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## General presentation of the FSC certification system

### 1.1 - Birth of forest certification

In response to public opinion questioning concerned by the durability of forests and woods use, certification systems for forests and their management were set up.

Certification is an assessment process by which an independent third party attests that a product, a process or a service, is in accordance with requirements predefined in a standard or a standard.

Within the scope of forest certification, the aim is to prove that management is adapted and coherent in the long term on an environmental, social and economic level.

The general purpose of this certification system is to certify that the forest management is “responsible“. Then to ensure the transfer of the certificate all along the wood manufacturing process up to the final consumer. That transfer is only possible if all the links in the chain of custody (from the forest up to the retailer) are certified, each link in the chain being defined by a property transfer. It is the certification process of the Chain of Custody.

### 1.2 - FSC presentation

The Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC™) is a global, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of responsible forest management worldwide. It was established in 1993 as a solution to respond to concerns over deforestation at a global scale. FSC™ is regarded as one of the most important initiatives to promote responsible forest management worldwide.

FSC™ is a certification system that provides internationally recognized standard-setting, trademark assurance and accreditation services to companies, organizations, and communities interested in responsible forestry.

The FSC™ system is different from other certification schemes on two main points. The FSC™ Forest Management (FM) international standard shall be adapted locally and this adaptation process, and later on the field audit, shall use inputs from local stakeholders, or groups with an interest in forest management.

FSC™ certification system general purpose is to certify “responsible” forest management (FSC™ Certification) and afterward to certify the products generated from these certified forests all along the processing chain till the final consumer. That transfer is only possible if all the links in the chain of custody (from the forest down to the retailer) are certified, each link in the chain being defined by a transfer of property. It is the certification process called Chain of Custody certification.

The FSC™ label provides a credible link between responsible production and consumption of forest products, enabling consumers and businesses to make purchasing decisions that benefit people and the environment as well as providing ongoing business value.



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### 1.3 - FSC system requirements

The FSC system requirements are defined by the FSC Forest Management or Controlled Wood for Forest Management Enterprises standards and by the FSC™ chain of custody standard.

The former describes either the Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC™) ten Principles and Criteria, which after adaptation to local particularities, are applicable to any forest situation or the requirements to be met in relation to the categories of the FSC Controlled.

The latter was defined by Bureau Veritas Certification on the ground of the FSC requirements on the subject.

At the end of the applicant's audit, Bureau Veritas Certification testifies that the whole of the requirements are respected and delivers the certificate which allows the use of the FSC trademark..

## 2 - Certification proposition

### 2.1 - Description of the certification process

This document presents Bureau Veritas Certification procedures within the scope of FSC™ Forest Management<sup>1</sup> Enterprises certification. These procedures were developed according to FSC requirements (Forest Stewardship Council).

The FSC™ certificate given by Bureau Veritas Certification proves that the considered forest management entity meet the requirements of the applicable FSC™ standard standards<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.2 - Useful definitions

Standard:

Bureau Veritas Certification develops a FSC™ forest management standard adapted to the national or regional level from the FSC™ Principles and Criteria. The latter defines the requirements that the applicant to certification must meet and serves as assessment basis during audits. That document will be replaced by FSC standard(s) developed on a national or regional level when they exist. It is moreover likely to evolve.

Forest entity:

Forest surface area and associated management system at the level of a management unit; a forest property; a group of owners or a group of properties having the same manager.

Stakeholders:

Any party (association, group, community, company...) implicated, allocated or having an interest in forest management; including particularly neighbourhood and forest users, associations for environmental protection, forest management organizations and consultants, forest research and training organizations, relevant local administration...

The stakeholders as a whole must represent a wide range of environmental, ecological, social, legal and economic elements of forest management.

<sup>1</sup> So called later FSC FM

<sup>2</sup> The applicable standards depends on the type of certification application, e.g. FSC FM application refers to the FSC FM locally adapted standard, group certification application refers to the FSC-STD-30-005



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### 2.3 - Certification request

Any entity interested in certification of FSC Forest Management activities receives on request an SF 01 RFQ (Request For Quotation), the applicable Forest Management standard and the present document (GP01 for FSC FM).

It is also sent:

- For group certification: FSC-STD-30 005;
- For industry: FSC-STD-40 004;
- For trademark use: FSC-STD-50 001.

### 2.4 - Preliminary examination of the Request and Offer of Services

On return of the SF01 RFQ duly filled in, Bureau Veritas Certification prepares a certification offer. Nevertheless the SF 01 RFQ also allows Bureau Veritas Certification to ensure that the entity is able to enter the certification process and to maintain it afterwards.

Together with the offer, the general and specific terms of sale are sent.

Any application that are already covered by a valid or suspended FSC certification (except for transfer) will be rejected.

### 2.5 - Contract

When the applicant accepts Bureau Veritas Certification's offer, it sends it back signed: the offer then becomes a contract between the applicant and Bureau Veritas Certification.

