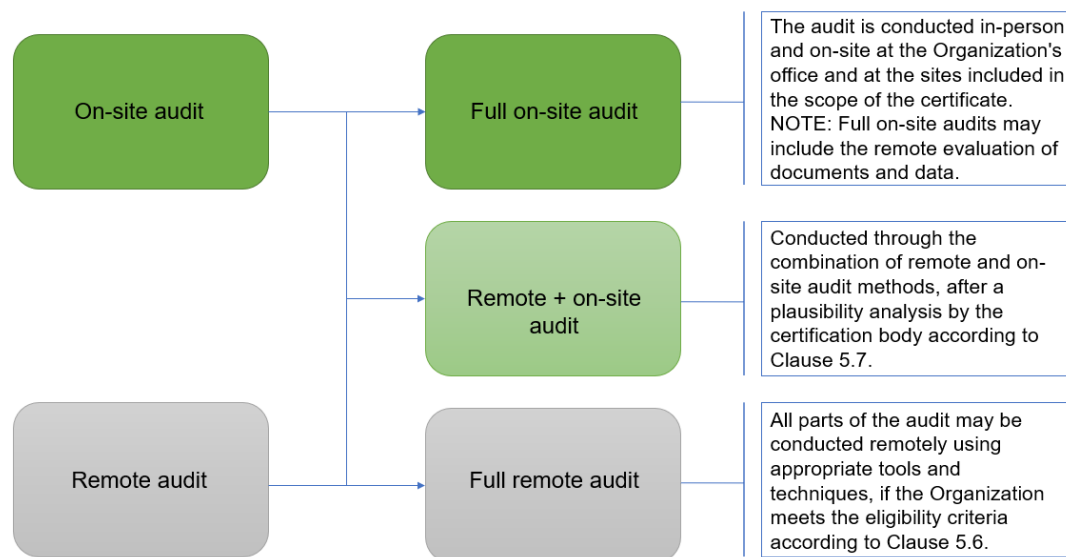
- b. performing document and records review;
- c. conducting culturally appropriate stakeholder consultation;
- d. evaluating a sample of the sites and contractors included in the scope of certification;
- e. travelling to and between sites;
- f. collecting and verifying information;
- g. evaluating open non-conformities;
- h. analysing and compiling audit findings.

4.2. Based on this procedure, the certification body shall record and justify the audit time in person days for each evaluation in the evaluation report.

## 5. Determination of the audit method

- 5.1. The certification body shall determine the appropriate audit method based on the information in the Organization Profile.
- 5.2. 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 as illustrated in Graphic 1.

Graphic 1. Audit methods



- 5.3. The justification for the selection of the audit method shall be included in the evaluation report and public summary.
- 5.4. Both remote and on-site audits shall be performed by a qualified audit team. 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.
- 5.5. The full remote audit method may only be applied at pre-evaluations and surveillance evaluations. It shall not be applied in main evaluations and re-evaluations.
- 5.6. Organizations (except for Small or Low Intensity Managed Forest Management Unit – hereinafter SLIMF) that meet all remote auditing eligibility criteria specified in the Organization Profile are eligible for a maximum of two (2) full-remote audits in a five-year certification cycle.

NOTE: Even though an Organization meets the remote auditing eligibility criteria, the certification body may decide to conduct the audit on-site.

- 5.7. For Organizations (except for SLIMF) that partially meet remote auditing eligibility criteria specified in the Organization Profile, the certification body may combine remote and on-site audit methods in the surveillance evaluation. In this case, the certification body shall conduct a plausibility analysis to determine whether certain requirements and sites can credibly be audited remotely. In the case of a single SLIMF, the certification body shall carry out at least one on-site audit in a five-year certification cycle. If there are no outstanding corrective actions or complaints which require on-site verification, the remaining audits in that cycle may be conducted remotely.
- 5.8. In the case of groups of SLIMF or sets of 'like' MUs qualifying as SLIMFs, the certification body shall conduct the audit of the first surveillance evaluation and at least one additional audit during surveillance on-site in a five-year certification cycle. If there are no outstanding corrective actions or complaints which require on-site verification, the remaining audits in that cycle may be conducted remotely.
- 5.9. In the case of a demonstrated security risk for the life or health of auditors, the certification body may apply for a derogation to replace an on-site audit by a remote audit.

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

## **6. Preparation requirements for pre-evaluation**

- 6.1. The certification body shall complete a pre-evaluation in accordance with the requirements in Section 9 of this standard prior to the main evaluation of any MU of the following categories:
  - a. Plantations larger than 10,000 ha;
  - b. Natural forests larger than 50,000 hectares, unless the whole MU meets the requirements for classification as a "low intensity managed forest" (see FSC-STD-01-003).
- 6.2. If an MU contains High Conservation Values or if it is unknown if they are present, a pre-evaluation shall be conducted, unless the MU qualifies as SLIMF.
- 6.3. The certification body shall take a precautionary approach to the likelihood that an MU may include High Conservation Values. The certification body should request this information from The Organization in the application phase and check for the presence of High Conservation Values in the MU on FSC's Geographic Information System Portal or other High Conservation Value maps (e.g., [www.globalforestwatch.org](http://www.globalforestwatch.org) for Intact Forest Landscapes).
- 6.4. The pre-evaluation may be waived if The Organization is already certified according to FSC-STD-30-010 FSC Controlled Wood Standard for Forest Management Enterprises.
- 6.5. A pre-evaluation may be conducted for any MU not meeting the criteria specified in Clause 6.1 or Clause 6.2, at the discretion of the certification body or on request of The Organization, prior to any main evaluation.
- 6.6. Pre-evaluations are not required in the case of re-evaluations.
- 6.7. 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 the main evaluation is not carried out.

