

Chapter 9 - Additional rules for the certification program: FSC Forestry

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Article 9.1 Audit types:	2
Article 9.2 Classification of non-conformities	3
Article 9.3 Sanction and condition of granting certification	3
Article 9.4 Guideline for closing a non-conformity.....	5
Article 9.5 Possible certification decisions of the certifier.....	6

Article 9.1 Audit types:

1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Pre-assessment, pre-evaluation or scoping:</u> Short visits carried out by qualified lead auditor or small audit team, prior to a main evaluation. Pre-evaluation visits allows Control Union to familiarize the client with the main requirements of the standard to be used for the audit, and to ensure that there are no obvious problems that the client should work to correct before committing to the cost of a full evaluation. It also familiarizes Control Union with the client and with major forest stewardship issues in the region. They allow Control Union to carry out preparation for the main evaluation including the identification of stakeholders, preparation of logistics and collection of essential background information such as management plans and maps. A pre-evaluation is a requirement prior to the main evaluation in case of large scale forests for which the total area included in the scope of evaluation (either as a single Forest Management Unit or as a collection or group of separate Forest Management Units) is greater than 10 000 hectares, unless the whole area meets the requirements for classification as a low intensity managed forest (SLIMF), as well as in cases of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF).
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Initial audit, main assessment or main evaluation:</u> First ever audit of a client, which may result in the issuance of a certificate. The initial audit consists of a document review and site visits.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Re-certification audit</u> (re-assessment or re-evaluation): Carried out at the end of the certification cycle (maximum 5 years after issuance of certificate). The re-assessment consists of a document review and site visits.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Surveillance audit:</u> Yearly follow-up audits between the initial and re-assessment audits.
	<p>In addition to the above mentioned audit, CU can perform special audits.</p>
a	<p><u>Extensions to scope</u> CU will in response to an application for extension to the scope of a certification already granted, undertake a review of the application and determine any audit activities necessary to decide whether or not the extension may be granted. This may be conducted in conjunction with a surveillance audit.</p>
b	<p><u>Short-notice audits</u> CU reserves the right to conduct short notice audit. These audits will be announced to the client 1 day before the actual visit takes place. The client can object against the audit team members but cannot object against the audit. The reasons for these short notice audits can be severe doubts derived from complaints, external notices or information, internal information gathered during previous audits or as follow-up on suspended clients.</p>
c	<p><u>Re-assessment of non-conformities (NC-verification audits):</u> Some non-conformities (or group of non-conformities) may need to be re-assessed by additional site visit. The auditor in consultation with the client or auditee decide when it is necessary. The certifier can overrule this decision but the client must be informed.</p>
d	<p><u>Other audits:</u> If applicable, additional audits as required by FSC (as mentioned in the latest version of FSC-STD-20-001, FSC-STD-20-007 and FSC-STD-20-011)</p>

Article 9.2 Classification of non-conformities

The FSC Forestry Certification Program has 2 NC-types:

	NC-type	Description	Deadline
1	Major	Non-compliance shall be considered major if, either alone or in combination with further non-compliances, it results in, or is likely to result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant requirement in the Chain of Custody operation(s) within the scope of the evaluation. Such fundamental failure shall be indicated by non-compliance(s) which: a) continue over a long period of time, or b) are repeated or systematic, or c) affect a wide range of the production, or d) are not corrected or adequately responded to by the responsible managers once they have been identified.	3 months (under exceptional circumstances six (6) months); Verification necessary.
2	Minor	A non-compliance may be considered minor if: a) it is a temporary lapse, or b) it is unusual/non-systematic, or c) the impacts of the non-compliance are limited in their temporal and organizational scale, and d) it does not result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant requirement.	1 year (under exceptional circumstances 2 years); verification might be done during next audit, but can also take place as a desk re-assessment in case CUC considers this to be possible.
3	Observations	Points not classified as non-conformity during the audit but will be assessed in the next audit.	

Article 9.3 Sanction and condition of granting certification

	Type of non-compliance	Company action and corrective action	Action by CUC
1	Major NC	Undertake and confirm corrective action to CUC within 3 months (under exceptional circumstances six (6) months).	Initial certification Certificate cannot be granted unless compliance is demonstrated with or without a further revisit. If the corrections are submitted later than 3 months a complete new

			<p>audit will have to take place.</p> <p>Re-certification New certification cannot be granted unless compliance is demonstrated with or without a further revisit. Undertake and confirm corrective action to CUC within 3 months. Suspension of the certificate if NC is not closed within 3 months.</p> <p>Surveillance audits Undertake and confirm corrective action to the certification body within 3 months (under exceptional circumstances 6 months). More than 4 major NC's identified during an audit automatically means suspension of the certificate (only FSC CoC). Suspension of the certificate if NC is not closed within this timeframe.</p>
2	Minor NC	Undertake and confirm corrective action to CUC within 1 year (under exceptional circumstances 2 years)	<p>Initial certification Certification can be granted. Undertake and confirm corrective action to the certification body within the given timeframe (usually 1 year). NC will be upgraded into major if NC is not closed within the given timeframe.</p> <p>Re-certification New certification can be granted. Undertake and confirm corrective action to the certification body within the given timeframe. NC will be upgraded into major if NC is not closed within the given timeframe</p> <p>Surveillance audits Undertake and confirm corrective action to the certification body within the given timeframe. NC will be upgraded into major if NC is not closed within the given timeframe.</p>

Article 9.4 Guideline for closing a non-conformity

The client shall analyze the cause and describe the specific correction and corrective action taken, or planned to be taken, to eliminate detected non-conformity before the above mentioned deadline.