For applicants for forest management certification except for small or low intensity managed forests, the Bureau Veritas shall at minimum enter the following information in the FSC certification database ([info.fsc.org](http://info.fsc.org)) once it is available and at latest thirty (30) calendar days before the main evaluation:

Then one uses the phrase "applicant for certification" to designate the forest entity. The realization or not of a pre-audit must have been validated at that moment.

The optional pre-audit realization shall be validated at this step.

The company will receive an FSC™ trademark licence agreement that shall be signed prior to the contract signature with Bureau Veritas Certification.



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### 2.6 - Audits preparation

Bureau Veritas Certification and the applicant for certification agree on the audit team's timetable and composition with a view to prepare the pre-audit or the initial audit.

The applicant can ask for a revision of the audit team composition to avoid any risks of conflict of interests between the forest entity and one or several audit team members. The final choice of the audit team composition is nevertheless made by Bureau Veritas Certification.

The audit preparation is finalized and presented to the applicant. The documents that will have to be examined by the auditors before the audit are then requested from the applicant (see §8 p18).

## 3 - Auditors of Bureau Veritas Certification, Wood and Forestry scheme

### 3.1 - Auditors' qualification

Bureau Veritas Certification only calls upon Wood and Forestry experts, in order to give priority to the following points:

- Independence: the auditors shall not have been employed, nor be a consultant for the last 2 years.
- Mastering of forest management techniques and processes
- Knowledge of the industry.

Besides, to be described as Bureau Veritas Certification auditors, these specialists shall:

- Prove a technical competence and a professional experience in the forestry field;
- Have followed a specific training for auditing and the FSC system standard;
- Sign a non-disclosure agreement to protect the applicant's details;
- Have validated that training by having participated in at least three audits.

Finally, Bureau Veritas Certification specialized auditors are appointed for certification audits realization according to the three following criteria:

- Competence in the type of forests concerned by certification
- Nearness to the location of the forest entity.
- Availability on the certification dates wished by the applicant

Bureau Veritas Certification auditors favour a pragmatic and practical approach. Prior to any other thing, they assess the FSC™ Forest Management system as a tool allowing the applicant entity to master its activities and to improve them.



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### 3.2 - Audit Team composition:

An audit team is formed of at least one Bureau Veritas Certification Lead Auditor, most of the time assisted by other auditors or consultants (1 to 6 people for the pre-audit and the surveillance audit: 2 to 8 people for the initial audit).

If necessary, Bureau Veritas Certification calls on consultants who come with a specific competence in a field or a particular region.

Thus the qualifications we should find within the audit team are:

- A qualified Lead Auditor (mandatory);
- Someone fluent in the local language (or an interpreter). This person cannot be related to the applicant in any way;
- Someone who lives in the country or the region;
- Someone who has experience or the required qualifications concerning social problems in the region;
- Someone who has experience or the required qualifications concerning economic problems in the region;
- Someone who has experience or the required qualifications concerning environmental and forest management problems in the region.





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### 3.3 - Observers' participation to audits

Bureau Veritas Certification can be led to associate observers to its Certification or monitoring audits.

An observer is a person who accompanies the assessment or audit team but does not assess or audit. Observers are recognized as interested parties, but shall respect the code of conduct outlined in this document.

NOTE 1: An observer is not a part of the audit team and shall not influence or interfere with the audit.

NOTE 2 An observer can be from a regulator or other interested party who witnesses the audit.

These observers can be:

- Bureau Veritas Certification in-house auditors (within the scope of in-house audit activities of Bureau Veritas Certification),
- Bureau Veritas Certification International in-house auditors (in-house audit of Bureau Veritas Certification Local Office by Bureau Veritas Certification International network),
- Bureau Veritas Certification auditors undergoing training,
- Observers having signed an agreement according to the FSC-PRO 01-017 "*Participation of external observers in on-site FSC certification audits and / or ASI assessments*",
- ASI auditors (Accreditation Services International - Accreditation Organization for FSC) (at the time of a Bureau Veritas Certification audit within the scope of accreditation programmes).

The applicant has to accept the presence of an accreditation body representative during Bureau Veritas Certification audits. In the other cases, the observer's presence is submitted to the Applicant's agreement.

The applicant shall submit substantiate justification (conflict of interest, track record of breaking confidentiality agreements, track record of audit misconduct, evidence of an intended disruption of the audit) in case of rejection of observer's application, otherwise the refusal will not be accepted.



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### 4 - Pre-audit

#### 4.1 - Pre-audit interest and realization

The pre-audit stage consists in establishing how forest management operations satisfy FSC™ system standard requirements and thus if the applicant can undergo a complete assessment (carried out during the initial audit).

The pre-audit allows to analyse the forest entity particularities, to check that the purposes of the procedure are understood by the applicant (questions provoked by the standard, process details, label use...) and to define issues that the applicant will need to implement necessary updating actions before the initial audit.

That stage is not systematically compulsory in the certification process, nevertheless it is necessary when forest management operations are complex or when the surface area to be assessed is important.

