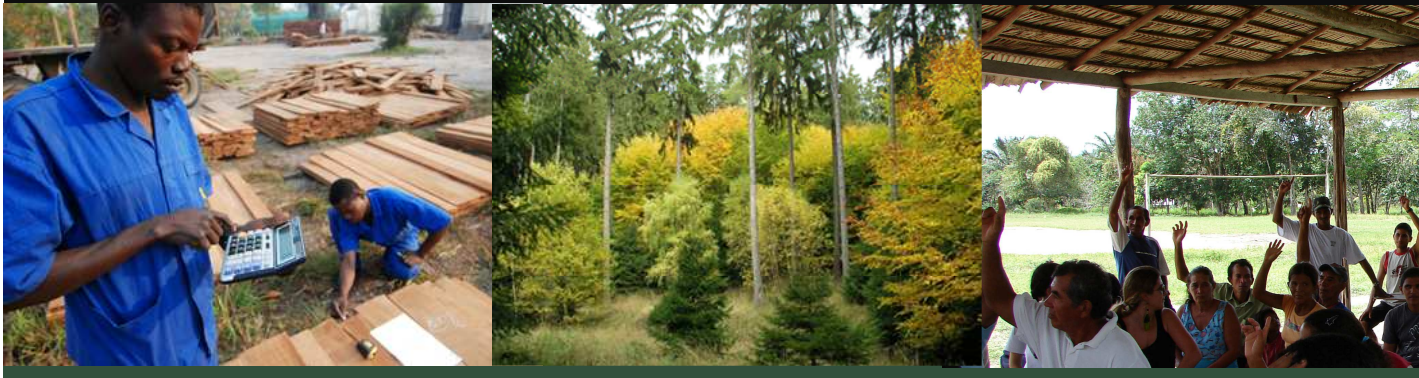


FSC INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

Forest management evaluations

FSC-STD-20-007 (V3-0) EN



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FOREST MANAGEMENT EVALUATIONS

FSC-STD-20-007 (V3-0) EN

FINAL VERSION

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, not for profit, non-government organization established to support environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

FSC's vision is where the world's forests meet the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation without compromising those of future generations

Foreword

FSC forest management certification is designed to provide a credible guarantee that all Forest Management Units (FMUs) included in the scope of the certificate comply with the requirements of the Forest Stewardship Standard specified on the certificate.

Evaluation is based on the certification body's observations of the means of verification for each Indicator of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard. The means of verification include study of documentation and records, field observations, and interviews with managers, employees, contractors and other stakeholders. Observations may be collected over a wide area including many different sites and many different means of verification.

The objective of this standard is to clarify the principles to be followed by certification bodies when sampling FMUs and sites, and integrating the observations to come to a reliable certification decision.

Note on use of this standard

All aspects of this standard are considered to be normative, including the scope, standard effective date, references, terms and definitions, notes, tables and annexes, unless otherwise stated (e.g. examples).

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A Scope

Certification bodies shall comply with the requirements of this standard for all forest management evaluations, including pre-, main and re-evaluations of single forest management units, forest management groups, and single legal entities managing multiple forest management units.

This International Standard shall be used as a normative document for FSC accreditation.

B Standard effective date

This standard becomes effective on **01 January 2010**.

New applicant certification bodies that apply for accreditation after the effective date of this standard shall be audited against the requirements of this standard.

Existing applicant certification bodies in the process of accreditation at the effective date shall switch to the requirements of this standard before accreditation is granted.

FSC accredited certification bodies shall be in compliance with the requirements of this standard by 01 January 2011.

C References

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For references without a version number, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

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

FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF eligibility criteria

FSC-STD-20-001 The application of ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996 (E) by FSC accredited certification bodies

FSC-STD-20-002 Structure, content and local adaptation of Generic Forest Stewardship Standards

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

FSC-STD-30-005 FSC Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups

FSC normative documents replaced by this version of the standard:

FSC-STD-20-005 V2-1 Forest pre-evaluation visits

FSC-STD-20-008 V2-1 Forest Certification Reports

FSC-STD-20-009 V2-1 Forest Certification Public Summary Reports

FSC-POL-20-001 Group certification guidelines for CBs

D Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the terms and definitions given in *FSC-STD-01-002 FSC Glossary of Terms* and the following apply:

Group entity: The group entity is the entity representing the forest properties that constitute a group for the purpose of FSC forest management certification. The group entity applies for group certification and finally holds the forest management certificate. The group entity is responsible to the certification body for ensuring that the requirements of the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Stewardship are met in all forest properties participating in the group.

The group entity may be an individual (e.g. a 'resource manager'), a cooperative body, an owner association, or other similar legal entity.

