

26/2025

IMPROVING AUDITOR COMPETENCE AND AUDIT QUALITY IN FSC CERTIFICATION

Accepted by MC | Policy Motion

	Proposed By	Seconded By	Seconded By
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Chamber / Subchamber	Economic / South	Social / South	Environmental / South

Policy Motion (Motion text / High-level action request):**Note from the FSC Secretariat: FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE VERSION, SEE THE ORIGINAL MOTION IN FRENCH**

To strengthen the integrity of the FSC system, FSC shall take measures to improve the **competence and qualification of auditors** involved in forest management (FM) certification. This includes:

1. **Clarify and strengthen the skills and experience requirements** in FSC accreditation standards for FM auditors in the areas in which they audit.
2. **Facilitating and designing structured FM auditor training programs**, leveraging practical experience from its network, including experience with international laws and best practices.
3. **Reinforcing oversight mechanisms through ASI ([Assurance Services International](#))** to ensure consistent enforcement of auditor qualifications and audit quality, particularly in high-risk regions.
4. **Assessing cost-effective solutions** to improve audit quality without creating excessive financial burdens for certificate holders.
5. **Examining the governance relationship between FSC and ASI**, identifying areas where FSC could play a more active role in ensuring the robustness of accreditation and oversight mechanisms.

These actions aim to **enhance the credibility of FSC audits**, ensure high technical standards, and provide a more consistent application of FSC requirements across different regions.

Background Information and Key Documents:

Audit quality is at the core of FSC's credibility. However, concerns have been raised about inconsistencies in the **competence and qualifications of FM auditors**, especially in certain regions where governance challenges exist. Some auditors, while trained in auditing techniques, may **lack sufficient forestry, environmental, or social expertise**, affecting the robustness of assessments.

At the same time, FSC's **relationship with ASI** plays a key role in ensuring audit integrity. While ASI is responsible for accreditation oversight, FSC has limited influence over its processes. Strengthening **FSC's role in defining and ensuring competency requirements, as well as exploring ways to improve FSC's engagement in ASI's oversight mechanisms**, could help address gaps and enhance audit credibility.

Additionally, past experiences suggest that **practical experience is key to improving audit quality**. FSC could **facilitate a structured training approach** for FM auditors, building on expertise within its network. While this motion does not prescribe a specific training model, it calls on FSC to explore feasible options.

Recognizing that any additional requirements may impact costs, this motion also calls for an **evaluation of cost-effective solutions** to improve audit quality without placing undue financial pressure on certificate holders.

This motion complements existing discussions on strengthening **ASI oversight mechanisms** (including Motion 31 from the last General Assembly) and aligns with ongoing efforts to enhance FSC certification credibility.

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