



# COLLECTION OF POLICY RESPONSES TO SITUATION IN UKRAINE



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**Title:** Collection of Policy Responses to Situation in Ukraine

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**Contact for comments:**   FSC International – Performance and Standards Unit  
Adenauerallee 134  
53113 Bonn  
Germany

**Phone:** +49 -(0)228 -36766 -0

**Fax:** +49 -(0)228 -36766 -65

**Email :** psu@fsc.org

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## **FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION**

This document contains the derogations and interpretations related to the current situation in Ukraine, to offer a central source of information to FSC stakeholders.

# CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PART I – RESPONSES TO CERTIFICATION BODY AUDITING REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>5</b>
General derogation for conducting audits remotely in Ukraine	5
Conducting COC main evaluation audits remotely in Ukraine	9
Conducting FM ‘hybrid’ audits in Ukraine	14
Timeline for signing the ‘License Agreement for the FSC Certification Scheme’ in Ukraine	16
Interpretations	16
<b>PART II – RESPONSES TO CB AUDITOR REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>20</b>
CB Auditor requirements	20
<b>PART III – POLICY RESPONSES TO FM CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>22</b>
Interpretations	22
<b>PART IV – POLICY RESPONSES TO COC CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>23</b>
Interpretations	23

## PART I – RESPONSES TO CERTIFICATION BODY AUDITING REQUIREMENTS

FSC-DER-2022-003	<b>General derogation for conducting audits remotely in Ukraine</b>	
Requirement (s)	As indicated below	
Rationale	This derogation has been developed to address a force majeure situation in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is applicable in circumstances in which an on-site audit is not possible or viable due to the organization being located in or requiring travel through a region with a demonstrated security risk for the life or health of auditors and restricted in its scope of application as indicated below.	
Terms and definitions	<b>Hybrid audit:</b> Combination of a remote desk audit and an on-site inspection.	
PSU conclusion	<b>Scenarios for applying this derogation</b>	<p>This derogation is restricted in its application to evaluations in Ukraine.</p> <p>This derogation applies to audits in situations where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there is demonstrated health and/or safety risk to auditors (demonstrated through verifiable public sources), or</li> <li>- travel restrictions are imposed by organizational (certificate holder/ certification body) health and safety policies or public authorities.</li> </ul>
	<b>Preconditions for conducting desk and hybrid audits</b>	<p>1. Certification bodies (CBs) shall have a documented policy, procedure, or both, outlining the process to be implemented in case this derogation is applied. This shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A method for assessing whether an on-site audit can be replaced with a desk or hybrid audit, and</li> <li>- A description of the desk and hybrid audit methods to be applied in the case of forest management (FM) and chain of custody (CoC), and</li> <li>- A process to implement the reporting and record-keeping requirements of this derogation.</li> </ul> <p>2. CBs and certificate holders shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- have the technical and operational capacity to conduct audits remotely or as hybrid audits, and</li> <li>- agree on a secure and confidential data transmission, and</li> <li>- ensure the availability of key staff.</li> </ul>

		<p>3. CBs shall utilize information and communication technology (ICT) to evaluate all requirements from the annual audit plan to the extent possible.</p> <p>4. Desk audits and the remote component of a hybrid audit should be conducted on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- virtual video meetings / virtual company tour,</li> <li>- interviews with relevant people of the certificate holder and stakeholders,</li> <li>- relevant documents and records,</li> <li>- satellite images (where possible), and other best available information.</li> </ul> <p>5. When desk or hybrid audits are conducted, CBs shall demonstrate that the full scope of the audit can be covered, and that it is possible to evaluate with adequate assurance the conformity of the applicant to the normative requirements.</p>
	<p><b>Forest Management Pre-evaluations</b></p> <p>FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0</p> <p>Definition of Pre-evaluation</p>	<p>Pre-evaluation audits may be conducted as desk audits if the CB concludes that a desk audit can credibly be conducted.</p> <p>Alternatively, or when the CB concludes that a pre-evaluation audit cannot be credibly conducted as a desk audit, the audit may be conducted as a hybrid audit as regulated in FSC-DER-2022-005.</p>
	<p><b>Forest Management main audits (initial certification)</b></p> <p>FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0</p> <p>Clause 5.4.2</p>	<p>Regulated in FSC-DER-2022-005</p>
	<p><b>Chain of Custody main audits (initial certification)</b></p>	<p>Regulated in FSC-DER-2022-004</p>
	<p><b>Surveillance audits</b></p> <p>FSC-STD-20-001 V4-0</p> <p>Clause 4.7.1</p> <p>FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0</p> <p>Clause 6.1.1; INT-STD-20-007_37</p> <p>FSC-STD-20-011 V4-0</p> <p>Clauses 2.6 e), 9.2; INT-STD-20-011_04; Clause 9.2 and 9.3</p>	<p>CBs may apply either option below, either individually, or sequentially if needed.</p> <p>A. Surveillance audits may be postponed for a period not exceeding six (6) months beyond the maximum audit cycle.</p> <p>All other requirements including the requirement to have four (4) surveillance audits within one certification cycle remain unaffected.</p> <p>B. Surveillance audits may be conducted as desk audits, when based on an assessment of the scale, intensity and risk of The Organization's activities it is concluded that a desk audit can credibly be conducted.</p>