Group member: forest owner or forest manager who participates in a group scheme for the purpose of FSC forest management certification. Group members are responsible for implementing any requirements of group membership. Group members do not hold individual FSC certificates, but as long as they comply with all the requirements of group membership, their forest properties are covered by the forest management certificate issued to the group entity.

Joint certification: Certification of forest management and the tracking and tracing system of forest products (incl. NTFPs) *within* the forest management unit up to the forest gate. Forest products must be covered by a valid chain of custody certificate, or by a joint forest/chain of custody certificate, in order to be eligible to carry the FSC Logo and to enter into further chains of custody.

NOTE: In the case of joint forest management and Chain of Custody certification, timber that had been felled prior to the issue of a certificate, but which has not yet been sold by the forest management enterprise may be sold as certified if it was felled in the same calendar year or harvesting period and if the main evaluation did not reveal any major nonconformities.

Landscape level requirements: requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard that are implemented at the level of the group entity in a forest management group (e.g. protection of representative samples of ecosystems, protection of high conservation values).

Plantation: Forest areas lacking most of the principal characteristics and key elements of native ecosystems as defined by FSC-approved national and regional standards of forest stewardship, which result from the human activities of either planting, sowing or intensive silvicultural treatments.

Pre-evaluation: (sometimes referred to as 'scoping') are short visits to the applicant for forest management certification carried out by qualified lead auditors or small audit teams, prior to a main evaluation. Pre-evaluations familiarise the certification body with the forest management enterprise and with major forest stewardship issues in the region. Pre-evaluations allow the certification body to familiarise the forest manager with the main requirements of the standard to be used in the main evaluation, and to ensure that there are no obvious problems that the manager should work to correct before committing to the costs of a full evaluation.

Resource Manager: a person or organization that has been given the responsibilities by forest owners for the utilization of their forest resources, including operational planning and harvesting operations. In a group scheme, resource manager and group entity may be the same person / organization (this is often referred to as 'resource manager type of group' or 'Type II Group').

Resource Management Unit (RMU): Set of FMUs managed by the same managerial body (e.g. the same resource manager). In the case of small operations, RMUs may be used as the basis for sampling.

Suspension: temporary invalidation of the FSC certification for all or part of the specified scope of attestation.

Types of forest management groups

Type I group: group with shared responsibilities between the group entity and the group members. These may vary from administrative tasks to planning, silviculture, harvesting, and monitoring shared between the group entity and the group members.

Type II group: 'Resource manager' type of group in which the group entity has basically taken all operational responsibilities including administration, forest management and harvesting activities on behalf of the group members.

Withdrawal: revocation or cancellation of the FSC certification.

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 to 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 certification body can meet these requirements 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.

1 Basic Principles

- 1.1 A forest management certificate issued by an FSC-accredited certification body provides a credible assurance that there is no major failure in the conformity with the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard in any FMU within the scope of the certificate.
- 1.2 In order to provide such an assurance the certification body shall:
- a) Analyse and describe the forest area to be evaluated in terms of one or more forest management units;
 - b) Confirm that there is a management system in place that is capable of ensuring that all the requirements of the specified Forest Stewardship Standard are implemented within every FMU within the scope of the evaluation;
 - c) Carry out sampling of sites, documents, management records, interviews, consultation with stakeholders and direct factual observations sufficient to verify that there are no major non-conformities with the performance thresholds specified in the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard within any FMU within the scope of the evaluation.
- 1.3 FSC Forest Stewardship Standards are primarily designed for application at the forest management unit (FMU) level. In the case of forest management groups, designated requirements can be applied at the level of the group through the group entity.
- 1.4 If a regional, national or sub-national Forest Stewardship Standard has received formal FSC approval since the certificate was issued, then this standard shall replace any locally adapted generic forest stewardship standard previously used as the standard for evaluation according to the effective date as specified in the approved standard.
- 1.5 Primary or secondary processing facilities associated with the forest management enterprise shall be inspected for conformity with the applicable chain of custody standard(s), and a separate report which meets the requirements of *FSC-STD-20-011 Annex 1* shall be prepared.

NOTE: This clause does not apply to log cutting or de-barking units and small portable sawmills associated with the forest management enterprise. They can be evaluated as part of the 'normal' forest evaluation procedures.

2 Documented procedures

- 2.1 The certification body shall document and implement its systems and procedures for evaluating forest management enterprises, in conformity with the requirements specified in this standard.
- 2.2 The certification body shall allow sufficient time for the auditors in an evaluation to fully implement the requirements as specified in the certification body's procedures.

NOTE: The amount of time spent by the certification body to evaluate conformity with the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard varies with the number of FMUs selected, the complexity of the management and social and

environmental conditions, the number of sites, records and documents evaluated and stakeholders interviewed, and with the time taken to carry out those evaluations and consultations. The amount of time expected to be required for a competent evaluation will be included in the guidance to this standard.

