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Forest Management Certification Requirements

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1 Certification body

- 1.1 Certification shall be carried out by impartial, independent third parties that
 - a) cannot be involved in the standard setting process as governing or decision making body
 - b) cannot be involved in forest management
 - c) shall be independent of the certified entity
- 1.2 Certification body shall fulfil the requirements defined in ISO 17021.
- 1.3 Certification body shall have the technical competence in and good understanding of
 - a) forest management and its economic, social and environmental impacts
 - b) forest certification criteria
 - c) HFC scheme
 - d) PEFC scheme
- 1.4 Certification body shall use competent auditors who meet the requirements described in Chapter 2.

2 Auditor team

- 2.1 Auditor team shall include member(s) who
 - a) is competent in forest management and holds a relevant university degree at MSc level
 - b) understands legal regulation of forest management, wild game management and nature protection in Hungary (Note: does not require relevant university degree)
 - c) has at least 5 years of experience in certification processes
 - d) successfully completed a HFC recognized training course on Forest Management Certification
- 2.2 The auditor team shall include auditors who fulfil general criteria for quality and environmental management systems auditors as defined in ISO 19 011

3 Certification process

- 3.1 Certification shall be based on the written procedures developed by the certification body.
- 3.2 Certification procedure shall comply with ISO 17021 and ISO 19 011.
- 3.3 Scope of certification shall cover
 - a) MER 1001 v1 Sustainable Forest Management Requirements
 - b) MER 1002 v1 Group Forest Certification Requirements, if relevant
 - c) PEFC ST 2001:2008 v1 Logo usage rules, if relevant.
- 3.4 Evidences of conformity with requirements shall be assessed through assessment audit and surveillance audit specified in Chapter 4.
- 3.5 Certification body shall inform HFC about
 - a) all issued certification with a list of group participants
 - b) any changes concerning validity and scope of certificates
- 3.6 Compliance of the certification body's procedures with the requirements shall be verified by accreditation in accordance with the requirements of MER 05 Registration and notification procedures.
- 3.7 Certification process shall be carried out as accredited certification.

4 Audit

- 4.1 Representative of HFC is allowed to be present during the audits without the right of influencing the audit by any means.
- 4.2 Assessment audit shall be carried out in every five years.
- 4.3 Surveillance audit shall be conducted within a maximum period of 12 months.

- 4.4 Audits shall be based on evaluating
- sample of group participants with less than 5.000 hectares of certified area
 - sample of group participants with 5.000 hectares or more certified area
 - group participants with non-conformities.
- 4.5 Sample of participants mentioned in 4.4 a) and b) shall be
- drawn randomly
 - cover at least 10% of the total certified area respectively, except in case of assessment audit of 4.4 b) when at least 30% is applied.
- 4.6 Group participants shall belong to the category identified by 4.4 c)
- if either internal monitoring, assessment audits or surveillance audits find non-conformities
 - as long as non-conformity is corrected
 - shall be excluded from 4.4 a) or b)
- 4.7 Audit evidence to determine the conformity with relevant standard shall include information provided by the applicant (group entity) in a form of written report on the review of conformity (see MER 1002 v1 3.2).
- 4.8 Audit evidence to determine the conformity with relevant standards shall include information from external parties as appropriate.
- 4.9 Methods of auditing the compliance with specific requirement is determined by the certification body with due considerations to:
- recommendations of relevant HFC documents if there are any
 - level of scrutiny demonstrated by the applicant in the review of conformity
 - degree of compliance with the specific requirements in the previous audits
- 4.10 Audits shall determine minor non-conformity with a specific requirement by the group entity or by a group participant if
- the requirement is not met for a short period of time, or non-systematically, or the reasons are beyond control of the respective organization,
 - the responsible organization was in any way prevented to make corrective actions in a timely manner
 - full conformity can be reached by corrective actions within a reasonable period of time
 - effects of non-conformity are reversible, and the impact is on an insignificant area, if relevant
- 4.11 Audits shall determine major non-conformity with a specific requirement by the group entity or by a group participant if
- the requirement is not met on purpose, and was motivated by or resulted in unfair benefits for the respective organization
 - the responsible organization had knowledge of the non-conformity, but omitted to make corrective actions in a timely manner
 - the action behind the non-conformity is clearly violating the principle of sustainability
 - effects of non-conformity are irreversible, and the impact is on a significant area, if relevant

5 Audit report

- 5.1 Results of the audit shall be evaluated in an audit report.
- 5.2 Audit report shall contain
- decision on the result of the audit according to 5.3
 - summary to be made publically available by the auditee with due considerations to confidential information
 - a list of group participants with non-conformities
 - recommendation for the group entity regarding the requirements to be included in the monitoring programme.

- 5.3 Decision of the audit can be:
- a) statement of full conformity
 - b) statement of conformity with corrective actions needed
 - c) withdrawal of certificate
- 5.4 Conformity with corrective actions needed can include:
- a) specification of corrective actions with deadline regarding minor non-conformities of the group entity or specific group participants
 - b) immediate exclusion of group participant in case of major non-conformity that has an individual nature and does not affect the conformity of the group organization as a whole
- 5.5 Certification body shall submit the draft audit report to the applicant (group entity).
- 5.6 Applicant can comment the draft audit report which shall be considered by the certification body.
- 5.7 Certification body shall submit the audit report to HFC.

6 Certificate

- 6.1 The issued certificate shall
- a) be written in English and Hungarian
 - b) bear an accreditation symbol of the relevant accreditation body
 - c) clearly indicate the scope of certification according to 3.3
 - d) indicate PEFC recognition
 - e) indicate validity
- 6.2 Validity of certificate shall not exceed 5 years.