



Friend of the Sea Standard

FOS 0001 – CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE FOS-Aqua, FOS-Wild, FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO, and O3 General requirements

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1 — INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the certification rules and the requirements for certification bodies (CBs) operating within Friend of the Sea (FOS) certification schemes. The term “shall” used throughout FOS standards and procedure documents indicates mandatory provisions.

1.1 Definitions and Abbreviations

1.1.1 Definitions

Definitions used follow those cited within the UNI EN ISO 19011 and ISO/IEC 17000 regulations.

1.1.2 Abbreviations

AB: Accreditation Body.

AG: Audit Group.

LA: Lead Auditor.

AU: Auditor.

CA: Corrective action.

CAR: Corrective action report.

CB: Certification Body.

CO: Company (owner or manager) requesting the certification.

CoC: Chain of Custody.

FOS-Aqua: Certification criteria for sustainable aquaculture.

FOS-FF: Certification criteria for sustainable fish feed.

FOS-FM: Certification criteria for sustainable fishmeal.

FOS-FO: Certification criteria for sustainable fish oil.

FOS-O3: Certification criteria for sustainable Omega3.

FOS-Wild: Certification criteria for sustainable seafood from wild fisheries.

IAF: International Accreditation Forum.

NC: Non-conformity.

SQRT: Square root.

1.2 Aim

This document outlines the general requirements for the following;

- a)** The CBs of FOS-Wild, FOS-Aqua (versions Inland, Marine, Shellfish, Fish welfare), FOS-FF, FOS-FM, FOS-FO, FOS-O3 and CoC, that operate according to the standards defined by Friend of the Sea (FOS 0001), and;
- b)** The auditing staff employed by the CBs for the assessment of the certification schemes FOS-Wild, FOS-Aqua, FOS-FF, FOS-FM, FOS-FO, FOS-O3 and CoC.

1.3 Standard references

1.3.1 FOS reference documentation

FOS Standard is defined by the present document and the following reference documentation:

- FOS-Wild: Certification criteria for sustainable seafood from wild fisheries.
- FOS-Aqua-Inland: Certification criteria for sustainable inland aquaculture.
- FOS-Aqua-Marine: Certification criteria for sustainable aquaculture in the sea.
- FOS-Aqua-Shellfish: Certification criteria for sustainably farmed bivalves.
- FOS-Aqua-Fish welfare: Certification criteria for fish welfare in aquaculture
- FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO and O3: Certification criteria for fish feed, fishmeal, fish oil, omega 3 from sustainable fisheries and criteria for traceability of FOS products.

1.3.2 Other reference documentation

- UNI EN ISO 19011:2018 Guidelines for auditing management systems.
- UNI EN ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Requirements for organisations that certify products, processes and services.
- ISO/IEC 17011:2017 Conformity assessment — general requirements for accreditation bodies assessing and accrediting conformity assessment bodies.

2 — ACCREDITATION of CBs

Friend of the Sea certification schemes are accredited according to the procedures based on the EA 1/22 (EA Procedure and Criteria for the Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes by EA Accreditation Body Member) by Accredia (www.accredia.it). Before carrying out an audit and issuing a Friend of the Sea certificate, CBs shall register with Friend of the Sea. The notification process to Friend of the Sea is a non-discriminatory process that enables all the CBs to operate within the certification schemes of Friend of the Sea.

The CBs shall achieve accreditation within twelve (12) months from notification. All CBs wishing to issue certifications within the Friend of the Sea scheme shall be accredited according to UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17065:2012. Friend of the Sea certifications can only be issued by CBs that have been accredited or is under accreditation by a national accreditation body member of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), who have signed reciprocal recognition agreements for the accreditation scheme.

If a certification body is unable to complete the national accreditation process required by Friend of the Sea for the following reasons:

- Failure of accreditation process with the national accreditation body or accreditation withdrawal;
- Decision by the certification body itself not to finish the accreditation process;

it will be no longer authorized to carry out audits against the Friend of the Sea standards.

Organizations / Companies with products certified by the certification body no longer authorized to carry out Friend of the Sea audits will be promptly informed by Friend of the Sea and will have to rely on an alternative accredited certification body. Certification body that fails the accreditation is required to inform the certified companies to inform them and invite them to contact Friend of the Sea for clarification on how to proceed. Organizations will be allowed technical time to change certification bodies and

extensions of the certification can be allowed by the scheme owner for no more than 60 days from date of expiration of audit validity.

The certification failing the accreditation can re-apply not earlier than 6 months. The certification body will not be authorized to carry out audits against Friend of the Sea accredited standards.

3 — CERTIFICATION OF FOS-Wild, FOS-Aqua and FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO, O3

3.1 Certification of FOS-Wild, FOS-Aqua, and FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FOS-FM, FOS-FO, FOS-O3

The certification process consists of three main stages (See Figure 1):

- 1) Assessment;**
- 2) Review;**
- 3) Decision.**

The assessment phase (1) consists of two phases:

- a) Preliminary phase (S1);**
- b) Audit implementation phase (S2).**

The preliminary phase (S1) aims to:

- a) Audit the documentation of the CO management system;**
- b) Assess the CO site location and characteristics and exchange information with the CO's staff in order to assess whether the audit implementation phase, S2 can be started;**
- c) Review the CO's understanding of the regulations' requirements, particularly related to the identification of key aspects, processes, objectives and functioning of the management system;**
- d) Gather the necessary information about areas of interest of the management system, processes, and location(s) of the CO, including related legal aspects and compliance to the regulation (e.g. regarding quality, environment, legal aspects related to the CO's activity, associated risks, etc.);**
- e) Review the allocation of resources for S2 and develop a plan with the CO for S2;**
- f) Plan S2, create a detailed document of the CO's management system, activities, and sites;**
- g) Check if the implementation of the management system indicates the CO is ready for the S2 audit.**