		<p>Examples of the above that would prevent a desk audit include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate holders with open major corrective action requests (CARs) that require on-site verification,</li> <li>• Certificate holders with purchase/sales mismatches proven through supply chain investigations conducted by the CB, ASI or FSC,</li> <li>• Certificate holders who fail to report purchase/sales when requested through a supply chain investigation,</li> <li>• Certificate holders with unresolved complaints.</li> </ul> <p>C. Alternatively to Option B, or where a surveillance audit cannot be credibly conducted remotely it may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For FM: be conducted as a hybrid audit as regulated in FSC-DER-2022-005.</li> <li>• For CoC: be conducted according to the preconditions, risk assessment and audit process as prescribed in FSC-DER-2022-004.</li> </ul> <p>Where audits cannot be conducted according to these options, the certificate shall be suspended.</p>
	<p><b>Re-evaluation audits</b></p> <p>FSC-STD-20-001 V4-0 Clause 1.4.2 and 1.4.3</p>	<p>CBs may apply either option below, either individually, or sequentially if needed.</p> <p>A. A certificate may be extended once for up to twelve (12) months beyond its original expiry date, by performing a surveillance audit (which may be conducted in line with this derogation).</p> <p>A re-evaluation audit shall then be performed before the maximum 12-month extension expires in order to renew certification.</p> <p>B. A re-evaluation hybrid audit for FM may be conducted as regulated in FSC-DER-2022-005.</p> <p>A re-evaluation audit for CoC may be conducted according to the preconditions, risk assessment and audit process as prescribed in FSC-DER-2022-004.</p> <p>C. If after the first twelve (12) month extension of a certificate a re-evaluation hybrid audit for FM is not possible, the CB may extend the certificate another time for up to twelve (12) months (up to 24 months beyond its original expiry date) by performing a surveillance audit, which may be conducted in line with this derogation.</p> <p>In the surveillance audit the CB shall include the mandatory elements specified in Section 6 of FSC-STD-20-007 and shall audit requirements of the Forest Stewardship Standard based on the level of risk and previous performance of the certificate holder.</p>

	<p><b>Scope change audits</b></p> <p>FSC-STD-20-001 V4-0 Clause 4.8.3</p>	<p>Changes in the scope of certification shall be handled in line with FSC requirements and in accordance with operational procedures of CBs. Where on-site audits are required, they may be conducted as regulated in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FSC-DER-2022-005 for FM</li> <li>- FSC-DER-2022-004 for CoC</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Transfer audits</b></p> <p>FSC-PRO-20-003 V1-0 Clause 3.2.f)</p>	<p>A transfer audit for FM may be conducted as a hybrid audit as regulated in FSC-DER-2022-005.</p> <p>A transfer audit for CoC may be conducted according to the preconditions, risk assessment and audit process as prescribed in FSC-DER-2022-004.</p>
	<p><b>On-site internal audits of bodies providing outsourced services</b></p> <p>FSC-STD-20-001 V4-0 Clause 2.5.5</p>	<p>Where 3-yearly on-site audits of bodies providing outsourced services to CBs are due, the annual on-site audit may be replaced by a desk audit.</p>
	<p><b>General</b></p>	<p>1. CBs shall retain documented evidence for each case where flexibility offered by this derogation has been applied and document the justification in the audit report (as applicable).</p> <p>2. CBs shall submit an aggregated quarterly report to FSC on audits conducted according to this derogation within one month of the end of each quarter. The first report may be submitted by 31. August 2024 (FSC will provide the report template).</p>
<b>Scope of derogation</b>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Generic (applicable by all certification bodies)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Specific (applicable only upon individual request and PSU confirmation)</p>	
<b>References</b>	<p>IAF ID 3: 2011: Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations</p> <p>IAF MD 4: 2018: The Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/ Assessment Purposes</p>	
<b>Approval date</b>	31 March 2022	
<b>Effective date</b>	31 March 2022	
<b>Transition period</b>	N.A.	
<b>Period of validity</b>	<p>Until 31 December 2024, unless invalidated prior to that date.</p> <p>FSC monitors the development of the current situation in Ukraine and will update or invalidate the derogation in full or in part, as necessary.</p>	



