

**Guide  
to Monitoring  
*FSC***

***(Forest Stewardship Council)***

**Certifications**

**Greenpeace International**

**August 2000**

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Public Information - what you have a right to know and request</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Background Information</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Opportunities for Participation in the FSC</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2. Guide to Resolving Conflict over FSC Certifications</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.1 Concerns over forest management in a certified forest</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2 Concerns over the performance of a certifying body</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.3 Complaints to the FSC Organisation</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2.3.1 Informal Procedures</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.3.2 Formal Procedures</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix 1 FSC Certification Body Contact Details</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix 2 FSC Certification Process</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix 3 Information Checklist for Investigating FSC Certified Forest Areas</b>	
<b>A: Certification Assessment Procedures and Requirements</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>B: Key Check Points from the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Management.</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>C: Check Points for Chain of Custody Certificates</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix 4 FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Management</b>	<b>21</b>

# Introduction

The Forests Stewardship Council (FSC) was established in 1993 to promote certification of forest management that meets sound ecological, social and economic standards, and to provide a guarantee to the consumer by labelling forest products from these certified “well managed forests”. The FSC uses a consultative multi-stakeholder approach to further refine its policies and environment/social performance standards. A part of that stakeholder consultative approach is monitoring, questioning and, if warranted, disputing certifications carried out by certifying organisations accredited to the FSC.

Greenpeace is particularly concerned about the certification of industrial logging in ancient, primary, and High Conservation Value Forest areas. We support human uses in such forests that can maintain their unique ecological attributes. We oppose the ‘conversion’ or degradation of a forest to a lower category, such as the conversion of primary forest to secondary forest and secondary forest to plantations, all of which lead to the loss of important ecological and

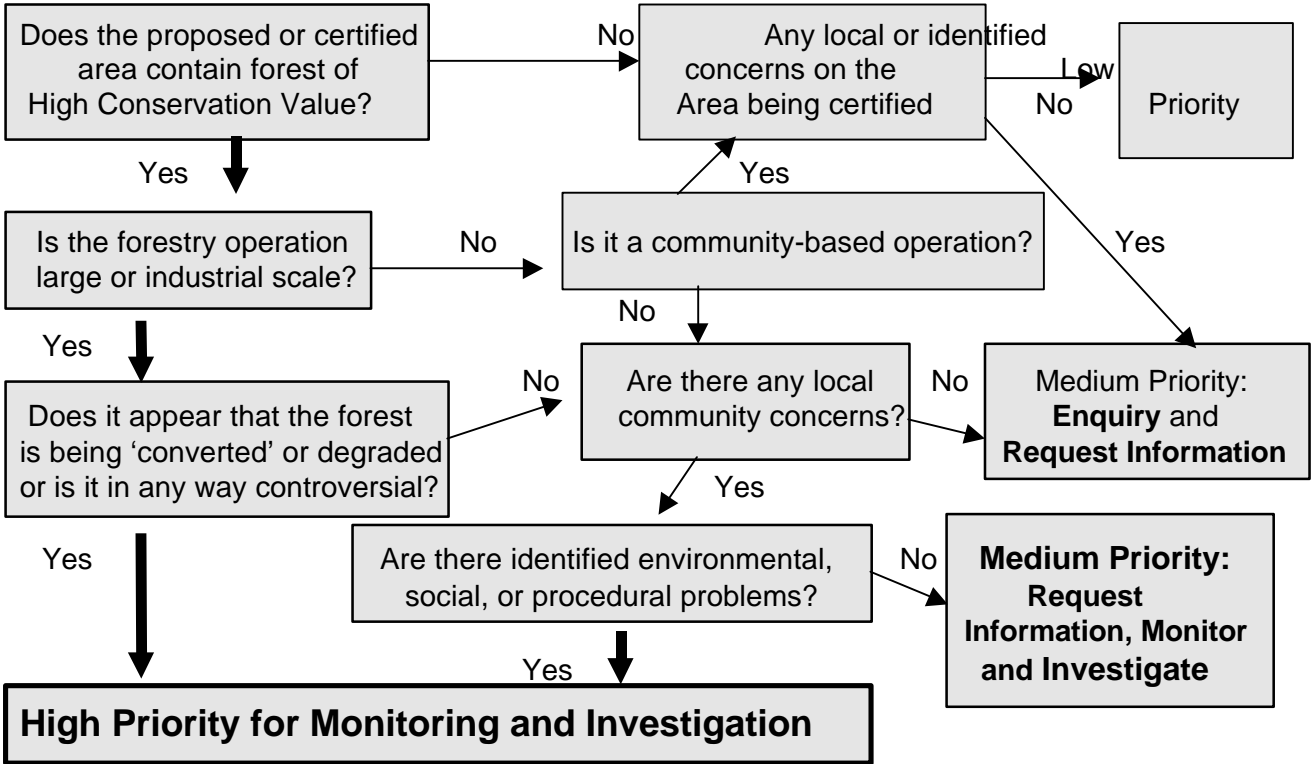
social values. We support the respect of indigenous peoples’ rights to their forests.

These goals are explicit in the FSC Principles and Criteria. If the FSC is to remain an effective tool to transform forestry practices, however, environmental and social stakeholders need to be actively involved in certification assessments. Using FSC rules, stakeholders and FSC members can play an important FSC “watchdog” role to ensure strong ecological and social standards, correct procedures, including stakeholder consultation and truthful labelling are followed, and the FSC is carrying out its core accreditation function effectively.