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.

## 7. Preparation requirements for main evaluation

- 7.1. The certification body shall use the results of pre-evaluations in the preparation of a subsequent main evaluation.
- 7.2. Preparation for a main evaluation shall include:
  - a. Identification of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard (FSS). If the country or region in which the evaluation is to take place does not yet have an FSC-approved FSS, the CB shall develop an Interim Forest Stewardship Standard in accordance with relevant FSC requirements;
  - b. An analysis of the overall 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).

## 8. Selecting management units and sites for evaluation

### 8.1. General requirements

- 8.1.1. In the case of main evaluations and re-evaluations, the certification body shall complete an analysis of the area included in the scope of the evaluation in terms of discrete MUs, and management systems in place.
- 8.1.2. The certification body shall classify the MUs included in the scope of the 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 (natural forest vs. plantation);
  - b. Size of the MU (see Sections 8.4 and 8.5);
  - c. Whether the MU has been classified as active or inactive;
  - d. Other factors as may be defined in the applicable FSS.
- 8.1.3. Forest management groups or multiple MUs may consist of one or more sets of 'like' MUs.
- 8.1.4. In the case of forest management groups comprised of SLIMF and non-SLIMF the certification body may apply SLIMF streamlined procedures as applicable to sets of 'like' MUs that only comprise of SLIMF.

### 8.2. Number of management units for evaluation

- 8.2.1. For each set of 'like' MUs identified, the certification body shall select a minimum number of MUs for evaluation, as follows:
  - a. In the case of multiple MUs, by applying the formula  $x = 0.8 * \sqrt{y}$  for each set of 'like' MUs ( $y$  = number of MUs within the set of 'like' MUs);
  - b. In the case of forest management groups, as specified in Sections 8.3-8.7 of this standard.

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

- 8.2.2. In the case of multiple MUs, for sets of 'like' MUs where all MUs have been defined as inactive since the last evaluation, the certification body shall apply the formula  $X = 0.1 * \sqrt{y}$  (y= number of MUs within the set of "inactive" MUs).

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

- 8.2.3. The certification body shall then 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 and ensure that the sample selected is representative of the whole forest area under evaluation in terms of:
- Geographical distribution, and
  - The personnel responsible for operational management of the selected MUs.
- 8.2.4. The number of MUs to be audited in a surveillance evaluation of multiple MUs shall be at least half the number of MUs audited during the main evaluation.
- 8.2.5. If new MUs (e.g., newly acquired MUs) have been added to the scope of certification since the last evaluation, they shall be sampled at the rate of a main evaluation.

### 8.3. Sampling for group certification

- 8.3.1. For sets of 'like' MUs where all MUs have been defined as inactive since the last evaluation, the certification body shall apply the formula  $X = 0.1 * \sqrt{y}$  (y= number of MUs within the set of 'inactive' MUs).
- NOTE: If inactive MUs are not specified by the group entity, all MUs are treated as 'active'.
- 8.3.2. If the MUs that have been added to the scope of an existing group certification have been FSC certified within the last six (6) months, they may be sampled at the rate of an annual surveillance.
- 8.3.3. The CB shall increase the number of MUs and contractors to be evaluated in relation to the calculated minimum when risk factors are identified (e.g., significant changes in management systems), stakeholder complaints, allegations of non-conformity, etc.

### 8.4. Sampling process for active medium and large size management units

- 8.4.1. The number of active medium and large size MUs to be audited within each set of 'like' MUs shall be calculated according to the formula in Table 1. The number of MUs calculated (x) must be rounded to the upper whole number to determine the number of units to be sampled.

Table 1. Number of MUs to be audited (x) within each set of 'like' MUs

Size class	Main evaluation	Surveillance and re-evaluation
> 10,000 ha	$X = y$	$X = 0.8 * y$
1,000 – 10,000 ha	$X = 0.3 * y$	$X = 0.2 * y$

- 8.4.2. All sets of 'like' MUs shall be audited in the main evaluation.
- 8.4.3. 50% of the sets of 'like' MUs shall be audited in surveillance and re-evaluations for MUs in size class 1,000-10,000 ha, and all sets of 'like' MUs must be audited in surveillance and re-evaluations for MUs > 10,000 ha.



- 8.4.4. For each set of 'like' MUs to be sampled, the certification body shall select a minimum number of MUs for evaluation (x) by applying the applicable formula in Table 3 (y= total number of MUs within a set of 'like' MUs).