3 Pre-evaluation

3.1 Requirements for pre-evaluation

3.1.1 The certification body shall complete a pre-evaluation in accordance to the requirements in Section 3 of this standard prior to the main evaluation of any FMU of the following categories:

- a) Plantations larger than 10,000 ha;
- b) All non-plantation forest types larger than 50,000 hectares, unless the whole area meets the requirements for classification as a “low intensity managed forest” (see *FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF eligibility criteria*);

NOTE: the thresholds in a) and b) refer to the total area included in the scope of evaluation (either as a single FMU or as multiple or group FMUs).

- c) FMUs containing high conservation value attributes, unless the whole area meets the requirements for classification as a “small forest” (see *FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF eligibility criteria*).

NOTE: certification bodies shall take a precautionary approach to the likelihood that an FMU may include High Conservation Value Forest. Certification bodies should request this information from the applicant forest manager in the application phase and check for the presence of HCVF in the FMU on the FSC Global Forest Risk Register or other HCVF maps.

3.1.2 Pre-evaluations may be conducted for any FMU not meeting above specifications, at the discretion of the certification body, prior to any main evaluation.

3.1.3 Pre-evaluations are not required in the case of re-evaluations.

3.2 Pre-evaluation of management system(s)

3.2.1 Pre-evaluations shall include the following elements:

- a) Review and discussion with forest managers of the requested scope of evaluation in light of relevant FSC norms such as group certification, partial certification of large management enterprises, joint forest management and chain of custody certification, etc.
- b) Review and discussion with forest managers of the requirements of the standard(s) to be used for the evaluation, including procedural requirements such as stakeholder consultation (see *FSC-STD-20-006 Stakeholder consultation for forest evaluation*).

3.2.2 In the case of group or multiple site evaluations, the certification body shall:

- a) carry out an analysis and description of the forest management units proposed for inclusion within the scope of the evaluation, in conformity with the requirements of Clauses 5.1 and 5.2 (below);
- b) discuss the certification body's approach to sampling of forest management units within the scope of the evaluation;
- c) carry out an initial analysis of the supplier's management systems and capacity to administer the requirements of those systems including in the case of evaluation;
- d) in the case of group certification applicants an explicit review of conformity with the requirements for group entities (see *FSC-STD-30-005 FSC Standard for Group Entities*).

3.2.3 Identification, on the basis of information provided by the applicant, of major gaps or likely problem areas in respect of the applicant's conformity with any of the requirements of the standard(s).

3.2.4 The certification body shall prepare a written report on the pre-evaluation, which should be made available to the applicant. A summary of the main results shall subsequently be included in the main evaluation report.

3.3 Public consultation

3.3.1 Mandatory pre-evaluation of operations as listed under 3.1.1 shall include a consultative phase in which key stakeholders are identified and consulted. This consultative phase shall be completed prior to the initiation of the main evaluation.

NOTE: This consultation does not replace the general stakeholder consultation as specified in *FSC-STD-20-006 Stakeholder consultation for forest evaluation*.

3.3.2 The certification body may also initiate the general stakeholder consultation process to facilitate conformity with the requirements of *FSC-STD-20-006 Stakeholder consultation for forest evaluation*.

3.3.3 In a voluntary pre-evaluation, the preceding elements may be carried out in confidence, if this is requested by the applicant.

4 Preparation for main evaluation

4.1 The certification body shall use the results of any pre-evaluations in the preparation of a subsequent main evaluation.

4.2 Preparation for main evaluation shall include:

4.2.1 Documents and records

The certification body shall collect copies of key documents or records that may be used in preparation for the main evaluation, such as management plans, inventory results, management system documentation, maps, legal documents, etc..

4.2.2 National legislation and guidance

The certification body shall identify and obtain copies of relevant national and local laws and administrative requirements which apply in the country or region in which the evaluation is to take place.

4.2.3 Stakeholders and officials

The certification body shall identify an initial list of individuals and organizations that are likely to be contacted as stakeholders to the main evaluation. If possible the certification body should obtain the contact details of such stakeholders. The certification body should identify any national or local government departments that will need to be contacted during a main evaluation.

4.2.4 Potential main evaluation team members

The certification body may contact, interview and/or brief potential personnel for a subsequent main evaluation (see *FSC-STD-20-001 Annex 2 on qualification requirements for FSC certification auditors*).

4.3 Preparation for main evaluation shall include:

- a) adaptation of the generic forest stewardship standard in accordance with the requirements of *FSC-STD-20-002 Part 2* if the country in which the evaluation is to take place does not yet have an FSC-approved regional, national or sub-national forest stewardship standard;
- b) initiation of stakeholder consultation in accordance with the requirements of *FSC-STD-20-006*.
- c) an explicit analysis of the overall responsibility for full compliance with the applicable forest stewardship standard (e.g. by land owner, resource manager) as well as of the delegated responsibilities for the implementation of selected requirements (e.g. by contractors).