The guide is a user-friendly helper to identify critical certifications that need to be questioned against key FSC ecological, social and certification standards. It gives guidance on how to constructively engage in FSC endorsed certification assessments through FSC procedures and the Dispute Resolution Protocol for any complaint or dispute.

## Quick Reference Prioritising Pathway for Monitoring of Natural Forest Certifications:

Start Here:



## Public Information - What you have a right to know and request

### General Information and FSC Documents

Various FSC documents can be downloaded from the FSC website ([www.fscoax.org](http://www.fscoax.org)) including the FSC's 10 global Principles and 56 Criteria of good forest stewardship, contact information for all accredited and applicant FSC accredited certification bodies, FSC national contact information and other documents including the Dispute Resolution Protocol.

### a) Information from and about Certification Bodies

***FSC endorsed certification assessments are carried out by certification organisations accredited by the FSC. (See Appendix 1 for list of FSC accredited Certification Bodies)***

***i) Certification Bodies Accredited by FSC:***

At any time a request can be made to a certifier for:

- a written description of their certification procedures,
- a list of all suppliers/producers certified by them,
- education material describing the importance of forest certification,
- the Forest Stewardship Standard used for each certification evaluation,
- details of their dispute resolution procedures, and
- details of their organisational structures, including the names and qualifications of members of their committees/entities responsible for: overall performance, ensuring independence, formulation and implementation of policies, certification decision making, and dispute resolution.

***ii) Certification Bodies applying for FSC Accreditation.***

To find out the recommendation of the secretariat including any conditions or pre-conditions on the accreditation of an applicant certifier, request a copy of the public summary of the FSC Accreditation Report. All FSC members are required to be notified at least 30 days in advance that this public summary is available, that the decision on the application is on the agenda for the next board meeting and its date, and that written comments are welcome for consideration by the board.

***iii) Annual Monitoring:***

The FSC secretariat is required to monitor annually each certification body. This includes at least one visit to a forest certified by that certifier. You can at any time raise issues for the attention of the secretariat during their annual monitoring. The FSC should notify FSC members of any up and coming monitoring evaluations.

Following the completion of annual monitoring, the 'Annual Report' on each certification body is available on request from the FSC secretariat.

## b) Information about Certification Evaluations

**Certification assessments take place in two main stages, a pre-evaluation or “scoping” phase, and the full certification assessment.**

### **i) Pre-Evaluation Stage:**

Certifiers or forest managers are not required to make public any information at this point, and most pre-evaluations or scopings are carried out discretely without any notification of stakeholders. However, with certification assessments that are large-scale or involve High Conservation Value Forests, a pre-evaluation stakeholder consultation phase is required. With other certifications the FSC recommends that the certifier familiarise themselves with stakeholders and issues at this point.. Pre-evaluations are usually requested by forest managers to see how their management compares to the requirements of the FSC. It is very useful to begin engaging with the certifier at this point to have them incorporate your concerns on key issues into their certification evaluation standards.

### **ii) Main Evaluation:**

If you are an identified ‘stakeholder’ then you should be notified at least one month in advance of basic details of the evaluation, of procedures for developing a certifiers ‘Interim Local Standard”, that you can request and comment on the ‘Interim local standard’ that they will use as a basis for the evaluation, and the details of the certifier’s dispute resolution procedures. You can request to become a stakeholder or suggest others who should be if it can be shown that you/they have an interest or ‘stake’ in the forest areas concerned. If you are a stakeholder, then prior to the evaluation the Forest Manager should have voluntarily sent you information about their management and policies. You should be asked to comment on any High Conservation Values, and the management options being forwarded to maintain them. No claim of conformity or near conformity should be made at this point by the forest manager. If the forest area involves High Conservation Value Forest, the certifier is required to incorporate stakeholders concerns and finalise their ‘interim standard’ to be used prior to the evaluation beginning. For other areas, the certifier must finalise and circulate their ‘interim standard’ to stakeholders at least one month prior to the certification decision.

## c) Information after a Certificate has been issued

**By the Certifier:** a ‘Public Certification Summary Report’ is made available that follows a template of the details required, including a direct correlation with FSC Principles and Criteria, and translation into the main local language. You can request this directly from the certifier (see Appendix 1 for contact details), or copy it from theirs or the FSC Web site. You can request a list of all the names and contact details of forest managers or suppliers certified by the certifier, public summaries of these, and Forest Stewardship Standard used in each

case. If as a stakeholder during the consultative phase you raised issues on the certification, within 6 months you should be informed on how they were addressed.

**By the Forest Manager:** The forest manager is required to continue consultation with groups and people directly affected by the management operations, and also required to make available a public summary of their Forest Management Plan and the results of their monitoring indicators.