A part of the S1 may take place at CO's head offices. Once S1 is completed with positive outcome, it is possible to proceed directly to S2. During S2, the implementation and efficiency of the CO's management system are assessed. This phase shall be carried out at the CO's site(s) where the processes subjected to certification take place, and shall include an assessment of the following:

- a)** Compliance of the management system to all the legislative requirements;
- b)** Activities of monitoring, measuring, reporting and reviewing in accordance to the fundamental objectives and goals of the CO;
- c)** The CO's management system and its compliance against the legal requirements;
- d)** The CO's control of the processes;
- e)** The CO's governance;
- f)** Links between regulation requirements, policy, objectives and goals of the CO, all the applicable legal requirements, responsibilities, staff competences, activities, and procedures;
- g)** Internal audits and review by the CO's management.

Audits are carried out according to the principles outlined in the UNI EN ISO 19011 regulation. Certification bodies shall inform Friend of the Sea when the quotation has been sent and when it has been accepted by the client. Sampling procedures for audits of FOS-Aqua, FOS-Wild, FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO, O3 are given in Appendix A.

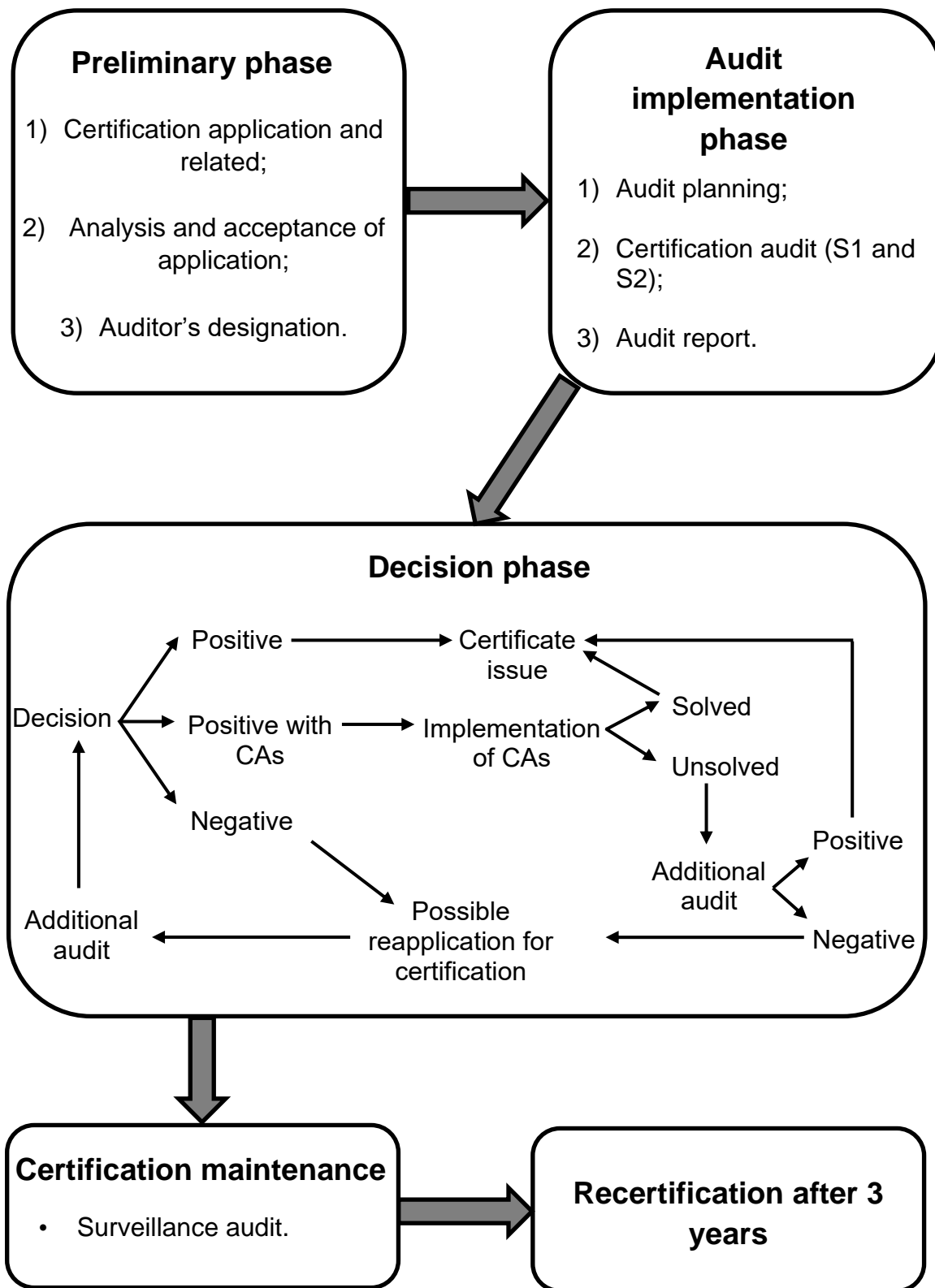


Figure 1. Steps for issuance and maintenance of certification.