5 Main evaluation

5.1 Analysis of forest management units

- 5.1.1 The certification body shall complete an explicit analysis of the area included in the scope of the evaluation in terms of discrete forest management units, and the structures and systems in place for their management.

NOTE: the results of this analysis are required as the basis for subsequent evaluation of the management structure and for sampling of the population of forest management units included in the scope of the evaluation.

5.2 Evaluation of management system(s)

- 5.2.1 The certification body shall complete an explicit analysis of the critical aspects of management control required to ensure that the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard is implemented over:
- a) the full geographical area of the evaluation;
 - b) the full range of management operations.

NOTE: The extent to which the management system is documented shall be an important part of the evaluation. For large enterprises a fully documented management system is expected. A system based on verbal descriptions and simple documentation may be sufficient to implement the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard for small scale or low intensity enterprises.

- 5.2.2 In the case of applicants for group certification, the certification body shall evaluate conformity with the requirements of *FSC-STD-30-005 FSC Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups*.
- 5.2.3 The certification body shall evaluate the capacity of the applicant 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).
- 5.2.4 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.
- 5.2.5 The certification body shall evaluate the tracking and tracing of forest products *within* the evaluated forest area up to the forest gate, and procedures for the identification of products sourced from the evaluated forest area as part of the analysis of the forest management system.
- 5.2.6 A joint forest/chain of custody certificate shall only be issued if the certification body is satisfied that the system of tracking and tracing implemented by the forest management enterprise is sufficient to provide a guarantee that all products invoiced by the forest management enterprise originate from the evaluated forest area.

5.3 Selection of forest management units (FMUs) for evaluation

This section applies to multiple FMU and group evaluations, but is inapplicable if the scope of the evaluation is a single FMU.

- 5.3.1 The certification body shall classify the FMUs included in the scope of the evaluation as sets of 'like' FMUs for the purpose of sampling. The sets shall be selected to minimise variability within each set in terms of:
- a) forest types (natural/ semi-natural vs. plantation);
 - b) FMU size class (see Annex 1);
 - c) applicable national or regional Forest Stewardship Standard.

NOTE: A group or multiple FMU evaluation may consist of one or more sets of 'like' FMUs.

NOTE: in the case of forest management groups comprised of SLIMF and non-SLIMF operations the certification body may apply SLIMF streamlined procedures as applicable to sets of 'like' FMUs that only comprise of SLIMF operations.

- 5.3.2 For each set of 'like' FMUs thus identified, the certification body shall select a *minimum* number of units for evaluation (x) as specified in Annex 1 of this standard in the case of forest management groups, and by applying the formula $X = 0.8 * \sqrt{y}$ in the case of multiple FMUs (y= all FMUs in the scope of certification).
- 5.3.3 The certification body shall then select for evaluation specific FMUs within each set to achieve the required calculated sample number. 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:
- a) geographical distribution, *and*
 - b) the personnel responsible for operational management of the selected FMUs.
- 5.3.4 In the case of evaluations of multiple FMUs and groups or sets of SLIMF FMUs, the certification body may evaluate each defined set of FMUs as a whole against the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard, but it is not necessary that each sampled FMU be evaluated by the certification body against *all* the requirements of the standard.
- 5.3.5 In the case of evaluations of all other groups, the certification body shall evaluate each FMU selected as part of the sample against *all* the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard that apply at the level of the group members.

NOTE: Responsibilities for meeting the applicable criteria shall not be 'traded' between different members.

- 5.3.6 In the case of evaluations of all types of forest management groups, the certification body shall evaluate the group entity against all the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard that apply at the level of the group entity.

NOTE: the forest management requirements that are applicable at the level of group members and at the level of the group entity must be defined in the group management system (see *FSC-STD-30-005*).

5.4 Evaluation at the level of the Forest Management Unit (FMU)

Documents and records

- 5.4.1 The auditor(s) shall identify and assess management documentation and a sufficient variety and number of records at each FMU selected for evaluation as to make direct, factual observations to verify conformity with all the indicators of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard that are under evaluation at that FMU 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.

Sites

- 5.4.2 The auditor(s) shall visit a sufficient variety and number of sites within each FMU selected for evaluation as to make direct, factual observations as to conformity with all the indicators of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard that are under evaluation at that FMU and for which such inspection is a necessary means of verification, over the range of conditions under management by the applicant forest management enterprise.

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

- 5.4.3 The auditor(s) should select sites for inspection based on an evaluation of the critical points of risk in the management system.

