



CONSULTATION MATERIAL

Joint consultation: Certification Statement for FSC
Regulatory Module and Minimum Audit Duration for Forest
Management Evaluations



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A. Introduction

FSC opens a consultation from **20 May to 3 July 2026** on two draft Advice Notes related to FSC certification body requirements.

FSC seeks feedback on:

- a) **ADV-STD-20-001-13_V1-0 D1-0 – Certification statement for FSC Regulatory Module**
- b) **ADV-STD-20-007-28_V1-0 D1-0 – Minimum audit duration for Forest Management¹**

These Advice Notes address gaps identified through an ongoing FSC scheme review by the German national accreditation body and reflect FSC's efforts to align certification body requirements with relevant ISO standards. Their aim is to ensure the continued relevance and validity of FSC certification body requirements while supporting a well-functioning certification system.

FSC addresses the corresponding Chain of Custody (CoC) update on minimum audit duration through the ongoing CoC revision and its dedicated public consultation, which opened on 15 May 2026.

This consultation gives stakeholders the opportunity to review the proposed requirements and provide feedback.

What are the key consultation topics?

Key topics	Why it matters	Reference to the Draft
Certification Statement for FSC Regulatory Module	FSC introduced the certification statements for all type of certification and certification scope. The Advice Note draft is developed to define the certification statement for cases where FSC Regulatory Module has been included into the certification scope.	ADV-STD-20-001_13 D1-0
Minimum Audit Duration for Forest Management Evaluations	FSC introduced the minimum audit duration for forest management evaluation. The Advice Note introduces a matrix that determines the minimum onsite or remote audit duration times for all types of forest management evaluations.	ADV-STD-20-007-28_V1-0 D1-0

¹ FSC addresses the corresponding Chain of Custody (CoC) update on minimum audit duration through the ongoing CoC revision, including a dedicated public consultation. Interested stakeholder can access the consultation in English or Spanish (see [here](#)), or French (see [here](#)). [Please note: the links will not work until the consultation goes live on 15 May 2026].

Intended target group for this consultation

The main target groups for this consultation are accredited certification bodies, certificate holders (particularly forest management) and ASI. Other stakeholders, including members, interested organizations, and individuals, are also welcome to participate in the consultation.

FSC encourage all participants to provide input to both Advice Notes drafts, however considering the diverse stakeholder groups and variation in applicability of both Advice Notes, FSC has not made it mandatory to fill all sections in the consultation. This allows the stakeholders participating in the consultation to skip any section.

B. ADV-STD-20-001-13_V1-0 D1-0 – Certification Statement for FSC Regulatory Module

Introduction

A certification scheme is required to clearly define the conformity statement, including the specific object or product to which the statement applies. In practice, this means identifying both the standard against which an organization has been evaluated and the products or processes for which conformity is confirmed.

As part of FSC's efforts to align its normative requirements with ISO/IEC 17065:2012 and ISO/IEC 17067:2013, FSC has updated its requirements in the revised version (V5-0) of FSC-STD-20-001 General requirements for certification bodies. In particular, Clause 7.7.1 of this standard specifies the certification statements applicable to each certification type, including variations in scope.

These certification statements clarify both the object of conformity assessment and the meaning of the certification for each FSC certification type.

With the introduction of the FSC Regulatory Module, FSC has expanded certification outputs to include additional claims—namely, the *Regulatory Claim* and the *Regulatory+ Claim*. These claims reflect an organization's conformity with due diligence obligations, including requirements for information collection, risk assessment, and risk mitigation.

The certification statements provided in Clause 7.7.1(d) of FSC-STD-20-001 V5-0 are not sufficiently explicit to cover situations where the FSC Regulatory Module, forms part of the certification scope.

To address this gap, the document **ADV-STD-20-001-13_V1-0 D1-0** introduces specific wording for certification statements applicable when the FSC Regulatory Module, is included. It clarifies that certification under the FSC Regulatory Module, relates to conformity with due diligence processes—namely, information collection, risk assessment, and risk mitigation—and that the organization may communicate a *Regulatory Claim* or *Regulatory+ Claim* on sales and delivery documentation for certified products as applicable.

