



Certification under special conditions

Standard operating procedure

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1 Purpose of this document

This document describes the approach for “certification under special conditions” that is currently applicable only for customers included in the piloting of this approach. It is based on conducting purely remote audits.

If not specified differently in this document and its annexes, the regular audit procedure (as per [CERT Audit SOP](#) and [CERT Certification SOP](#)) will be applied. The existing processes will also apply with regards to the follow-up process after the audit and potential certification sanctions.

The main difference to the procedures lies in the audit process, the scope of certification and the certificate issued including a disclaimer “certified under special conditions”.

2 Area of application

The scheme is open in its current pilot phase for a period of 12 months from the date of publication of this SOP. Applications under this scheme are open from the date of publication of this SOP for 6 months in order to allow all applicants to finish their audit and post audit process within the 12 Months. Findings will be presented for review to Fairtrade International to effect any changes within a year of the publication of this review.

3 Scope of certification

During a remote audit (initial, focused and/or renewal, please refer to the [CERT Audit SOP](#) for more information on audit types), only selected elements of the underlying generic Fairtrade Standards as well as the product-specific Standards will be audited, you can find the information in the checklist for “certification under special conditions” [here](#). The underlying idea is that FLOCERT will only audit Fairtrade Standard requirements which can be assessed based on documentary evidence.

Certification based on remote audits is limited to three cycles (i.e. maximum nine years).

4 Application

Applicants need to apply to the applications team using the regular application documents and procedures as described in the [CERT Application SOP](#).

In addition, applicants will need to submit the following additional requirements before an application can be processed:

- A communication vouching your existence as an organization, from a Fairtrade stakeholder (NFO, FMO, PN, FI).
- Written sourcing intention / commitment from buyer (trader)
- Written confirmation that the applicant has access to an internet connection that allows them to submit audit documents.
- Confirmation that they have received and understood this CERT Certified under Special Conditions SOP and agree to be “certified under special conditions” .

5 Audit cycle and frequency

Customer that are “certified under special conditions” will be audited as per regular certification cycle (for more information about the certification cycle please see [CERT Certification SOP](#) chapter “5.1 Three-year certification cycle for Producers & Traders”).

6 Audit process

The remote audit is set up of four elements:

1. **Preparation & scoping call**, auditor and customer agree on technical tools and dates for the remaining steps;
2. **Document collection**, customer hand in documents within agreed deadline;
3. **Desktop review** is conducted by auditor, customer is available via email during that day to answer questions in case this is necessary;
4. **Live interaction** with at least one representative of the organisation and signature of closing report (this could also be a phone call or an email clarification process in case a interaction via teleconferencing is not possible for technical reasons).

All elements are conducted within a timeframe of 4 weeks.

The post-audit process (also referred to as the corrective measure workflow) and all further procedures like certification sanctions follows the same processes as laid out in the [CERT Certification SOP](#).

7 Information and certificate

Customers certified under this scheme will receive a regular certificate indicating that they have been 'certified under special conditions'. The information will also appear on FLOCERT's website.

In case a customer had undergone onsite audits in the past and is already certified, a new certificate indicating that they have been 'certified under special conditions' will be issued, with the same 'valid until' date, following an audit conducted under this SOP.

8 Allegations

In case FLOCERT receives an allegation that a customer is in breach of the certification contract or in non-compliance with the applicable Fairtrade Standard, FLOCERT will attempt to investigate the allegation remotely. In cases where the allegation pertains to aspects that are not covered due to the reduced scope of Certification under Special Conditions, the allegation will not be taken up for investigation

9 References

- [CERT Application SOP](#)
- [CERT Audit SOP](#)
- [CERT Certification SOP](#)
- [Compliance Criteria for certification under special conditions](#)