<b>FSC-DER-2022-004</b>	<b>Conducting COC main evaluation audits remotely in Ukraine</b>
<b>Requirements</b>	FSC-STD-20-011 Part 1, FSC-STD-40-003 V2-1
<b>Rationale</b>	This derogation has been developed to address a force majeure situation in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is applicable in circumstances in which an on-site audit is not possible or viable due to the organization being located in or requiring travel through a region with a demonstrated security risk for the life or health of auditors and restricted in its scope of application as indicated below.
<b>PSU conclusion</b>	<p><b>Scenarios for applying this derogation:</b></p> <p>This derogation applies to main evaluations for CoC certification in Ukraine where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there is demonstrated health and/or safety risk to auditors (demonstrated through verifiable public sources), or</li> <li>- travel restrictions are imposed by organizational (certificate holder/certification body) health and safety policies or public authorities.</li> </ul> <p>1. Main evaluations by CBs in situations where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. CBs assess there is a health risk involved in implementing an on-site audit; <i>or</i></li> <li>b. auditors are prevented from conducting an on-site audit due to travel restrictions.</li> </ul> <p>2. Central Office internal audits for new applicant sites for group/multi-site certificates where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the Participating Site is in an area with a health risk (demonstrated through verifiable public sources), <i>or</i></li> <li>b. Central Office auditors are prevented from conducting an on-site audit due to travel restrictions imposed by organizational (certificate holder/Central Office) health and safety policies or public authorities.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Preconditions for conducting desk audits for main evaluations:</b></p> <p>1. CBs shall have a documented policy, procedure, or both, outlining the process to be implemented in case this derogation is applied, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A method for assessing whether an on-site audit can be replaced with a desk audit, <i>and</i></li> <li>ii. A description of the desk audit methods to be applied, <i>and</i></li> <li>iii. A process to implement the reporting and record keeping requirements of this derogation.</li> </ul> <p>2. CBs and certificate holders shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. have the technical and operational capacity to conduct audits remotely, <i>and</i></li> <li>ii. agree on a secure and confidential data transmission <i>and</i></li> <li>iii. ensure the availability of key staff.</li> </ul>

	<p>NOTE: This requirement shall include all sites/group members covered in the application, and any contractors who are physically handling the material.</p> <p>3. CBs shall utilize information and communication technology (ICT) to evaluate the applicant.</p> <p>4. Desk audits should be conducted on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. virtual video meetings / virtual company tour,</li> <li>ii. interviews with relevant people of the certificate holder and stakeholders,</li> <li>iii. relevant documents and records,</li> <li>iv. other best available information.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Certification bodies may conduct desk audits for main evaluations of Chain of Custody and Project certification applicants according to the following requirements:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prior to conducting a main evaluation, the information obtained by the CB from the applicant shall be sufficient to conduct the risk assessment according to the requirements in this derogation (see FSC-STD-20-001 V4-0 Clause 4.1.3).</li> <li>2. The certification body can demonstrate that the full scope of the audit can be covered remotely, and it is possible to evaluate with adequate assurance the conformity of the applicant to the normative requirements.</li> <li>3. CBs shall conduct a risk assessment of each applicant according to the scenarios/ factors provided in <b>Annex A</b> to determine the option of conducting a fully remote audit (low risk), a partially remote audit (medium risk), or if a mandatory on-site audit is required (high risk). The risk assessment is to be undertaken at the level of a single site and not at the certificate level. For multi-site certificates, the risk assessment shall be undertaken for each participating site (or for each site selected by sampling) during the evaluation audit.</li> <li>4. When an applicant falls into more than one risk category, the CB shall adopt the precautionary approach and apply the audit type of the higher category.</li> <li>5. Applicants with <b>medium risk</b> shall be audited in a two-stage audit process: A Stage 1 initial desk audit which can lead to certificate issuance, followed by a Stage 2 on-site audit, to be undertaken when the related health risks have abated and/or travel restrictions are no longer applicable or at the first surveillance evaluation (see Clause 7 below), whichever is earlier. A certificate can be issued on successful completion of Stage 1. Stage 2 audit shall cover the factors which lead to the medium risk categorization and include requirements whose conformity cannot be verified through a remote audit or which require an on-site follow-up to verify conformity once processing of FSC material starts.</li> <li>6. In case the Stage 2 audit cannot be undertaken until the time of the first surveillance evaluation (due to health risks and/or travel restrictions), it shall be replaced by the full surveillance evaluation, undertaken as an on-site audit, unless Clause 7 applies.</li> <li>7. In case the Stage 2 audit (or the full surveillance audit) cannot be undertaken due to continued health risk or travel restrictions imposed by organizational (certificate holder/Central Office) health and safety policies or public authorities, the audit shall be conducted as per the provisions laid out for surveillance audits in FSC-DER-2022-003 (provided the FSC-DER-2022-003 is still active).</li> </ol>

8. The first surveillance evaluation after certification shall be conducted within twelve (12) months after the date of the desk audit. Failure shall lead to the suspension of the certificate. In case the first surveillance audit cannot be held as a full onsite audit, then it shall be undertaken as per the provisions of FSC-DER-2022-003 (provided the FSC-DER-2022-003 is still active).

9. Any scenario not covered in Annex A shall be considered as 'high-risk'. In such cases, CBs may approach PSU to provide further instructions.

NOTE: This derogation may be modified/ updated based on additional information regarding risk levels categories.

10. CBs shall retain documented evidence for each case where this derogation has been applied and document the justification in the audit report.