Directly affected stakeholders

- 5.4.4 The auditor(s) shall interview a sufficient variety and number of people affected by or involved in the forest management of each FMU as to make direct, factual observations as to conformity with all the indicators of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard that are under evaluation at that FMU and for which such consultation is a necessary means of verification, over the range of conditions under management by the applicant forest management enterprise. Annex 4 provides examples of stakeholder groups that the auditor(s) may consult.
- 5.4.5 Certification body procedures for meeting and consulting with directly affected stakeholders shall comply with the requirements of *FSC-STD-20-006 Stakeholder Consultation for Forest Evaluation*.

6 Surveillance

6.1 General requirements

- 6.1.1 The certification body shall carry out a surveillance evaluation to monitor the certificate holder's continued conformity with applicable certification requirements at least annually.

NOTE: For a certificate having a five year duration at least four surveillance evaluations shall take place before the certificate expires. However, a surveillance evaluation may not require an FMU level site visit (see Paragraph 6.3, below).

- 6.1.2 Surveillance evaluations shall follow clear, documented procedures and shall include the elements specified in Section 6 of this standard.
- 6.1.3 If a regional, national or sub-national Forest Stewardship Standard has received formal FSC approval since the previous main or surveillance evaluation then this standard shall replace any locally adapted generic standard previously used by the certification body in the area to which it applies according to the standard effective date specified in the approved standard.

6.2 Review of documentation and records

- 6.2.1 The certification body shall review:

- a) Any changes to the forest area included in the scope of the certificate, including additions, exclusions, or FMU boundary changes;
- b) Changes to the certificate holder's management system;

NOTE: The certification body shall specifically assess the capacity of the certificate holder's management system to manage any change in scope of the certificate including any increase in number of group members, and in size, number or complexity of forest management units within the scope of the certificate.

- 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 (and record quantitative data on the use of pesticides);
- j) Records of sales of FSC certified products (copies of invoices, bills, shipping documents).

- 6.2.2 In addition, in the case of group certificates the certification body shall review:

- a) The group management system;
- b) The updated list of group members;
- b) The rate of membership change within the group in relation to the specified increase and maximum group size;
- c) Formal communication / written documents sent to group members by the group entity since the previous certification body surveillance;
- d) records of monitoring carried out by the group entity;
- e) records of any corrective actions issued by the group entity.

NOTE: Documentation and records covering the period since the previous evaluation may be submitted to the certification body for review prior to a site visit.

6.3 FMU level site visits

Frequency

- 6.3.1 The certification body shall carry out one or more FMU level site visits annually for all certificate holders except in the case of those managing SLIMF operations (see below).
- 6.3.2 In the case of a single SLIMF, the certification body shall carry out at least one FMU level site visit during the period of validity of the certificate. If there are no outstanding corrective actions to be evaluated which may require site verification, no complaints requiring evaluation and no significant forest activities have taken place in the previous 12 months, the remaining surveillance evaluations may be based on review of the documentation and records specified in 6.2, above, and do not require FMU level site visits.
- 6.3.3 In the case of groups or sub-groups of SLIMFs with less than 100 members the certification body shall carry out at least one FMU level site visit at the end of the first year in which the certificate was issued, and at least one additional FMU level site visit during the period of validity of the certificate. If there are no outstanding corrective actions to be evaluated and no unresolved complaints requiring evaluation the remaining surveillance evaluations may be based on review of documentation and records specified in 6.2 above, and do not require FMU level site visits. The certification body shall take account of the rate of change of membership within the group; changes to the group management structure and the type and variety of forest activities being implemented within the group before making the decision to waive an annual FMU level site visit.

Box 1: Groups of SLIMF: minimum surveillance requirements in the case of a certificate issued for five (5) years.

Year 0	Main evaluation/Certification
Year 1	Surveillance visit required.
Year 2}	Min. of 1 surveillance visit in years 2-4.
Year 3}	Min. of 2 annual documentation audits required in years 2-4
Year 4}	
Year 5	Re-evaluation

NOTE: In the case of certificates issued for periods less than five (5) years the minimum requirements may not result in reduced visits. In the case of certificates issued for a single year, it is not required to carry out surveillance prior to re-evaluation in the second year.

- 6.3.4 In the case of groups or sub-groups of SLIMFs with 100 or more members the certification body shall carry out at least one FMU level site visit annually according to applicable sampling requirements.

Number

- 6.3.5 The number of FMUs to be visited in a surveillance evaluation of forest management **groups** shall be determined according to Annex 1. If new FMUs (e.g. group members or newly acquired FMUs) have been added to the scope of the certificate

since the main evaluation, the new FMUs shall be sampled at the rate of a main evaluation.

- 6.3.6 The number of FMUs to be visited in a surveillance evaluation of **multiple FMUs** shall be at least half the number of FMUs visited during the main evaluation. If new FMUs (e.g. newly acquired FMUs) have been added to the scope of the certificate since the last evaluation, the new FMUs shall be sampled at the rate of a main evaluation.