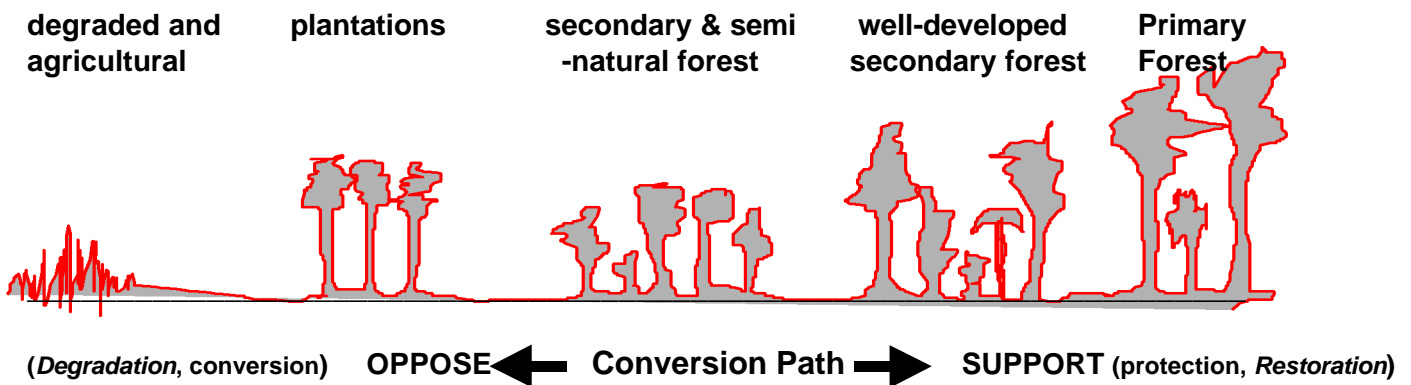
# 1. Background Information

The FSC was formally established in 1993 with the widespread support of international environment and conservation NGOs. Much of the initial focus of Greenpeace and others was on ensuring strong international “Principles and Criteria for Forest Management”. The FSC sets the rules and accredits independent certifying organisations to carry out the audits of forest management to this agreed set of principles and criteria.

Using their own procedures and a set of standards appropriate to the local situation, the certifiers and the FSC have now approved more than 17 million hectares of forests and plantations in 33 different countries. Unfortunately, concerns have been raised that some of the certifications may not fully meet the FSC certification procedures nor the standards required by the Principles and Criteria. Better informed stakeholder monitoring and involvement can help prevent this from occurring.

Failing to perform to the principles and criteria and procedures agreed by the FSC membership and variability of interpretation across certifiers and regions reduces the FSC’s credibility and utility as an incentive and tool to transform destructive forestry practices. A key question to ask of any Forest Manager seeking certification is, whether it is an ‘inward’ exercise to genuinely achieve high environmental and social standards, or is it an “outward” exercise to placate market demand for green labelling and achieve an image ‘greenwash’.

A major concern for Greenpeace is the loss of ecological values from the conversion of primary, ancient, or High Conservation Value forest to secondary forests through logging. In all cases we believe FSC certification can and should be aiding positive movement on the *conversion pathway* (see diagram below).



More than 90% of current certifications are in natural secondary forests, semi-natural forests or plantations. There are however, more than 2 million ha of FSC certified areas that may involve either primary forest or High Conservation Value Forest (HCFV)<sup>1</sup>. Of this,

<sup>1</sup> There are difficulties calculating this as certifiers are not as yet using High Conservation Value Forest as a reporting category on the certificates they have issued.

approximately 800,000 ha is community-based operations. Less than 7% of the current certified area may involve private business or corporate logging of primary or HCVFs.

However, driven by strong market demand (in particular corporate commitments such as from Home Depot and Lowes in the US, UK 95Plus Group, and IKEA) there is now

unprecedented interest from the industrial forestry sector in FSC certification. Correspondingly a large number of certification evaluations are underway or proposed involving HCVPs. In the next few years the FSC system will be put to the test, with considerable commercial pressure on the FSC to compromise meaningful social and environmental standards.

A significant strength of the FSC is its consensus type *modus operandi*, consultative processes with its membership, and balanced democratic voting structure. A key method in FSC procedures to resolve disagreements and improve the performance of the certifiers and the FSC organisation is to monitor, investigate and seek resolution, if necessary through dispute mechanisms, certificates that stakeholders believe have been issued inappropriately.

If stakeholder consultation is effective, most issues can be resolved without moving to formal dispute. The FSC offers numerous opportunities for public participation (see diagram). There are now also a number of examples where the FSC system has responded positively due to formal

complaints and dispute on either a certification or standards setting process. There are complaints and disputes procedures within the FSC that are designed to address either public or membership concerns over the performance of the FSC. These are outlined in this guide.

As well, key information is required to monitor and investigate certifications to assist FSC members in strengthening the FSC system. FSC NGO members can play an important role as local stakeholders in both gathering relevant information, engaging in the certification assessment and standards setting processes, and if necessary directly making complaints. This guide is intended to be a user-friendly checklist of information requirements for investigating, monitoring and participating and the complaint/dispute procedures.

Appendix 3 of this guide provides an information checklist for investigating a certification assessment, a certified forest and/or a chain of custody certification

# Opportunities for Participation with the FSC

*With whom*

*In what*

*How*

**FSC  
Organisation**

**Policies, Rules, &  
Principle and Criteria**

Motion to vote by membership

Board Decisions

Working Groups and Reviews

Complaints and Disputes

**Certifier/  
National WG**

**Standards Used for  
Certification**

Input to development of  
Local Standard

*Build Relationship  
with Certifiers*

Participation in and Influence  
on Regional Standard Setting

*Get on Stakeholder  
list*

*Know key issues &  
Standard you want*

*Work cooperatively with  
other Stakeholders and Reps  
on Working Group*

**Forest Manager**

**Forest Management**

Monitoring, Complaints and  
Disputing Standards and Process

*Be Familiar with  
Dispute Resolution  
Protocol*

Engage with Forest Manager

*Directly approach on any  
management concerns*

*Request Public  
Summary of FM plan  
& monitoring reports*

## 2. Guide to Resolving Conflict over FSC Certifications

As the FSC certification is a multi-stakeholder process merging many different perspectives, inevitably at times there will be disagreement. This may be over the certification process, issues on a forest management area or practices, standards used, or a certification decision.