Accordingly, **ADV-STD-20-001-13_V1-0 D1-0** introduces the following certification statements:

a) Joint Forest Management and Chain of Custody Certification with FSC Regulatory Module in the scope:

[the organization] is allowed to use the FSC trademarks to communicate responsible forest stewardship according to FSC's Principles and Criteria on the management unit(s) included in the certification scope, and to sell the listed products with FSC claims including *Regulatory+ Claim* for certified products signifying that inputs are conforming with due diligence processes to meet the requirements of FSC Regulatory Module;

b) Controlled Forest Management Certification with FSC Regulatory Module in the scope:

[the organization] is allowed to communicate the Controlled Forest Management on the management unit(s) included in the certification scope and to sell the listed products with FSC claims including *Regulatory+ Claim* for certified products signifying that inputs are conforming with due diligence processes to meet the requirements of FSC Regulatory Module;

c) Chain of Custody Certification with FSC Regulatory Module in the scope:

[the organization] is allowed to communicate its status as FSC certified with the FSC trademarks and to sell the listed products with FSC claims, and to promote listed products as supporting responsible forest

stewardship including Regulatory Claim and Regulatory+ Claim for certified products signifying that inputs are conforming with due diligence processes to meet the requirements of FSC Regulatory Module;

d) Chain of Custody Project Certification with FSC Regulatory Module in the scope:

[the organization] is allowed to communicate its status as FSC- certified with the FSC trademarks, to sell the listed projects with the FSC claim including Regulatory Claim and Regulatory+ Claim for certified products signifying that inputs are conforming with due diligence processes to meet the requirements of FSC Regulatory Module, and to promote the listed projects as supporting responsible forest stewardship.

Related document:

- ADV-STD-20-001-13_V1-0 D1-0 EN Certification Statements for FSC Regulatory Module

Questions for feedback

1. Do you agree with the certification statement for Joint Forest Management and Chain of Custody Certification with FSC Regulatory Module in the scope?

- a) Strongly agree, b) Agree, c) Neutral, d) Disagree, e) Strongly Disagree, f) No opinion / Not sure

Please explain your rationale

2. Do you agree with the certification statement for Controlled Forest Management Certification with FSC Regulatory Module in the scope?

- a) Strongly agree, b) Agree, c) Neutral, d) Disagree, e) Strongly Disagree, f) No opinion / Not sure

Please explain your rationale

3. Do you agree with certification statement for Chain of Custody Certification with FSC Regulatory Module in the scope?

- a) Strongly agree, b) Agree, c) Neutral, d) Disagree, e) Strongly Disagree, f) No opinion / Not sure

Please explain your rationale

4. Do you agree with certification statement for Chain of Custody Certification Project Certification with FSC Regulatory Module in the scope?

- a) Strongly agree, b) Agree, c) Neutral, d) Disagree, e) Strongly Disagree , f) No opinion / Not sure

Please explain your rationale

5. Do you have any other comment regarding the ADV-FSC-20-001-13_V1-0 D1-0 Certification statements for FSC Regulatory Module?

C. ADV-STD-20-007-28_V1-0 D1-0 – Minimum Audit Duration for Forest Management

Introduction

FSC-STD-20-007 V4-1, Annex 6 lists the audit aspects and factors for calculating the audit time of forest management organizations. This Advice Note introduces a matrix that determines the minimum onsite or remote audit duration times.

The minimum audit duration suggested in the FM Advice Note is based on the analysis of a wide range of published FM audit summary reports from different regions and different forest types and sizes.

The Advice Note has also been developed taking into consideration the lessons learned from the Forest Management Auditing Time Advice Note released in June 2018 and suspended in January 2020 (Advice-20-007-19). The Advice Note focuses only on the establishment of a minimum audit duration and aims to keep the Advice Note as simple as possible.

The proposed minimum audit times are below the average audit durations reported in the analyzed evaluation report summaries. This minimum should not be understood as a “default”. The actual duration of the audit still needs to be calculated by the certification body for each specific case, based on local conditions and the scope of the certificate, and justified in the evaluation reports.

Related document:

- ADV-STD-20-007-27 V1-0 EN Audit Duration for Forest Management

Questions for feedback

1. Do you agree with the proposed minimum audit duration in the FM Advice Note (ADV-STD-20-007-27 V1-0 D1-0)?

- a) Strongly agree, b) Agree, c) Neutral, d) Disagree, e) Strongly Disagree, f) No opinion / Not sure

Please explain your rationale

2. How do you rate the implementation of the minimum audit duration as proposed in the Advice Note?

- a) Very easy, b) Somewhat easy, c) Neutral, d) A bit difficult, e) Very difficult, f) No opinion / Not sure

Please explain your rationale

3. Do you have any other comment regarding the ADV-STD-20-007-27 V1-0 EN Minimum Audit duration for forest management

Thank you

Thank you for participating in this joint consultation. Should you have any questions related to this revision process, please write to us at: systemdevelopment@fsc.org

Supporting webinars

FSC will host two webinars during the consultation period to present the draft Advice Notes and respond to stakeholder questions.

Please register in advance via Zoom using the registration links below to receive the joining details:

- Morning session: 10:00-11:15 AM (CEST)
- Afternoon session: 16:00-17:15 PM (CEST)