

Procedure

Procedure for Equivalence Assessment of Verification Schemes Against the FSC Core Labour Requirements

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Title: Procedure for Equivalence Assessment of Verification Schemes Against the FSC Core Labour Requirements

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OBJECTIVE

The objective of this procedure is to provide clear and transparent methodology for identifying, benchmarking, assessing, and approving verification schemes that can demonstrate compliance with the FSC core labour requirements in <FSC-STD-40-004 Chain of Custody Certification>.

SCOPE

The scope of this procedure is to provide guidance on conducting the equivalence assessment of verification schemes for the FSC core labour requirements in <FSC-STD-40-004 Chain of Custody Certification> and <FSC-STD-20-011 Chain of Custody Evaluations>.

As part of the internal QMS, this document is not subject to the review and revision cycle as described in <FSC-PRO-01-001 The Development and Revision of FSC Requirements>.

This procedure is applicable to the FSC performance and standards unit. The document will be revised as needed.

REFERENCES

The following documents are indispensable for the application of this document.

For references without a version number, the latest version of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies:

FSC-STD-40-004	Chain of Custody Certification
FSC-STD-20-011	Chain of Custody Evaluations
FSC-PRO-01-008	Processing Complaints in the FSC Certification Scheme

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this procedure, the terms and definitions included in <[FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms](#)>, <[FSC-STD-40-004 Chain of Custody Certification](#)>and <[FSC-STD-20-011 Chain of Custody Evaluations](#)>, and the following apply:

Consultant: An external service provider with the expertise in evaluating schemes, verification schemes or international labour standards. This service provider will be contracted by FSC to assess, benchmark, evaluate and recommend verification scheme as equivalent to FSC core labour requirements in accordance with this procedure.

Equivalence: Third party verification scheme recognized as partially or fully equal to the requirements entailed under FSC core labour requirements in <[FSC-STD-40-004 Chain of Custody Certification](#)>and <[FSC-STD-20-011 Chain of Custody Evaluations](#)>.

Verification scheme: Voluntary sustainability standards (VSS), national and regional regulatory mechanisms, corporate practices, internal procurement policies and other initiatives.

Requirements: Necessary conditions defined by a verification scheme in order to ensure that the intended objectives of the verification scheme are achieved. Requirements can be in the form of standards, principles, criteria, statutes, laws, rules, regulations, code of practices, charters, conventions, etc.

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

ASI	Assurance Services International
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
INS	Interim National Standard
NF	Normative Framework
NFSS	National Forest Stewardship Standard
NRA	National Risk Assessment
PSU	Performance and Standards Unit
PSG	Policy Steering Group
CLREA	Core Labour Requirement Equivalence Assessment

PART 1 - PROCEDURE

1. Overview of process for conducting core labour requirement equivalence assessment (CLREA)

- 1.1. The CLREA process shall be undertaken in dedicated evaluation cycles.
- 1.2. Each evaluation cycle will be of twelve months duration and shall consist of the following stages:
 - a) Application for verification schemes to be evaluated
 - b) Feasibility check of application
 - c) Evaluation of verification scheme
 - d) Approval and publication of equivalent verification scheme

NOTE: Only one evaluation cycle will be active at a point in time.

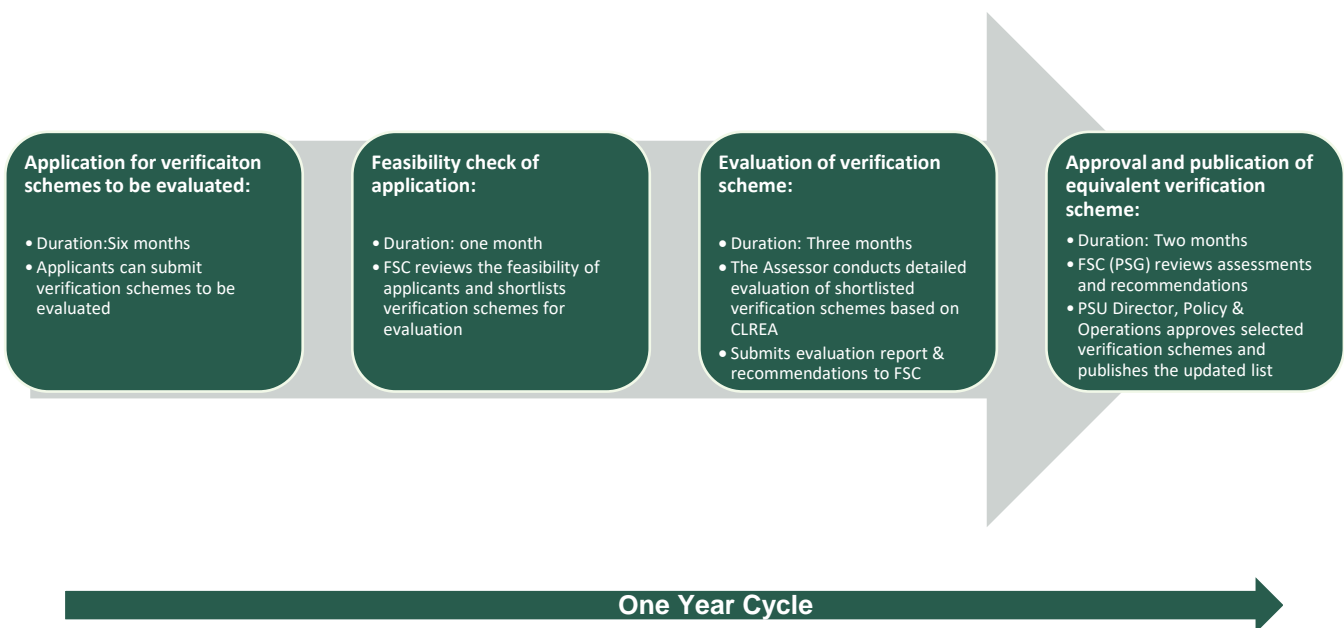


Figure 1 Core labour requirements equivalence assessment process

2. Application for verification schemes to be evaluated

- 2.1. An application for conducting a CLREA of a verification scheme shall be submitted to chainofcustody@fsc.org by using the template in Annex 3: FSC Template for submitting application. An application for evaluation of a verification scheme may be submitted by:
 - a) Verification scheme owners/ managers
 - b) Certification bodies or ASI

- c) Certified Organizations
- d) Members of the FSC system, including FSC International staff, FSC International Network Partners and FSC National/Regional offices.

