



CERTFOR STANDARD FOR GROUP CERTIFICATION

DN-02-08, September 2015

Contents

PRINCIPLE 1.....	3
PRINCIPLE 2.....	4
2.1 Obligations and responsibilities	4
2.2 Internal management and group administration system	6
2.3 Joining the group	7
2.4 Leaving the group	8
2.5 Claims.....	9
2.6 Internal monitoring and corrective actions	10
2.7 Forest certification	11
PRINCIPLE 3.....	12

1. Introduction

CERTFOR Standard for Group Certification has been developed so that small and medium-sized forest owners can be certified. This group certification system enables joint compliance with CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations requirements and reduces costs associated to the audit process.

The forest estate, which is the overall area of holdings under forest management belonging to all the participants comprising the group, constitutes the Forest Management Unit (FMU) subject to compliance with the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations.

Audit costs are reduced by creating a group of forest owners with similar activities and implementing an internal management system designed to reduce the frequency of inspections required to verify compliance with the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations.

Notwithstanding, group certification should not be expected to constitute savings for individual forest owners lacking an internal management system or those executing different management activities. In these cases, the frequency of visits and certification report complexity could eliminate potential savings.

Aspects addressed in this standard are related to systems required to ensure a standard performance level of sustainable forest management for each participant of the group and evidence that must be presented to certification bodies in order to confirm that all requirements of this standard and the FMU sustainable forest management standard are met.

However, there is a certain degree of flexibility in the groups, which is related to the sharing of group management system responsibilities and participant responsibilities. In some cases, the group may be solely responsible for internal audits, control and organization of certification inspections, while in other cases the group may be responsible for the execution of forest operations, including physical work.

A participant belonging to a certification group shall not be entitled to individually qualify for a CERTFOR system sustainable forest management certificate nor belong to more than one certification group.

2. Objective

The objective of this document is to become the CERTFOR Standard for Group Certification - Version September 2015 that will be used to certify groups of small and medium-sized forest owners.

3. Scope

The updated version of this standard will be available starting XX of YY and will remain in force until an amendment or new version is published.

PRINCIPLE 1

The group is clearly identified and its sphere of action has been identified.

Criteria		Indicators	
1.1	The name of the group is clearly established and the group's legal status is indicated	1.1.1	The group, participants of this group and other entities have determined legal status entitling the same to sign contracts with the CertforChile Corporation.
1.2	The group has a documented policy to respect CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations Principles.	1.2.1	There is a written policy that is public domain.
		1.2.2	The participants of the group have agreed to comply with this policy in the contract with the group.
		1.2.3	The policy is actively explained to stakeholders.
1.3	The group has clearly specified its sphere of action.	1.3.1	The group has clear objectives.
		1.3.2	In the event that the group conducts activities that are not included in sustainable forest management certification, these shall not go against CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations Principles.
1.4	The group has a long-term budget that indicates how administration costs will be managed in the future (for at least 5 years).	1.4.1	The budget indicates financial flows for at least five years.

PRINCIPLE 2

2.1 Obligations and responsibilities

The obligations and responsibilities of the group and its participants are clearly indicated. The group entity and its participants shall be appropriately trained to perform their obligations and responsibilities.

