



Update to stakeholders

15 December 2010

FSC certification of Veracel plantations in Brazil

A submission of stakeholder concerns regarding FSC certification of Veracel plantations in Brazil was sent to FSC in September 2010. FSC has since turned its resources to investigate these concerns through the Dispute Resolution System. FSC requested ASI-Accreditation Services International to initiate an investigation. This has included completion of a stakeholder consultation in November and a short notice On-site Witness Assessment of SGS Qualifor in December 2010.

Preliminary findings from the ASI assessment of SGS Brazil on 6 – 10 December are currently being analyzed. The results are not yet conclusive towards a decision regarding the accreditation of SGS Brazil, and do not have immediate implications for the Certificate Holder. ASI will finalize the assessment results, and will report any decision on the accreditation of SGS Brazil immediately following full review. The final ASI Assessment report will be available on the ASI website in January.

Assessment Process

Stakeholder Consultation

As a part of the normal evaluation process ASI undertakes meetings with local stakeholders. These are mainly relevant during forest management Assessments and are strongly recommended in cases of controversies, certificates in HCVF area, areas with indigenous communities, or whenever a stakeholder requests to meet with ASI representatives.

In respect to the witness assessment of SGS Qualifor at Veracel Celulose S.A, ASI undertook a comprehensive stakeholder consultation which consisted of 3 components:

1. Announcement of the assessment on the FSC electronic fora one month prior to the assessment to solicit stakeholder comments and complaints;
2. Specific messages and outreach to local stakeholders requesting input for the ASI On-site Short Notice Witness Assessment;
3. ASI organized a meeting with key-stakeholders (representatives from NGO's, State agencies and workers groups) took in Bahia, Brazil, on 26 to 28 November 2010 to ensure that all stakeholders were contacted and that ASI gathered all of the relevant information relevant prior to the on site assessment.

The results of the stakeholder consultation will be available in the final Assessment Report.



Assessment Timeframe

During all ASI assessments, objective evidence shall be evaluated against the assessment criteria to generate the assessment findings, which may indicate either, conformity, nonconformity or potential nonconformity with the assessment criteria. A witness assessment determines whether the CB adequately implemented their accredited procedures in the field and whether the assessment team agrees with the findings and conclusions of the CB (see ASI-PRO-20-101).

ASI assessment findings together with supporting assessment evidence are recorded and graded as minor/major NCs or as observations. These are presented to the CB at the assessment closing meeting to obtain the CB's understanding and acknowledgement as to their accuracy. Every attempt is made at this point to resolve any diverging opinions concerning the assessment evidence and/or findings, and unresolved issues are recorded.

In respect to the witness assessment of SGS Qualifor at Veracel Celulose S.A, ASI will deliver findings based on the timeframe outlined below:

1. ASI has completed a short notice On-site Witness Assessment of SGS Qualifor to Veracel Celulose on 6 to 10 December 2010;
2. ASI has completed a Summary of Findings Report of the assessment and the report has been sent to SGS Qualifor for comment;
3. The CB has until 17 December to comment on the preliminary Report;
4. If no comments are received from the CAB, the ASI FM Assessment Report is drafted by the ASI lead assessor within 15 working days and peer assessed within 5 days;
5. Subject to comments, peer review and formal decision making processes that may involve an independent accreditation committee the ASI FM Assessment Report can expect to be finalized within 31 days from the assessment closing meeting. The report will be made available online at www.accreditation-services.com.

Based on the findings ASI will decide whether or not the CB can maintain their accredited status subject to a timely closing out of any non-conformities.

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