Procedures

- 6.3.7 Surveillance shall include:

- a) evaluation of the certificate holder's compliance with all conditions (corrective actions) on which certification is based;
- b) review of any complaints or allegations of non-conformity with any aspect of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standards;
- 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 area under evaluation.

NOTE: The certification body may focus its surveillance during a particular annual surveillance evaluation on specific elements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard (e.g. those pertaining to particular FSC Principles or to particular aspects of management) with the provision that all aspects of the Forest Stewardship Standard are monitored during the period of validity of the certificate. Certification bodies may therefore focus on particular aspects of the forest management system reducing the time and cost of surveillance.

- 6.3.8 For the following types of operations, the certification body shall at minimum evaluate at each surveillance all indicators of the following sets of criteria from the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard in addition to the elements as defined in Clause 6.3.7 (above).

- a) Plantations larger than 10,000 ha

Criterion 2.3; Criterion 4.2; Criterion 4.4; Criterion 6.7; Criterion 6.9; Criterion 10.6; Criterion 10.7; Criterion 10.8.

- b) All non-plantation forest types larger than 50,000 hectares, unless the whole area meets the requirements for classification as a "low intensity managed forest" (see *FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF eligibility criteria*)

Criterion 1.5; Criterion 2.3; Criterion 3.2; Criterion 4.2; Criterion 4.4; Criterion 5.6; Criterion 6.2; Criterion 6.3; Criterion 8.2; Criterion 9.4

- c) FMUs containing high conservation value attributes, unless the whole area meets the requirements for classification as a "small forest" (see *FSC-STD-01-003 SLIMF eligibility criteria*)

Criterion 6.2; Criterion 6.3; Criterion 6.9; Criterion 9.4

NOTE: These requirements are based on the level of risk associated with such operations.

7 Re-evaluation

- 7.1 The certification body may re-issue a certificate that has expired, based on the re-evaluation of the certificate holder's conformity with all aspects of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard and additional (e.g. contractual) certification requirements.
- 7.2 Re-evaluation shall follow the same procedures as for the main evaluation, with the following exceptions:
- a) The certification body is not required to submit the evaluation report for peer review;
 - b) The certification body is not required to prepare a full, new certification 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 re-issue a certificate is based.
 - c) FMUs may be selected at the same rate as for annual surveillance.

8 Decision making

Basic principles

- 8.1 In addition to the conditions necessary for a client to receive or maintain a certificate as specified in *FSC-STD-20-001*, certification bodies shall make certification decisions based on their evaluation of the forest management enterprise's conformity with the requirements specified in the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard and related normative documents (e.g. *FSC-STD-30-005 FSC Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups*).
- 8.2 All non-conformities that are identified by the certification body during an evaluation shall systematically be recorded in the evaluation report or associated checklists.
- NOTE: non-conformities with requirements shall be recorded and addressed even if these are not in the specific focus of a particular evaluation.
- 8.3 Each non-conformity against indicators of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard shall be evaluated to determine whether it constitutes a minor or major non-conformity at the level of the associated FSC Criterion.
- Note: A single Corrective Action Request shall not include requirements that relate to two (2) or more Criteria from the applied Forest Stewardship Standard.
- 8.4 Each non-conformity against other applicable certification requirements (e.g. *FSC-STD-30-005 FSC Standard for Group Entities in Forest Management Groups*) shall be evaluated to determine whether it constitutes a minor or major non-conformity at the level of the individual requirement.
- 8.5 Non-conformities shall lead to Corrective Action Requests, suspension or withdrawal of the certificate.

8.6 A non-conformity shall be considered minor if:

- a) it is a temporary lapse, *or*
- b) it is unusual/ non-systematic, *or*
- c) the impacts of the non-conformity are limited in their temporal and spatial scale, *and*
- d) it does not result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant FSC Criterion or another applicable certification requirement.

8.7 A non-conformity shall be considered major if, either alone or in combination with further 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*
- b) in a significant part of the applied management system.

NOTE: the cumulative impact of a number of minor non-conformities may represent a fundamental failure or total breakdown of a system and thus constitute a major non-conformity.

8.8 Fundamental failure is indicated by non-conformity which:

- a) continues over a long period of time, *or*
- b) is repeated or systematic, *or*
- c) affects a wide area and/or causes significant damage, *or*
- d) is indicated by the absence or a total breakdown of a system, *or*
- e) is not corrected or adequately responded to by the client once identified.

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

8.10 Requests for corrective action shall have the following timeframes:

8.10.1 Minor non-conformities shall be fully corrected within one (1) year

NOTE: Minor non-conformities may be extended **once** for a maximum period of another year if full implementation of corrective action was not possible due to circumstances beyond the control of the responsible forest manager.