## 8.5. Sampling process for active small size management units

- 8.5.1. The number of active small size MUs to be audited within each set of like MUs shall be calculated according to the formula in Table 2. The number of MUs calculated (x) must be rounded to the upper whole number to determine the number of units to be sampled.

Table 2. Number of MUs to be audited (x) within each set of 'like' Mus

Size class <sup>2</sup>	Main evaluation	Surveillance and re-evaluation
100 -1,000 ha	$X = 0.8 * \sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$
SLIMF	$X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.3 * \sqrt{y}$

- 8.5.2. Sampling for MUs ≤ 1,000 ha shall be conducted in a two-step approach.
- 8.5.3. Step 1 defines the minimum number of sets of 'like' MUs to be sampled in each evaluation. This number (x) shall be calculated by entering the total number of sets of 'like' MUs (y) into the applicable formula in Table 2.
- 8.5.4. Step 2 defines the minimum number of MUs to be sampled within each set of 'like' MUs. For this purpose, MUs managed by the same managerial body (e.g., the same resource manager) may be combined into a single 'resource management unit' (RMU). The number of MUs to be sampled (x) shall be calculated by entering the total number of MUs (y= number of MUs directly managed by the forest owner + number of RMUs) within the set of 'like' MUs (y) into the applicable formula in Table 2.
- 8.5.5. For the purposes of sampling, SLIMF MUs within an RMU may be considered to equal one MU.
- NOTE: Non-SLIMF MUs within an RMU shall be sampled in accordance with Tables 1 and 2 (above).
- 8.5.6. In case of existence of risk factors, stakeholder complaints or non-conformities, the CB shall increase the number of MUs to be audited in relation to the calculated minimum.
- 8.5.7. The sample of MUs selected for the evaluation shall include representatives of MUs that were part of the most recent internal monitoring of the forest management group.

## 8.6. Mega groups of small size MUs ≤ 1,000 ha

- 8.6.1. For mega groups or sets of small size MUs having more than 5,000 members per group or set, the certification body may sub-stratify the group or sets of small size MUs according to the level of risk in relation to presence of High Conservation Values, land tenure or land use disputes, and length of harvesting cycles.
- 8.6.2. The certification body may reduce the sampling size determined using Table 2 for MUs within a set of 'like' MUs by a maximum of 50%, in the demonstrated absence of:

<sup>2</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.

### 8.7. Sampling process for contractors in the scope of group certification

- 8.7.1. The minimum number of contractors to be evaluated out of the total number of contractors (y) in the forest management group shall be calculated according to the formula in Table 3. The calculated number of contractors shall be rounded to the upper whole number to determine the actual size of the sample.

Table 3. Number of contractors to be evaluated (X).

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

- 8.7.2. The sample should include contractors that performed activities within the existing sample of MUs during the evaluation period (e.g., previous 12 months).
- 8.7.3. If new contractors have been added to the scope of certification since the last evaluation, the new contractors shall be sampled at the rate of a main evaluation.
- 8.7.4. Each contractor within the group shall have been audited by the certification body at least once in a 5-year certification cycle.

### 8.8. Selection of sites

- 8.8.1. The certification body shall audit a sufficient variety and number of sites within each MU selected for evaluation to make direct, factual observations of conformity with the requirements of the applicable FSS.

NOTE: Examples of sites that may be assessed are listed in Annex 3 of this standard.

- 8.8.2. The certification body shall select the sites for evaluation based on an analysis of the critical points of risk of non-conformity in the management system.

## PART II FOREST MANAGEMENT EVALUATIONS

### 9. Pre-evaluation

- 9.1. Pre-evaluations shall include the following elements:

- a. Review and discussion with The Organization of the requested scope of certification to determine the full range of applicable FSC normative requirements such as group certification, trademark and pesticide use requirements, etc.
- b. Review and discussion with The Organization of the requirements of the normative document(s) to be used for the evaluation, including procedural requirements such as stakeholder consultation (see FSC-STD-20-006).

- 9.2. In the case of group or multiple MU evaluations, the certification body shall:

- a. Carry out an analysis and description of the MUs proposed for inclusion within the scope of certification, in conformity with the requirements of Sections 9 and 10.2;
- 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;
  - d. In the case of group certification applicants, carry out an explicit review of conformity with the requirements for group entities (see FSC-STD-30-005).
- 9.3. Identify, based on information provided by The Organization, major gaps or likely problem areas in respect to The Organization's conformity with any of the requirements of the applicable FSC normative requirements.
- 9.4. 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 audit findings shall subsequently be included in the evaluation report.
- 9.5. Key stakeholders shall be identified and consulted during the pre-evaluation.
- 9.6. In a voluntary pre-evaluation, Clause 9.5 may be carried out in confidence if this is requested by The Organization.