The most preferable way to deal with any disagreement is directly between the parties involved in the first instance. This means being a genuine party by engaging fully in the stakeholder process during the certification evaluation. To avoid protracted and costly (time, resources, image of FSC) formal disputes, every effort should be made to resolve any disagreement or complaint informally.

However, in some instances a formal complaint or dispute process may be the only option. The FSC openly welcomes input and feedback, but also has designed

formal dispute procedures for any concerned party or FSC member to file complaints if they feel that key issues and concerns have not been appropriately addressed. Members of the FSC are required to follow these procedures.

The complaint and dispute process is a healthy democratic way of resolving disagreements and improving the performance of the both the certifiers and the FSC system.

To be effective, it is important that the procedures are followed and that any decisions are open to public/political debate and scrutiny at an appropriate point in any disputes process to ensure transparency and a fair outcome. The procedures are hierarchical, bureaucratic, are based on the idea that complaints should initially be heard at the lowest appropriate level and resolved informally if possible.

**Enquiries and Complaints** can be lodged at three levels:

- with the certified forest management unit,
- with the certifier who has certified the forest area (and their Independent Certification Decision-making Entity), and
- with the FSC organisation itself (secretariat, board, then the Disputes Resolution Committee).

### 2.1 Concerns over forest management in a certified forest

**Action 1:** If you believe the forest management enterprise is not meeting the FSC Principles and Criteria, write to the forest managers with your concerns, requesting information and an explanation.

**Action 2:** If a satisfactory response is not received then either send a written formal complaint over the inadequate management practices, or

**Action 3:** Make a certifier information request or informal complaint over why a certificate was issued for this forest management area.

## 2.2 Concerns over the performance of a certifying body (ie. SGS, SCS, Smartwood, Soil Assn, SKAL, IMO, Silva)

**Action 4:** If your informal approaches to the certifier do not resolve your concerns and you believe that a certifier is not adequately applying FSC Principles and Criteria or not meeting their procedural obligations, write to the certifier with your complaint about either the certified forest or their certification procedures. Include copies of any correspondence from the forest manager (2.1). Request details on their own internal complaint and disputes procedures, in particular how long the process may take.

**Action 5:** Send a copy of your complaint letter (s) to the FSC secretariat.

**Action 6:** If the certifier does not satisfy all your concerns, send a written request to the certifier to convene their “Independent Committee” to resolve your complaint. Provide the Committee with a clear description of your complaint and any information they require.

**Action 7:** If the certifier’s Independent Committee does not resolve all your concerns, move to the FSC organisation complaint (2.3).

## 2.3 Complaints to the FSC Organisation

A complaint can only be raised with the FSC relating to forest management (2.1), or a certifier’s performance (2.2) if those concerns raised have not been informally or formally resolved with the forest manager or the certifier. The FSC calls this requirement “*prior participation*”. A complaint can also be over the FSC secretariat’s or Board’s performance, or any decisions relating to complaints raised, with “prior participation” being that the member has raised its concern in writing prior to the decision or action taken (unless insufficient prior notice given). The secretariat (via the Executive Director) is responsible to the Board for the effective implementation of all FSC policies and duties. Therefore any forest certifications are also the responsibility of the secretariat.

Complaints or disputes to the FSC are guided by the Interim Disputes Resolution Protocol (April 1998). Copies are available from the FSC website or from Greenpeace and it is strongly suggested that this be read in detail before proceeding. It describes an initial *informal resolution* process that must be used first before *formal resolution* procedure can take place. Complaints at this stage to the FSC can only be filed by FSC members ‘in good standing’ and at the formal complaint stage it will likely involve costs being reimbursed to the FSC. At the formal complaint stage, it is advisable that legal advice is taken. There are timeliness and document filing requirements to be met for it to be a valid complaint

### 2.3.1 Informal Resolution

Prior to lodging a formal dispute with the FSC, a complainant must seek informal resolution of the matter.

**Action 8:** Write to the FSC Executive Director in Oaxaca with your complaint within 30 days of the event you are complaining about (eg. failure of certifier's independent committee to resolve the complaint, or a particular action by the FSC secretariat or board), requesting informal resolution. Include details and evidence to support your case, any previous correspondence, and suggest a solution.

**Action 9:** If after 30 days of request there has been no resolution by the informal procedures and investigation of the complaint it is still not resolved to your satisfaction, an additional 45 day period may be issued to resolve the dispute.

**Action 10:** If outcome of the informal resolution process does not resolve your complaint, then you may, with the endorsement of at least two other FSC members, initiate a formal complaint.

### 2.3.2 A Formal Complaint to the FSC

A formal complaint is governed by part 2 of the Interim Dispute Resolution Protocol. The FSC Board will be the interim reviewing body in all cases except disputes against decisions made by the board. Otherwise the Disputes Resolution Committee will be activated. Separately elected representative members sit on the Disputes Resolution Committee. The complaint at this point must have the endorsement of at least two other FSC members and must be backed by a security bond of US\$1000 towards the

costs of hearing the case. If the complaint is not upheld, the cost could potentially be magnitudes greater than US\$1000. It is strongly advised that before proceeding with a formal complaint that legal advice is taken, the applicant is familiar with the requirements of the Interim Disputes Resolution Protocol, and that support and financial backing is sought from several other FSC members for initiating the complaint. Appeals can be made over any decision made by the FSC board but not the Disputes Resolution Committee.

## Appendix 1: FSC Certifier Contact Details

(See also the FSC website, [www.fscoax.org](http://www.fscoax.org), for updated lists of accredited and applicant certification bodies.)