Nevertheless pre-audit is compulsory when:

- Single, multiple or group of Forest Management Unit (FMUs) total area is over 50,000 ha, unless the whole area meets the requirements for classification as a “Low Intensity Managed Forest according to the national, sub-national or regional applicable FSC standards or locally adapted generic standard of the certification body (which complies with “FSC STD 01-003 SLIMF eligibility criteria), for non-plantation forest types.
- Single, multiple or group of FMUs total area is over 10,000 ha, for plantations;
- The forests are very likely to include High Conservation Value (HCVF), unless the all area meets the requirements for classification as a “Small Forest according to the national, sub-national or regional applicable FSC standards or locally adapted generic standard of the certification body (which complies with “FSC STD 01-003 SLIMF eligibility criteria);
- The forests are very likely to include Intact Forest Landscape.

Bureau Veritas Certification may request the applicant to be previously audited (pre-audit to be performed) in any risky areas, in order to identify whether the applicant to forest certification can reach the level of performance demanding by FSC standard and the national initiative, in such context.

Such risky areas can be identified with the following criteria:

- Presence of Intact Forest Landscape close to the FMUs;
- High level of corruption (Indice of Corrupton lower than 40 according to Transparency International report of 2012 or equivalent);
- Known stakeholder's issues about the company's activities.

And in any case, in order to limit failure and extra cost risks, pre-audit allows the applicant to check that the organization set up for certification does not present any major dysfunctions and that he does not become wrongly involved in the certification procedure.

It is mainly about a documentary survey, however, according to circumstances (size of the forest entity, complexity of forest management), a visit in the forest may be organized as well as consulting the stakeholders.



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In the case of group or multiple site evaluations, there will be an analysis and description of the forest management units and the procedure of sampling; an initial analysis of the supplier's management systems and an explicit review of conformity with the requirements for group entities. A pre-audit report is given to the applicant, it specifies Preliminary Updating Actions Requests (PUAR) to be implemented before the initial audit as well as the time limits to carry out these actions, in agreement with the applicant.

Besides, the pre-audit stage is necessary for a smooth course of the **stakeholders' consultation**: even before pre-audit, the applicant entity and Bureau Veritas Certification shall proceed with the stakeholders' first identification, in order to organize a consultation which will take place during the pre-audit.

Afterwards, during pre-audit, the auditor will try to make the stakeholders' list as exhaustive as possible for Bureau Veritas Certification to be able then to start the consultation.

**NB:** It is strongly recommended that the applicant should have identified and got into contact with the stakeholders even before the beginning of the certification process. Applicants not having carried out that work are invited to do so.

### 4.2 - Setting up Preliminary Upgrade Action Requests

On the pre-audit report basis, the applicant for certification sets up, within the due time, upgrade actions in order to find a solution to critical points identified during pre-audit.

At the same time, Bureau Veritas Certification gets in contact with the identified stakeholders, at least six (6) weeks before the initial audit, presents to them the certification procedure objectives, collects potential observations concerning the management practised by the forest entity, and, in certain cases, submits the FSC forest management standard to them for comments (during a first use so that the latter is perfectly appropriate to the concerned site characteristics).

Then a team of auditors is missioned by Bureau Veritas Certification to prepare the initial audit.

A period of about one month is necessary for that stage.

Bureau Veritas Certification receives notice by mail from the applicant that the upgrade actions were carried out so that Bureau Veritas Certification may set the initial audit dates.



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### 5 - Initial Audit

#### 5.1 - Certification Audit Programme

Sufficiently early before the audit, Bureau Veritas Certification provides the applicant a provisional audit program which specifies the applicant's organization elements which will be subjected to assessment as well as a timetable of the interventions.

That programme can be reconsidered afterwards, according to its coherence with the organization of activities and availability of the people that the auditors wish to meet, so as to perturb as little as possible the running of the company.

For group or multisites, the sampling will be analyzed in order to get the best overall point of view of the applicant's situation.

If the documentary review (cf. 8 - p 18) or the preliminary audit showed numerous differences that could not be corrected before the initial audit and risking to compromise the certification process, the applicant may ask Bureau Veritas Certification within reasonable time previous to the audit for the audit to be postponed so as to put itself in conformity.

#### 5.2 - Initial audit realization

The initial audit stage consists in checking that the candidate entity respects all the requirements recorded in the FSC™ forest management standard so as to grant or not the certificate.

##### 5.2.1 - Opening meeting

The audit starts by a meeting during which the Lead Auditor confirms the certification scope, presents the team and the audit programme and confirms the audit plan and logistic according to the latest changes that the applicant entity may perhaps wish to bring.

The presence of the Company's managers and heads of departments is necessary during that meeting so that they can clearly perceive the way in which the audit will take place and thus be able to inform their staff.



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### 5.2.2 - Audit planning

The audit team work is at first done on documents, then from field inspections and interviews of employees, outside contributors, and stakeholders' representatives.

The initial audit principal missions are as follows:

- Analysis of forest management units;
- Evaluation of management system(s);
- Selection and Evaluation of forest management units (FMUs).