8.10.2 Major non-conformities shall be fully corrected within three (3) months.

NOTE: Major non-conformities may be extended **once** for a maximum period of another three months if full implementation of corrective action was not possible due to circumstances beyond the control of the responsible forest manager.

NOTE: A major non-conformity may require immediate action to be taken by the forest manager e.g. immediate cessation of use of a prohibited pesticide, immediate cessation of dangerous activities or activities causing serious environmental damage.

- 8.11 The certification body shall determine whether the corrective action has been appropriately and fully implemented within its designated timeline. If the action taken is not considered adequate, then:

8.11.1 Minor non-conformities shall become 'major' non-conformities and shall be corrected within a maximum period of three (3) months.

8.11.2 Major non-conformities shall lead to suspension of the certificate.

- 8.12 Corrective Action Requests shall not be closed out if corrective action has not been fully implemented as requested.

- 8.13 Major non-conformities shall not be downgraded to minor non-conformities.

Main evaluation

- 8.14 The certification body shall not issue a certificate to an applicant if there is any major non-conformity with a requirement of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard and/or other applicable certification requirements.

- 8.15 A certificate shall not be issued in the case that a large number of minor non-conformities or the cumulative impact of the non-conformities represents a fundamental failure or total breakdown of a system and thus constitute a major non-conformity.

Surveillance evaluation

- 8.16 Certification bodies shall base their evaluation of the forest management enterprise's conformity with specific indicators in the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard taking into consideration previous evaluations and stakeholders comments.

- 8.17 The occurrence of five or more major non-conformities in one surveillance evaluation shall be considered as a total breakdown of the company's management system and the certificate shall be suspended.

Re-evaluation

- 8.18 The certification body shall not re-issue a certificate to a client if there is major non-conformity with a requirement of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard and/or other applicable certification requirement.

Forest Management Groups

- 8.19 The certification body must explicitly define the methodology by which the certification body determines 'failure' of a group evaluation: at the time of main evaluation AND at the time of surveillance. The specification of 'failure' shall also distinguish between 'group failure' and 'member failure', where:

8.19.1 'Group failure' shall lead to corrective actions, suspension or withdrawal of the group certificate, 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 comply 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 failures may each contribute to a group failure: many minor failures or few major failures may both suggest a breakdown in the group system for quality control, and may be considered sufficient reason to withdraw a group certificate.

8.19.2 Depending on the number and seriousness, 'member failure' shall lead to corrective actions, suspension or expulsion of a group member.

Conflicts between certification requirements and laws and regulations

- 8.20 The certification body shall evaluate any conflicts between laws/ regulations and certification requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard, on a case by case basis, in arrangement with involved or affected parties.

Allegations of non-conformity

- 8.21 If the certification body receives specific information of particular instances or allegations of non-conformity with aspects of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard at specific Forest Management Units (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 Forest Stewardship Standard.

Annex 1: Sampling for group certification

1 Generic requirements

- 1.1 The group entity shall be assessed in each evaluation in addition to the sampled FMUs according to the requirements specified in *FSC-STD-30-005*.
- 1.2 Depending on risk factors, stakeholder complaints or nonconformities the number of units to be evaluated shall be increased in relation to the calculated minimum.

2 Sampling process for large and medium size FMUs

Table 1 Number of FMUs to be evaluated (x) within each set of 'like' FMUs

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

NOTE: the number of units calculated (x) has to be rounded to the *upper* whole number to determine the number of units to be sampled

- 2.1 All sets of 'like' FMUs shall be visited in the main evaluation.
- 2.2 50% of the sets of 'like' FMUs shall be visited in surveillance and re-evaluations for FMUs in size class 1,000-10,000 ha, and all sets of 'like' FMUs must be visited in surveillance and re-evaluations for FMUs > 10,000 ha.
- 2.3 For each set of 'like' FMUs to be sampled, the certification body shall select a *minimum* number of units for evaluation (x) by applying the applicable formula in Table 1 (y= total number of FMUs within a set of 'like' FMUs).
- 2.4 Each FMU within the group shall have been visited on-site by the certification body at least once in a 5 years certificate cycle.