**BM TRADA Certification**, Stirling Business Centre, Wellgreen Place, Stirling, FK82DZ, UK.

**Contact: Alasdir McGregor**

Ph: 44-1786-450891, Fax: 44-1786-451087. Email:

[AMCGregor@stirling.trada.co.uk](mailto:AMCGregor@stirling.trada.co.uk)

Web: <http://www.bmtrada.com>

(Scope limited to Chain of Custody worldwide)

**IMO, Institut fur Marktökologie**, Poststrasse 8, CH-8583, Switzerland

**Contact: Karl Buchel**

Ph: 41-71-6449880, Fax: 41-71-6449883, Email: [forest@imo.ch](mailto:forest@imo.ch)

Web; <http://www.IMO.CH>

**Rainforest Alliance SmartWood Program**, 61 Millet St, Richmond, Vermont 05477, USA. **Contact: Ms Wendy Hall.**

Ph: 1-802-4345491, Fax: 1-802-434-3116, email: [wjhall@smartwood.org](mailto:wjhall@smartwood.org)

Web: <http://www.smartwood.org>

**Scientific Certification Systems (SCS)**, Park Plaza building, 1939 Harrison St, Suite 400, Oakland, CA 94612-3532.

**Contact: Robert Hrubes**

Ph: 1-510-832-1415, Fax: 1-510-832-0359. Email: [rhrubes@scs1.com](mailto:rhrubes@scs1.com)

Web: <http://www.scs1.com>

**SGS Forestry QUALIFOR Programme**, 58 St Aldates, Oxford OX1 1ST, UK.

**Contact: Ruth Nussbaum.**

Ph: 44-1865-201212, Fax: 44-1865-790441. Email: [forestry@sgsgroup.com](mailto:forestry@sgsgroup.com)

Web: <http://www.sgs.co.uk/qualifor/>

**Silva Forest Foundation**, P.O. Box 9, Slocan Park, British Columbia, VOG 2E0, Canada.

**Contact: Ms Susan Hammond**

Ph: 1-250-2267222, Fax: 1-250-2267446 Email: <[silvafor@netidea.com](mailto:silvafor@netidea.com)>

Web: <http://www.silvafor.com>

(scope limited to forest management and chain of custody within Canada)

**SKAL**, Stationsplein 5, P.O. Box 384, 8000 A J Zwolle, the Netherlands.

**Contact: Jan-Willem Heezen**

Ph: 31-38-4226866 Fax: 31-38-4213063 Email: [info@skal.com](mailto:info@skal.com)

Web: <http://www.skal.com>

**Soil Association Woodmark Scheme**, Bristol House, 40-56 Victoria St, Bristol BS1 6BY, UK.

**Contact: Mathew Weban-Smith**

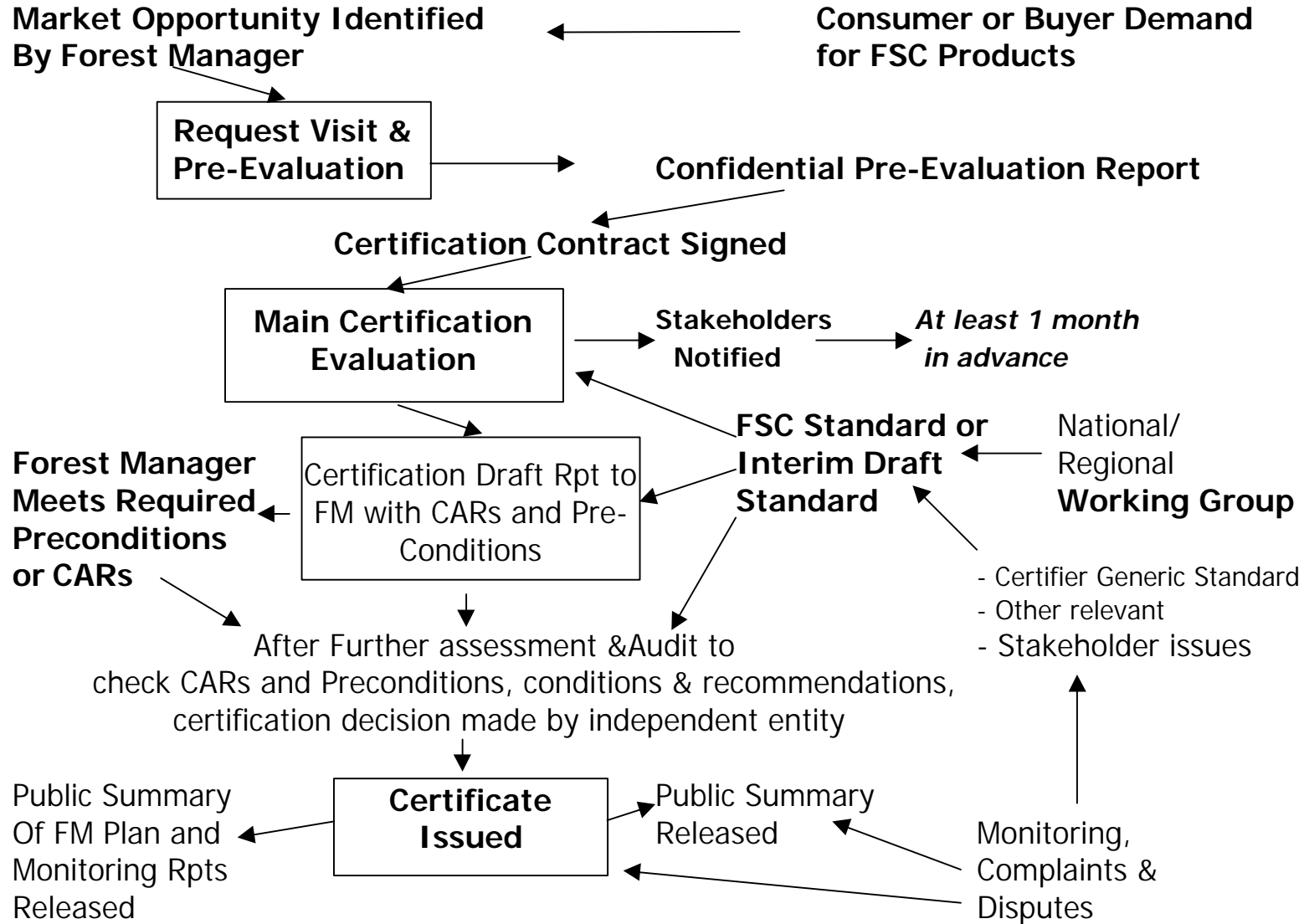
Ph: 44-117-929-0661, Fax: 44-117-925-2504 Email: [rfp@gn.apc.org](mailto:rfp@gn.apc.org)