## 10. Main evaluation

### 10.1. General requirements

- 10.1.1. In the main evaluation 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 unless Clause 10.1.2 applies.
- 10.1.2. For requirements designated as low risk in the NFSS Risk Assessment and confirmed as such by the certification body. The certification body is not required to actively seek evidence of conformity of The Organization against these requirements unless there are substantiated concerns from stakeholders about the low-risk designation.
- NOTE: For low-risk indicators, the conclusion of conformity in the evaluation report can be based on a statement that "no evidence of non-conformity was observed".
- 10.1.3. The certification body shall ensure that there is sufficient audit time and appropriate evaluation method chosen to evaluate all specified or undesignated risk requirements from the applicable FSS.
- 10.1.4. In the case of evaluations of multiple MUs and groups or sets of 'like' MUs qualifying as SLIMF, 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 be audited by the certification body against all the requirements of the applicable FSS.
- 10.1.5. 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).

### 10.2. Evaluation of management system(s)

- 10.2.1. 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;
  - b. The full range of management activities.

- 10.2.2. 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);
  - 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).
- 10.2.3. 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.
- 10.2.4. The certification body shall evaluate the tracking and tracing of forest products within the MUs in the scope of certification up to the forest gate, and procedures for the identification of products sourced from the evaluated MUs as part of the analysis of the management system.
- 10.2.5. The certification body shall identify and evaluate management documentation and a sufficient variety and number of records at each MU selected for evaluation as to make direct, factual observations to verify conformity with all the indicators of the applicable FSS that are under evaluation at that MU and for which such documents are a necessary means of verification.

NOTE: Examples of such documentation and records are listed in Annex 2 of this standard.

## 11. Surveillance evaluation

### 11.1. Surveillance evaluation shall include:

- a. Evaluation of The Organization's conformity with corrective action requests;
- b. Review of any complaints or allegations of non-conformity with any aspect of the applicable FSS;
- c. 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 under evaluation.

### 11.2. Where there is an approved NFSS Risk Assessment, the certification body shall prioritize the requirements designated as specified risks of non-conformity in the NFSS.

### 11.3. Where requirements are designated as low risk in the NFSS Risk Assessment and confirmed as such by the certification body, the certification body is not required to actively seek evidence of conformity of The Organization against those requirements, unless there are substantiated concerns from stakeholders about the low-risk designation.

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

### 11.4. 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 within a five-year certification cycle. The certification body's risk assessment specified in Clause 3.2 should support the selection of the requirements for evaluation according to the risks at Organization level.

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

- a. Plantations larger than 10,000 ha:  
Criteria 1.6; 2.3; 4.4; 4.5; 7.6; 10.2; 10.3; 10.6; 10.7 and 10.12

When the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard is still based on the FSC Principles and Criteria V4, these are: Criteria 2.3; 4.2; 4.4; 6.7; 6.9; 10.6; 10.7 and 10.8.

- b. All natural forests larger than 50,000 hectares, unless the whole area meets the eligibility criteria for SLIMF (see FSC-STD-01-003):

Criteria 1.4; 1.6; 2.3; 3.2; 3.4; 4.4; 4.5; 5.2; 6.4; 6.6; 7.6; 8.2 and 9.4.

When the applicable FSS is still based on the FSC Principles and Criteria V4, these criteria are: 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. MUs containing High Conservation Values, unless the whole area meets the eligibility criteria for SLIMF (see FSC-STD-01-003)

Criteria 6.4; 6.6; 9.4 and 10.3

When applicable FSS is still based on the FSC Principles and Criteria V4, these are: Criteria 6.2; 6.3; 6.9 and 9.4

11.6. 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 instead of the criteria listed in Clause 11.5 for these types of MUs.

11.7. For MUs not meeting the thresholds listed in Clause 11.5, the certification body is not expected to evaluate all requirements with specified risk at each surveillance but shall evaluate all undesignated and specified risk requirements within a five-year certification cycle.

11.8. The certification body shall review during surveillance:

- 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. Accident records;
- e. Training records;
- f. Operational plan(s) for the next 12 months;
- g. Inventory records;
- h. Harvesting records;
- i. Chemical use records, including records of quantitative data on the pesticides use;
- j. Records of sales of FSC certified products (copies of invoices, bills, shipping documents).

- 11.9. The certification body shall evaluate the capacity of The Organization's management system to manage any change in the scope of certification including any increase in size, number or complexity of MUs.

## 12. Re-evaluation

- 12.1. The certification body shall complete a re-evaluation prior to the expiry of certification as a prerequisite for granting re-certification.
- 12.2. Re-evaluation shall follow the same procedures as for main evaluation, with the following exceptions:
- a. Pre-evaluations are not required;
  - b. The certification body is not required to submit the evaluation report for peer review;
  - c. 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.
  - d. MUs may be selected at the rate as for annual surveillance for forest management groups and multiple MUs.
- 12.3. 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 and confirmed as such by the certification body unless there are substantiated concerns from stakeholders about the low-risk designation.

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

## 13. Conflicts between laws and regulations

- 13.1. 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.
- 13.2. 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, involving:
- a. FSC Network Partners and/or Standard Development Groups, where they exist.
  - b. PSU if deemed appropriate.
- 13.3. If the conflict cannot be resolved, and the non-conformity with the requirement(s) results in, or is likely to result in a fundamental failure, the certification body shall issue a major corrective action request.
- 13.4. The certification body shall follow a precautionary approach in cases where there are:
- a. Conflicting, contradictory, or otherwise inconsistent requirements for The Organization within or between applicable laws, regulations, and administrative requirements;
  - b. Differing interpretations of the above listed legal instruments by public authorities.
- 13.5. A precautionary approach towards these cases 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.