In order to do so, the audit team will proceed in different ways:

- Introduce, among the controlled requirements, the region's specific elements (such as locally endangered species) and, if necessary, take into account local and regional uses and rules;
- Meet the identified stakeholders' representatives;
- Visit the applicant's offices for which assessment of the operational system for planning, forest management and surveillance is set up as described in a management scheme.
- It also collects detailed and precise information on sites, exploited species and volumes as well as on the exploitation managers, wood stocking and transport managers (loggers, contractors, haulage contractors and other participants).
- Visit the forests and meet the sites managers (workers, markers, forest wardens, woodmen, skidders, subcontractors, and so on).
- Define the standard and discuss the encountered problems with the forest entity managers and the staff concerned.

### 5.2.3 - Synthesis Meeting

At the end of each audit day (or after each main stage of the audit), meetings are organized so as to sum up the audit progress and synthesize the first results. The differences encountered during the day (or the stage) are analyzed thus allowing the Applicant to start thinking about the corresponding corrective actions.

They also allow to analyze the results of the corrective actions already started, and in certain cases to close the corresponding nonconformities.



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### 5.2.4 - Closing Meeting

The Lead Auditor organizes a closing meeting at the end of the audit. It gathers, as far as possible, the same people as those who were present at the opening meeting.

That meeting enables to present the audit results and its conclusions, as well as handing in the nonconformity reports and to have the audit conclusions signed.

Despite the audit will present the Non-Conformities (NC) during the closing meeting, the final wording and grading of all NC will be submitted by Bureau Veritas Certification offices together with the finalized audit report resulting from the certification decision.

Then, the lead auditor gives to the applicant a copy of the nonconformity reports signed.

At that stage, the initial audit results only expose the noted situation and facts, they do not allow a certificate allocation decision.

Bureau Veritas Certification is not obliged to grant or maintain certification, if activities of the client conflict with the obligations of Bureau Veritas Certification as specified in its accreditation contract with ASI, or which, in the sole opinion of Bureau Veritas Certification, reflect badly on the good name of Bureau Veritas Certification

The audit team produces a temporary initial audit report and submits it to the Bureau Veritas Certification technical manager concerned. The audit report is reviewed by Bureau Veritas Certification, then this revised report is transmitted to the applicant.

### 5.3 - Draft Audit Report Revision

Bureau Veritas Certification submits the initial audit report for comments to the applicant entity as well as to pairs, who carry out an independent revision in full confidentiality. There is minimum one peer reviewer who is an independent expert, familiar with the problems linked to the region's forest management and with FSC™ requirements. The choice of peer reviewer is, like the choice of the auditors, carried out by Bureau Veritas Certification then, if requested, submitted to the applicant who may ask for changes.



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### 6 - Non-conformities

#### 6.1 - Non-conformities definition

The dysfunctions met during the audit are commented by the Lead Auditor with the applicant's representative, who can then bring complementary elements allowing to evaluate them in a more global context.

If these elements are deemed insufficient by the audit team, The dysfunctions are then formalized in nonconformity reports the originals of which are left to the applicant, signed by their representative.

The nonconformities thus formalized always meet the 3 following criteria:

- Be objective and motivated by failure to meet a standard requirement or a disposition planned by the applicant.
- Be founded on proof and in no case on presumptions.
- Be understood and accepted by the Applicant.

According to their importance, nonconformities appear as observations, minor corrective actions requests or major corrective actions requests.

#### 6.2 - Non-conformities status

There are three corrective action levels:

- Observations: remarks concerning either dysfunctions or potential improvements detected by the auditors, but for an element which, however, meets the standard requirements, or even an element which is not dealt with by the standard. The entity can be certified;
- Minor Non-Conformities (minor NC): the entity can be certified but it must put itself in conformity with the requirements in question within the year following the initial audit;
- Major Non-Conformities (major NC): the entity cannot be certified as long as it does not meet the requirements in question and a complementary audit specific to major NC will take place before any certification decision.

In the scope of surveillance audits,

- in a **FSC FM certification** process (once the entity is certified),
  - if 4 or less major NCs are issued the entity is allowed a length of time given by the auditors, relatively short (three months maximum), to meet the relevant requirements,
  - if 5 or more major NCs are issued the certificate will be suspended.
  - In a FM certification, a Major NC can never be downgraded to a minor CAR;

The absence of valid License Agreement for the FSC certification scheme will be treated as a major Non-Conformity and the client will be requested to correct the NC within a maximum period of two (2) weeks. If this NC is not closed by 2 weeks, it will lead to the suspension of certification.



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### 6.3 - Timelines for NC closure

The Applicant can start corrective actions to solve the nonconformities as soon as the nonconformity reports have been signed.

#### 6.3.1 - Minor Non-Conformities

Minor Non-Conformities shall be corrected within a maximum period of one (1) year. This period may be extended to 1 additional year in exceptional and justified circumstances.

#### 6.3.2 - Major Non-Conformities

Major Non-Conformities shall be corrected within a maximum period of three (3) months. This period may be extended to 3 additional months in exceptional and justified circumstances.

The original nonconformity reports filled in by the Company are returned to the Lead Auditor.

Bureau Veritas Certification will inform the client if the closure of the NC involve an additional audit on site to assess the corrective and preventive actions carried out by the client.





