



## **FSC CERTIFICATION PROCESS**

QMI-SAI Global is an accredited Forest Stewardship Council Certification Body. As such it provides third party independent assessment of forest management and chain of custody under the FSC program.

### **APPLICATION**

When a potential client is interested in having its operations certified to either the FSC Forest Management or the FSC Chain of Custody QMI-SAI Global through its facility questionnaire collects all the necessary information to prepare a proposal. Once the proposal is ready it is sent to the potential client along with an application. Upon receiving the signed application operation is then notified that the customer is ready to begin the certification process

### **FOREST MANAGEMENT**

#### **Readiness Evaluation (Pre-Assessment)**

Before a main evaluation is performed QMI-SAI Global will conduct a readiness evaluation.

The readiness evaluation process (pre-assessment) is designed to evaluate an operation's potential to achieve FSC certification. The readiness evaluation process is designed to identify any gaps or areas that may present obstacles to achieving certification.

The readiness evaluation takes place on site and focuses mainly on documentation reviews, review of related procedures, field inspections and determination of readiness. In addition the Lead Auditor will discuss the stakeholder consultation and notification process and strategy, discuss the audit plan and review any general logistics for the initial audit with the client. Should significant and unforeseen gaps be identified during the readiness evaluation, QMI-SAI Global may request to delay the initial audit and come back for another readiness evaluation at a later stage.

Once the readiness evaluation is done a draft reports will be prepared, sent to the client for review and a final report will then be submitted to the client taking into account the comments received from the client.

#### **Initial Audit**

The initial audit is a full assessment audit to the specific FSC standard being audited. Before any certification can be granted the client must go through the initial audit. QMI-SAI Global will conduct a FSC initial audit against the locally or regional endorsed FSC standard. If a locally or regional endorsed standard is not available the QMI-SAI Global generic standard will be used. As part of the initial audit QMI-SAI Global will prepare the audit which includes



contacting and responding to interested parties for public consultation, and preparing for the initial audit including the audit plan. Following the initial audit QMI-SAI Global will generate a report over and will have the audit report peer reviewed.

### Stakeholder Consultation

During the audit the audit team will consult with different stakeholders such as Aboriginals, local communities, NGOs, neighboring landowners, employees, contractors, and other interested parties. However prior to the initial audit public notices are distribute with the help of the organization at least 30 days prior to the initial audit. If needed the QMI-SAI Global Lead Auditor will respond to any request from stakeholders.

### On site audit

The on site audit will occur over a certain period of time with the entire audit team. It includes interviews with staff, stakeholders and Aboriginals, field visits to organization's forest locations; evaluation of forest management operations, interviews with field and management staff regarding forest management planning, review of silvicultural applications and evaluation of forest management activities. The on site audit includes also in office audit work where documentations and procedures are reviewed. The field visit usually takes place following the first day or second day of the office audit.

### Audit Report and final stage

Following the on site audit a draft report is prepared and sent to the client for review. After receiving comments on the drafts report from the client, the audit team will consider whether there are changes that should be made to the report. Once that is done the draft report is submitted for peer review. A final report will then be prepared and if needed will incorporate the comments of the peer review.

Following completion of the FSC certification final audit report and closure of any non-conformances which may have been raised during the audit, QMI-SAI Global will make a decision on the FSC certification following its internal review process. Once a positive certification decision is made a certificate is sent to the client. A public summary report is also posted on the QMI-SAI Global Web Site

### Annual surveillance audits

The FSC audit cycle is 5 years. It is a requirement that an annual audit be conducted within a 12 month period following the initial audit at a minimum. Surveillance audits are somewhat similar to the initial audit with the exception that no public consultation process is performed prior to the surveillance audit and that a smaller sample of the field visit and office audit is done.



At the end of the 5 year cycle a full re-assessment is conducted.

## **CHAIN OF CUSTODY**

### **Manual Review**

Before a main evaluation is performed QMI-SAI Global will conduct a manual review either on site or off site.

The manual review process is designed to evaluate an operation's potential to achieve FSC chain of custody certification and is designed to identify any gaps or areas that may present obstacles to achieving certification.

The manual review focuses mainly on documentation reviews, review of related procedures, and determination of readiness. In addition the Lead Auditor will discuss the audit plan and review any general logistics for the initial audit with the client. Should significant and unforeseen gaps be identified during the manual review, QMI-SAI Global may request to delay the initial audit and do another manual review at a later stage.

Once the manual review is done a draft reports is prepared, sent to the client for review and a final report will then be submitted to the client taking into account the comments received from the client.

### **Initial Audit**

The initial audit is a full assessment audit to the specific FSC Chain of Custody standard being audited. Before any certification can be granted the client must go through the initial audit. As part of the initial audit QMI-SAI Global will prepare the audit which includes preparing for the initial audit and the audit plan.

The on site audit will occur over a certain period of time. It includes interviews with staff and visits to organization's locations and facilities;. The on site audit includes also in office audit work where documentations and procedures are reviewed.

### **Audit Report and Final Stage**

Following the on site audit a draft report is prepared and sent to the client for review. After receiving comments on the drafts report from the client, the audit team will consider whether there are changes that should be made to the report. Once that is done a final report will then be prepared.



Following completion of the FSC Chain of Custody certification final audit report and closure of any non-conformances which may have been raised during the audit, QMI-SAI Global will make a decision on the FSC certification following its internal review process. Once a positive certification decision is made a certificate is sent to the client.

### **Annual Surveillance and Re-assessment Audits**

The FSC audit cycle is 5 years. An annual audit is conducted within a 12 month period following the initial audit at a minimum. At the end of the 5 year cycle a full re-assessment is conducted.