3.2 Certification of FOS-CoC

All companies processing certified products shall undergo a Chain of Custody (CoC) audit. FOS-CoC applies to each step of the supply chain. In the case of companies and/or subcontractors (service providers) only trading, distributing or storing certified tamper-proof, packaged products, the audit is not necessary. On these products, FOS logo may be used according to clear reference to the certified producer.

The certification process for Chain of Custody (CoC) consists of three main stages detailed in section 3.1. An outline of the sampling procedures for FOS-COC audits is given in Appendix A.

3.3. Subcontractors and suppliers

Subcontracted producers (*i.e.* fish farms, fishing vessels and processors) working on behalf of the CO and responsible for the production of the product to be certified, shall be included in the scope of certification.

The subcontractors of the CO shall be audited following the sampling procedures for FOS-Aqua, FOS-Wild, FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO, O3 given in Appendix A. Subcontracted activities that fall within the scope of the certification shall be declared during application, to allow the CBs to schedule audits at these premises. There shall be a contract between the CO and all subcontractors responsible for the production of the product to be certified, as the CO is responsible for the compliance of all subcontracting company to FOS standards. CBs are responsible for verifying the existence of those contracts before starting the certification process.

Suppliers are independently certified producers or processors that own a valid FOS certification. Suppliers do not need to be included in the scope of certification of a processor seeking FOS CoC certification when they own a valid FOS certification.

3.4 Certification of producer group

The certification of producer or processor group is authorised when:

- 1) All producers or processors in the group belong to the same legal entity, and/or
- 2) All group members implement a common management system (e.g. evaluation of escapes, farming practices, traceability of the batch, equipment maintenance, etc).

In the latter case, there shall be written contracts in force between each producer member and the legal entity of the producer group. The group shall undertake internal audits of all members, covering all products under the certification scope to ensure compliance with the certification requirements. The internal audits shall include minimum one internal audit of the management system and of one internal audit covering 50% of all group members per year. The group is the certificate holder once certified. If individual members of a producer or processor group leave the group, the certificate is not valid for that member, and its products cannot carry the label anymore.

New producers may be added to a certificate in effect. If it corresponds to 10% or less, this addition can be done with an internal audit. It is the responsibility of the certificate holder to update the CB and FOS on any addition or change of group members. The newly added producers shall be audited during the subsequent audit. If it corresponds to more than 10%, the audit shall be carried out by a CB.

The CB does not inspect all producers or production sites, but just a sample. Hence, the CB shall assess whether the internal controls of the group are appropriate. The sampling procedures for producer members of producer groups are provided in Appendix A.

3.5 Non-conformities and corrective actions

From the date of the onsite audit, the CB shall produce the audit report within 15 working days. Non-conformities (NCs) detected during the audit shall be reported by the auditor to the CO and to FOS. The CO is responsible to address and solve all NCs detected

during the audit before the issue of the certification (with the exception of non-conformities concerning requirements classified as recommendations).

- **In the case of Major NCs:** The company requesting the certification shall be 100% compliant with essential requirements to be recommended for certification by the certification body. The certificate cannot be granted if the company has a major NC that is not closed.
- **In the case of Minor NCs:** To be recommended for certification by the certification body, the company shall:
 - a. **Elaborate a corrective action plan to come into compliance with all important requirements:** within maximum three weeks from the date of assessment of the NCs, the company shall submit a proposal to carry out the corrective actions to the satisfaction of the certification body. In the proposal, the company shall include the timeframe for the implementation of each corrective action, considering that all minor NCs must be closed before the surveillance audit. The proposal shall be analysed by the certification body regarding its consistency and feasibility. If accepted, the certificate can be granted.
 - b. **Resolve all minor NCs reported in the corrective action plan which are verified in the surveillance audit:** the company must have complied with the approved proposal. If the approved proposal has not been fully implemented, the certificate is suspended until the resolution of any remaining minor NCs.

The CO shall plan and implement corrective actions (CAs) in the appropriate timeframe (see section 3.6).

CBs are responsible for the communication of the NCs, for their implementation within the appropriate timeframe, and for their verification and approval. The auditor shall report any NCs in the audit report together with evidence of non-compliance. The CAs are considered completed for the purpose of certification only when their implementation is verified and approved by the auditor.

The CB shall report non-conformities according to the latest CAR template provided by Friend of the Sea (dated July 4th, 2019) and related evidence of CA implementation together with the audit report to FOS. Proprietary or other templates may be used only with the prior written approval by Friend of the Sea.

3.6 Decision

The CB shall make the decision of granting a certification within a maximum of 30 working days after closure of any outstanding NCs. The decision is based on the amount and type of NCs recorded, if any, during the audit, and on any other relevant information given. The requirement for COs to solve NCs before gaining certification depends on the level of the NC.

- **Essential requirements** COs shall be 100% compliant with essential requirements to be recommended for certification by the CB. Failure to comply with essential requirements is a major NC. To achieve certification, corrective actions (CA) shall be implemented within three months from the date of assessment of NCs. Specific requirements prescribed in each standard* have 6 months to come into compliance due to complexity of missing data to be retrieved. The company shall provide the CB with satisfactory evidence of correction of all Major NCs, if necessary, with additional audits.

*FOS Wild (Rev. 3.1) = Requirements 2.1 and 2.2;

FOS Wild (Rev.4) = Requirements 2.1, 2.2, 3.1.1, 5.1.1b and 5.10.2;

FOS CoC, FOS FO, FF, FM, O3 (Rev. 5) = Requirements 2.1 and 2.2;

FOS Aqua Marine (Rev. 2) = Requirement 2.1 and 2.2;

FOS Aqua Inland (Rev. 3) = Requirement 2.3;

FOS Aqua Shellfish (Rev. 3) = Requirement 2.3.