2.2. The application period shall stay open for up to six months following an announcement by FSC.

3. Feasibility check of application

- 3.1. The FSC Secretariat will acknowledge receipt and assess the feasibility of the applications based on the following criteria:
- a) At least two FSC Chain of Custody certificate holders are complying with the proposed verification scheme.
 - b) Advantage/ business case for the certificate holders to benefit from CLREA and the verification scheme being suggested e.g., assessment time and cost savings.
 - c) The verification scheme's social requirements are relevant to the FSC core labour requirements and have been formally published.
 - d) Availability of the minimum relevant documents such as requirements, guidance on requirements, assurance methodology, assurance provider requirements for the verification scheme. Including documentation providing evidence to demonstrate equivalence to the social and assurance criteria in Annex 1.
 - e) Additional information and/or clarification may be requested from the applicant and an incomplete application may be rejected.
- 3.2. The Secretariat will complete the feasibility assessment within one month from close of application and will inform the applicant prior to commissioning the evaluations whether the application has been accepted or rejected.
- 3.3. If the application is rejected, the Secretariat will provide the applicant with a reasoning. The applicant can re-apply in the next call for application once the issues that lead to the rejection have been addressed
- 3.4. If the application has been accepted, the FSC Director Policy Operations will commission the evaluation of the verification schemes by an external consultant.

4. Evaluation of verification scheme

- 4.1. FSC will appoint an external consultant to evaluate the verification scheme against the social criteria and assurance criteria from Annex 1.
- 4.2. The selection of the external consultant shall be based on requirements specified in Annex 2.
- 4.3. FSC will enter into an agreement with the Consultant. The following will be the activities that the Consultant shall undertake:
- 4.3.1. Each verification scheme shall be evaluated by the consultant individually.
 - 4.3.2. The consultant shall conduct a structured evaluation of the verification scheme according to the criteria and instructions in Annex 1.
 - 4.3.3. The consultant shall record the result and the justification (under comment column of the tool) against each criterion (social and assurance).

- 4.3.4. All records of references considered during the evaluation should be documented in the final evaluation report.
- 4.3.5. The Consultant shall submit an evaluation report including, a completed CLREA evaluation tool (see Annex 1) and a recommendation to FSC on equivalence of each of the verification schemes to the FSC core labour requirements. The recommendation shall be based only on minimum social criteria (Annex 1.2.a) and minimum assurance criteria (Annex 1.2.b).

5. Approval and publication of equivalent verification scheme

- 5.1. FSC will review the consultant's evaluation report for completeness and consistency and prepare approval documents (CLREA evaluation tool, evaluation report, and approval meeting presentation) and submit them to the PSG for decision making.
- 5.2. Based on the submitted documentation, PSG will:
 - a) Approve the CLREA verification scheme; or
 - b) Reject the CLREA verification scheme, with rationale.
- 5.3. FSC will inform the applicant whether the evaluation has resulted in approval or rejection. If rejected, FSC will provide the applicant with a justification.
- 5.4. Post approval, FSC will publish the CLREA verification scheme on applicable fora.

NOTE: Information about the approval is announced through available FSC communication channels (e.g., FSC Newsfeed on the international FSC website www.ic.fsc.org, Certification bodies and membership mailing lists, FSC Branching Out and the FSC Document Centre).

6. Review and Revision of CLREA

- 6.1. All approved verification schemes shall undergo a periodic review every six years.
- 6.2. A major revision in the normative documents or policies of the verification scheme may trigger a review at a shorter interval.
- 6.3. The review shall follow the steps of Section 4 and 5 of this procedure.

NOTE: FSC Secretariat may also undertake a review based on relevant stakeholder feedback.

7. Complaints

- 7.1. All complaints regarding an approved CLREA shall follow the process described in <FSC-PRO-01-008 Processing Complaints in the FSC certification scheme>.

8. External funding

- 8.1. A CLREA may be funded by an external donor.

8.2. Requirements for the funding process are as follows:

- a) The external donor should approach FSC expressing interest in funding the assessment of a particular verification scheme.
- b) FSC will evaluate the feasibility of the verification scheme being proposed for CLREA as per Section 3.
- c) In case FSC recommends the evaluation of the verification scheme, FSC will develop a funding agreement for the verification scheme's evaluation with the potential donor.
- d) FSC and the donor sign the funding agreement.
- e) Within two weeks after signature of the funding agreement, the donor transfers the funds in one full instalment to FSC International whereupon FSC issues a donation certificate to the donor.

8.3. The CLREA development begins as per Section 4.

ANNEX 1: SOCIAL AND ASSURANCE CRITERIA

- 1.1 The consultant shall use the comments section of the Evaluation Tool to record the findings against each criterion (minimum and aspirational) and grade it, using Table 1. The evaluation of these criteria and the criterion results from Table 1 can enable the consultant to determine whether a verification scheme is aligned to the FSC core labour requirements and meets the assurance criteria. The recommendation will be based only on minimum social criteria (Annex 1.2.a) and minimum assurance criteria (Annex 1.2.b) of the procedure. Aspirational criteria may be used for gathering additional insights.

Table 1 Benchmark results

Criterion result	Overall benchmark result	Definition
Does not meet	Not fully equivalent	The verification scheme does not meet the minimum social and/or assurance criteria. The verification scheme's requirements are not the same, and the assurance system does not meet the minimum assurance criteria.
Partially meets		The verification scheme meets the social and/or assurance minimum criterion, but not all. The requirements are not entirely the same and/or the assurance system does not fully meet the minimum assurance criteria.
Meets	Equivalent	The verification scheme meets the social and assurance minimum criterion. The verification scheme's requirements are the same, and the assurance system meets the minimum assurance criteria regardless of minor differences in requirements or language used.
Exceeds		The verification scheme meets the social and assurance minimum criterion, as well as some or all aspirational social and assurance criterion.
Not applicable		Some of the assurance minimum criterion are not applicable as the system was not designed with those elements. For example, proxy accreditation.

1.2 CLREA Evaluation Tool

Table a) Minimum Social Criteria Evaluation Tool

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
S.1	Scope & Workers Definition	Does the verification scheme owner require its requirements to apply all types of workers in the workplace (e.g., temporary, seasonal, contracted)?	The requirements apply to all types of workers at the organization workplace including subcontracted ones, temporary and seasonal workers		
CL.1	Child Labour	Does the verification scheme owner have a requirement on elimination of child labour?	The verification scheme owner has an explicit requirement that clearly prohibits the use of child labour.		
CL.2	Child Labour Scope	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to ensure the elimination of child labour in all of its business relations?	The requirement prohibits the use of child labour in all business operations, including support of child labour and indirect employment of child labour by business partners. It recognizes the responsibility of the organization's human rights impact approach. Both direct, indirect and contribution should be assessed.		
CL.3	Child Labour - Minimum Age	Does the verification scheme owner define the minimum working age as 15 years old or higher if stated by the national law?	The verification scheme owner has an explicit requirement that the minimum age for employment should not be less than 15 years. If the national law set the minimum age higher, the higher age should apply.		
CL.4	Child Labour - Light Work	Does the verification scheme owner define light work as per the ILO Convention on Minimum Age?	The verification scheme owner defines explicitly light work in line with ILO Convention No.138. It is work that should not be harmful to a child's health and development, not prejudice attendance at school and participation in vocational training or "capacity to benefit from the instruction received".		
CL.5	Child Labour - Light Work	Does the verification scheme owner allow light work as defined by the ILO Convention on Minimum Age No.138?	The verification scheme owner permits children to do light work if allowed by the national law or regulations and if it meets the criteria of light work.		
CL.6	Child Labour - Light Work	Does the verification scheme owner define the age limit for light work as a minimum of 13 years old?	The verification scheme owner explicitly defines the minimum age for permitting light work not less than 13 years old.		
CL.7	Child Labour - Light Work	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to implement prevention measures for not	The verification scheme owner require organization to implement protection measures for health and safety of the young workers.		