**Central offices of Group/Multi-site certificates may replace the initial internal audits for new applicant sites/members by desk audits according to the following requirements:**

11. The new applicant site meets the requirements of clause 5.3.5 of FSC-STD-40-003 V2-1 *or*

12. The Central Office shall conduct a risk assessment of each applicant according to the scenarios/ factors provided in **Annex A** to determine the option of conducting a fully remote audit (low risk), a partially remote audit (medium risk), or if a mandatory on-site audit is required (high risk). The risk assessment is to be undertaken at the level of each new applicant site.

13. When an applicant falls into more than one risk category, the Central Office shall adopt the precautionary approach and apply the audit type of the higher category.

14. The risk assessment by the Central Office shall be approved by their certification body prior to conducting remote audits.

15. Applicants with **medium risk** shall be audited in a two-stage audit process: A Stage 1 initial desk audit which can lead to inclusion in the FSC group/multi-site certificate, followed by a Stage 2 on-site audit, to be undertaken when the related health risks have abated and/or travel restrictions are no longer applicable or at the first annual audit (see Clause 15, below), whichever is earlier. Stage 2 audit shall cover the factors which lead to the medium risk categorization and include requirements whose compliance cannot be verified through a remote audit or which require an on-site follow-up to verify compliance once processing of FSC material starts.

16. In case the Stage 2 audit cannot be undertaken until the time of the first annual audit (due to health risks and/or travel restrictions), the Stage 2 audit shall be replaced by the full annual audit, which shall be conducted as an on-site audit, unless Clause 17 applies.

17. In case the Stage 2 audit or the full annual audit cannot be undertaken due to continued health risk or travel restrictions imposed by organizational (certificate holder/Central Office) health and safety policies or public authorities, the audit shall be conducted as a surveillance audit as per the provisions laid out for surveillance audits

	<p>in FSC-DER-2022-003 (provided the FSC-DER-2022-003 is still active).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Central office and applicant sites shall: have the technical and operational capacity to conduct audits remotely, <i>and</i></li> <li>b. agree on a secure and confidential data transmission <i>and</i></li> <li>c. ensure the availability of key staff.</li> </ol> <p>18. The Central Office shall retain documented evidence for each applicant where this derogation has been applied.</p>
<b>General</b>	CBs shall submit an aggregated quarterly report to FSC on audits conducted according to this derogation within one month of the end of each quarter. The first report may be submitted by 31. August 2024 (FSC will provide the report template).
<b>Scope of derogation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Generic (applicable by all certification bodies and certificate holders) <input type="checkbox"/> Specific (applicable only upon individual request and PSU confirmation)
<b>Approval date</b>	31 March 2022
<b>Effective date</b>	31 March 2022
<b>Period of validity</b>	<p>Until 31 December 2024, unless invalidated prior to that date.</p> <p>FSC monitors the development of the current situation in Ukraine and will update or invalidate the derogation in full or in part, as necessary.</p>

## Annex A: Risk determination for undertaking remote main evaluation audits

Scenario	Low risk	Medium risk	High risk
<b>Traders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• without physical possession</li> <li>• with physical possession, but restricted to storage/trading in finished and labelled products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With physical possession and trading in unfinished/non-labelled products</li> </ul>	
<b>Primary and secondary producers/processors/printers and related services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusively handling certified products made of single input material (e.g., whole site deals with FSC 100%)</li> <li>• All inputs to production are eligible inputs according to Table B in FSC-STD-40-004, only transfer system is used and physical segregation is not required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of either percentage or credit system with/without multiple product groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High complexity with management and uses of all control systems</li> </ul>
<b>Non-eligible input entering the supply chain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk mitigated by temporal separation of material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk mitigated by identification of material</li> <li>• Risk mitigated by physical separation of materials if mitigation can be verified by real time video</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk mitigated by physical separation of materials</li> </ul>
<b>Contractors/outsourcing activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low risk contractors or High risk contractors with low risk categorization as per Clause 9.3 of FSC-STD-20-011</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low risk contractors but with identified risk of improper additions or mixing by the contractors at the contracting facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High risk contractors as defined in Clause 9.2 of FSC-STD-20-011</li> </ul>
<b>Sourcing reclaimed materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplier audit program undertaken by another FSC-accredited CB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reclaimed material classification can be demonstrated through objective evidence upon receipt.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplier audit program undertaken by applicant organization <i>and</i> reclaimed material classification through objective evidence not possible</li> </ul>
<b>Sourcing CW through implementation DDS as per requirements of FSC-STD-40-005 standard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low risk of origin, <i>and</i></li> <li>• Low risk of mixing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specified risk for origin (mitigation measures do not require field level verification) <i>and</i></li> <li>• Low risk of mixing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specified risk for origin (mitigation measures require field level verification) <i>or</i></li> <li>• Specified risk of mixing that can be mitigated only by physical separation.</li> </ul>
<b>Group and multi-site certification (Central Office requirements may be evaluated in the same manner as a single site)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normal risk** participating site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High risk participating site* which meets remote audit requirements for reclaimed materials sourcing, CW sourcing and for contractors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High risk participating site*</li> </ul>
<b>Other risk factors</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custom manufactured products with individual conversion factors</li> <li>• Project certification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unresolved complaints/disputes regarding the organization's conformity to the requirements of FSC standards</li> </ul>

\***High-risk participating site:** A participating site operating due diligence system according to FSC-STD-40-005, a supplier audit program for reclaimed materials according to FSC-STD-40-007, or high-risk outsourcing to a non-FSC-certified contractor.