13.6. The certification body shall have a procedure for using the precautionary approach.

13.7. 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.

## **PART III CERTIFICATION DECISION**

### **14. General requirements**

14.1. The certification body shall make certification decisions based on their evaluation of The Organization's conformity with the requirements specified in the applicable FSC normative requirements and in accordance with FSC-STD-20-001.

### **15. Non-conformities and corrective action requests**

15.1. All non-conformities that are identified by the certification body during an evaluation shall be recorded in the evaluation report and associated checklists.

15.2. Non-conformities with FSC normative requirements shall be recorded and addressed even if these are not in the scope of a particular evaluation.

15.3. Each non-conformity against indicators of the applicable FSS shall be evaluated to determine whether it constitutes a minor or major non-conformity at the level of the associated FSC criterion.

15.4. Each non-conformity against other applicable FSC normative requirements (e.g., FSC-STD-30-005) shall be evaluated to determine whether it constitutes a minor or major non-conformity at the level of the individual requirement.

15.5. Single corrective action requests shall not include requirements that relate to two (2) or more criteria from the applied FSS.

15.6. If a non-conformity is related to indicators from more than one criterion, the corrective action request should be raised against the criterion associated with the root cause of the non-conformity.

15.7. A non-conformity shall be considered major if, either alone or in combination with other non-conformities, it results in, or is likely to result in a fundamental failure:

- a. To achieve the objectives of the relevant FSC criterion or intended outcome of the FSS,  
or
- b. In a significant part of the applied management system.

NOTE: The cumulative impact of a number of minor non-conformities may result in a failure to achieve the overall objectives of the FSS and thus constitute a major non-conformity.

15.8. The certification body shall consider the impact of a non-conformity, taking into account of the fragility and uniqueness of the forest, when evaluating whether a non-conformity results in or is likely to result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant FSC criterion.

- 15.9. A major non-conformity may require immediate action to be taken by The Organization e.g., immediate cessation of use of a highly hazardous pesticide, immediate cessation of dangerous activities or activities causing serious environmental damage
- 15.10. If the certification body receives specific information of particular instances or allegations of non-conformity with aspects of the applicable FSC normative requirements at specific MUs (for example, information received from stakeholder consultation), the certification body shall investigate those instances. Such instances shall be evaluated to determine if the allegation is valid and, if valid, whether they constitute major or minor non-conformities with the FSC normative requirements.
- 15.11. Joint forest management/chain of custody certification 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 an assurance that all products invoiced with an FSC claim by The Organization originate from the MUs in the scope of certification.

## 16. Non-conformities in Forest Management Groups

- 16.1. 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'.
- 16.2. 'Group failure' shall lead to corrective actions, 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;
  - 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 failures or few major failures may suggest a breakdown in the group system for quality control and may be considered sufficient reason to suspend or withdraw certification.
- 16.3. Depending on the number and seriousness, 'member failure' or 'forestry contractor failure' shall lead to corrective actions, suspension or expulsion of a group member or forestry contractor, respectively.



## PART IV REPORTING

### 17. Evaluation report

#### Notes for stakeholders for the consultation of the draft

This standard and Annex 4 will introduce the mandatory content of the evaluation report for conformity assessment purposes which are provided in Annex 4.

Apart from data on evaluation, the FSC digital reporting template will include data needed for FSC monitoring and evaluation and FSC system integrity purposes. The scope of monitoring and evaluation, as well as system integrity data is regulated outside this standard. The scope of monitoring and evaluation data will be included in FSC standard setting process in the future. The scope of system integrity data will be determined based on ongoing assessment of system integrity needs.

Any changes to the reporting template(s) will be subject to defined process involving certification bodies, including a transition period to enable adaptation of certification body's management systems.

- 17.1. The certification body shall complete the evaluation report for each evaluation, using the applicable reporting template(s) provided by FSC (Annex 4).
- 17.2. The certification body may provide the evaluation report in language of the convenience of The Organization and the people involved in the certification body's technical review and decision-making process.
- 17.3. The evaluation report submitted to FSC via the FSC digital reporting template shall be in one of the official languages of FSC.
- 17.4. The certification body shall submit the evaluation report to The Organization and to the FSC Database (<https://info.fsc.org/>) within the following timelines:
  - a. For pre-evaluations: 90 days from the closing meeting;
  - b. For main evaluation: 90 days from the closing meeting for the preliminary report and 12 months for the final report;
  - c. For surveillance evaluation and re-evaluation: 90 days from the closing meeting, and up to 120 days in justified exceptional circumstances.

### 18. Public summary

- 18.1. 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.
- 18.2. For certifications 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.
- 18.3. The certification body shall submit the public summary and its translated version(s) to the FSC database (<https://info.fsc.org/>) within the following timelines:



- a. For main evaluations and re-evaluations: before certification is granted to The Organization;
- b. For surveillance evaluations: 90 days from the closing meeting and up to 120 days in justified exceptional circumstances.

