

**FSC® Advice Note**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Maximum timeline for certification decisions to be taken in order to maintain certification</b>
<b>Document Code :</b>	FSC-ADV-20-001-02 EN
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<b>ADVICE-20-001-02</b>	<b>Maximum timeline for certification decisions to be taken in order to maintain certification</b>
Normative reference	ISO Guide 65, Clause 4.6.2.a FSC-STD-20-001 V3-0, Clause 20.6
Effective date	01 January 2015
Background	<p>ISO Guide 65 together with FSC-STD-20-001 requires the certification body to conduct annual surveillance evaluations to confirm the continued conformity of the certificate holder with applicable certification requirements in order to maintain the certificate.</p> <p>This Advice requires certification bodies to suspend and subsequently withdraw certificates when they cannot take certification decisions to maintain a certificate within a specified time period, for circumstances beyond the control of the certification body.</p>
Advice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The certification body shall suspend a certificate at latest six (6) months after the closing meeting of an annual surveillance audit, if a certification decision to maintain the certificate cannot be taken due to circumstances beyond the control of the certification body. The decision to suspend a certificate may be taken earlier, if it is evident that the circumstances will not change within the maximum six (6) months' timeframe.  NOTE: Circumstances beyond the control of the certification body may include, but are not limited to, the client or other parties preventing the use of audit findings and/ or the delayed or declined acceptance of audit findings or the audit report by the client.</li><li>2. The maximum period that a certificate shall remain suspended for suspensions relating to Clause 1 (above) is twelve (12) months. After this period, the certificate shall be withdrawn, unless all nonconformities / circumstances leading to suspension have been addressed to the satisfaction of the certification body.</li></ol>