Web: <http://www.earthfood.co.uk>



**Appendix 2:**

**FSC Certification Process** (6 months to 2 years)



## Appendix 3: Information Checklist for Investigating FSC Certified Forest Areas

Information required to investigate a certified forest, certification evaluation, or the Chain of Custody (CoC) certificate falls into three categories. The first relates to the FSC procedures and rules that certifiers and forest managers must follow during and after the certification assessment, in particular what information must be made public. The second is simply whether the forest management meets the FSC Principles and Criteria. The third is on CoC aspects. The checklist for the two categories below does not cover every possible compliance issue but rather those most important and relevant for environmental and social interests, and those most commonly breached.

### A. Certification Assessment Procedures and Requirements

FSC Ref.	Procedure or Requirement	Action to Verify	y/n	Comment
Part 3.2 <sup>2</sup> Section 2 & 7	<b>Where there is no FSC Approved National Standard:</b>			
2.2.3.1.d) & 7.2.5 2.2.3.1 e)	The certifier has encouraged local comment on their 'generic' standard, and have liaised with any group developing any local FSC standard	<b>Ask certifier for list of consulted groups. Check with groups on level of consultation.</b>		
2.2.3.2 a)	The certifier has made publicly available and circulated to stakeholders their 'Interim Local Standard' <sup>3</sup> that is to be or was used, (at least one month prior to the assessment taking place in HCVFs, or for other area one month prior to certification decision.)	<b>Check with local stakeholders that they were notified that the standard was available within the required timeframe.</b>		
Part 3.2: Section 7	<b>Stakeholder Consultation</b>			
7.2.2	Local and national environmental, ecological, legal, social and economic NGOs and governmental stakeholders must be identified before assessment.	<b>Request stakeholder contact list from certifier</b>		
7.2.3	Identified stakeholders must be informed at least one month prior to assessment of: the assessment, its date, its scope, the FSC or 'generic' standard to be used, contact details, and of certification dispute resolution procedures. For HCVF areas or those that are large-scale, consultation must begin in the pre-evaluation phase.	<b>Check with stakeholders that they were notified at the right time and with correct information.</b>		

<sup>2</sup> from "FSC Accreditation Manual" January 1998: FSC document 3.1.

<sup>3</sup> Certifiers are expected to use the FSC Principles and Criteria, their own Criteria, and any relevant local standards, to develop an 'Interim Standard' for stakeholders to make comment on and then for use in the certification assessment.

7.2.5	The certifier must have procedures for gather comments from stakeholders on the 'Interim local Standard' to be used <sup>4</sup> and they must inform stakeholders of them. Certifier must 'meaningfully accommodate stakeholder concerns' into interim local standard, and finalise it one month in advance for HCVF areas, and one month before the certification decision for all other assessments.	<b>Check process certifier has for gathering and incorporating comments</b>		
7.2.6	The results of the stakeholder consultation process must be recorded in the Certification Report <sup>5</sup> , and stakeholders informed on how any issues they raised were addressed	<b>Check the Public Summary for list of stakeholders and record of consultation. Check consultation report back.</b>		
Part 3.2: Sect.2 & G2.4 <sup>6</sup>	Certifier 'generic standards' and any standard used for a certification evaluation must use the exact language of the FSC P&C as its basis, structure and presentation.	<b>Check certifier standards to see if they confirm with the required format.</b>		
Part 3.2: Section 13	<b>Certifier's Public Certification Report</b>			
13.2 & Part 3.3 Sect. 2	A report is released to the public that follows the 'Public Certification Report Template' that is translated into the main local language and includes details of: the forest management system, environmental and social factors, assessment process, reasons for certification decision, details of any corrective actions requested, and reports directly on performance to FSC Principles and Criteria. The Public Certification Report must be available on the WWW.	<b>Request Public reports from the certifier or copy from website, and check content is correct.</b>		
	<b>Forest Manager Public Requirements</b>			
Crit. 4.5 FSC P&C	Consultations have continued with people and groups directly affected by management operations.	<b>Ask local affected people or groups if the forest manager has continued consulting and general views on the certification.</b>		
Crit. 7.4 & 8.5 FSC P&C Part 2.1: 3.2.1	Forest managers have made available to the public a summary of their Forest Management Plan, and the results of their monitoring indicators.	<b>Check availability of public summary of Mgt Plan and monitoring.</b>		

<sup>4</sup> It is generally the norm that certifiers will adjust the standard as far as possible to address the issues raised by stakeholders, and in particular if the stakeholder is seen as important or influential, or a number of stakeholders in the same sector raise the same concerns.