\*\***Normal risk participating site:** A participating site that does not conduct any of the activities considered 'high risk' above.

<b>FSC-DER-2022-016</b>	<b>Extension of transition period to FSC-STD-40-004 V3-1 for COC certificate holders in Ukraine</b>
<b>Status</b>	Withdrawn

<b>FSC-DER-2022-005</b>	<b>Conducting FM ‘hybrid’ audits in Ukraine</b>
<b>Requirements</b>	FSC-STD-20-007 V3-0 Clause 5.4.2 FSC-STD-30-005 V1-1 Clause 3.4 FSC-DER-2022-003
<b>Rationale</b>	This derogation has been developed to address a force majeure situation in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is applicable in circumstances in which an on-site audit is not possible or viable due to the organization being located in or requiring travel through a region with a demonstrated security risk for the life or health of auditors and restricted in its scope of application as indicated below.  This temporary model is designed to maintain the integrity of the evaluation while avoiding a deadlock in the (re-) issuance, maintenance and transfer of forest management certificates.
<b>Terms and definitions</b>	<b>Hybrid audit:</b> Combination of a remote desk audit and an on-site inspection.  <b>Audit team:</b> is made up of one or more auditors, one of whom is appointed to be the audit team leader. When necessary, audit teams are also supported by technical experts and/or further personnel (e.g. interpreter), who assist auditors but do not themselves act as auditors.  <b>Audit team leader:</b> an auditor who is competent to lead the audit and the audit team.  <b>Technical expert:</b> a person supporting an audit team by providing specific knowledge or expertise about a specific sector, content, process or activity being audited. The person does not act as auditor.
<b>PSU conclusion</b>	<b>Scenarios for applying this derogation:</b>  This derogation, in combination with FSC-DER-202-003, may be applied to forest management pre-, main, surveillance, re-evaluation, change of scope and certificate transfer audits in situations where:  - there is demonstrated health and/or safety risk to auditors (demonstrated through verifiable public sources), or  - travel restrictions are imposed by organizational (certificate holder/certification body) health and safety policies or public authorities  <b>Preconditions for conducting hybrid audits:</b>  1. CBs shall have a documented policy, procedure, or both, outlining the process to be implemented in case this derogation is applied. This shall include:

- a. a method for assessing whether an on-site audit can be replaced with a hybrid audit, including a risk assessment, *and*
  - b. a description of the hybrid audit methods, including safeguards for risk mitigation to be applied, *and*
  - c. a process to implement the reporting and record keeping requirements of this derogation.
2. CBs and The Organization shall:
- a. have the technical and operational capacity to conduct hybrid audits, *and*
  - b. agree on a secure and confidential data transmission, *and*
  - c. ensure the availability of key staff on the ground.
3. Technical expert(s) on the ground shall\*:
- a. have demonstrated experience and qualifications covering all social, environmental and economic aspects that are required in the respective audit (see: FSC-STD-20-001 V4-0 EN Box 2: Key considerations for selection of audit team members for forest management audits), *and*
  - b. have participated in at least three on-site FM audits before, OR have participated in at least one on-site FM audit and have completed and passed an FSC FM auditor training course, *and*
  - c. be able to work independently, *and*
  - d. have access and sufficient technical skills to utilize required technology, including video capabilities to share field observations.
4. CBs shall demonstrate that the full scope of the audit can be covered with the hybrid audit approach, and that it is possible to evaluate The Organization's conformity with adequate assurance.
5. CBs shall utilize information and communication technology (ICT) to evaluate The Organization and guide the audit team member(s) on the ground. A check-in/briefing/exchange between the remote audit team member(s) and the on-site team member(s) shall be conducted before, during and at end of the audit.
6. Hybrid audits shall be conducted on the basis of:
- a. a qualified audit team leader leading the audit remotely, *and*
  - b. Technical expert(s) and/or qualified auditor(s) on-site to obtain audit evidence, *and*
  - c. virtual video meetings between the remote audit team leader and The Organization / on-site team member(s), *and*
  - d. interviews with relevant managers, employees, contractors and other stakeholders (remotely and / or on-site), *and*
  - e. a review of relevant documents and records (remotely and / or on-site), *and*
  - f. conducting the opening and closing meeting of the hybrid audit with physical / virtual presence of the full audit team (auditors and local experts) together with relevant staff of The Organization, *and*
  - g. other best available information.

\* Clause 3 applies in audits where no qualified auditor is joining the on-site component of the hybrid audit.