18.4. No public summaries shall be removed from the FSC database by the certification body.

NOTE: FSC reserves the right to archiving the published reports and data.

## ANNEX 1 ORGANIZATION PROFILE

### Eligibility criteria for remote auditing method for non-SLIMF MUs

a.	There are no open non-conformities to be evaluated on-site	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	None of the following happened since the last evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>repeated non-conformities</li> <li>more than four open non-conformities</li> <li>non-conformities not being closed within timelines</li> <li>Switching between certification bodies</li> <li>The Organization's certification has been blocked by FSC</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	The Organization's certification hasn't been suspended or terminated and certified again in the last 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	There have not been any substantiated complaints related to scope of The Organization's certification being submitted to the certification body since the last evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	There are no unresolved disputes related to land tenure with affected stakeholders (e.g., Indigenous Peoples, local communities)	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	The certification body is not aware of any issues in the public domain (NGO reports, media articles), court cases or legal proceedings related to management activities of The Organization that may indicate potential nonconformities	<input type="checkbox"/>
g.	The certification body has access to up-to-date satellite imagery of the MUs (e.g., through the FSC GIS Portal)	<input type="checkbox"/>
h.	The Organization and the auditors have the communication tools and technologies that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sufficient for videoconference</li> <li>accessible to all relevant stakeholders included in the scope of the audit without having to use The Organization's facilities</li> <li>accessible throughout the full range of The Organization's MUs included in the scope of the audit?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i.	The certification body has the possibility to securely and confidentially access information from The Organization remotely (e.g., inventory data, maps, shape files)	<input type="checkbox"/>
j.	The Organization has the ability to securely and confidentially share real-time (immediately while the audit is taking place) documents and systems remotely with the certification body	<input type="checkbox"/>
k.	The Organization is able to ensure the availability of key staff at the times defined for the audit	<input type="checkbox"/>
l.	It is possible to interview workers securely and confidentially in remotely	<input type="checkbox"/>
m.	The Organization can provide disclosure of all workers and their respective roles included in the scope of the audit prior to the audit	<input type="checkbox"/>
n.	The application of information and communication technology (ICT), as for example videoconference, a stakeholder engagement method that is considered in harmony with the customs, values, sensitivities, and ways of life of workers, communities and individuals included in the scope of the audit.	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Certification Body's justification for the selection of audit method:

- ☐ The Organization meets all remote auditing eligibility criteria above and is therefore eligible for a full remote surveillance audit.
- 
- ☐ The Organization meets none or part of the remote auditing eligibility criteria above. Therefore, The Organization shall be evaluated through on-site auditing.
- 
- ☐ The Organization meets partially the remote auditing eligibility criteria. However, the certification body concluded that some aspects of the present evaluation can be audited remotely (e.g., remote stakeholder interviews) based on justification provided by the certification body.
- NOTE: the certification body is required to provide justification for the selected audit method in the evaluation report.
- 

### Changes to risk designations of NFSS Risk Assessment at The Organization level

NFSS Risk Assessment		Risk assessment by certification body	
Criterion/Indicator	Risk designation at NFSS Risk Assessment (e.g., low/ undesignated/ specified risk)	New risk designation assigned by the Certification Body (e.g., low/ undesignated/ specified risk)	Evidence for justifying the change in the risk designation (e.g., example of evidence, mitigation measures)
...			

## ANNEX 2 EXAMPLES OF DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS

The following list provides examples of some of the documents and records that could be used to assess conformity with FSC normative requirements. This is not a complete list, nor is the certification body required to inspect all documents listed here.

- a. Copies of applicable laws
- b. Long term management plan(s)
- c. Technical management guides relating to roads, nurseries, planting, harvesting, inventory, etc.
- d. Concession agreements
- e. Documentation showing tenure or land-use rights and Indigenous Cultural Landscapes.
- f. Up-to-date maps of roads, management sites, etc.
- g. Inventory records
- h. Work instructions
- i. Contractor contracts
- j. Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) agreements with affected local communities
- k. Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) agreements with affected Indigenous Peoples, etc.
- l. Records of payments of royalties, fees, or taxes
- m. Records of complaints/disputes and their resolution
- n. Records of payments to workers
- o. Wildlife evaluation records
- p. Environmental impacts monitoring records, e.g. on water quality, soil condition
- q. Social impact survey results
- r. Results of monitoring forest growth and health
- s. Harvesting and production records
- t. Chemical use records
- u. Communications with stakeholders
- v. Purchasing and sales documentation
- w. Maps including information on the High Conservation Values

## ANNEX 3 EXAMPLES OF SITES FOR EVALUATION

The following list provides examples of some of the sites that should be audited to assess conformity with FSC normative requirements. This is not a complete list, nor is the certification body required to audit all sites listed here.