<sup>5</sup> The public report released after the completion of the assessment and the certificate issued.

<sup>6</sup> From FSC Guidelines for Certification Bodies: June 1998.

## B. Key Check Points from the FSC Principles and Criteria for Forest Management

A good place to begin monitoring and verification if the forest is already certified is to view or obtain a copy of the public summary report issued by the certifier (see contact information is Appendix 1), and also either the FSC Standard or the 'Interim local standard' used. This will provide information on how the forest management has met the criteria but it is unlikely to give you all the information that is needed, and much of it will need to independently checked and preferably verified through a field visit.

If the forest has not been certified, request copies of the forest management plan, policies, monitoring results, and other information directly from the forest manager. If an evaluation is underway, request a copy of the draft 'interim standard' from the certifier to check if it adequately covers all environmental and social concerns.

Crit. Ref.	Key Points from FSC Principles & Criteria for Forest Management	Action to Verify	y/n	Comments
1.1	Forest operations meet all national and local <b>laws</b> , and administrative requirements.	<b>Compare and cross-reference local laws with practices by the forest operation.</b>		
1.6	Forest managers demonstrate a long-term <b>commitment to the FSC P&amp;C</b> .	<b>Ask the forest manager for policy or plans, check overall management activities (including outside the area being certified) against P&amp;C, and look for major failures or conflicts.</b>		
2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2	<b>Land use rights:</b> forest management operation has an agreed right but does not reduce local community or indigenous customary control or use rights.	<b>Check with local community and indigenous peoples' designated representatives that they agree with land use right of the forest manager.</b>		
2.3 & 4.5	Forest operations use <b>appropriate methods to resolve disputes</b> over land use rights, and for compensation from any damage or losses.	<b>Check for how any disputes have been handled.</b>		
3.3	<b>Sites</b> of significance for indigenous people are identified and protected.	<b>Ask indigenous people if their cultural sites are being respected.</b>		
4.1	Preferential employment and training <b>opportunities for local communities</b> .	<b>Ask local people if they have been offered training or employment, and on general community benefits gained and services improved.</b>		
4.2 & 4.3	<b>Health and safety</b> and ILO labour laws and regulations are exceeded for employees and families.	<b>Compare regulations and ILO laws with forest operation practices. In particular check workers rights to organise and collective bargaining for employment conditions.</b>		
5.2	<b>Local processing</b> and optimal use that <b>minimises waste</b> is	<b>Evidence of local processing, benefits and efficient use of harvested</b>		

Ref.	Key Point from FSC P&C	Action to Verify	y/n	Comments
5.3	Watersheds, fisheries and other <b>forest services</b> are maintained.	<i>Ask local people and groups if there are any 'downstream' effects.</i>		
5.6	<b>Sustainable rate of harvest</b> of forest products.	<i>Compare extraction rate with local estimates of annual growth rates.</i>		
6.1	Appropriate to the scale of operations, a full landscape level <b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> has been completed.	<i>Ask forest manager for EIA and check that it has included broader landscape level aspects.</i>		
6.2	Conservation areas established to <b>protect rare, threatened and endangered species</b> and their habitats.	<i>Request map of conservation areas and list of threatened species. If possible check that conservation areas are respected and actively managed.</i>		
6.3	<b>Ecological functions</b> are maintained such as biodiversity and natural regeneration. Harvest method/system mimics natural non-catastrophic disturbance patterns for that area.	<i>Arrange a field visit by forest expert to see if harvested forest areas key composition and functions are being maintain in comparison with the unharvested areas (reference sites).</i>		
6.4	<b>Protected Representative</b> areas of local ecosystems set aside and are actively managed.	<i>Request method used to determine representative areas. Check if a part of all different ecosystem types are mapped as conservation areas. Have landscape scale ecological assessments, and a protected ecosystem 'gap' type analysis been completed? (see 7.1 also)</i>		
6.6 & 10.7	Prohibited and chlorinated chemicals are not used, and clear plans and trails exist for phasing out any other <b>chemical use</b> as soon as possible in favour of ecological pest management.	<i>Ask forest manager for list of chemicals used, their toxicity, and plans for phase out. Check with workers and local people on chemical use.</i>		
6.8	<b>Biological control</b> use is carefully controlled and no Genetically Modified Organisms are used ( <b>GMOs</b> ).	<i>Check specifications and source of any planted or introduced species. Check no GMO field tests carried out by the forest manager.</i>		
6.9 & 10.4, 10.8	<b>Exotic species</b> used (plantations and restoration only) as a last resort only after it is proven that no indigenous species is possible and that there are no on or off site adverse ecological or social impacts.	<i>If exotic species present, request from the forest manager researched evidence to social, environmental and economic objectives that indigenous species were not suitable.</i>		
7.1	<b>Management Plan</b> shall be written, implemented and kept up to date.	<i>Request a copy of Management Plan (or Summary of) and check for a detailed description of forest resources, landscape scale ecological assessments, and maps of the required ecosystem reserves and set-asides.</i>		
Ref	Check Point from FSC P&C	Action to Verify	y/n	Comments