3 Sampling process for small size FMUs

Table 2

Size class	Main evaluation	Surveillance eval.	Re-evaluation
100 -1,000 ha	$X = 0.8 * \sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$
< 100 ¹ ha	$X = 0.6 * \sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.3 * \sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.3 * \sqrt{y}$

NOTE: the number of units calculated (x) has to be rounded to the *upper* whole number to determine the number of units to be sampled

- 3.1 Sampling for FMUs ≤ 1,000 ha shall be conducted in a 2-step approach.
- 3.2 Step 1 defines the *minimum* number of sets of 'like' FMUs to be sampled in each evaluation. This number (x) shall be calculated by entering the total number of sets of 'like' FMUs (y) into the applicable formula in Table 2.
- 3.3 Step 2 defines the *minimum* number of units to be sampled within each set of 'like' FMUs. For this purpose, FMUs managed by the same managerial body (e.g. the same resource manager) may be combined to a single 'resource management unit' (RMU). The number of units to be sampled (x) shall be calculated by entering the total number of units (y= number of FMUs directly managed by the forest owner + number of RMUs) within the set of 'like' FMUs (y) into the applicable formula in Table 2.
- 3.4 Sampling within a 'resource management unit' shall be conducted in accordance to Clause 5.4.2 in a main- and re-evaluation and in accordance to Clause 6.3 in a surveillance evaluation.

¹ For countries or regions with an FSC-approved SLIMF size limit above 100 ha this may be used as the threshold for this size class.

4 Mega groups of small size FMUs² ≤ 1,000 ha

4.1 For mega groups or sets of small size FMUs (i.e. more than 5,000 members per group or set) the certification body may sub-stratify the group or sets of small size FMUs according to the level of risk in relation to presence of HCVs, land tenure or land use disputes, and long harvesting cycles.

4.2 In the demonstrated absence of:

- high conservation value attributes, *and*
- land use or tenure disputes, *and*
- short (< 30 years) rotation cycles,

the certification body may reduce the sampling size as specified in Table 2 for units within a set of 'like' FMUs by a maximum of 50% (but not less than 55 units in total).

5 Reporting

5.1 Process and results of sampling shall be documented in the certification report.

² An FMU is considered 'small' in the context of sampling if the total forest area of the FMU is less than 1,000 ha.

Table showing examples of the *minimum* number of small management units to be included in the sample of an evaluation

y (total number of units in set for sampling)	X (sample for evaluation)= $0.8\sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.6\sqrt{y}$	$X = 0.3\sqrt{y}$
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	1
3	2	2	1
4	2	2	2
5	2	2	2
6	3	2	2
7	3	3	2
8	3	3	2
9	3	3	2
10	3	3	2
15	4	3	3
20	4	4	3
50	7	6	4
100	9	8	6
500	20	18	13
1,000	29	25	18
5,000	64	55	39
10,000	90	78	55
50,000	200	174	123

NOTE: the number of units calculated (x) has been rounded to the *upper* whole number to determine the number of units in the sample.

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 Forest Stewardship Standard Indicators. 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
- f) up to date maps of roads, management sites, etc.
- g) inventory records
- h) work instructions
- i) contractor contracts
- j) agreements with affected local communities
- k) 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

Annex 3: Examples of sites for evaluation

The following list provides examples of some of the sites that could be visited to assess conformity with Forest Stewardship Standard Indicators. This is not a complete list, nor is the certification body required to visit all sites listed here.

- a) seed orchards;
- b) nurseries;
- c) protected areas;
- d) 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.
- e) worker accommodation and amenities;
- f) areas used by communities and/or indigenous peoples within or near the forest area;
- g) water courses of different sizes, within and downstream of the forest area;
- h) roads and forest roads of different sizes affected by the forest management;
- i) sites where chemicals have been applied and stored;
- j) potential High Conservation Value Forest sites;
- k) monitoring sites.

Annex 4: Examples of stakeholder groups

The following list provides examples of some of the stakeholders that may need to be consulted to evaluate conformity with specific aspects of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard. This is not a complete list, nor is the certification body required to consult with all the stakeholders listed here if this is not required to verify the applicable indicators.

FSC Principle	Stakeholder groups typically consulted to evaluate conformity
Principle 1	State forest service, statutory bodies with some legal mandate over the FMU under evaluation, e.g. tax or legal departments
Principle 2	Representatives and members of communities directly affected by the forest management enterprise Representatives and members of Indigenous Peoples directly affected by the forest management enterprise
Principle 3	Representatives and members of Indigenous Peoples directly affected by the forest management enterprise
Principle 4	Employees, contractors and subcontractors and their representatives, Labour organisations or unions of forestry sector workers; forest recreation organisations
Principle 5	Employees Representatives and members of communities directly affected by the forest management enterprise Representatives and members of Indigenous Peoples directly affected by the forest management enterprise
Principle 6	National NGOs that are involved or have an interest in respect of environmental aspects of forest management, either at the national level, or at the sub-national level in the environs of the forest to be evaluated;
Principle 7	State forest service, employees
Principle 8	State forest service, employees
Principle 9	National NGOs that are involved or have an interest in respect of social or environmental aspects of forest management, either at the national level, or at the sub-national level in the environs of the forest to be evaluated; Representatives and members of communities directly affected by the forest management enterprise Representatives and members of Indigenous Peoples directly affected by the forest management enterprise
Principle 10	Various