- **Important requirements** Failure to comply with important requirements is a minor NC. Proposals to carry out CAs shall be submitted to the CB within maximum three weeks from the date of assessment of the NCs. In the proposal, the company shall include the timeframe for the implementation of each corrective action. The

submission of such proposal has to be accepted by the CBs. Once accepted, the certificate can be granted. All NCs established in the approved proposal must be closed until the surveillance audit, otherwise the certificate can be suspended until the resolution of the remaining NCs (unless there is a valid reason - see section 3.7 for examples of this term).

- **Recommended Indicators:** It is not compulsory for COs to comply with recommended indicators to achieve certification. Nonetheless, all the aspects related to these requirements shall be reviewed and any NCs will be highlighted in the audit report as a “recommendation”. The company should consider the necessity of CAs and, during the next audit, inform the CB about the CAs undertaken.

CBs are requested to inform Friend of the Sea each time an audit is planned, at least one month in advance. Friend of the Sea will make this information public on its website in the Audit Planning section (<https://friendofthesea.org/audits/>), to allow stakeholders to object to the audit. Only unscheduled audits are considered as an exception.

Friend of the Sea shall be informed of audit outcomes alongside the complete audit report, **relative CARs** and a copy of any certificates.

3.7 Issue of certificates

The CBs issue the certificates, which are valid for three years and shall include the following minimum information:

- FOS logo;
- The name and address of the company;
- The name and address of the accreditation body;
- The address of Friend of the Sea;
- The name and address of the CB;
- The certified sites and/or list of certified vessels;
- The certified species (not mandatory for the FOS-CoC);

- The certification scheme (FOS-Wild and FOS-Aqua, FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO and O3) with reference to the current standard version;
- The fishery subjected to certification, fishing method and fishing area for wild catch products, or the type of aquaculture production and farm sites for farmed products;
- In case CoC certificate, describe the audited process (e.g. farming, fishing, fish feed production, fish oil production, pre – processor, end processor, import, export, distribution,...) and refer to <http://www.friendofthesea.org/certified-products.asp> for products covered by certification;
- The certificate number;
- Date of issue;
- Date of expiry;
- Signature or other authorisation defined by the responsible person.

In addition, each issued certificate shall include information about the national accreditation body (including accreditation number and name of the AB and CB).

CBs who have not yet completed the accreditation process with their national accreditation body must not include in the certificate any of the required information on the national accreditation body (e.g. logo, address, etc.)

The validity of the certificate can be extended beyond three years for a maximum period of 60 days after the certificate's expiry date to allow for recertification. This maximum extension can only occur if there is a valid reason, which shall be reported by the CB and evaluated by Friend of the Sea.

Valid reasons are here intended as:

- Lack of production (e.g. sanitary problem, closed fishing season, etc.);
- Geopolitical situations (e.g. civil wars, general strikes, etc.);
- Natural disasters (e.g. tsunami, earthquake, etc.);
- Evidence of absence of key people in the company related to the certification process.

3.8 Publication of the audit report of FOS-Wild and FOS-Aqua, FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO and FOS-O3

The CB shall produce an audit report using the checklist relative to the appropriate standard. It is the CB's responsibility to use the most updated version of the standards. The current version of all standards is available on FOS's website.

It is requested to specify in the audit report, section "Additional information", what type of audit is being conducted (initial, surveillance, additional or recertification) and, in the case of multi-site audits, specify also the method for calculation of places inspected.

The report shall be approved by the CB and sent to Friend of the Sea once the certification process is concluded. FOS Wild reports and relative CARs can be made publicly available through the Friend of the Sea website.

Certification Body shall file full audit reports at its office and make these reports available to relevant parties upon request and specify in the contract with certified companies the possibility of excluding commercially sensitive information before making audit reports publicly available.

3.9 Use of the Friend of the Sea logo

The Friend of the Sea logo can be used by the certificate owner on its own or together with other labels.

Friend of the Sea manages the rights of use of the Friend of the Sea logo. For a more detailed outline of the requirements when using the Friend of the Sea logo, refer to the document "*Friend of the Sea logo use guidelines*" – available at <https://friendofthesea.org/after-certification/>. Uses of the logo different from those stated in the document "*Friend of the Sea logo use guidelines*" shall be approved by Friend of the Sea in advance.

3.10 Maintenance and renewal of certification

3.10.1 Surveillance audit

A surveillance audit shall be carried out by the CB to ensure certified companies maintain Friend of the Sea certification standards. The first surveillance audit of FOS-Wild and FOS-Aqua, FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO and O3 shall be carried out within 12 months from the certificate issue. In the case of justified impediments (e.g. delayed fishing season), the CB may request authorization from Friend of the Sea to postpone surveillance audits for a maximum period of 90 days after the due date. Where possible and subject to fishery restrictions surveillance audits shall be carried out within 18 months from each recertification audit.

In case an Organization/Company with Friend of the Sea certified product/s decides to rely on a Certification Body different from the one which carried out the initial audit, the following must be applied:

- The new Certification Body shall request both to Friend of the Sea and the CB which holds the certificate of the company in question the following documents: audit reports and relative CAR(s), economic pending, certificate(s);
- The new CB must analyze the documents and verify that everything is in order before proceeding with the surveillance audit (which must be done within the timeframe set initially).
- If the company successfully passes the new surveillance audit, a new certificate must be issued by the new CB keeping the same dates as the initial certificate.