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
		affecting the schooling and health of children if light work is allowed?			
CL.8	Child Labour - Hazardous Work	Does the verification scheme owner prohibit employment of people under 18 years old for hazardous work except for the purpose of training within approved national laws and regulations?	The verification scheme owner explicitly sets the minimum age for admission to hazardous work not less than 18 years old. Heavy work (in the context of child labour): refers to work which is likely to be harmful or dangerous to children's health. Hazardous work (in the context of child labour): any work which is likely to jeopardise children's physical, mental or moral health, should not be undertaken by anyone under the age of 18 years. Hazardous child labour is work in dangerous, or unhealthy conditions that could result in a child being killed or injured/maimed (often permanently) and/or made ill (often permanently) as a consequence of poor safety and health standards and working arrangements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse; • Work underground, under water at dangerous heights or in confined spaces; • Work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads; • Work in unhealthy environment which may, for examples, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health; • Work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer 		
CL.9	Child Labour - Worst form	Does the verification scheme owner prohibit the worst forms of child labour?	The verification scheme owner explicitly defines the worst forms of child labour as per ILO Convention No. 182		
FL.1	Forced Labour	Does the verification scheme owner have a requirement on elimination of all forms of forced labour and compulsory labour?	The verification scheme owner has an explicit requirement that prohibits the use of forced labour and compulsory labour.		
FL.2	Forced Labour	Does the verification scheme owner require that the employment relationship is	The verification scheme owner has an explicit requirement for the employment relationship to be voluntary and without threat of penalty. Workers have the right to terminate the contract.		
FL.2.1	Forced Labour	Voluntary	Voluntary: Workers' consent to enter into employment and their freedom to leave the employment at any time.		

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
FL.2.2	Forced Labour	Based on mutual consent			
FL.2.3	Forced Labour	without threat of penalty	Threat of penalty: Any form of coercion such as threats, violence, the retention of identity documents, confinement/imprisonment, or non-payment of wages.		
FL.3	Forced Labour	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to eliminate practices that are indicative of forced labour and compulsory labour namely:			
FL.3.1	Forced Labour	Restriction of movement	The verification scheme owner requires that workers are free to enter and exit the work premises and if restrictions apply, they are reasonable and legitimate.		
FL.3.2	Forced Labour	Physical and sexual violence	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to prohibit all types of physical and sexual violence		
FL.3.3	Forced Labour	Intimidation and threats of denunciation to the authorities	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to prohibit all types of intimidation and threats		
FL.3.4	Forced Labour	Retention of identity documents and passport	The verification scheme owner prohibits possession of identity documents or other valuable personal documents.		
FL.3.5	Forced Labour	Withholding of wages	The verification scheme owner prohibits the systematic and deliberate withholding of wages as a means to compel workers to remain and deny them the opportunity to change employment.		
FL.3.6	Forced Labour	Bonded labour	The verification scheme owner prohibits the organization to use debt to manipulate workers and bind them to work for unspecified periods.		
FL.3.7	Forced Labour	Payment of employment fees and or payment of deposit to commence employment	The verification scheme owner prohibits organizations to charge recruitment fees or pay deposits to workers as a condition for employment.		
D.1	Non-discrimination	Does the verification scheme owner prohibit discrimination in employment and occupation?	The verification scheme owner has an explicit requirement that clearly prohibits discrimination in employment and occupation.		

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
D.2	Discrimination Grounds	Does the verification scheme owner list the grounds for discrimination?	Discrimination: includes- a) any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, social origin, sexual orientation, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation; b) such other distinction, exclusion or preference which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation as may be determined by the Member concerned after consultation with representative employers' and workers' organizations where such exist, and with other appropriate bodies		
D.3	Discrimination - Preventive Measures	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to implement non-discriminatory employment and occupation practices?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to implement non-discriminatory practices in employment and practices.		
FOA.1	FOA & CB Respect	Does the verification scheme owner recognise the freedom of association and effective collective bargaining right?	The verification scheme owner has an explicit requirement that requires organizations to respect freedom of association and collective bargaining rights.		
FOA.2	FOA - Discrimination and Threat	Regarding trade unions and workers associations, does the verification scheme owner prohibit the following for lawful activities related to forming, joining or assisting:	The verification scheme owner prohibits discrimination and any types of threat or punishment as a result of union membership or exercising freedom of association and collective bargaining rights.		
FOA.2.1	FOA - Discrimination and Threat	Discrimination	The verification scheme owner clearly states that workers cannot be discriminated based on their workers association or trade union membership or activity.		
FOA.2.2	FOA - Discrimination and Threat	Punishment and threats in relation to worker's memberships to organizations and exercising their rights?	The verification scheme owner clearly states that workers cannot be threatened due to workers association or trade union membership or activity.		
FOA.3	FOA - Freedom to Choose	Does the verification scheme owner recognise workers right to establish or join organizations of their own choosing?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to respect workers' rights to establish or join organizations and draw up their own constitution. The verification scheme owner prohibits all types of interference.		
FOA.4	FOA - Lawful Activities	Does the verification scheme owner recognise workers' rights to draw up their own constitution?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to respect workers right to establish or join organizations and draw up their		

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
			own constitution. The verification scheme owner prohibits all types of interference.		
FOA.5	FOA - Lawful Activities	Does the verification scheme owner recognise workers right to conduct lawful activities (forming, joining and participating in workers meeting)?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to respect workers lawful activities.		
CB.1	Collective Bargaining - Good Faith	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to act in good faith in collective bargaining negotiations?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to act in good faith. Good faith in negotiation: The organization (employer) and workers' organizations make every effort to reach an agreement, conduct genuine and constructive negotiations, avoid unjustified delays in negotiations, respect agreements concluded and give sufficient time to discuss and settle collective disputes Examples of 'good faith in negotiation': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing workers with information to support collective bargaining (i.e., pay scales) • Complying with what was agreed • Not to prolonging negotiations and making an effort to reach an agreement 		
CB.2	Implementation of CBA	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to implement mutually agreed collective agreements?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to respect agreements concluded and implemented.		