**Conducting hybrid audits for forest management evaluations**

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CBs may conduct hybrid audits for forest management evaluations in connection with FSC-DER-2022-003 when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This derogation can be applied according to the health and risk scenarios (above), <i>and</i></li> <li>• The preconditions for conducting hybrid audits (above) are fulfilled.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. CBs shall retain documented evidence for each case where this derogation has been applied and document the justification in the audit report.</li> <li>3. CBs shall submit an aggregated quarterly report to FSC on audits conducted according to this derogation within one month of the end of each quarter. The first report may be submitted by 31. August 2024 (FSC will provide the report template).</li> </ol>
<b>Scope of derogation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Generic (applicable by all certification bodies and certificate holders) <input type="checkbox"/> Specific (applicable only upon individual request and PSU confirmation)
<b>Approval date</b>	31 March 2022
<b>Period of validity</b>	Until 31 December 2024, unless invalidated prior to that date. FSC monitors the development of the current situation in Ukraine and will update or invalidate the derogation in full or in part, as necessary.

<b>FSC-DER-2023-002</b>	<b>Timeline for signing the ‘License Agreement for the FSC Certification Scheme’ in Ukraine</b>
<b>Status</b>	Withdrawn

## Interpretations

### Suspension timelines

<b>Code</b>	INT-ADV-20-001-12_01
<b>Requirement (s)</b>	Clauses 5, 6 and 9
<b>Publication date</b>	07 April 2022 Effective from the date of publication until 31 December 2024, or until invalidated prior to that date. This interpretation will be updated as necessary.



The Advice Note requires that the certification body shall inform relevant certificate holders about their upcoming suspension, withdrawal, or scope reduction within three (3) business days after having been notified by FSC about the declaration of extraordinary events and circumstances or the relevant 'specified risk' designations (Clause 5). Additionally, the certification body shall inform its certificate holders sourcing material from or outsourcing activities to organizations located within the geographical scope of the FSC Risk Assessment with relevant 'specified risk' designations five (5) business days after having been notified about the changes to risk designations (Clause 9).

The distribution of the conflict zones in Ukraine is changing and new conflict zones are identified. What are the timelines for suspensions of the certificates and adaptation of the due diligence systems in the newly identified conflict zones?

1. The certification body shall inform relevant certificate holders about their upcoming suspension within three (3) business days after identifying a new conflict zone(s).
2. The certification body should monitor the sources of information provided in the FSC Risk Assessment for Ukraine on an at least bi-weekly basis.
3. The suspension shall become effective within 30 calendar days from the identification of the new conflict zone.
4. The certification body shall inform its certificate holders sourcing material from or outsourcing activities to organizations located within the geographical scope of the FSC Risk Assessment for Ukraine with relevant 'specified risk' designations within five (5) business days after identifying a new conflict zone(s) as follows:
  - a. the certification body shall inform certificate holders sourcing forest-based material for the inclusion in FSC product groups about the upcoming suspension or withdrawal of relevant certificate holders and the mandatory adaptation timeline of changing their due diligence systems within 30 calendar days from identification of the new conflict zone;
  - b. the certification body shall inform certificate holders sourcing reclaimed material for the inclusion in FSC product groups (according to FSC-STD-40-007 V2-0, clause 2.1) that they need to exclude relevant suppliers as part of their validation process within 30 calendar days from the identification of the new conflict zone.
  - c. the certification body shall inform certificate holders outsourcing activities within their certificate scope (according to FSC-STD-40-004 V3-0, clause 12.1 or FSC-STD-40-004 V3-1, clause 13.1) that they need to exclude relevant contractors from providing such activities within 30 calendar days from the identification of the new conflict zone.

## Suspension of certificates

<b>Code</b>	INT-ADV-20-001-12_02
<b>Requirement (s)</b>	Clauses 3 and 4
<b>Publication date</b>	04 July 2022 Effective from the date of publication until 31 December 2024, or until invalidated prior to that date. This interpretation will be updated as necessary.

### In the case of Ukraine, which certificates shall be suspended or have their scopes reduced?

FSC-ADV-20-001\_12 states that certificates that are within the geographical scope of the FSC risk assessment covered by relevant 'specified risk' designations shall be suspended. In the case of Ukraine, the relevant 'specified risk' designation is found in indicator 2.1.

The areas of risk are determined in the indicator's control measure, using three kinds of information sources: publicly available sources, State Forest Resource Agency of Ukraine (SFRA) or local authorities, and FSC accredited CBs or auditors.

One publicly available source that CBs shall use is the following map showing known and suspected locations of explosives in Ukraine: <https://mine.dsns.gov.ua/>

As this map is a publicly available information source, certificates shall be suspended for all or part (e.g., MUs, sites, group members) of the scope of certification when the CH is located within 100 m of any starburst presented on the map or when the CH is located, in whole or in part, within the "dangerous territories" (orange-highlighted areas).

Certificates outside the 'zones of armed conflict' on this map shall still be evaluated against the kinds of information sources found in the NRA's indicator 2.1 control measure verifier to ensure consistent application of FSC-ADV-20-001.