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# 7 - Certification

## 7.1 - Certification Decision

On the basis of the initial audit report finalised, the comments of the applicant for certification as well as the peer review, the certification decision is made by the Bureau Veritas accredited entity within two months after reception of all these documents.

Bureau Veritas Certification communicates certification decisions to the client maximum twelve (12) months after the main evaluation in the case of forest management evaluations.

It could be up to eighteen (18) months in exceptional and justified cases, where due to major nonconformities a positive certification decision cannot be made within twelve (12) months. Between twelve (12) months and (18) months an on-site audit shall be required to verify the validity of the main evaluation findings and to evaluate any changes to the management system.

In case of negative certification decision, Bureau Veritas Certification provides the reasons for this decision to the client.

Prior to making the certification decision, the Certification Decision maker can ask for a complementary audit in order to clarify some parts.

He also may raise non-conformity or upgrade a minor non-conformity to a major non-conformity if the non-conformity represent either alone or in combination with further non-conformities, it results in, or is likely to result in a fundamental failure:

- To achieve the objectives of the relevant FSC Criterion, or
- 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 nonconformity.*

During this 2 months period, the applicant is not yet certified and cannot sell certified products nor can he communicate on his pending certification or use the FSC® trademark.

## 7.2 - Certificate Granting

When the certification decision is favourable and the applicant accepts the observations and possible non-conformities, the certification is granted for maximum five years.

A certificate number is given to the applicant who becomes a certified organization.

Once this agreement is signed the entity can use the FSC™ trademark while respecting the conditions of use described in the FSC-STD-50-001 and after validation of any FSC trademark use by Bureau Veritas Certification.

Bureau Veritas Certification prepares a public summary (general and non confidential data) mentioning the certification decision. This public summary (report) will be submitted to the applicant. If within 2 weeks the company does not provide any comments and does not underline confidential items, the public report will be considered as accepted by the applicant and will be published.



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### 8 - List of documents to be provided for application

So as to inform the audit team before the first assessment and, in certain cases, to be able to establish a personalized services offer to the forest entity, it is necessary to transmit to Bureau Veritas Certification, at the time of the official application, the following elements:

#### 8.1 - For an individual application for certification

- Large scale map showing location of the forests (map at minimum 1:25,000<sup>th</sup>);
- Forests population cartography, presenting if possible the road systems and hydrographic networks;
- Valid forests management document (it can be, according to cases, a Management scheme, Simple management scheme, ...);
- Document dealing with the particular management of environmental and social aspects, for example: identification and technical itinerary of remarkable sites, sensitive zones, protected species; environmental and social impact surveys, chemical agents use; stakeholders' consultation... It can be the management document or an appendix if these elements are not dealt with in the management document;
- Any document allowing to assess the dispositions taken specifically for the FSC™ certification, for example: FSC™ products monitoring or traceability procedures in the forest entity, personnel training documents, specifications, post sheets, good practices guide, procedures to be implemented.

#### 8.2 - For an application for group certification

Group certification concerns forest entities, legally independent from one another and situated within the same country, that will gather under a group manager to obtain a group certificate for forest management.

Entities wishing to implement a group certification will find the requirements to be met as well as the procedures relating to that type of certification in the FSC-STD-30-005.

It is in that case preferable to contact Bureau Veritas Certification.



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### 8.3 - List of documents to be prepared for the first audit

After having sent the aforementioned documents and so as to proceed with the first audit (pre-audit or initial audit), certain documents will have to be prepared and put at the audit team's disposal:

- Stakeholders' consultation elements ;
- List of stakeholder;
- information relating to environmental, social and landscape constraints;
- elements taking into account certification requirements with regard to the loggers, contractors or other forest workers;
- any information concerning the rights and uses (mandates, leases, uses, legal constraints...);
- the volumes (in round timber equivalent if there was a transformation) of timber exploited by the forest entity, volumes of timber sold by the forest entity and turnover during the three last years.

### 8.4 - List of information and documents to be made public

Within the scope of certification, certain elements must be made public. That requirement applies as soon as the forest entity receives a certificate:

- name and address of the forest entity;
- certificate number;
- last name and first name of the person to be contacted within the scope of the certification;
- Information related to the Forest Management Units included in the scope of the certificate (name, localisation, area);
- FSC forest management generic standard and documents defined in the standard in the **Criteria 7.1 and 8.2** (in accordance with 7.4 and 8.5 requirements), in particular the FSC forest management certification public reports.

Bureau Veritas Certification is responsible, through legally enforceable commitments, for the management of all information obtained or created during the performance of certification activities.

Information is considered proprietary and shall be regarded as confidential, except for information that the client makes or is required to make publicly available (see the list above) and that FSC and ASI are entitled to access, or when agreed between the CB and the client (e.g. for the purpose of responding to complaints).



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### 9 - Management of the disputes linked to the certificate

Bureau Veritas Certification developed within the scope of the FSC™ certification system, a process based in great part on consultation and concertation.

The latter operates through the forest entity's information and consultation, at the different stages of the certification process, but also through the consultation of all the stakeholders involved in the practised forest management.