Table b) Minimum Assurance Criteria Evaluation Tool

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
IM.1	Verification scheme management	Legal status	Is the verification scheme owner a legal entity, who can be held legally responsible for the verification scheme's operations?	The verification scheme owner shall be an organization that is a legal entity, or an organization which is a partnership of legal entities. The verification scheme cannot be developed, managed or owned by an assurance provider.		
IM.2	Verification scheme management	Sustainability strategy	Does the verification scheme have a strategy that specifies how it aims to improve social performance, including how it will monitor its long-term social impacts?	A publicly accessible organizational strategy and documented approach to monitoring and assessment that specifies social indicators.		
RS.1	Requirement-setting	Requirement-setting procedure	Does the verification scheme owner have a publicly available requirements development and revision process, that includes an overview of decision-making?	A documented process is available on the verification scheme owner website or upon request.		
RS.2	Requirement-setting	Accessibility	Is the requirement publicly available?	The requirements (that includes the labour requirements) is publicly available on the verification scheme owner website.		
RS.3	Requirement-setting	Interpretation guidance	Does the structure of the requirements or accompanying guidance ensure consistent interpretation (e.g. auditable indicators)?	The requirements and/or separate guidance documents for interpretation shall include sufficient detail so that each individual criterion can be assessed consistently, and it specifies necessary evidence for each criterion.		
RS.4	Requirement-setting	Review	Is the requirement reviewed and if necessary revised periodically?	An explicit requirement is defined in the requirement-setting procedure or there is evidence that demonstrates the requirement is reviewed and where necessary revised periodically.		
A.1	Assurance	Assurance methodology	Is there a publicly available documented assurance methodology and structure for the verification scheme, that includes the following?:	A documented assurance methodology describing the assurance model, requirements for assurance providers and the assessment procedures. The assessment methodology shall include		

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
A.1.1	Assurance	Assurance methodology	assessments to assess conformance with the requirements	<p>procedures for at least the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -assessment of conformance with the requirement; -Review and decision; -Issuance of an assessment result report or similar (where applicable); -Periodic assessments. <p>For each type of assessment used, the procedure shall specify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Frequency and intensity of assessing; -Sampling protocol for assessing; -Knowledge and skills required in an assessor or assessment team; -Minimum set of requirements that need to be checked in every assessment; and -Timelines for submission of completed reports, following the assessment. 		
A.1.2	Assurance	Assurance methodology	Review and decision			
A.1.3	Assurance	Assurance methodology	Issuance of an assessment result report or similar			
A.1.4	Assurance	Assurance methodology	Periodic assessment			
A.2	Assurance	Assurance methodology	For each type of assessment used, does the assurance methodology specify:			
A.2.1	Assurance	Assurance methodology	Frequency and intensity of assessment			
A.2.2	Assurance	Assurance methodology	Sampling protocol for assessment			
A.2.3	Assurance	Assurance methodology	Knowledge and skills required in an assessor or assessment team			
A.2.4	Assurance	Assurance methodology	Minimum set of requirements that need to be checked in every assessment			
A.2.5	Assurance	Assurance methodology	Timelines for submission of completed reports, following the assessment			
A.3	Assurance	Third-party assess	Does the verification scheme owner require third-party assessment?	The documented assurance methodology requires that assessments and compliance decision-making is conducted by accredited or verification scheme approved third-party assurance providers.		
A.4	Assurance	Assessment scope	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to conduct on-site assessments of all sites where operational activities take place?	An explicit requirement for assurance providers to conduct onsite assessments of the organization's operations (that include sourcing, processing, labelling and sale of products). As a minimum the organizations main site of operations (office), plus		

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
				a sample of other sites is included in a normative document		
A.5	Assurance	Corroborating evidence	Are there requirements for assurance providers and assessors to gather and corroborate evidence (including conducting interviews with the organizations management and workers)?	An explicit requirement for assurance providers and assessors to gather and corroborate evidence that includes interviewing a sample of workers and management.		
A.6	Assurance	assessment cycle	Does the verification scheme owner require annual or more frequent assessments of organizations?	A full assessment of an organization is carried out every year or once every year with a surveillance assessment in between.		
A.7	Assurance	assessment sampling	Is there a documented process for assurance providers to sample the organizations sites, contractors, records and interviews with personnel during an assessment to verify that the control system is being implemented effectively and consistently across the whole scope of the certificate?	As a minimum, the organizations main site of operations (office) plus a sample of other sites is included in a normative document		
A.8	Assurance	Impartial decision-making	Is compliance decision-making impartial?	An explicit requirement is documented for third-party assurance providers to make decisions on compliance. In addition, persons making compliance decisions must be different from those who carry out the assessment. This requirement is included in a normative document.		
A.9	Assurance	Addressing non-conformities	There are procedures to grade non-conformities, including when they should be escalated?	Organizations should follow a time bound process for rectifying the identified non-conformities in an assessment.		
A.10	Assurance	Reporting	Are assurance providers required to document the results of assessments in a consistent reporting format, that provides	Assurance providers are required to report on a minimum set of reporting requirements (incl. dates, locations, assessment scope, team composition,		

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
			sufficient information on the scope of the assessment and results?	findings and corrective action plans) or a mandatory reporting template is provided.		
A.11	Assurance	Complaints and appeals	Does the verification scheme owner have and require assurance providers to have documented complaints and appeals mechanisms for compliance decisions?	The verification scheme owner has a complaints and appeals mechanism and a explicit requirement for assurance providers is included in a normative document.		
A.12	Assurance	Complaints and appeals	Does the verification scheme owner require keeping a record of all complaints made known to it relating to conformity with certification requirements and make these records available to the certification body when requested?	The verification scheme specifies a requirement to direct complaints related to nonconformity with requirements to the assessor for investigation and follow up		
A.13	Assurance	Certification documents	Does the certificate, license or approval documentation define the scope of certification and duration of validity?	The verification scheme owner requires assurance providers to include the following information on certificates, license or approval documentation: -Name and address of the organization and all certified units and the assurance provider; -Date the certification was granted; -Scope of the assurance (the requirement, product or service for which the certification is granted); -Expiry dates of the certificate.		
A.14	Assurance	Accessible certified organization list	Is a list of all certified organizations made publicly available?	A list of certified organizations is made publicly available on the verification scheme or assurance provider website		
A.15	Assurance	Certification status	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to only grant recertification based on a re-evaluation?			
PC.1	Personnel competence	assessor & assurance personnel competence	Does the verification scheme owner define assessment and social competence requirements for assessors and assurance body personnel? That includes as a minimum successful completion of an assessor training course.	The verification scheme owner defines competence requirements for assessors and assurance body personnel, and requires as a minimum: -Successful completion of an assessor training course, ideally an IRCA registered 'ISO		

