

This document explains the steps required to achieve FSC and/or PEFC Chain of Custody certification through Interface NRM. For further information, do not hesitate to contact our office.

Application and Contracting

Firstly, contact us and we'll guide you through completing an application form for Certification to the relevant Standard(s). We review this information to ensure it is sufficient for planning our next steps and to ensure that we all understand the scope of the certification required.

Next, we'll send you a Certification Proposal and Contract for you to evaluate, sign and return to us along with the FSC Trademark License Agreement (if applicable).

Auditing

Please discuss with us if a pre-assessment would be useful. The pre-assessment report will provide recommendations for improvements prior to your Main Assessment and allow you to develop a compliant system ready for audit.

At the Main Assessment, our auditor reviews your systems and processes, conducts interviews with core staff and writes a report detailing all the observations made during the visit, in line with the requirements of the relevant Standards. Any nonconformances with the Standards are highlighted and discussed, opportunities for improvement are noted and the Auditor will leave you with a recommendation. Auditors return the report to the office for review and finalization.

Certification Decision

Your assessment will be reviewed independently by one of inhouse assessors. If approved your certification will be confirmed.

During the audit, the auditor evaluates each nonconformity identified to determine whether it constitutes a minor or major nonconformity. The certification decision depends on the **nonconformities** raised during the audit.

Nonconformances need to be closed within agreed timescales. For pre-conditions, this is before the Certificate will be issued. For Major Conditions, the norm is a 3 month close out period and for Minor Conditions the norm is 12 months. Opportunities for improvement have no fixed time scales. Ultimately, not complying with the rules about correction to these conditions will mean your certificate is suspended, revoked or in some instances, not issued at all.

- **Minor condition:** A temporary lapse, or an unusual/ non-systematic nonconformity, or if the impacts of the nonconformity are limited in their temporal and organizational scale, and it does not result in a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant requirement.
- **Major/pre-condition:** A non-conformity which results in, or is likely to result in, a fundamental failure to achieve the objective of the relevant requirement within the scope of the evaluation. Such fundamental failures may be indicated by nonconformities which continue over a long period of time, or are systematic, or affect a wide range of the production, or affect the integrity of the FSC and/or PEFC system, or are not corrected or adequately addressed by the client once they have been identified.

FSC only: At MA/RA the certification cannot be issued if there are one or more major/pre- condition.

PEFC only: At MA/RA the certification cannot be issued if there are one or more minor/major/pre-conditions.

Once the report is finalised, and if no pre-conditions are present, the certificate is issued for a period of 5 years.

Annual Surveillance Visits

To maintain Certification and to ensure your Company is continually meeting the requirements of the relevant Standard, annual visits will be conducted to ascertain this for the following 4 years. The first surveillance visit (S1) will normally be carried out ca9 months after the certificate issue.

At surveillances, in the case of 5 or more Major nonconformities finalised, the company's certification shall be immediately suspended.

Interface can also conduct short-notice or unannounced visits to the Company. ASI, the organisation which accredits Interface NRM on behalf of FSC, and UKAS on behalf of PEFC, may also conduct short-notice visits at any point in the audit cycle. All Certificate Holders need to be aware of this

A **Re-Certification Audit** is required at the end of the final year to enable us to re-issue a Certificate.

Trademark use

Once Certified, you can use the scheme trademarks (FSC and/or PEFC) on your certified products (using on-product labels), and promote your products using the trademarks in promotional advertising materials and on your website.

We will be happy to advise you on the correct use of the trademarks. We also need to see it in situ so we can approve the way you're planning to use it.

Complaints procedure

If you have a complaint about our decision or service, you have a right to complain which will not prejudice your Certification status.

We have a procedure you can follow. If we can't resolve it directly with you, you can lodge a formal complaint with ASI or PEFC, as appropriate.

You can view our Appeal and Complaints Procedure on our Website.