The following shall be taken into account:

- Corrective action: you need to investigate the non-conformity, determine the root cause of the problem and implement some form of corrective action to prevent the problem re-occurring.
- Correction: an immediate action to solve the problem without preventing it re-occurring, a 'quick-fix' dealing only with the symptom.

Only when the client is sure that the problem has been solved he/she should submit details of the corrective action along with the evidence of the effectiveness of the solution and the correction to CUC:

To do this in the right way the client should ask the following questions:

- Is the root cause of the problem identified.
- Was the problem localized or could it have more far-reaching implications and are necessary steps taken to ensure that the corrective action has been applied through the system where such problems could also occur.
- Has the system been revised so that a permanent fix has been put in place, not just for the immediate future, but on a more long term basis.

Submitting only a correction is not enough to close a non-conformity, unless this is explicitly mentioned in the NC.

In your response you need to detail at least the following:

- Explanation of the cause of the failure including root cause.
- Description of measures that has been taken to avoid the reoccurrence of the problem.
- Send evidence that the measures has been implemented.

Article 9.5 Possible certification decisions of the certifier

1	<p><u>Initial certification</u> Initial certification is when CUC certifies the project for the first time. It can be the result of an initial audit (when the client has not been certified before) or of a re-certification audit (when the client has already been certified by some other CB). If the decision is positive a certificate is issued for a maximum of 5 years. The certificate cannot be issued until it is demonstrated that the client satisfies all the FSC requirements.</p>
2	<p><u>Re-certification</u> After a maximum of 5 years audit program, there must be a re-certification audit done. Re-certification audit is a complete audit which is reported in the Audit Report. The certifier shall make decisions on renewing certification based on the results of the recertification audit, as well as the results of the review of the system over the period of certification and complaints received from users of certification. If the decision is positive a new certificate is issued for another 5 years (maximum).</p>
3	<p><u>Maintaining certification (continued certification)</u> In the frame of the 5 year audit program, between the initial and the re-certification audit and certification CUC must carry out annual surveillance audits. After each surveillance audit the auditor reports to the certifier. The certifier shall maintain certification based on demonstration that the client continues to satisfy the FSC requirements.</p>
4	<p><u>Suspension</u> The certification is suspended in cases when, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system; - the certified client does not allow surveillance or recertification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies; or - the certified client has voluntarily requested a suspension; - certification fee has not been paid; - major non-conformities have not been closed before the deadline; - failure to comply with other contractual requirements. <p>Under suspension, the client's management system certification is temporarily invalid. FSC shall be informed by CUC through putting the certification status on suspended on the FSC database.</p>
5	<p><u>Withdrawal</u> Suspension can be held for a maximum of 6 months. Failure to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension within 6 months shall result in withdrawal. Please note that the certifier has the right to withdraw without prior suspension.</p>
6	<p>In case the certificate has been suspended or withdrawn CUC issues a letter of notification to the company</p>

	<p>In the event that a certificate is suspended or withdrawn, the client shall:</p>
a)	<p>immediately cease to make any use of any FSC trademarks, or to sell any products that the client has previously labeled or marked using the FSC trademarks, or to make any claims that imply that they comply with the requirements for certification;</p>
b)	<p>identify all relevant existing customers, and advise those customers of the suspension or withdrawal in writing within three (3) business days of the suspension or withdrawal , and maintain records of that advice;</p>
c)	<p>cooperate with CUC and with FSC in order to allow CUC or FSC to confirm that</p>

	these obligations have been met.
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	On withdrawal of the certificate the client shall:
i)	return the certificate to the certification body or destroy the original, and commit to destroy any electronic copies and hardcopies in their possession;
ii)	at its own expense remove all uses of FSC's name, initials, logo, certification mark or trademarks from its products, documents, advertising or marketing materials.

	<u>Extension / reduction of the scope of certification.</u>
	<p>The certifier shall, in response to an application for extension to the scope of a certification already granted, undertake a review of the application and determine any audit activities necessary to decide whether or not the extension may be granted. This may be conducted in conjunction with a surveillance audit. After the audit with positive result a new certificate -updated with the extended scope - should be issued, but the validity should be the same as on the original certificate.</p> <p>Reduction of the scope can be indicated by the client or can be a consequence of the audit result. For example, reduction of the scope can be applied if a non-conformity affecting only a clearly determined part of the scope cannot be solved by the company, but QMS is functioning well for the rest of the scope. The certifier must consider whether the certificate need to be suspended/cannot be granted or the scope of the certificate need to be reduced.</p>