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
				management standard assessor course' or an ISO 19011 course on assessment techniques. -Successful completion of at least one relevant social assessor training course, ideally on one of the following standards or equivalent: SA 8000, APSCA certified social compliance assessor, Social Compliance Management System by WRAP, Responsible Business Alliance Labour & Ethics or ISO 45001:2018.		
PC.2	Personnel competence	Knowledge of the verification scheme requirement	Are assessors and assurance personnel required to have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the social requirement and its implementation?	The verification scheme owner defines a minimum set of knowledge requirements relevant to the requirement, this can include: -Human rights -ILO Core Conventions -Occupational Health & Safety		
PC.3	Personnel competence	Assessment of assessor competence	Is the competence of assessors and assurance body personnel regularly assessed?	An explicit requirement is documented for assurance providers to regularly assess assessors.		
PC.4	Personnel competence	Resource requirements	Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to maintain records of all assurance provider personnel involved in work related to the verification scheme, and do the records include a means to confirm the competence, qualification, and training status of personnel?			
O.1	Oversight	Oversight program	Is there a documented oversight methodology and procedures for how the verification scheme maintains oversight of assessors? That includes:	A documented oversight methodology that describes the approach to oversight, frequency of oversight, responsibilities for different functions (Eg; person who conducts assessment, delivers results, accepts certification request, etc.), procedures to be followed including a review of the performance of assurance providers and assessors in conducting assessment activities.		
O.1.1	Oversight	Oversight program	The approach to oversight			
O.1.2	Oversight	Oversight program	Frequency of oversight			
O.1.3	Oversight	Oversight program	Responsibilities for different functions (Eg; person who conducts assessment,			

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
			delivers results, accepts certification request, etc.)			
O.1.4	Oversight	Oversight program	Procedures to be followed including a review of the performance of assurance providers and assessors in conducting assessment activities.			
O.2	Oversight	Proxy accreditation	Where the oversight program accepts assurance providers that are accredited to other verification schemes (proxy accreditation), does the verification scheme owner assess verification scheme-specific competence?" Note: Only applicable for verification schemes which accept proxy accreditation"	The oversight program and/or procedures demonstrate that relevant verification scheme-specific competence is assessed.		
O.3	Oversight	Independence of oversight	Is the oversight mechanism independent of the assurance providers being assessed?	The oversight program and/or procedures demonstrate that oversight assessment and decision-making is carried out by an oversight body who is a separate legal entity from the assurance provider/s.		
O.4	Oversight	Accredited/approved assurance providers	Does the verification scheme owner maintain or require its oversight provider to maintain a current and publicly available list of all accredited/approved assurance providers?	A publicly accessible list of all accredited/approved assurance providers is made available on the verification scheme owner or respective oversight provider/s website or upon request.		

Table c) Aspirational Social Criteria Evaluation Tool

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
AS.P.1	Policy	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to adopt a policy or policies? That covers:			
AS.P.1.1	Policy	Minimum or living wage			
AS.P.1.2	Policy	Working hours			
AS.P.1.3	Policy	Elimination of child labour			
AS.P.1.4	Policy	Elimination of forced labour and compulsory labour			
AS.P.1.5	Policy	Elimination of discrimination in occupation and employment			
AS.P.1.6	Policy	Respect the right of freedom of association and collective bargaining			
AS.P.1.7	Policy	Occupational health and safety			
AS.P.1.8	Policy	Disciplinary measures and elimination of harassment and abuse			
AS.P.1.9	Policy	Employment relationship			
AS.P.2	Policy	Does the verification scheme owner require policies related to subjects above to be available to:	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to make available its existing policies on subjects below. The policies should be available and accessible for affected and interested stakeholders e.g., workers and assurance providers.		
AS.P.2.1	Policy	Affected and interested stakeholders			
AS.P.2.2	Policy	Assurance providers			

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
AS.P.3	Policy	Does the verification scheme owner refer to adherence to the national law?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to adhere to the local law.		
AS.P.4	Policy	Does the verification scheme owner refer to adherence to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and/or Core Conventions?	The verification scheme owner requires adherence to the ILO Declaration on FPRW and Core Conventions		
AS.P.5	Policy	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to ensure ILO Declaration on FPRW are implemented in all business relations?	The requirements apply to all subcontractors, contractors and organizations which have core business relations with the organization.		
AS.P.6	Share policies	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to effectively communicate their policies to their personnel and make them accessible to them in all appropriate languages?			
AS.P.7	Review policies	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to regularly review their policy statements, policies, procedures for implementing the standards and document performance results for improvement?			
AS.P.8	Social policy statements	Does the verification scheme owner require CBs to verify that the organization has adopted and implemented a policy statement that encompasses core labour requirements?			
AS.P.9	Public policy statement	Does the verification scheme owner require CBs to verify that the policy statements are publicly available to all stakeholders?			
AS.CL.1	Child labour	Does the verification scheme owner recognize the exceptions of ILO in terms of minimum age for employment?	The verification scheme owner does not recognise the exceptions and sets the minimum age as 15 years old. The ILO Convention on Minimum Age allows developing countries to set the minimum age as 14. If the verification scheme requirement allows ILO exceptions, the requirement does not comply with the limit of 15 years of age set by FSC.		

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
AS.CL.2	Child labour - Remediation	Does the verification scheme owner have requirements for remediation of child labour cases?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to implement remedies in cases where child labour is found.		
AS.FL.1	Forced Labour	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to eliminate practices that are indicative of forced labour and compulsory labour namely:			
AS.FL.1.1	Forced Labour	Abuse of vulnerability	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to implement preventive measures for protecting vulnerable groups of workers.		
AS.FL.1.2	Forced Labour	Abusive working and living conditions	The verification scheme owner sets basic standards for working and living conditions of workers		
AS.FL.1.3	Forced Labour	Excessive overtime	The verification scheme owner prohibits excessive overtime (overtime that more than the permitted level within the national law, under some form of threat (or dismissal), to earn at least the minimum wage)		
AS.FL.2	Forced Labour - Illegal Deductions	Does the verification scheme owner prohibit all types of illegal deduction from wages including for disciplinary purposes unless permitted by the national law?			
AS.FL.3	Forced Labour	Does the verification scheme owner allow workers to terminate the contract?			
AS.FL.4	Forced Labour	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to eliminate practices that are indicative of forced labour and compulsory labour namely:			
AS.FL.4.1	Forced Labour	Deception	The verification scheme owners requires that workers are provided with agreed terms and		

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
			conditions of the employment at the recruitment stage.		
AS.FL.4.2	Forced Labour	Isolation	The verification scheme owner requires that if workers are working in remote locations, they should not be denied contact with outside world.		
AS.FL.5	Contracts	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to sign a written employment contract with workers?			
AS.FL.6	Contracts	Does the verification scheme owner prohibit repetition of temporary contracts for the permanent nature of work?			
AS.D.1	Equal Opportunity	Does the verification scheme require affirmative action for equal opportunity?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations take additional measures for ensuring equal opportunity in particular for women and vulnerable groups: e.g., people with disabilities, migrant workers, young workers		
AS.D.2	Gender Pay Discrimination	Does the verification scheme owner require payments to be made based on the principles of 'equal payment for work of equal value'?	The verification scheme owner explicitly prohibits wage discrimination between men and women and requires that women and men should be paid based on the principle of equal payment for the work of equal value.		
AS.D.3	Gender Equality	Does the verification scheme owner prohibit discriminatory practices related to gender?	The verification scheme owner prohibits gender related discriminatory practices such as pregnancy and virginity tests and termination of the contract related to maternal leave.		
AS.D.4	Discrimination Scope	Does the non-discrimination requirement cover all stages of employment?	The verification scheme owner explicitly requires that non-discriminatory practices cover all stages of employment including recruitment and termination.		
AS.FOA.1	FOA and CB	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to provide facilities to workers for	The verification scheme owner requires organizations provide worker representatives with appropriate facilities to assist in effective		

