

FSC™ Forest Management certification

Service information

What is FSC Forest Management (FM) certification?

FSC FM certification constitutes the most fundamental part of the Forest Stewardship Council™ scheme. Its main purpose is to create recognition for responsible forest management through rigorous standards, third-party auditing and eco-labelling. Amongst other aspects, FSC requires you to comply with national and international legislation, respect local user rights, maintain the forest's biodiversity and the ecological functions, secure your operation's long-term economic viability, and ensure proper planning and monitoring of forestry operations. To verify your compliance with FSC's criteria, our auditors will conduct a thorough assessment of your performance against all relevant FSC criteria.

What are the key roles and responsibilities within the FSC system?

FSC is an international organisation that owns the FSC system and develops the certification standards and requirements that certified companies need to follow. FSC certification bodies are accredited by FSC's system surveillance body Assurance Services International (ASI) and need to follow accreditation rules published by FSC International Center.

Which certification standards apply to my organisation?

The global FSC Principles and Criteria define sound forest management at the global level and the international generic indicators are used to adapt indicator requirements at the national or regional level. In many countries, national FSC forest management standards are in place. In countries without FSC approved nation forest stewardship standards, Interim National Standards are developed from the International Generic Indicators and used by certification bodies as the basis for evaluation and certification.

Additional standards, policies, and procedures cover aspects such as Non-timber Forest Products, Chain of Custody for forest operations, group forest certification, partial certification of large ownerships, Small or Low Intensity Managed Forests (SLIMF), the excision of areas from the scope of certification, pesticides use, or the interpretation on GMOs.

Which trademarks can we use?

The FSC logo and trademarks can be applied to certified products and used for promotional purposes if you are FSC certified and have signed an FSC Trademark License Agreement. Any public trademark usage shall be submitted to us for approval prior to publication.



What is the cost structure?

The total certification cost consists of the costs related to the auditing services and the FSC Annual Accreditation Fee (AAF). The auditing fee is specified in the proposal. It depends on your operation's size, geographic locations, and the complexity of factors such as forestry activities, high conservation values, stakeholder relations, etc.

The FSC AAF fee is determined based on 7 different categories reflecting forest type, management objectives, productivity and scale. A fixed rate of USD 10 is generated by each certificate and an additional per hectare fee is calculated on top of this rate.

Different per hectare rates are used for the different forest management categories. Certificates fully qualifying as SLIMF or Community Forestry are completely free of charge, i.e. their area is not included into the per ha calculation and no fixed per certificate rate shall be applied.

Categories of Forest Management	Per ha Rate (USD)
SLIMF	zero
Natural Forest - Community Forestry	zero
Natural Forest - Conservation purposes	\$ 0.0001
Natural Forest - Tropical	\$ 0.0020
Natural Forest - Boreal	\$ 0.0035
Natural Forest - Temperate	\$ 0.0045
Plantations	\$ 0.0200

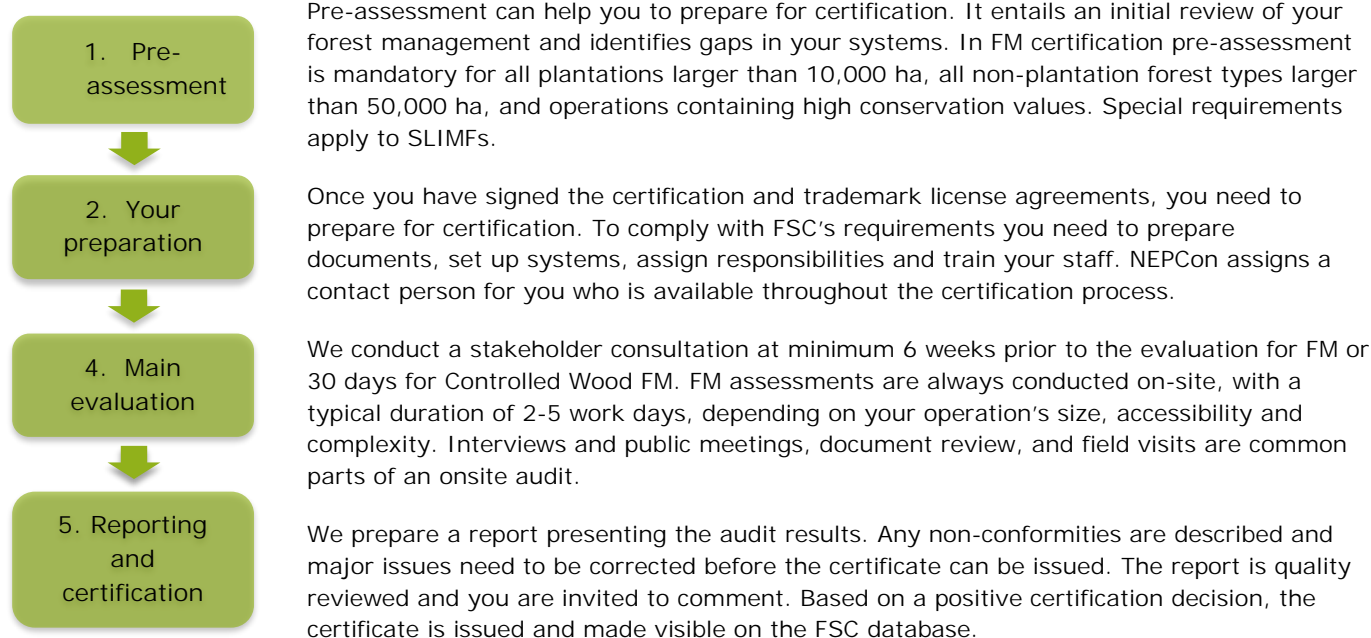
The FSC AAF per-hectare fee valid in USD when this document was published, please check fsc.org for updates. This fee comes on top of the base rate of 10 USD.

What about confidentiality?

To check correct accounting for certified volumes, our auditors will need access to confidential information, including commercial information. The confidentiality of your data is secured and our staff is bound by strict confidentiality requirements. All FSC FM certificates are however publicly listed in FSC database (<http://info.fsc.org/>) along with a summary of the audit report. This includes information about the scope of your certificate, basic company details and context, a summary of your forest management plan, the audit process, and the main audit results, including any non-conformity reports.

What does the certification process entail?

FSC certificates are issued for a five year period. An initial assessment is conducted as a basis for certification, and subsequent annual audits are required to maintain the certificate.



How do I maintain my certificate?

You need to comply with the certification requirements to remain certified. This is verified through annual audits. NEPCon helps you stay up to speed on the requirements by providing regular updates on system changes. If non-conformities are identified in your system, you must take appropriate and effective action to address these.

To secure the integrity of the FSC system, rigorous requirements apply to the follow-up on non-conformities, which are graded as major or minor. Minor issues are commonly verified during the next annual audit; if they have been insufficiently addressed, they are upgraded to major. Major non-conformities must be addressed within maximum three months, thus requiring an additional audit to verify your timely compliance. Failure to address major non-conformities, or the discovery of five or more major non-conformities during an audit, will lead to suspension of your certificate. However, even a suspended certificate can be re-instated if you ensure system compliance and this is verified through an audit.