NOTE: The requirement to use this map is applied to reduce known inconsistencies in the identification of zones of armed conflict by CBs. This interpretation and this map do not introduce new required sources of information.

CBs shall submit an aggregated quarterly report to FSC on the use of this interpretation within one month of the end of each quarter. The first report may be submitted by 31. August 2024 (FSC will provide the report template).

### Certification of SFE and signing of the License Agreement for the FSC Certification Scheme

<b>Code</b>	INT-STD-20-001_45
<b>Requirement (s)</b>	FSC-STD-20-001 V4-0; Clause 4.8.3
<b>Publication date</b>	15 February 2023
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Can a CB grant certification to a single branch of the State Specialized Forest Enterprise (SFE) "Forests of Ukraine" after the change in structure or legal ownership introduced by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1003 "Some issues of reforming the management of the forestry sector" dated 07.09.2022 and later normative acts.</b></li> <li>2. <b>Are CBs in Ukraine expected to require their clients representing single branches of State Forest Enterprise (SFE) "Forest of Ukraine" to sign the most recent version of the 'License Agreement for the FSC Certification Scheme', in response to the changes in the structure or legal ownership of the State Specialized Forest Enterprise "Forests of Ukraine"?</b></li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes, the CB can grant certification to a single branch of SFE "Forest of Ukraine".</li> <li>2. Yes, in response to the changes in the structure and legal ownership of the State Specialized Forest Enterprise "Forests of Ukraine", CBs shall require the certificate holders to enter into and hold the most recent version of the 'License Agreement for the FSC Certification Scheme', as well as ensure that the signed agreements uniformly identify the contracting party according to the following example: SFE "Forests of Ukraine", Branch "XYZ".</li> </ol>

## Extending the transfer audit date in Ukraine

<b>Code</b>	INT-PRO-20-003_11
<b>Requirement (s)</b>	FSC-PRO-20-003 V1-0, Clause 3.2.f FSC-DER-2022-003
<b>Publication date</b>	04 April 2022 Effective from the date of publication until 30 June 2024, or until invalidated prior to that date. This interpretation will be updated as necessary.
<p><b>As a transfer audit is supposed to be conducted according to the requirements for a surveillance evaluation, can this transfer audit also be postponed in accordance with FSC-DER-2022-003?</b></p> <p><b>CoC</b> -Yes, the transfer audit can be postponed, but shall be conducted within six (6) months of the agreed transfer date. In case of medium risk, this timeline refers to the Stage 1 audit.</p> <p><b>FM</b> - Yes, the transfer audit can be postponed, but shall be conducted within six (6) months of the agreed transfer date.</p> <p>CBs shall submit an aggregated quarterly report to FSC on the use of this interpretation within one month of the end of each quarter. The first report may be submitted by 31. August 2024 (FSC will provide the report template).</p>	

## PART II – RESPONSES TO CB AUDITOR REQUIREMENTS

<b>FSC-DER-2022-006</b>	<b>CB Auditor requirements</b>	
<b>Requirement (s)</b>	As indicated below	
<b>Rationale</b>	This derogation has been developed to address a force majeure situation in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is applicable in circumstances in which an on-site audit is not possible or viable due to the organization being located in or requiring travel through a region with a demonstrated security risk for the life or health of auditors and restricted in its scope of application as indicated below.	
<b>PSU conclusion</b>	<b>Scenarios for applying this derogation</b>	<b>Scenarios for applying this derogation:</b> This derogation is restricted in its application to evaluations in Ukraine, where:  - there is demonstrated health and/or safety risk to auditors (demonstrated through verifiable public sources), or  - travel restrictions are imposed by organizational (certificate holder/ certification body) health and safety policies or public authorities
	<b>Continuous qualification</b>  FSC-STD-20-001 V4-0 Annex 2, Table 2, 1.2, #3  Annex 2, Table 3, 2.2, #3	All required 3-yearly witness audits may be done remotely.
	<b>Auditor rotation</b>  FSC-STD-20-001 V4-0  Clause 4.3.7  Clause 4.3.8	Where auditor rotation is required, the rotation period may once be extended by one (1) audit.
	<b>General</b>	CBs shall submit an aggregated quarterly report to FSC on audits conducted according to this derogation within one month of the end of each quarter. The first report may be submitted by 31. August 2024 (FSC will provide the report template).
<b>Scope of derogation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Generic (applicable by all certification bodies and (independent) training providers)  <input type="checkbox"/> Specific (applicable only upon individual request and PSU confirmation)	
<b>References</b>	IAF ID 3: 2011: Management of Extraordinary Events or Circumstances Affecting ABs, CABs and Certified Organizations  IAF MD 4: 2018: The Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/ Assessment Purposes	

<b>Approval date</b>	31 March 2022
<b>Period of validity</b>	Until 31 December 2024, unless invalidated prior to that date. FSC monitors the development of the current situation in Ukraine and will update or invalidate the derogation in full or in part, as necessary.