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
		collective bargaining agreements negotiations and meetings?	collective bargaining agreements and other types of worker representation meetings		
AS.FOA.2	Discrimination and Threat	Regarding trade unions and workers associations, does the verification scheme owner prohibit retaliation for lawful activities related to forming, joining or assisting?	The verification scheme owner clearly states that workers contract cannot be terminated due to workers association or trade union membership or activity.		
AS.FOA.3	Affirmative Action	Does the verification scheme owner encourage other forms of workers representation where workers freedom of association is restricted by the local law?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to take additional measures to ensure workers representation in countries where freedom of association is restricted by law.		
AS.FOA.4	Awareness	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to inform their workers on their rights related to collective bargaining agreements and freedom of association?	The verification scheme owner requires organization to inform its workers on rights related to collective bargaining and freedom of association.		
AS.R.1	Remuneration - Living Wage	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to progress towards paying living wage to workers?			
AS.R.2	Remuneration - Overtime	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to pay overtime in accordance with the rate defined by the national law?			
AS.WO.1	Working hours	Does the verification scheme owner limit weekly work hours to 48 hours or the national law limit whichever is lower?			
AS.WO.2	Working hours -Overtime	Does the verification scheme owner limit weekly overtime hours to 12 hours or the national law limit whichever is lower?			
AS.WO.3	Working hours - Overtime	Does the verification scheme owner require overtime work to be voluntary?			

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
AS.WO.4	Working hours - Leaves and Rest Time	Does the verification scheme owner require organization to provide:			
AS.WO.4.1	Working hours - Leaves and Rest Time	Rest day/s as per the national law or at least one day for every 6 days of work			
AS.WO.4.2	Working hours - Leaves and Rest Time	Annual leave			
AS.WO.4.3	Working hours - Leaves and Rest Time	Breaks			
AS.OHAS.1	OHAS Training	Does the verification scheme owner require OHAS training to be conducted regularly?			
AS.OHAS.2	OHAS Risk Assessment	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to conduct risk assessments to identify and mitigate OHAS risks at the workplace?			
AS.OHAS.3	OHAS PPE	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to provide PPE to its workers free of charge?			
AS.OHAS.4	OHAS Record Keeping	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to keep records of OHAS incidents or near misses?			
AS.OHAS.5	OHAS Hygiene	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to provide:			
AS.OHAS.6	OHAS Hygiene	Clean toilet facilities			
AS.OHAS.7	OHAS Hygiene	Access to drinking water			

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
AS.OHAS.8	OHAS Hygiene	Clean and safe dormitory facilities (if provided)			
AS.OHAS.9	OHAS Hygiene	Clean eating spaces			
AS.OHAS.10	First Aid	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to provide first aid training to workers and have appointed first aid persons/teams?			
AS.OHAS.11	First Aid	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to have first aid kits at the workplace?			
AS.OHAS.12	Fire Safety	Does verification scheme owner require organizations to implement measures for fire safety?			
AS.OHAS.13	OHAS Committee	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to establish a health and safety committee?			
AS.OHAS.14	Imminent danger	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to recognise workers' rights to remove themselves from imminent danger without seeking permission?			
AS.OHAS.15	OHAS Representative	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to appoint a representative to implement procedures related to OHAS?	The organizations are required to appoint a representative for implementing OHAS requirements at the workplace.		
AS.OHAS.16	OHAS Training	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to conduct training with its workers on OHAS?	The organization should conduct training for its workers on issues covering OHAS.		
AS.OHAS.17	Special Category of Workers	Does the verification scheme require organization to implement protective measures for young workers?	The organizations are required to implement additional measures to protect young workers.		

ID	Criteria name	Question	Requirement	Criteria result	Comments
AS.OHAS.1 8	OHAS Workplace	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to provide safe working places for workers?	The verification scheme owner requires organizations to ensure the safety of its workers at the workplace		
AS.RK.1	Record keeping	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to maintain records that demonstrate their implementation and conformance to the standard?			
AS.SA.1	Self- assessment	Does the verification scheme owner require organizations to maintain an up-to-date self-assessment describing how they comply with the social requirements?			
AS.SA.2	self- assessment - Evaluation	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to design and implement a system to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness and adequacy of the organizations' self-assessment and conformity to core labour requirements?			
AS.SA.3	self- assessment - Evaluation	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to establish a mechanism to verify self-assessments against available sources of information?			

Table d) Aspirational Assurance Criteria Evaluation Tool

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
AA.A.1	Assurance	Management system	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to implement a management system that is accredited to or is aligned with ISO 17065 or 17021 or equivalent?	The verification scheme requires assurance providers to be accredited by an independent accreditation body or the verification scheme owner operates its own oversight program that incorporates independent assessments of assurance providers to ISO 17065 or 17021. This requirement is included in a normative document.		
AA.A.2	Assurance	Surveillance	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to conduct a surveillance assessment at least once per calendar year and additionally for chain of custody assessments not later than fifteen (15) months after the last assessment?			
AA.A.3	Assurance	Surveillance	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to assign one or more persons to make the certification decision to continue, suspend or withdraw certification based on information collected from surveillance activities and their review?			
AA.A.4	Assurance	Surveillance	In the occurrence of five (5) or more major nonconformities in a surveillance assessment, does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to consider this as a breakdown of the client' management system and certification shall be suspended within ten (10) days of the certification being taken?			
AA.A.5	Assurance	Surveillance	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to suspend certification at latest three (3) months after the closing meeting of a surveillance assessment, if a certification decision to maintain the certification cannot be taken due to circumstances beyond the control of the certification body?			

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
AA.A.6	Assurance	Surveillance	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to suspend certification for a maximum period of twelve (12) months, and after this period to withdraw certification, unless all major nonconformities have been successfully corrected and a surveillance assessment was conducted in case the timeline of suspension exceeded twelve (12) months?			
AA.A.7	Assurance	Surveillance	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to record the certification decision to maintain certification for each surveillance assessment?			
AA.A.8	Assurance	Assessment	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to have an assessment plan and share it with clients before the assessment?			
AA.A.9	Assurance	Assessment	Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to assign an assessment team that meets its specified competence requirements, including in the case of outsourced assessment tasks?			
AA.A.10	Assurance	Assessment	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to ensure that no client is assessed by the same assessor on more than three consecutive occasions?			
AA.A.11	Assurance	Assessment	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to provide all assessors with a handbook or equivalent which includes all the guidance necessary for the assessors to complete assessments in accordance with the assurance providers documents procedures? The handbook or equivalent shall include: a) the implementation of checklists, guidance documents and interpretations of the standard; b) detecting, analysing, grading and addressing nonconformities; c) writing reports.			