3.10.2 Recertification audit

Recertification audits shall be carried out at the end of the certificate's period of validity or with a maximum of 6 months in advance of the expiry date of the certificate. Exceptions are allowed but must be communicated and approved by Friend of the Sea. The CB shall inspect the complete checklist (Essential, Important and Recommended requirements) of the applicable standard(s) during all audits.

Recertification audits are mainly focused on the NCs identified during the initial audit and on the CAs. Audits also review any additions to the management system, fishing

boats or aquaculture sites previously not sampled. Audits shall follow the UNI EN ISO 19011 regulation. Sampling procedures are listed in Appendix A.

In case an Organization/Company with Friend of the Sea certified product/s decides to rely on a Certification Body different from the one which carried out the initial-surveillance audits, the following must be applied:

- The new Certification Body shall request both to Friend of the Sea and the CB which holds the certificate of the company in question the following documents: audit reports and relative CAR(s), economic pending, certificate(s);
- The new CB must analyze the documents and verify that everything is in order before proceeding with the recertification audit.

3.10.3 Unannounced audits

Unannounced audits come in addition to the initial, surveillance or recertification audits of the three-year certification cycle. Therefore, these are additional audits and shall be carried out without significant advance warning. The CB shall inform the CO and Friend of the Sea staff with a maximum of two working days before the intended visit. In the case of non-conformities and corrective actions, please refer to the section “3.5 *Non-conformities and corrective actions*”.

The CBs shall specify in the contract with certified companies the possibility of undergoing unannounced audits and that related costs shall be covered by the company subject to the audit. Annually, 3% of the companies certified by the CB in the previous year must undergo unannounced audits. This monitoring shall be carried out in a diversified manner, aiming to include at least one company certified according to each FOS standard (FOS-Wild, FOS-Aqua and FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM and O3). Audits shall follow the UNI EN ISO 19011 regulation. Sampling procedures are listed in Appendix A.

3.11 Certification suspension and cancellation

During a certification contract, the CB can suspend the CO's certification for the following reasons:

- a)** A wrong or misleading use or advertisement of the certification by the company;
- b)** The company refuses or hinders the audit activities;

- c)** The company fails to meet the financial obligations defined by the contract with the CB;
- d)** The auditor detects major NCs that the COs are not able to solve (e.g. stock status);
- e)** The company fails to carry out any CAs following NCs detected by the CB;
- f)** Unlicensed use of the Friend of the Sea logo or failure to pay the annual fee for the logo use.

The CB shall inform the CO about the time period within which the CAs shall be undertaken. In the event of a suspension of certification, Friend of the Sea shall be notified.

A suspension can be revoked after an additional audit whose outcome provides evidence all NCs have been corrected. This shall take place within 90 days, otherwise the certification is revoked. The costs of the additional audit shall be covered by the CO. In the time period between the suspension of the certification and the cancellation of the suspension, the product will not be considered compliant to the Friend of the Sea standards.

The revocation of certificate causes the immediate prohibition of the use of the certificate by the company and/or the withdrawal of all certificates of membership. The decision of revocation and the related reasons shall be communicated to the company and Friend of the Sea.

The CB shall have clear procedures for receiving, processing and investigating complaints concerning and from certified companies, as well as appeals of non-compliances of certification decisions in relation to the standards valid at the time of the audit.

4 — MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OF AUDITING STAFF FOR FOS-Aqua, FOS-Wild, FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO and O3

The qualifications of auditors of FOS-Wild/FOS-Aqua and FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO and O3 are independent of each other. Auditing staff for FOS-Wild/FOS-Aqua, FOS-CoC and FOS-FF, FM, FO and O3 shall have the following minimum knowledge and experience:

- a)** Knowledge of Friend of the Sea documentation related to the certification scheme under assessment, achieved through successful completion of a course officially recognised by Friend of the Sea. The course shall include updated current best practices for fisheries and/or aquaculture. Auditing staff shall also attend a FOS refresher training every second year;
- b)** Knowledge of the UNI EN ISO 19011 standard and proficiency in the related techniques and methodologies. Particularly, the CB shall ensure that the auditing staff complete a course on this subject of at least 8 hours;
- c)** Knowledge of the processes related to the certification scheme under assessment and sufficient knowledge of the related products/services, including legal requirements.

These skills may be concentrated in one single auditor or they can be distributed among several staff members of the AG. A high school diploma or equivalent is necessary and for the following certification criteria are required:

- FOS-Aqua: minimum one-year work experience in the Technical or Production Department of an aquaculture company;
- FOS-Wild: minimum one-year work experience in the Technical or Production Department of a fishing company or a seafood processing company;
- FOS- FF, FM, FO and O3: minimum two years of work experience in the food industry.

Alternatively, the auditing staff shall have one of the following university degrees: Biology, Marine Biology, Chemistry, Veterinary, or similar degree in food technology or food safety, and should carry out the following as a trainee auditor:

- FOS-Aqua: three audits of aquaculture sites (Friend of the Sea or in alternative Global GAP Aquaculture, BAP, GAA, ASC audit experience or other similar schemes recognized by GSSI);
- FOS-Wild: three audits of fishing activities (Friend of the Sea or in alternative MSC audit experience or other similar schemes recognized by GSSI);
- FOS- FF, FM, FO and O3: three audits of food processing activities.

In all cases, the candidate shall have successfully completed at least one audit as “auditor in training” of the standard he/she is being qualified for (FOS-Aqua, FOS-Wild, FOS- FF, FM, FO and O3) under the supervision of a qualified auditor.