Criteria		Indicators	
2.1	A group entity has been appointed and it is responsible for group management and operation.	2.1.1	There is a group entity.
		2.1.2	The group entity is authorised by the group to sign contracts with the CertforChile Corporation.
		2.1.3	The group entity is authorised to represent the group in the certification process, including communications and relations with the certification body, submittal of a certification request and contractual relations with the certification body.
		2.1.4	The group entity is responsible on behalf of the group for compliance with the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations and other applicable requirements of the CERTFOR Forest Certification System.
2.2	The group entity has enough authority to manage the group.	2.2.1	The group entity at least decides the incorporation and dismissal of participants.
2.3	The group has an organisational chart describing its organisational structure and the responsibilities of all of its participants.	2.3.1	There is an organisational chart. Note: There may be a very simple organisational structure for small groups, but large groups may have several levels of responsibility or management, with a wide range of support personnel.
2.4	The group has clearly assigned responsibilities corresponding to the group entity, to the group in general and to its participants.	2.4.1	Responsibilities are clearly assigned with regard to aspects such as forest management, long-term planning and the sale of timber, among others.
		2.4.2	Each participant of the group has a document indicating his or her obligations and responsibilities in terms of sustainable forest management and obligations that must be managed by the group entity.
2.5	The group entity has been appropriately trained to execute its obligations and responsibilities.	2.5.1	The group entity is cognisant of all properties that comprise the group FMU.
		2.5.2	The group entity is cognisant of all legal issues applicable to forest management in Chile.
		2.5.3	The group entity is able to execute internal audit functions (monitoring) required to ensure compliance with the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management for Plantations.

2.6	There is an individual contract between the group and each of its participants.	2.6.1	<p>This contract includes at least the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Each participant's adherence to the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations Principles. b. Description of each participant's and the group entity's forest management responsibilities. c. Provision of all assistance and cooperation in order to effectively respond to all group entity and certification body requests with regard to the provision of relevant information and documentation. d. Authorised free access by the group entity to the FMU with monitoring and control objectives. e. Authorised certification body access for the execution of annual audits and monitoring. f. The obligation to implement corrective measures determined by internal audits and by the certification body. g. Respect for the group entity's decision to suspend or dismiss a group participant due to any major failure in the line of forest management.
		2.6.2	Each participant that has an individual contract will receive a document issued by the group entity confirming that he or she belongs to the group and is covered by the group certification scope.
2.7	Group participants have been appropriately trained to comply with their obligations and responsibilities with regard to effective implementation of the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations and other applicable requirements of the CERTFOR Forest Certification System.	2.7.1	This training may be provided by means of a formal course or by means of talks or other forms of education provided by the group entity.
		2.7.2	The group entity keeps training records for group participants.
2.8	The group entity has established the minimum level of training required in order to perform any role in the group and keeps records in order to verify that all forest operations are executed by appropriately trained personnel.	2.8.1	Training requirements are documented.
		2.8.2	The group entity keeps records of all persons who have been trained.
		2.8.3	The group entity keeps a copy of all training material.

2.2 Internal management and group administration system

There is an internal group management system to ensure that all participants of the group comply with all of their requirements.

Criteria		Indicators	
2.9	The internal group management system is completely documented.	2.9.1	There is a manual that describes group functioning and this manual includes at least the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Requirements b. Procedures c. Corrective actions requests d. Monitoring and control e. Reports
2.10	The group entity keeps records of all relevant information corresponding to its participants.	2.10.1	There is an updated record of all group participants, which includes contact data, forest property identification and size for each participant. The CertforChile Corporation is notified within the space of two weeks after a participant joins or leaves the group.
		2.10.2	There is an updated map indicating the location and area of all holdings subject to forest management comprising the group FMU.
2.11	All procedures required for group administration are documented and include the date of the last revision.	2.11.1	There is a list of all procedures required for group administration (participants joining or leaving the group, corrective actions and reports, among others).
		2.11.2	The group entity keeps an updated copy of all procedures.
		2.11.3	The group entity has a list of all procedures required for the group participants, which includes the date of the latest review.
		2.11.4	The group entity has an updated copy of all procedures required for the group participants.
2.12	Group participants have a copy of all required documents (procedures, checklists and forms, among others).	2.12.1	Each participant has a list of required documents, including the date of the latest review.
		2.12.2	Each participant has an updated copy of all required documents.
2.13	There is a procedure to ensure that all group participants have the latest version of any document required by the group.	2.13.1	A record or distribution list of official group documentation is kept.
2.14	There is an internal group management audit system, which is applied at least once per year.	2.14.1	Frequency and size of the sample to be monitored have been determined.
		2.14.2	This audit shall cover all aspects of group functioning, as well as group participant obligations and responsibilities (requirements, procedures, corrective actions and reports, among others).
		2.14.3	In the event that corrective actions are recommended, these are implemented in the recommended timeframes.
		2.14.4	Results of the internal system audit are incorporated when updating the group layout.