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
AA.A.12	Assurance	Assessment	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to incorporate ISO 19011 into the assessment handbook and include as a minimum requirement for opening meetings, closing meetings and communication of assessment findings in accordance with ISO 19011, where appropriate?			
AA.A.13	Assurance	Stakeholder participation	Are assurance providers and their assessors required to seek external stakeholder input during the assessment process?	An explicit requirement for assurance providers is included in a normative document.		
AA.A.14	Assurance	Scope extension	Does the assurance methodology include a requirement for assurance providers to regularly evaluate and extend the scope of certification?	A documented process that requires assurance providers to assess the scope of certification (i.e., group and multi-site extensions) and where necessary to assess the scope extension before it is incorporated into the certification scope.		
AA.A.15	Assurance	Certification status	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to only grant (re)certification when the organization: a) has entered into and holds a valid agreement; b) conforms with the standard requirements, (major nonconformities shall be corrected before granting certification and minor nonconformities shall be corrected within a maximum timelines)?			
AA.A.16	Assurance	Certification status	Does the verification scheme owner require the certification period of validity to not exceed five (5) years)?			
AA.A.17	Assurance	Certification status	Does the verification scheme owner permit single extensions of certificate validity of up to a maximum of six (6) months based on an exceptional permission?			
AA.A.18	Assurance	Assurance system reviews	Does the verification scheme owner carry out regular reviews of its assurance program that includes the performance of assurance providers and oversight bodies, and notifies assurance providers and organizations of any changes in requirements?	There is evidence of an assurance system review process such as a documented procedure, past assurance system review reports and information on requirement changes is made available to stakeholders on the verification scheme website.		

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
AA.A.19	Assurance	Impartiality	Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to be responsible for ensuring that all activities are undertaken impartially and shall not allow commercial or other pressures to compromise impartiality?			
AA.A.20	Assurance	Impartiality	Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance providers top management commitment to impartiality?			
AA.A.21	Assurance	Impartiality	Does the verification scheme owner require all assurance provider personnel and committees involved in certification activities to act impartially?			
AA.A.22	Assurance	Impartiality	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers and any part of the same legal entity and entities under its organizational control or controlling it to not offer or provide consultancy within the scope of accreditation/approval to its clients?			
AA.A.23	Assurance	Impartiality	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to maintain and implement a written policy and procedures for avoidance of conflicts of interest, that include: a) a contractual obligation for all personnel involved in the certification process, to disclose in writing to the assurance provider all possible and actual conflicts of interest, at the time that the conflict or possibility of conflict becomes evident; b) documented procedures for determining timely and appropriate responses to such declarations of conflict of interest as they arise, to ensure that the declared interests neither influence, nor are perceived to influence, the decisions of the assurance provider; c) maintenance of records.			
AA.A.24	Assurance	Impartiality	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to identify, analyse and document risks to its impartiality on an ongoing basis, including those risks that arise from its activities, from its relationships, or from the relationships of its personnel?			

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
AA.A.25	Assurance	Impartiality	If a risk to impartiality is identified, does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to demonstrate how it eliminates or mitigates such risks?			
AA.A.26	Assurance	Impartiality	Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to ensure that activities of separate legal entities with which it has relationships, do not compromise the impartiality of its certification activities?			
AA.A.27	Assurance	Impartiality	When a separate legal entity offers or provides consultancy, does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider's management personnel and personnel in the assessment, review and certification decision-making process to not be involved in the consultancy activities of the separate legal entity?			
AA.A.28	Assurance	Impartiality	Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider's activities to not be marketed or offered as linked with the activities of an organization that provides consultancy, implying that certification would be easier, faster or less expensive if a specified consultancy organization were used?			
AA.A.29	Assurance	Impartiality	To ensure there is no conflict of interest, does the verification scheme owner require the assurance body's personnel who have provided consultancy, or been employed by a client, to not be used by the assurance provider to assessment, review, make decisions or to review or approve the resolution of a complaint or appeal for that client within three (3) years following the end of the consultancy or employment?			
AA.A.30	Assurance	Impartiality	Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to have, maintain and implement a documented anti-corruption policy?			

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
AA.A.31	Assurance	Impartiality	Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to have a committee for safeguarding its impartiality and provide input on the following: a) the policies and procedures relating to the impartiality of its certification activities; b) any tendency on the part of an assurance provider to allow commercial or other considerations to prevent the consistent impartial provision of certification activities; c) matters affecting impartiality and confidence in certification.			
AA.A.32	Assurance	Outsourcing	Where the assurance provider outsources work related to certification to a separate legal entity, does the verification scheme owner require that the body provides the outsourced service in compliance with the verification scheme owners requirement and assurance requirements?			
AA.A.33	Assurance	Outsourcing	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to not outsource decisions for granting, maintaining, renewing, expanding, or reducing the scope of, suspending, reinstating, or withdrawing certification?			
AA.A.34	Assurance	Outsourcing	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to have a legally enforceable agreement with the legal entity that provides any outsourced service, that includes: a) conformance with applicable requirements of the verification scheme standard and assurance; b) implement the outsourced services according to the procedures of the assurance provider; c) use of competent and qualified personnel, who are subject to regular performance review; d) agree to periodic internal assessments of the activities covered by the outsourcing agreement.			

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
AA.A.35	Assurance	Outsourcing	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to: a) have documented policies, procedures and records for managing the relationships with bodies providing outsourced services; b) ensure the body providing the outsourced services, and its personnel undertake certification services impartially; c) maintain a list of approved providers of outsourced services; d) implement corrective actions for any breaches of the outsourcing agreement or other requirements of which it becomes aware; e) inform the client in advance of outsourcing activities; in order to provide the client with an opportunity to object.			
AA.PC.1	Personnel competence	assessor & assurance personnel competence	Does the verification scheme owner define assessment and social competence requirements for assessors and assurance body personnel that includes successful completion of at least one relevant social assessor training course?			
AA.PC.2	Personnel competence	Assessing experience	Are assessors required to have completed a minimum number of assessments or assessment days as part of their training and ongoing professional experience?	An explicit requirement is documented for assessors to attend a minimum number of CoC and social assessments as an assessor in training and a minimum number of completed assessments within one year.		
AA.PC.3	Personnel competence	assessor training	Are assessors and assurance personnel required to participate in regular training and professional development?	An explicit requirement is documented for assessors and assurance personnel to participate, and successfully complete regular training provided by the verification scheme or a third-party.		
AA.PC.4	Personnel competence	Repercussions of poor performance	Does the verification scheme owner have a process to address and sanction assurance providers and/or assessors for misconduct or poor performance?	There is a documented process to address issues of assurance provider and/or assessor misconduct. This can be within a normative document such as a complaint mechanism, oversight program or assurance program requirements.		