These requirements also apply to the LA. In addition, the LA shall have successfully completed a minimum of one audit as “LA in training” for the standard he/she is being qualified for (FOS-Aqua, FOS-Wild, FOS- FF, FM, FO and O3) under the supervision of a qualified LA. The lead auditor is the one who manages the audit team during the audits.

When any changes in the requirements for assessing CBs are applied, the CBs have up to six months to come into compliance, as a transitional period. In addition, in developing countries and countries in transition, the CBs have the option to apply for exceptions with a valid justification (e.g. by demonstrating that the number of auditors is not sufficient).

The CB shall provide a Curriculum Vitae of all auditors selected for assessing companies against Friend of the Sea seafood standards prior to their first audit. Specific template provided by Friend of the Sea shall be used.

Once Friend of the Sea receives all the requested documents and approve them, the auditor shall undertake the audit(s) training. The CB shall communicate when the process is completed and then Friend of the Sea shall issue an official statement.

The CB shall provide a Competence Assessment of all the auditors selected for assessing companies against Friend of the Sea seafood standards.

The Competence Assessment shall include the following items:

- An assessment of knowledge and skills for each fundamental area the auditor will be expected to be working;
- An assessment of knowledge of pertinent fishery and/or aquaculture programs and the ability to access and be able to apply relevant laws and regulations;
- An assessment of the personal attributes of the auditor, to ensure they conduct themselves in a professional manner;
- A period of supervision to cover the assessment fishery and/or aquaculture principles, specific audit techniques and specific category knowledge;
- A documented sign off by the certification body of the satisfactory completion of assessment requirements.

The CB shall provide every two years, starting from the date of the first submission, an updated Competence Assessment of all the auditors assessing companies against Friend of the Sea seafood standards.

Once Friend of the Sea Technical and Scientific Department has received the auditor's CV and competence assessment, if it deems it insufficient, it will communicate to the CB the denial of authorization to carry out FOS audits by that specific auditor.

The auditor may reapply if he meets the minimum requirements established in this document.

4.1 Specific requirements for CoC

The auditors in charge of CoC shall have the knowledge and experience listed in section 4 (a, b, c, and d) and shall have completed at least five CoC audits as a trainee for FOS-CoC (including the three audits for FOS- FF, FM, FO and O3 as mentioned above) or in alternative Global GAP, ASC, MSC, BAP, GAA, ISO 22000, BRC, IFS, ISO 22005 or other GSSI and GFSI recognized schemes.

5 — STANDARDS INTRODUCTION AND REVISION

FOS shall notify any change to standards, certification and accreditation procedures to ABs, CBs, and COs. The updates are sent to all FOS accredited CBs as official communications. It is the responsibility of the CBs to inform their staff of such updates.

When the competent AB revises a new version of the current certification standards, the COs are allowed a transitional period (36 months for the wild and aqua standards and 12 months for all the other standards) from the date of publication of the standard to come into compliance. During this period both standards versions are considered valid, while the new version becomes compulsory at the end of the transitional period, as defined for that standard revision. In the case of modifications that require considerable investments by the COs, the length of the transitional period can be extended for an additional time span of six months. The additional time request shall be submitted by the CBs with a valid justification.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A - Sample's temporal and spatial distribution

Friend of the Sea does not indicate to the CBs a fee structure in order to determine the audit costs, since they are highly variable. However, each CB shall specify to its potential customers its own fee structure in a non-discriminatory manner, detailing how the costs are calculated and considering the special circumstances and requirements of developing countries and countries in transition. The written fee structure shall be made available upon request and adequate to support accurate and truthful assessments commensurate with the scale, size and complexity of the fishery, fish farm or chain of custody. The initial audits shall include onsite visits.

Exceptional cases: Covid-19

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, certification bodies are authorised to carry out remotely audits in line with what requested in the sections "Exceptional cases" listed both in the *Appendix 1 – Certification of FOS-Wild* and *Appendix 2 - Certification of FOS-Aqua*.

With regards to the FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO and O3 audits, it is required to collect as much documentary data as possible and to carry out the audit by using a technological system that allows the auditor to see live the site under audit and to be able to verify what is requested by the standard.

In addition, certification bodies must add in the "*Additional information*" section of the Friend of the Sea checklists the following sentence: "Remote audit report".

All above-mentioned can be applied to any type of audit (initial, surveillance, additional, recertification and unscheduled) until the health emergency is officially resolved.

We strongly recommend CBs to be cautious and take a precautionary approach to avoid any risk of contagion.

The following procedure allows to understand how potential operating costs are calculated:

Appendix 1 — Certification of FOS-Wild

The number of man-days necessary to carry out the audit depends on the size of the company and fishery being audited. If the fleet meets all the following similarities, only the square root (see Table 1) of the total number of vessels supplying the company to be certified shall be inspected:

- All fishing vessels use the same fishing method;
- All fishing vessels use the same catching capacity per vessel ($\pm 40\%$);
- All fishing vessels operate in the same fishing area (intended as FAO or ICES area, depending on the reference area for the assessment of the stock status of the species under consideration);
- All fishing vessels are managed uniformly by the same shipowner or under the same regulation.

To ensure that costs are kept to a minimum, the number of vessels to be inspected is determined using the calculation in Table 1. Vessels already certified for other companies (common fleet) can be included in the certification scope but shall not be considered in the calculation of vessels to be inspected. The method for the calculation of the number of man-days required is outlined in Table 2.