- a. Seed orchards;
- b. Nurseries;
- c. Production forest areas in a sufficient variety of conditions (e.g. on steeper slopes; different soil conditions; different silvicultural systems), including areas:
  - i. marked for thinning;
  - ii. recently thinned;
  - iii. marked for harvesting;
  - iv. recently harvested;
  - v. one year after harvesting;
  - vi. five years after harvesting;
  - vii. ten years after harvesting.
- d. Worker accommodation and amenities;
- e. Areas used by communities and/or Indigenous Peoples within or near the forest area;
- f. Water courses of different sizes, within and downstream of the forest area;
- g. Roads and forest roads of different sizes affected by the forest management;
- h. Sites where chemicals have been applied or stored, pesticide buffer zones, and pesticide exclusion zones;
- i. Protected areas (e.g., Conservation Areas Network, Representative Sample Areas) and potential High Conservation Value areas;
- j. Monitoring sites;
- k. Boundaries between MU and Indigenous Peoples or local communities.

## ANNEX 4 CONTENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT AND PUBLIC SUMMARY

Evaluation reports are of particular importance. 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;
- 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 are simplified reports that contain a summary of key information about each Organization's evaluation and that is 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., SLIMF's public summaries are typically shorter than the reports of large forest operations).

### Notes for stakeholders for the consultation of the draft

In parallel to this revision process, FSC has launched the standardized format for digital audit reporting which will be implemented in phases across all FSC Forest Management evaluations. The digital audit report template is based on existing requirements in the addenda of FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0. It is also planned that the public summaries will be in the future automatically generated through the FSC digital reporting system.

Addenda a) and b) of FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 of the Standard have been replaced by new reporting requirements in Annex 4 of the draft standard – Table 4.

## 19. The mandatory content of the evaluation report and public summary

19.1. The mandatory content of the evaluation report for conformity assessment purposes and the public summary are specified in Table 4.

Table 4. Mandatory content of the evaluation report and public summary.

Information elements		Evaluation Type <sup>3</sup> For SLIMF			Public Summary	
		ME	SE	RE		
CERTIFICATION BODY INFORMATION						
1.	Certification body name and contact details	x	x	x	x	x
2.	Names, roles and expertise of the auditor(s) involved in the evaluation	x	x	x	x	
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	Optional	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	
10.	Description of how risk-based approaches were applied in the evaluation: a. justification for the audit time b. description of the audit team expertise c. justification for the audit method	x	x	x	x	x
11.	Specification of the audit method employed for the evaluation (full on-site audit, remote audit or a combination of both).	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	x	x	x	Optional	

<sup>3</sup> The evaluation types have been abbreviated as follows: Main Evaluation (ME), Surveillance Evaluation (SE) and Re-Evaluation (RE).

b. sites audited within each selected MU (optional for SLIMF MUs).					
14. Rationale for selecting MUs for evaluation	x	x	x	Optional	
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.					
<b>Stakeholder input</b>					
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 certification report (nor in the public summary report). It is 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". 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.					
17. Anonymized summary of the stakeholders' comments and the corresponding follow-up 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 follow-up 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 confidentiality of the complainant.					
<b>MANAGEMENT SYSTEM</b>					
<b>Management Units</b>					
19. An explanation of how the MU meets the eligibility criteria as a SLIMF (FSC-STD-01-003), if applicable.	x	x	x	x	
20. List of non-SLIMF MUs (e.g., MU name or cadastral number)	x	x	x	x	x
21. List of SLIMF MUs and the SLIMF type as per FSC-STD-01-003	x	x	x	x	x
22. Total certified area	x	x	x	x	x
23. Forest zone ((boreal, temperate, subtropical, tropical)	x	x	x	x	
24. Tenure ownership	x	x	x	x	
25. Tenure management	x	x	x	x	
26. Geographical location of the centre of the MU. For SLIMF groups the geographical location of the centre of the group	x	x	x	x	x



27. Information about the use of the area, including production forest, natural forest, plantation, restored areas, conservation areas, areas covered by ecosystem claims, etc.	x	x	x	x	
28. Description and area of the MU that have been excised from the scope of certification according to FSC-POL-20-003.	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Forest Management Plan</b>					
29. A summary of the legislative, administrative and land use contexts in which The Organization, 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
30. A summary of the management plan, including a description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The management objectives;</li> <li>b. The forest resources (land use and ownership status, socio-economic conditions, forest composition, profile of adjacent lands);</li> <li>c. The management structures (e.g., management structure, division of responsibilities, use of contractors, provision of training, etc.) implemented by The Organization;</li> <li>d. The silvicultural and/or other management systems being implemented (incl. harvesting techniques and equipment, rationale for species selection);</li> <li>e. The environmental safeguards;</li> <li>f. The management strategy for the identification and protection of rare, threatened, and endangered species and High Conservation Values;</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>	x		x	x	
31. Annual allowable cut (AAC), including estimate of the maximum sustainable yield for the main commercial species including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Explanation of the assumptions (e.g., silvicultural) on which estimates are based;</li> <li>b. Reference to the source of data (e.g., inventory data, permanent sample plots, yield tables) on which estimates are based.</li> </ul>	x	x	x	x	
32. Investments and measures taken for the prevention and control of natural hazards (fires, storm, flood, disease, pests, pathogens etc.) during the last calendar year.	x		x	x	
33. Categories of High Conservation Values present, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Area per category of HCV;</li> <li>b. Any changes to the previously existing areas</li> </ul>	x	x	x	x	
<b>Pesticides</b>					
34. List of pesticides (active ingredient and trade name) used, including the highly restricted, restricted highly hazardous pesticides (HHP) and the prohibited ones (only in emergency situations or by governmental order)	x	x	x	x	x
35. Applied areas	x	x	x	x	x
36. Quantity, number and frequency of applications and reason for use	x	x	x	x	x
37. Environmental and Social Risk Assessment (ESRA)	x		x	x	
38. Valid HHP derogation (if any)	x	x	x	x	
<b>Forest workers</b>					
39. Number of forest workers (including contractors) working within the scope of certification (differentiated by gender)	x	x	x	x	