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
AA.PC.5	Personnel competence	Resource requirements	Does the verification scheme require assurance providers to have personnel with sufficient capacity to cover all operations and to handle the volume of work related to the implementation of the verification scheme?			
AA.PC.6	Personnel competence	Resource requirements	Does the verification scheme owner require assurance providers to have, implement and maintain a procedure for the management of competencies of personnel involved in the implementation of the verification scheme?			
AA.PC.7	Personnel competence	Resource requirements	Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider (within its procedure) to determine the criteria for the competence of personnel for each function in the implementation of the verification scheme, taking into account the following: a) the person(s) that is (are) responsible for the application review; b) assessors are qualified and maintain their qualification; c) technical experts demonstrate competence in the relevant field of expertise; d) peer reviewers have demonstrated competence in the relevant field of expertise; e) the person(s) of the certification decision making entity are qualified as an assessors for the respective scope and incorporate a level of knowledge and experience sufficient to assess the evaluation processes, the assessment report and associated evidence and recommendations made by the assessment team; f) the assessment team leader is a qualified assessor in the respective scope with the ability to manage the assessment process and the assessment team - including report writing, effective use of team resources, team management, external team representation during the assessment process, management of stakeholder engagement including prevention or resolution of conflicts.			

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
AA.PC.8	Personnel competence	Resource requirements	<p>In terms of the personnel qualification, does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to:</p> <p>a) identify individual initial and continuous training needs according to the function of the person;</p> <p>b) define the scope of the initial and continuous training according to the findings mentioned under a) and/or monitoring and evaluation results against the applicable qualification requirements;</p> <p>c) carry out in-house training covering all internal aspects of the assurance provider relevant to certification processes as part of the initial training;</p> <p>d) demonstrate that personnel have the required competencies for the duties and responsibilities they undertake;</p> <p>e) formally authorise personnel for functions in the certification process.</p>			
AA.PC.9	Personnel competence	Resource requirements	<p>Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to take into account personal attributes of assessors for the following activities:</p> <p>a) selection of assessor candidates;</p> <p>b) assessor qualification process;</p> <p>c) monitoring of assessors;</p> <p>d) evaluation of assessor performance.</p>			
AA.PC.10	Personnel competence	Resource requirements	<p>Does the verification scheme owner require the assurance provider to require personnel involved in the certification process to sign a contract or other documents by which they commit themselves to the following:</p> <p>a) to conform with the rules defined by the certification body, including those relating to confidentiality, anti-corruption and independence from commercial and other interests;</p> <p>b) to declare any prior and/or present association on their own part, or on the part of their employer, with: i. a supplier or designer of products, ii. provider or developer of services, iii. an operator of developer of processes to the evaluation or certification of which they are to be assigned.</p>			

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
			c) to reveal any situation known to them that may present them or the assurance provider with a conflict of interest.			
AA.O.1	Oversight	Accreditation	Where the oversight program incorporates third-party accreditation, does the verification scheme owner require oversight providers to comply with ISO/IEC 17011?	An explicit requirement is documented for third-party oversight and/or accreditation bodies to demonstrate compliance to ISO/IEC 17011.		
AA.O.2	Oversight	Competence of oversight personnel	Are competence and standard knowledge requirements defined for oversight personnel evaluating assurance providers and assessors?	The verification scheme owner defines competence requirements for oversight personnel.		
AA.C.1	Chain of custody	Requirement for chain of custody	Does the verification scheme owner require chain of custody verification if the verification scheme results in a communication of product origin from certified production?	The verification scheme owner has an explicit requirement in the chain of custody standard, certification or assurance methodology.		
AA.C.2	Chain of custody	Physical handling	Does the verification scheme owner require all enterprises that take legal ownership of the certified product to undergo a chain of custody assessment if the product is destined for sale as a certified labelled product?	The verification scheme owner has an explicit requirement in the chain of custody certification or assurance methodology.		
AA.C.3	Chain of custody	Evidence of chain of custody	Does the verification scheme owner require enough information in the chain of custody assessment to enable tracing of the product and to avoid fraud in the supply chain?	The verification scheme owner specifies the chain of custody processes and documentation that must be evidenced and documented within the chain of custody assessment report.		
AA.G.1	Group certification	Group/multi-site	Are groups or multi-sites required to operate a shared management system that includes procedures for inducting, evaluating and removing group members?	The verification scheme owner has an explicit requirement/s in the group certification or assurance methodology.		

ID	Topic	Criteria name	Question	Evidence	Criteria result	Comments
		management system				
AA.G.2	Group certification	Group assessment	Does the verification scheme owner have a mechanism that prescribes and justifies how all sites within a group certification will be assessed over time?	The verification scheme owner has an explicit requirement in the group certification or assurance methodology.		

ANNEX 2: CLREA CONSULTANT SELECTION

- 2.1. The selection of a CLREA consultant is made by FSC based on the quality and experience demonstrated in the CLREA consultant's application as well as the selection criteria according to Clauses 2.2 and 2.3 below.
- 2.2. Qualification requirements
- a) A higher degree (M.Sc. or above) or equivalent professional experience in a subject related to Conservation / Natural resource management / Forest policy / Legality / Management of landscapes / GIS / Ecosystem services/ Labour issues;
 - b) A strong understanding of, and experience with, FSC systems; Forest certification or other verification schemes / Standard setting / Supply chain / Auditing/ Assurance;
 - c) An expertise in conducting benchmark evaluations of sustainability schemes and verification schemes.
 - d) Past experience and knowledge in using or evaluating international labour standards of ILO.
 - e) A track record of producing reports and publications following editorial quality of scientific reports/publications.
 - f) Proven experience of engaging with a wide range of stakeholders including international, national, governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- 2.3. Evaluation criteria
- a) Technical Approach: Detailed work plan and approach clearly defining the targets and the strategy to achieve the objectives as outlined in the scope of work.
 - b) Management Structure and staff qualification: Professional qualifications, expertise and experience of the key personnel who will directly contribute to the completion of the tasks.
 - c) Past Performance and Corporate Experience
 - i) Past performance, familiarity, and experience in understanding policies and programs related to forest resources and international labour standards.
 - ii) Expertise in conducting benchmarking of sustainability verification schemes.
 - d) Total Cost
 - i) Cost of the service, and a detailed estimate of travel, accommodation, and local expenses, if required.

NOTE: This section is not normative and selection criteria will be defined in the ToR of the Consultant procurement

ANNEX 3: FSC TEMPLATE FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATION

All applications for proposing verification schemes should be sent to chainofcustody@fsc.org.

FSC Template for submitting application for verification schemes to be evaluated for Core labour equivalence assessment:

Name of person submitting application	
Organization Name of person submitting application	
Contact details of person submitting the application	
Name of verification scheme to be evaluated	
Website URL of the verification scheme	
Detailed explanation justifying the need for suggesting the verification scheme for CLREA,	
Details of at least 2 FSC CoC certificate holders complying with the proposed verification scheme	
Detailed advantage/ business case for certificate holder to use CLREA with the verification scheme being suggested e.g., time and cost savings	
Similarities of verification schemes' social requirements with that of FSC CLR	
Similarities of verification schemes' assurance methodology with that of FSC	
List of relevant documents of the verification scheme such as: Requirements (standards, code of practices, certification); Requirements guidance; Assurance methodology; Assurance provider requirements.	



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