



An overview of the certification process

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The Basic Process:



- Application
- Scoping visit (required for forests, recommended for C.o.C)
- Inspection (Assessment) – 5 yr certificate
- Annual (usually) monitoring visits



Fundamental approach



- Principles and criteria → Standard → Checklist
- Main part of the process is *an assessment against the standard*, using a checklist
- Standard may be generic WM standard, or National standards – performance based
- Evaluation of systems, procedures, practices and consultation activities



Application



- Initial enquiry.
- Application form and info pack sent to the applicant.
- Information reviewed by Woodmark staff, quote given to the client for certification.
- scoping visit arranged and scoping visit advisor appointed.



Scoping visit objectives



- Collect information about the forest/management, and the area/region in general (guidelines, legislation etc.)
- Initial evaluation to identify probable non-compliances and key issues
- Identify potential stakeholders
- Inform managers/organisation



Scoping visit - activities



- Introductory meeting
- Review of forest management policies and procedures
- Site visits – good and bad
- Identify problems and assist the client to develop solutions
- Close-out meeting
- Scoping visit report prepared



Preparing for the inspection



- Scoping visit report provides issues and timeframe for client.
- 30 day consultation period – WM actively pursues consultees for input. Comments are assembled and provided to inspection team.
- Inspection team assembled: will include professional forester; extensive auditing experience; local knowledge; specific skills – one or more from social sciences, ecology, forest products industries



Inspection



- Format similar to scoping visit, but more formal and rigid agenda:
 - Initial meeting
 - Inspection of documents and records
 - Inspection of the forest
 - Stakeholder consultations
 - Control of tracking and tracing
 - Completion of checklists/standards
 - Closing out' meeting
 - Modification of the generic standard



Reporting and outputs



- Main outputs are completed WM standard/checklist, and draft public certification report.
- Standard/checklist is the documented 'guts' of the inspection
- Report is used for reviewing and is available for public comment



After the inspection



- Cannot say at the end of an inspection whether the client has 'passed or failed'.
- Process not finished.
- Can mention conditions
- Final outcome will be issuance of certificate with or without conditions, or pre-conditions to issuing a certificate.



Peer Review



- Two or three 'forestry experts' comment on the report:
- adequacy of the evaluation report;
- adequacy of the evaluation
- proposed certification decision.

- WM only finalises its certification decision after peer review and client comments received



Finalising the report



- Report sent to the client with compliance form.
- FSC Certificate issued to the client with logo pack.
- FSC informed of new certificate holder details
 - licensee details then available on FSC website and other certification websites.
- Forest Management summary reports displayed on the Soil Association website:
www.soilassociation.org/forestry



Monitoring Visits



- Evaluate:
 - Non compliances that remain outstanding after the previous visit
 - All issues raised as 'recommendations' at the previous visit
 - Any changes to policy or management practices
 - The implications of any changes to the scope of the certificate
 - Any management issues that might be affected by a change of the FSC standard
 - Use of the FSC logo