2.3 Joining the group

There is a procedure for new participants to join the group to ensure that only holdings subject to forest management complying with the applicable requirements of CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations shall be admitted into the group.

Criteria		Indicators	
2.15	There is a formal procedure for joining the group.	2.15.1	The procedure is documented and includes all requirements and activities participants are required to comply with.
		2.15.2	The procedure clearly indicates how a decision to accept a new participant will be made. Note: It is important to foresee a situation in which a participant may join the group for the exclusive purpose of selling a forest reaching harvest age and then leaving the group immediately after receiving the benefits of certification.
2.16	All holdings subject to forest management are subjected to a formal audit before joining the group.	2.16.1	The audit shall cover all aspects applicable to the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations, and the checklist used shall be kept as a record.
		2.16.2	The checklist shall be accompanied by an incorporation report indicating forest management, certified products produced and estimated production that will be obtained from the upcoming harvest.
2.17	Incorporation of participants shall be subject to the application of corrective actions if required.	2.17.1	Participants shall be in a conditional category until corrective actions have been implemented, if these are required.

2.4 Leaving the group

There is an exit procedure to ensure that only holdings subject to forest management that no longer comply with the applicable requirements of CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations are suspended or excluded. Participants wishing to voluntarily leave the group may do so by using the procedure for resigning from the group.

Criteria		Indicators	
2.18	There is a procedure for suspending or dismissing group participants who do not comply with the applicable requirements of CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations.	2.18.1	A corrective action will be requested whenever a group participant does not comply with the applicable requirements of the standard.
		2.18.2	If non-compliance could lead to non-conformity with a Principle, the group participant shall be suspended from the group until the corrective actions have been completed.
		2.18.3	If non-compliance could mean that a group participant fails to comply with two or more Principles, this participant shall be dismissed from the group and shall only be readmitted after a complete inspection of all aspects related to incorporation of a new participant.
2.19	There is a resignation procedure for participants who wish to leave the group.	2.19.1	The procedure establishes conditions under which a participant shall be able to leave the group.
		2.19.2	The procedure establishes obligations and responsibilities for participants who have decided to leave the group.

2.5 Claims

There is a procedure for processing claims filed by third parties and for addressing conflicts between group participants.

Criteria		Indicators	
2.20	There is a procedure for processing and settling claims, which also applies to conflicts between group participants.	2.20.1	There is a written procedure.
		2.20.2	There is a person responsible for claim processing.
2.21	Claims will lead to corrective actions when necessary.	2.21.1	Corrective actions will be addressed according to this procedure.
2.22	Suspended or dismissed group participants may make appeals using the claim processing procedure.		

2.6 Internal monitoring and corrective actions

There is an internal monitoring system to ensure appropriate operation of the group system and the execution of forestry operations by group participants. Non-conformities detected shall lead to corrective actions.

Criteria		Indicators	
2.23	There is an internal auditing or monitoring system for all group participants, which is applied at least once per year.	2.23.1	These audits shall cover all compliance aspects of the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations each group participant is responsible for.
		2.23.2	The audit shall include a site inspection for each group participant.
		2.23.3	Audit records shall be kept for at least five years.
2.24	There is a procedure for executing corrective actions for all non-compliance with CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations detected by internal audits or by the certification body.	2.24.1	The corrective action procedure must describe the problem detected.
		2.24.2	The corrective action procedure must describe the solution and deadline for solving the problem.
		2.24.3	The corrective action procedure must identify the person responsible for correcting the problem.
		2.24.4	The group entity shall review quarterly corrective action reports and evaluate the effectiveness of his or her administration.
2.25	All records related to corrective actions must be recorded in the group participant files for at least five years.		
2.26	There is a procedure to ensure that corrective actions identified at a group participant level are implemented throughout the entire group.		