Table 1. The number of vessels to be inspected based on the total number of vessels under audit.

Total number of vessels	Sample size
up to 30	$x = \text{SQRT}(n \text{ vessels})$
31-300	$x = 0.8^* \text{SQRT}(n \text{ vessels})$
301-3.000	$x = 0.6^* \text{SQRT}(n \text{ vessels})$
3.000-10.000	$x = 0.4^* \text{SQRT}(n \text{ vessels})$
over 10.001	$x = 0.2^* \text{SQRT}(n \text{ vessels})$

Where:

- *x represents the minimum number of vessels, rounded up to the nearest integer, to be audited, and*

- *n* indicates the total number of fishing vessels that supply the CO under assessment.

If the fleet does not meet the above-mentioned similarity requirements, the auditor shall inspect the square root of each subgroup of homogeneous vessels, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 2. The calculation of man-days for the audit of FOS – Wild.

Audited item	<i>In situ man-days</i>
Fishing boat	0.25 (2 hours)
Chain of Custody	0.5 (4 hours)
Social Accountability	0.5 (4 hours)

A day of assessment is comprised of 8 hours, excluding travel time. Assessment times that are higher (maximum 100% higher) or lower (maximum 50% lower) than those defined by Table 2 shall be recorded and justified.

Other factors may affect assessment times:

- Possible integration with ISO 9001, ISO 14001 standards and/or GSSI recognized schemes for fishery;
- Integrated audit with MSC standard (for further info refer to “Comparison manual FOS-MSC for integrated audit 10032020” and “Audit Guidance comparison FOS_MSC_10032020”)
- Management complexity, as reported by the CB through the collection of information about the company;
- Complexity of the environmental legislation and regulations, e.g. simplifications due to a very restrictive legislation, with strict controls of single properties, complications due to a lax legislation and rare controls;
- Complexity of the organisation, e.g. simplifications due to the existence of documents and controls by the Public Administration, *i.e.* application of the principle of subsidiarity; complications of the controls due to the complex organisation of CO;
- Other factors, such as delays in fishing vessels returning to port and during transshipment operations.

Exceptional cases:

1. *Audit in remote areas*

When the onsite audit is not immediately possible because of remote geographical location or temporal constrictions of the fishing activity, a documental audit can be considered acceptable only if the vessels to be audited are equipped with full-time closed-circuit TVs (CCTVs) system on board and digital logbooks, that can provide the evidence of standard compliancy. The CO shall also engage to undergo onsite audit during the fishing season or as soon as the fishing vessels return to port.

Off-site documental audits may be carried out when the fishing vessels do not land for periods longer than 6 months or when the landing ports are located in areas that are not accessible for the auditing staff.

2. *Unavailability of vessels*

In the case of unavailability of vessels at port (e.g. due to delays in landing or other impediments), the CB shall perform remotely the complete audit of the unavailable vessels included in the sample to inspect. This implies the review of all the documents and supporting evidences requested by the standard (e.g. fishing licences, boat registrations, logbooks, procedures) for all the vessels in the samples. CBs are requested to point out that the audit of the vessels was done remotely by adding in the "Additional information" section of the Friend of the Sea checklists the following sentence: "Remote audit report for the vessels: xxx " where xxx is the list of the name of the vessels that have been audited remotely. The complete audit of vessels shall be performed during the following audit (i.e. surveillance or recertification).

Appendix 2 — Certification of FOS-Aqua

The number of working days necessary to carry out an audit is proportional to the number of aquaculture sites and the number and complexity of the processing factories to be inspected. If all aquaculture sites operate within the same management system and same farming practices, the number of sites inspected will be the square root of the total number of sites, as outlined in Table 3. The method for the calculation of working days is outlined in Table 4.

Table 3. Calculation of the number of aquaculture sites to be inspected.

Total number of sites	Sample size
up to 30	$x = \text{SQRT}(n \text{ sites})$
31-300	$x = 0.8 * \text{SQRT}(n \text{ sites})$
301-3.000	$x = 0.6 * \text{SQRT}(n \text{ sites})$

Where:

- x is the minimum number of sites, rounded up to the nearest integer, to be audited, and
- n indicates the total number of sites that supply the CO under assessment.

If the sites do not meet the above-mentioned similarity requirements, the auditor shall inspect the square root of each subgroup of homogeneous sites, as outlined in Table 3.

Table 4. Method for quantification of working days for the audit of FOS – Aqua.

Audited item	In situ working days
Aquaculture site	1 (8 hours)
Chain of Custody	0.5 (4 hours)
Social accountability	0.5 (4 hours)

A day of assessment is comprised of 8 hours, excluding travel time. Assessment times that are higher (maximum 100% higher) or lower (maximum 50% lower) than those defined by Table 4 shall be recorded and justified.

NOTE: FOS-Aqua fish welfare standards must be applied in addition to the FOS-Aqua Inland rev.3, FOS-Aqua Marine rev.2 and FOS-Aqua Inland-Marine rev.4 standards. FOS-Aqua fish welfare standards must be applied according to the species included in

the certification scope. For each fish welfare standard, what shown in Table 5 must be applied.

Table 5. Method for quantification of working days for the audit of FOS – Aqua fish welfare.

Audited item	<i>In situ</i> working days
Aquaculture site	1 (8 hours)

The fish welfare standards are divided into two main sections: Hatchery and On-growing, consequently the time indicated in Table 5 may vary according to the production system of the farm under audit.