These consultation and voluntary participation general principles enable to avoid any dispute concerning certification benefits.

Nevertheless, if a conflict appears within the scope of a certification decision, Bureau Veritas Certification has set up a complaints and appeals management procedure, enabling to deal with the latter with maximum independence and according to the following particularities:

- Everything is implemented by Bureau Veritas Certification to solve the conflict in an amicable manner.
- When the conflict concerns a certification decision, the certification decision maker intervenes in the resolution;
- When the conflict concerns the use of the certification make or the standard requirements, the FSC is regarded as the final judge.

### 10 -Use of the FSC trademark

#### 10.1 - Use of the FSC trademark

The certified entity is recorded on the website of use of the FSC trademark, with a licence number for the use of the FSC trademark.

It must respect the FSC trademark conditions of use, for its product use as well as for its promotional use. These conditions of use are to be found in the following standards:

- FSC-STD-50-001 for FSC FM certificate holders

Bureau Veritas Certification insists on the fact that the certified entity must submit to Bureau Veritas Certification any planned FSC trademark use for approval, **before** starting the aforementioned use.



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### 10.2 - Use of Bureau Veritas Certification mark

The company certified by Bureau Veritas Certification can use the Bureau Veritas Certification mark, associated to the FSC mark and respecting every FSC trademark use requirements (see FSC-STD-50 001. The size of the Bureau Veritas Certification logo shall not be bigger than the FSC logo and if it consists in product marking, the FSC label must be sufficiently visible to avoid any confusion (data processing provided on demand).



This logo cannot be used alone and can only be used in association with the FSC trademark.

## 11 - Certificate maintaining

### 11.1 - Surveillance audits

Surveillance audits will take place at least annually (once per calendar year) but may be more frequent depending on:

- The complexity and evolution of the certificate holder management system conformity;
- The scale of operation;
- The intensity of resource management
- The ecological or social sensitivity of the resource base to management intervention;
- The experience and track record of the operations involved;
- The number and nature of any complaints submitted by stakeholders;
- The deadline of non-conformities resolution.

NOTE: FSC and ASI reserve the right to request higher surveillance frequencies from certification bodies for certain geographical areas or certification services that are deemed “challenging” or are linked to “high” or “specified risk” as the result of an internal risk assessment.

Surveillance audits enable to monitor:

- The management continuation as assessed during the initial audit;
- The implementation of minor corrective actions and eventual recommendations;
- The correct use of the FSC trademark by the certified organization

After each surveillance audit, the public summary will be updated with the new observation and findings made during the audit. This summary will be submitted for two weeks to the company for validation, after which the report will be published.



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During the valid period of the certificate (maximum 5 years), if Bureau Veritas Certification notes significant nonconformities leading to minor or major ones:

- for minor NCs the company is given a period of time of 12 month to implement the necessary corrective actions to close the non-conformity. After this period, if one minor NC is not closed, either by lack of proof or lack of audit, it is automatically upgraded to Major NC, and subltitted to closure in the next 3 months.
- for major NCs:
  - in a FSC FM certification process, if 4 or less major NCs are issued the entity is allowed a length of time given by the auditors, relatively short (three months maximum), to meet the relevant requirements, At the end of that period of time, a complementary audit is carried out (documentary and/or field), according to the assessment of the given answers, the certificate is maintained or suspended over a period of time sufficient for the company to put itself in compliance. A Major NC can never be downgraded to Minor NC in FM certification if 5 or more major NCs are issued the certificate will be suspended
  - If 5 or more major NCs are issued, the certificate is suspended within ten (10) days of the certification decision being taken.
  - When corrective action is implemented in order to close the non-conformities, a complementary audit is carried out (documentary and/or field), according to the assessment of the given answers, the certificate is re-issued or maintained suspended until the company is able to implement the necessary actions.

Each year, the certified organization provides Bureau Veritas Certification with the list of the sold products from the “certified forests”. The organization specifies the species, the nature, the quantity as well as the addressees of the products. These pieces of information allow to follow FSC products after property transfer.



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### 11.2 -Certificate scope extension

Certificate extension can be requested to widen the field of application of a certificate:

- a forest owner or manager wishing to include new forests or new forest plots to the field of application of his certificate, or,
- a manufacturer or a dealer wishing to include new units to the field of application of his certificate.

The certified organization might be subjected to an extension audit depending on the importance and/or the intensity of the new activities or areas to be included in the scope of certificate. This audit will be carried out on all new elements to be included in the scope of the certificate to monitor the compliance with the requirements defined in the applicable FSC standards (comparable to the initial audit).

In any case the extension is reported to the technical reviewer and if an audit was carried out, the audit report is submitted to the Certification decision maker for analysis and it decides to extend or not the field of application of the certificate following the normal procedure (see paragraph Certificate granting).

NOTE 1: An increase or decrease in the group members number is not considered a change of scope unless, in the opinion of Bureau Veritas Certification, the change requires significant changes to the group certification holder's management systems.

NOTE 2: A change of scope may be necessary as a result of changes in ownership, structure of the organization, or management systems.