40. Total number of worker related accidents since previous audit differentiating between minor, serious and fatal accidents.	x	x	x	
<b>Commercial timber species and non-timber forest products</b>				
41. Species, product codes and trade names of timber and non-timber forest products currently included in the scope of certification	x	x	x	x
42. Harvest volume since the last evaluation	x	x	x	x
43. Volume sold with FSC claim since the last evaluation		x	x	x
44. The following elements shall be included in all reports for joint FM and CoC certificates:	x	x	x	x
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 client 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);				
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;				
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.				
<b>Forest Management Groups</b>				
45. Total number of group members.	x	x	x	x
46. Description of division of responsibilities with entities included into the scope of certification:	x	x	x	x
a. group entity;				
b. resource manager;				
c. group member;				
d. forestry contractor.				
47. 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
48. Number of members sampled by group entity since the last evaluation.		x	x	x
49. The maximum number of members according to FSC-STD-30-005 Clause 5.1.	x	x	x	x
50. Group member's:				
a) name	x	x	x	Optional x
b) contact details	x	x	x	Optional x
c) Certified area	x	x	x	Optional
d) Specification of whether the member is a contractor	x	x	x	Optional x
e) For contractors: the date of entering the group and, where relevant, the date of leaving the group	x	x	x	Optional x
<b>NFSS Risk Assessment</b>				

51. Link to the NFSS Risk Assessment (if applicable)	x	x	x	x	x
52. Certification body's changes of risk designation at The Organization level together with their justification	x	x	x	x	
53. Changes in risk designations from specified-risk or undesignated to low-risk	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Ecosystem Services</b>					
54. Date of the evaluation of the verified or validated ES impact in accordance with FSC-PRO-30-006	x	x	x	x	x
55. Ecosystem services claims with ES impact	x	x	x	x	x
56. Name of the management unit(s) covered	x	x	x	x	x
57. Date of verification or validation of the impact	x	x	x	x	x
58. Approved on	x	x	x	x	x
59. Valid until	x	x	x	x	x
60. Name and contact details of the ES sponsor	x	x	x	x	x
61. Ecosystem Service Sponsored	x	x	x	x	x
62. Management unit where the sponsored ES is located	x	x	x	x	x
63. Start of sponsorship	x	x	x	x	x
64. End of sponsorship	x	x	x	x	x
<b>AUDIT FINDINGS AND NON-CONFORMITIES</b>					
65. A systematic presentation of the audit findings on which the certification decision is based at the level of the indicators defined in the applicable standard(s), indicating whether they have been identified as the result of stakeholder consultation, whether the finding implies a non-conformity. a. For groups, findings shall be presented separately for each MU evaluated, unless all the MUs within the scope of certification meet the eligibility criteria as SLIMFs according to FSC-STD-01-003. b. For SLIMF 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	
66. For public summaries, the certification body shall present 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	x	x	x
67. Identification and 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	
68. Non-conformities and/or observations identified as a result of the present evaluation, and/or non-conformities from previous evaluations remaining to be closed.	x	x	x	x	x
69. A description of any actions taken by The Organization prior to the certification decision to correct major or minor non-conformities that had been identified during the present evaluation.	x	x	x	x	x

70. In cases where one or more stakeholders have alleged a non-conformity, but the auditors have concluded that certification should be granted, the report shall explain why the auditors concluded there was no non-conformity, or why the alleged non-conformity was considered minor, or what action was taken to correct the non-conformity prior to granting certification.	x		x		x
71. A recommendation from the auditor regarding:			x		
a. Whether or not The Organization is in continued conformity with the certification requirements.				x	
b. Whether or not the certificate should be maintained, or if any corrective measures shall be taken.					x
72. Has the certification body identified any infringements of the FSC Policy for Association during the evaluation? Please specify.	x	x	x		x
<b>CERTIFICATION DECISION</b>					
73. Certification decision	x	x	x		x
74. Certification decision date	x	x	x		x
<b>REVIEW</b>					
75. Review finalization date	x	x	x		x
76. Review type (Simple report review or Peer review)	x	x	x		x
77. Reviewer name	x	x	x		x
78. Reviewer expertise	x	x	x		x
79. Auditor response	x	x	x		x



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