## PART III – POLICY RESPONSES TO FM CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

### Interpretations

#### Monitoring visits of Group Members

<b>Code</b>	INT-STD-30-005_14
<b>Requirement (s)</b>	Section 8 Monitoring requirements
<b>Publication date</b>	04 April 2022 Effective from the date of publication until 31 December 2024, or until invalidated prior to that date. This interpretation will be updated as necessary.
<p><b>Clause 8.1 requires that regular (at least annual) monitoring visits to a sample of Group Members to confirm continued conformity with all the requirements of the applicable Forest Stewardship Standard, and with any additional requirements for membership of the Group.</b></p> <p><b>Would the Russian invasion of Ukraine also be considered a circumstance in which remote desk audits would be justifiable for these monitoring visits?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Yes, the Russian invasion in Ukraine justifies conducting desk audits (remote audits) in situations where:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. the Group Member is in an area with security risk (demonstrated through verifiable public sources), or</li><li>b. the Group Entity is prevented from conducting any on-site monitoring visits due to travel restrictions imposed by organizational (certificate holder/Group Entity) health and safety policies or public authorities.</li></ol></li><li>2. Where the initial onsite audit of a new Group applicant is required, that audit shall not be replaced by desk audits (remote audits) and should be rescheduled.</li><li>3. In addition to the option of conducting the monitoring visits as desk audits (remote audits), the Group Entity may also consider postponing the monitoring visits, but not beyond the end of 2022.</li><li>4. The Group Entity shall retain documented evidence for each case where this interpretation has been applied.</li><li>5. CBs shall submit an aggregated quarterly report to FSC on the use of this interpretation within one month of the end of each quarter. The first report may be submitted by 31. August 2024 (FSC will provide the report template).</li></ol>	

# PART IV – POLICY RESPONSES TO COC CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

## Interpretations

### Internal audits of Participating Sites

<b>Code</b>	INT-STD-40-003_06
<b>Requirement (s)</b>	FSC-STD-40-003 V2-1 Clause 5.3.5
<b>Publication date</b>	04 April 2022  Effective from the date of publication until 31 December 2024, or until invalidated prior to that date. This interpretation will be updated as necessary.
<p><b>Clause 5.3.5 offers the option that Central Offices may conduct internal audits of Participating Sites as desk audits (remote audits) under certain circumstances. Would the Russian invasion of Ukraine also be considered a circumstance in which desk audits (remote audits) would be justifiable?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes, the option of desk audits (remote audits) as per Clause 5.3.5 for all types of participating sites are allowed in Ukraine, provided that:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the Participating Site is in an area with a health risk (demonstrated through verifiable public sources), or</li> <li>b. Central Office auditors are prevented from conducting an on-site audit due to travel restrictions imposed by organizational (certificate holder/Central Office) health and safety policies or public authorities.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. In addition to the option of conducting the internal audit as desk audits (remote audits), the Central Office may also consider postponing the internal audit, but not beyond the end of 2022.</li> <li>3. For new applicant sites, the initial internal audit may be replaced by desk (remote) audits in cases:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the new applicant sites are already meeting the existing requirements of Clause 5.3.5, <i>or</i></li> <li>b. the Central Office and the applicant sites meet the requirements specified in FSC- DER-2022-003 then the initial internal audit may be replaced by desk (remote) audits.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. The Central Office shall retain documented evidence for each case where this interpretation has been applied.</li> <li>5. CBs shall submit an aggregated quarterly report to FSC on the use of this interpretation within one month of the end of each quarter. The first report may be submitted by 31. August 2024 (FSC will provide the report template).</li> </ol>	

### Adapting Due Diligence Systems for changed risk designations in newly identified conflict zones

<b>Code</b>	INT-ADV-40-005-25_01
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<b>Requirement (s)</b>	Clause 1
<b>Publication date</b>	07 April 2022 Effective from the date of publication until 31 December 2024, or until invalidated prior to that date. This interpretation will be updated as necessary.
<p><b>The Advice Note requires adaptation of the organizations' DDS to the FSC Risk Assessments revised according to FSC-ADV-60-002-01 within 30 days from the approval of the risk assessment. In the FSC Risk Assessment for Ukraine the revised risk designations and control measures are associated with the presence of zones of armed conflict.</b></p> <p><b>In this case, what are the timelines for the adaptation of the DDS to exclude sourcing from supply areas located in newly identified conflict zones?</b></p> <p>For FSC Risk Assessments for Ukraine that have been revised based on FSC-ADV-60-002-01, the organization shall adapt its DDS to reflect the changed risk designations and control measures within conflict zone(s) identified after the publication of the risk assessment within thirty (30) calendar days from the identification of the new conflict zone.</p>	





**FSC International – Performance and Standards Unit**

Adenauerallee 134

53113 Bonn

Germany

**Phone:** +49 -(0)228 -36766 -0

**Fax:** +49 -(0)228 -36766 -65

**Email :** [psu@fsc.org](mailto:psu@fsc.org)