2.7 Forest certification

There is a system to ensure that all group participants comply with the applicable requirements of CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations at their respective holdings subject to forest management.

Criteria		Indicators	
2.27	Group participants are familiar with the minimum requirements and levels established in the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations for all forest operations these participants are responsible for.	2.27.1	Participants are able to describe the practical procedures required for compliance with the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations.
		2.27.2	Group participants understand what forest operations they are responsible for.
2.28	Forest management objectives and practices are similar for all group participants.	2.28.1	The group entity is familiar with the forest management objectives and practices for all group participants.
		2.28.2	In cases where group participant objectives and practices differ, the group entity has divided the group into similar subgroups and relates with each of these separately.
2.29	The group entity has annual production performance estimates for each group participant for at least one rotation.	2.29.1	It is acknowledged that individual participants of the group may not be able to annually harvest their holdings subject to forest management, but the group as a whole shall provide a steady flow of forest products.
		2.29.2	Groups comprised of over 40 participants shall be able to manage their holdings subject to forest management with a view to generating the equivalent of a regulated forest by the group FMU.

PRINCIPLE 3

There is a chain of custody control system for all timber produced by the group if the group wishes to sell this timber as certified timber.

Note: The group chain of custody system needs considerably more attention, since there is a wide variety of ways in which timber can be sold and this can be mixed at a group level and even at an individual participant level. This ranges from participants who sell standing timber directly to third parties to a variety of groups that have a commercialisation system for roundwood. In addition, there are often processing capacities associated to the group and in these cases there is often a variety of ways to document timber. The current scenario in Chile must be considered at all times, more specifically in terms of the participation of intermediaries.

Criteria		Indicators		
3.1	Responsibility for aspects related to the chain of custody is clearly indicated.	3.1.1	The group entity is responsible for ensuring that chain of custody control is maintained.	
3.2	The group entity is responsible for the safety of any packaging or material used to authenticate certified timber at the point of sale or in transit.	3.2.1	The group entity is required to ensure that any seal, certificate, packaging, pre-printed invoices and way bills are stored safely.	
3.3	There is a document that describes the group chain of custody control system.			
3.4	There is a procedure for documenting all timber belonging to group participants during pre-sale transport.			
3.5	The point at which chain of custody responsibility is transferred from the group participant to the group entity is clearly indicated.	Note: Chain of custody control is usually the responsibility of the timber owner. It is often difficult in group situations to determine at what point timber ownership is transferred from the group participant.		
3.6	Group participants use similar documentation and forms for all transactions involving certified timber.			
3.7	The group entity has a description of all forest products that can be sold by the group.			
3.8	Group participants report the sale of certified forest products to the group entity on an annual basis.			
3.9	There is a procedure to ensure that no timber will be accepted from a suspended or dismissed participant as a certified product.			

3.10 There is a procedure to ensure that all timber transported in by means of the chain of custody system complies with Chilean legislation regarding the use of vehicles on public roads.

4. Glossary of Terms

CERTFOR Certification Group Certificate: A document confirming that the certification group complies with the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations requirements, and other applicable requirements of the CERTFOR Forest Certification System.

Certification group: A group of participants represented by the group entity for the purpose of implementing the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations and its certification process.

Certified area: The forest area covered by a CERTFOR Certification Group certificate, representing the sum of all holdings subject to forest management owned by the participants.

Document confirming that the participant belongs to the certification group: A document issued by the group entity to an individual participant confirming that he or she belongs to the certification group and is covered by the scope of the certification group.

Group entity: An entity that represents the participants, with overall responsibility for ensuring the conformity of forest management in the certified area with the CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations and other applicable requirements of the CERTFOR Forest Certification System.

Group participant: A small or medium-sized forest owner covered by a CERTFOR Certification Group certificate, who has the legal right to manage a clearly defined holding subject to forest management, and the ability to implement CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations requirements at said holding.

Individual contract between a group participant and the group entity: A document confirming that a participant belongs to the certification group and commits to comply with CERTFOR Standard for Sustainable Forest Management of Plantations requirements.