8.2 & 10.8	Research is <b>monitoring</b> forest product yield, growth rates, regeneration, forest ecology, and environmental and social impacts (including off-site). Any results have been incorporated into management.	<b>Request from forest manager results of monitoring indicators and any changes made to management as a result. Ask local people if there are any impacts.</b>		
Prin. 9.	Is harvesting in <b>High Conservation Value Forest or Primary forest</b> ? Are primary or well-developed secondary forests being <b>converted</b> to secondary forests or plantations. Are <b>High Conservation Values</b> being <b>maintained</b> ?	<b>Have all HCVF areas been identified by the forest manager or certifier? Check their methods for identifying HCVFs and the sources of information used. Cross-check with forest expert and any FSC guidance on methods and on categories of forest in the area. What management options for maintaining the High Conservation Values were considered? Are they maintaining the values?</b>		
	Is it <b>large-scale/industrial or community/small-scale</b> harvesting?	<b>Check type of operation.</b>		
10.	<b>For Plantations only:</b>			
10.2 & 10.3	Plantation <b>design supports biodiversity conservation</b> by using wildlife corridors, conservation zones, streamside protection zones, a mosaic of different aged stands, and a diversity of species and management units.	<b>Request landscape and land use maps and carry out field visit. Check for evidence of biodiversity conservation design features.</b>		
10.2  G2.1	The scale and layout <b>mimics the natural forest patterns</b> in the landscape. Stand size and harvest area size and pattern mimics that found in the natural landscape.  Plantations are not <b>very short rotation (less than 7 years)</b> .	<b>Compare existing or historic forest patterns with the layout and design of the plantations. Has a landscape-scale ecological assessment been carried out?</b>  <b>How long is the rotation? Over 7 years?</b>		
10.5 & Prin. 6. & 6.4	An Ecological <b>Landscape Assessment</b> has been completed. Part of the plantation area is set aside and <b>restored</b> to natural forest cover.	<b>Same as 10.2 but also request % of ecosystem types set aside and check how much native forest being restored.</b>		
10.6	<b>Soil</b> fertility and quality, and <b>water</b> quality and quantity are maintained or improved.	<b>Ask local people and check monitoring indicator results.</b>		

### C. Check Points for Chain of Custody Certificates:

Of most interest in relation to forest processing and manufacture are the establishment of accurate systems to identify and track FSC certified inputs and outputs, and how effectively these procedures are assessed and verified by FSC “Chain-of-Custody” (CoC) certifications. The FSC has a policy that for a claim to be made of FSC certification or for the use of the FSC logo on a product, the forest product must contain wood from an FSC certified forest and have a valid FSC CoC certificate. The FSC CoC cannot be used to verify chain of custody for non-FSC forest certification schemes.

The FSC allows its label to be used both on products containing 100% wood from FSC certified forests, as well as products containing blends of wood from FSC certified and uncertified sources under its “percentage based labelling” policy. The FSC “percentage based labelling” policy defines minimum percentages for FSC certified content, and specifies that companies must also put in place safeguards to prevent the use of uncertified wood from “controversial” sources.

Categories of controversial sources of wood that are not allowed to be used in FSC percentage labelled products are:

- a) wood that has been illegally harvested,
- b) wood from genetically engineered trees,
- c) wood from uncertified High Conservation Value Forests, and/or
- d) wood harvested from areas that involve significant violation of traditional, customary or civil rights, or of serious disputes with Indigenous Peoples.

Monitoring of compliance related to the exclusion of ‘controversial’ sources in FSC CoC certifications are the focus of the checklist below. The full percentage based labelling policy is available by e-mail from FSC Secretariat or national contact persons.

Chain of custody certificates are issued by FSC CoC accredited certifiers to procedures and standards set out by the FSC. The standards come under 6 principles:

- Documented control system,
- Confirmation of inputs,
- Separation and/or demarcation of certified and non-certified inputs,
- Secure product labelling,
- Identification of certified outputs, and
- Record keeping.

FSC Ref.	Chain of Custody Check Points	Action to Verify	y/n	Comments
	Only those who have <b>a valid FSC Chain-of-Custody certificate</b> can use the FSC logo in connection with a forest product.	<b>Search certifier websites and <a href="http://www.forestworld.com">www.forestworld.com</a> to verify whether the product marketer is an FSC Chain of Custody certificate holder for that product.</b>		
	<b>Monitoring % based claims and Controversial sources.</b>	<b>Request copy of the certificate holders public policy on</b>		

<p><b>% Based Policy Sect. 3</b></p>	<p><b>For Uncertified contents and controversial sources:</b> the FSC aims to exclude all unacceptable uncertified sources of wood, including those that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>illegal,</b></li> <li>- from <b>uncertified High Conservation Value Forests</b></li> <li>- from genetically engineered trees or <b>GMOs</b>, and</li> <li>- from areas with significant existing <b>disputes</b> with indigenous peoples and other social stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p><b>unacceptable sources of uncertified wood, the name of the contact person, and copies of their reports indicating how they are verifying the origin of uncertified wood and the implementation of this policy.</b></p>		
<p><b>3.4</b></p>	<p>Certifiers are required to assess the companies <b>tracing and verification system</b> to evaluate uncertified sources.</p>	<p><b>Request a copy of the Forest manager and certifier's procedures to assess an applicant's operational verification and tracing system of uncertified sources.</b></p>		
<p><b>G 3.6</b></p>	<p><b>Scope of a chain of custody certificate:</b> FSC CoC backed products only come from sources covered by FSC forest management certificates.</p>	<p><b>Check all publicity, claims, advertising and information for compliance. Request documentation from CoC holder on specific products.</b></p>		