### 11.3 -Certificate reduction or excision

In case of scope reduction, the applicant shall apply for partial certification and respect the requirement in FSC POL 20 002 on Partial Certification. This is not applicable for group certification.

In cases where forest area as whole may be considered to comply with FSC standards although there are specific areas of the forest in which all of the requirements are not met for reasons beyond the control of the managers, a policy exists to excise part of the FMU.

Strict conditions are enforced to able implementation:

- The manager has done everything he could to avoid excision
- The rest of the forest stays compliant
- The excised area can be easily demarcated
- If the applicant is still managing the area, there is no violation of civil rights, no HCVF, no illegal harvesting, no GMO planted, no conversion from natural forests to plantation.
- Auditors shall come and assess the situation.



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In case of scope modification requirement, the certificate holder shall return its old certificate in order to receive a new one with the new wording for the scope.

### 11.4 - Renewing Audit

At the end of the five years, the certification contract can be renewed. To do so, Bureau Veritas Certification proceeds with a complete new assessment of the certified organization (comparable to the initial audit).

Afterwards, the certification process is carried out in the same way as previously.

### 11.5 -Period of validity of a certificate

The period of validity of a certificate is five (5) years. It may be extended for a **single exceptional extension** of up to six (6) months in order to permit re-evaluation to be completed, when justified by circumstances<sup>3</sup> beyond the control of the client and Bureau Veritas Certification. The client shall record such circumstances and provide it to Bureau Veritas Certification to be able to record it in its own FSC management system and update the entry in the FSC data base (info.fsc.org).

## 12 -Trademark use management system

Prior to each new use of the FSC trademarks, the organization shall ensure trademark use control by implementing an internal trademark approval process or by receiving external approval from Bureau Veritas Certification.

The organization may ask Bureau Veritas Certification for being granted the status of “FSC trademark self-approver”.

Instead of submitting all intended uses of FSC trademarks to Bureau Veritas Certification for approval, the organization may implement its own trademark use management system with an internal control system. This system shall be approved by the Bureau Veritas Certification before the organization may start using it. Organization shall ask Bureau Veritas for the procedure to comply with in order to obtain the status of “FSC trademark self-approver”.

## 13 -Suspension or withdrawal of the certificate

A certified organization practice or non-completion of a corrective action, leading to one or several nonconformities to the requirements defined within the FSC standard can be brought to Bureau Veritas Certification’s knowledge.

During a conflict or after denunciation of a nonconformity, Bureau Veritas Certification makes sure of the truthfulness of the collected information and reports to the Certification decision maker.

In all cases, NC are expressed if necessary.

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<sup>3</sup> Justifiable circumstances for an extension exclude problems in planning or scheduling an audit.





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The Certification decision maker then makes a decision depending on the importance of the nonconformity, which is judged in the following manner:

- If the nonconformity is due to an involuntary action, it justifies a conditional maintaining of the certificate. The certificate is maintained subject to the carrying out of the corrective action(s) requested by the certification decision maker, within a period of time that it defines;
- If the nonconformity is due to a deliberate action, it justifies, depending on the seriousness of the facts, a temporary suspension or a definitive withdrawal of the certificate.

In case of serious and indisputable failure to comply with the requirements of the standard or the label conditions of use, Bureau Veritas Certification remains authorized to suspend or withdraw the certificate, temporarily and without concertation with the Certification decision maker.

The company which certificate has been suspended or withdrawn has one week delay to react to this decision.

There is no partial withdrawal within the scope of FSC certification. A withdrawal always concerns the whole certificate. For multi-site or group, it means all the sites of the certificate will be either suspended or withdrawn.

Bureau Veritas Certification will suspend certification at latest 3 months after the closing meeting of a surveillance audit if a certification decision to maintain the certification cannot be taken due to circumstances beyond its control (for example if client or other parties prevent from the use of audit findings and/or delayed or declined acceptance of audit findings...)

In order to remove a suspension of certificate, a complementary (documentary or field) audit should take place in order to check the carrying out of the requested corrective action(s). The certificate can then be granted again. In case the requested corrective action(s) is (are) not raised, the certificate is then withdrawn.

Suspension of a certificate cannot last more than one year. Afterwards, the certificate is withdrawn.

In case of suspension or withdrawal of the certificate, the entity shall cease to make any use of any FSC trademarks, or to sell any products that the supplier has previously labelled or marked using the FSC trademarks, or to make any claims that imply that they comply with the requirements for certification and shall remove all FSC trademark uses within 12 months after certificate termination at its own expense. And inform the Certification Body and FSC when it is done.

In case of suspension or withdrawal, the client must follow these obligations :

- a) immediately cease to make any use of any FSC trademarks, or to sell any products that the client has previously labeled or marked using the FSC trademarks, or to make any claims that imply that they comply with the requirements for certification;
- b) identify all relevant existing customers, and advise those customers of the suspension or withdrawal in writing within three (3) business days of the suspension or withdrawal , and maintain records of that advice;
- c) cooperate with the certification body and with FSC in order to allow the certification body or FSC to confirm that these obligations have been met.



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A certificate will be suspended for a maximum period of twelve (12) months (upon justification and at the discretion of the Bureau Veritas Certification the timeline may be increased to eighteen (18) months to allow the client to correct nonconformities). After this period AND ONLY IF MAJOR NC have been properly corrected the certificate validity will be restored. If this is not possible the certificate will be terminated.

Upon justified and exceptional circumstances the suspension period may be extended to six (6) additional months. To lift the suspension a surveillance audit and a positive certification decision will have to be performed.



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### 14 -Complaints and Appeals process

Complaints and appeals management procedure (“Customer Appeals and Complaints Management for forest & wood certification”) can be download from Bureau Veritas Certification website. For information about this procedure, Bureau Veritas Certification may be contacted.

Complaints and appeals are regested directly on-line by the party (person or organization applicant) on either the global Bureau Veritas Certification website and/or directly on the Bureau Veritas Certification local office’s website.

#### 14.1 -Complaints

It's a formal expression of dissatisfaction (different from an appeal) relating to the activities of Bureau Veritas Certification and/or its subsidiaries.

#### 14.2 -Appeals

The applicant or certificate holder may request for reconsideration of a certification decision or non conformity issuance related to its certification status.

### 15 -Applicable standards for FSC FM Certification

#### 15.1 - Generic standard

Bureau Veritas Certification established a forest management generic standard, based on FSC Principles and Criteria and validated by the FSC during the accreditation procedures. Generic standard adaptation procedures to different local contexts are validated as well.

#### 15.2 - Local standard

Most countries in the world have their national standard at their disposal today (indeed, concerning the United-States for example, several local standards). These local standards are also based on FSC Principles and Criteria and validated by the FSC. Nevertheless, they were established by FSC local working groups.

When a country has at his disposal a standard adapted and validated by FSC, that standard is the standard to be respected for all Forest Management FSC certifications in the country.



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### 15.3 - Adaptation of the generic standard to a local context

When there is no local standard approved by FSC, the certification body wishing to certify a forest entity must adapt its generic standard to the local context, following the adaptation procedures validated by FSC.

Nevertheless, if one of these countries develop its own national standard, via a working group recognized by FSC, that national standard will become the document to be respected and will replace the standard adapted by Bureau Veritas Certification.

## 16 - FSC forest management standard synthesis

The 10 FSC principles used for the FSC forest management standard

#### **Principle 1: Compliance with Laws**

The Organization\* shall comply with all applicable laws\*, regulations and nationally- ratified\* international treaties, conventions and agreements.

#### **Principle 2: Workers Rights and Employment Conditions**

The Organization\* shall maintain or enhance the social and economic wellbeing of workers\*.

#### **Principle 3: Indigenous Peoples' Rights**

The Organization\* shall identify and uphold\* Indigenous Peoples'\* legal and customary rights\* of ownership, use and management of land, territories and resources affected by management activities.

#### **Principle 4: Community Relations**

The Organization\* shall contribute to maintaining or enhancing the social and economic wellbeing of local communities\*.

#### **Principle 5: Benefits from the Forest**

The Organization\* shall efficiently manage the range of multiple products and services of the Management Unit\* to maintain or enhance long term economic viability\* and the range of environmental and social benefits.

#### **Principle 6: Environmental Values and Impacts**

The Organization\* shall maintain, conserve and/or restore ecosystem services\* and environmental values\* of the Management Unit\*, and shall avoid, repair or mitigate negative environmental impacts.

#### **Principle 7: Management Planning**

The Organization\* shall have a management plan\* consistent with its policies and objectives\* and proportionate to scale, intensity and risks\* of its management activities. The management plan shall be implemented and kept up to date based on monitoring information in order to promote adaptive management\*. The associated planning and



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procedural documentation shall be sufficient to guide staff, inform affected stakeholders\* and interested stakeholders\* and to justify management decisions.

**Principle 8: Monitoring and Assessment**

The Organization\* shall demonstrate that, progress towards achieving the management objectives\*, the impacts of management activities and the condition of the Management Unit\*, are monitored and evaluated proportionate to the scale, intensity and risk\* of management activities, in order to implement adaptive management\*.

**Principle 9: High Conservation Values**

The Organization\* shall maintain and/or enhance the High Conservation Values\* in the Management Unit\* through applying the precautionary approach\*.

**Principle 10: Implementation of Management Activities**

Management activities conducted by or for The Organization\* for the Management Unit\* shall be selected and implemented consistent with The Organization's economic, environmental and social policies and objectives\* and in compliance with the Principles\* and Criteria\* collectively.

## 17 -Management of change

The company must inform Bureau Veritas Certification within ten (10) days of changes in the ownership, structure of the organization (e.g. changes in key managerial staff), certified management systems or circumstances which relate to the implementation of FSC certification requirements.

A change of scope may be necessary as a result of changes in ownership, structure of the organization, or management systems.

If a standard is revised, Bureau Veritas Certification will contact the client and communicate the actions to be done to get the certification against the new standard revised. Clients that were certified prior to the effective date of approval of a new or revised applicable FSC normative document shall be audited against the requirements of the new or revised document in accordance with the applicable transition requirements.