Other factors may affect assessment times:

- a) Possible integration with ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and BAP, GAA, ASC or other similar standards recognized by GSSI);
- b) Integrated audit with Global GAP Aquaculture standard (for further info refer to “Comparison manual FOS-GLOBAL G.A.P. for integrated audit 15082019” and “Audit Guidance comparison FOS_Global G.A.P._15082019”)
- b) Management complexity, as reported by the CB through the collection of information about the company;
- c) Complexity of the environmental legislation and regulations, e.g. simplifications due to a very restrictive legislation, with strict controls of single properties; complications due to lax legislation and rare controls;
- d) Complexity of the organisation, e.g. simplifications due to the existence of documents and controls by the Public Administration, i.e. application of the principle of subsidiarity; complications of the controls due to the complex organisation of CO;
- e) Other factors.

Exceptional cases:

In case the audit of plants is not possible due to adverse weather conditions, a documental audit may be considered acceptable if the CO is able to provide evidence of compliance to all requirements related to the production site management. The CO shall also engage to undergo onsite audit during the following surveillance audit.

Appendix 3 — Certification of FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO and O3

The number of working days necessary to carry out the audit is proportional to the number of certification items and, above all, to the number of suppliers involved in the sourcing process and to the source(s) of the product.

If all processing sites (permanent locations where organizations carry out production processes) operate under the control of a single entity (multi-site organisations), the number of sites inspected will be the square root of the total number of sites (Table 3) regarding the initial audit. The minimum audit time required for FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO, and O3 certifications is summarised in Table 5.

Table 5. Minimum audit time required for FOS-CoC, FOS-FF, FM, FO and O3 certifications.

Audited item	<i>In situ</i> working days
Product source and use of GMO, Chain of Custody per processing site	0.5 (4 hours)
Social Accountability	0.5 (4 hours)

A day of assessment is comprised of 8 hours, excluding travel time. All processing sites shall be audited during the period of validity of the certificate (three years). Assessment times that are higher (maximum 100% higher) or lower (maximum 50% lower) than those defined by Table 5 shall be recorded and justified.

Other factors may affect assessment times:

- a) Possible integration with ISO 9001 and/or ISO 14001 standards, and
- b) Management complexity, as reported by the CB through the collection of information about the company.

Appendix 4 — Certification of producers and processors groups

- The number of man-days necessary to carry out the audit depends on the size of the producer group being audited and of its members.
- If all members of a fishery group meet the homogeneity criteria defined for fishing fleets (A1), only the square root (see Table 1) of the total number of vessels supplying the company to be certified shall be inspected.
- In the case of a group of aquaculture producers, the number of producers/sites to be audited is equivalent to the square root of the current number of producers/production sites operating with the same management system.
- Procedures for auditing methods and frequency of audits shall take into consideration risk factors to decide in which cases more audits are necessary. Anyway, all COs shall undergo at least one surveillance audit during the certification cycle (3 years). CBs can use their own judgment to determine risk factors and shall document it.
- For audit timing, refer to paragraphs from A1 to A4.
- The CB shall inspect the complete checklist (Essential, Important and Recommended requirements) of the applicable standard(s) during all audits.

Surveillance Audits

The duration of the surveillance audit shall be 1/3 of the duration of the initial certification audit and shall be greater than 0.5 days. One third of the fishing vessels/farm sites/processing sites inspected during the initial certification audits shall be visited during the surveillance audits. These shall be selected amongst those that were not inspected during the previous audit(s), when possible. The surveillance audits shall include onsite visits.

Recertification Audits

Recertification audits shall have a duration of 2/3 of the initial certification audit. Two thirds of the fishing vessels/farm sites/processing sites inspected during the initial certification audits shall be inspected during the recertification audits. These shall be selected amongst those that were not inspected during the previous audit(s), when possible. The recertification audits shall include onsite visits.

Additional Audits

Additional audits (*i.e.* unscheduled audits due to the detection of major NCs) can have a shorter duration that shall be proportional to the importance of the NC or to the specific case and shall be justified by the CB. COs that have been certified before official accreditation of FOS schemes shall be verified by means of a first certification audit at recertification.

Unannounced Audits

The duration of the unannounced audit shall be 1/3 of the duration of the initial certification audit and shall be greater than 0.5 days. One third of the fishing vessels/farm sites/processing sites inspected during the initial certification audit shall be visited during the unannounced audits. These shall be selected amongst those that were not inspected during the previous audit(s), when possible. The unannounced audits shall include onsite visits.

APPENDIX B — Summary of FOS seafood standards, versions, scope and validity.

Standard	Current version	Scope	Valid from	Compulsory from
FOS Wild	Rev. 3.1 18/10/17	Wild catch fisheries	25/10/2017	15/02/2018
FOS Wild	Rev. 4 18/03/2020	Wild catch fisheries	18/03/2020	18/03/2023
FOS CoC, FOS FO, FF, FM, O3	Rev. 5 24/10/16	Chain of Custody, Fish oil, fish feed, fishmeal, omega 3	15/02/2017	15/02/2018
FOS Aqua Marine	Rev. 2 03/11/14	Marine aquaculture	03/11/2014	03/11/2015
FOS Aqua Inland	Rev. 3 18/10/16	Inland (ponds and tanks) aquaculture	18/10/2016	18/10/2017
FOS Aqua Shellfish	Rev. 3 16/06/2016	Shellfish aquaculture	16/06/2016	16/06/2017
FOS Aqua Inland-Marine	Rev. 4 xxx	Upgrade and merger of the Inland and Marine standards	xxx	xxx

FOS-Aqua – Acipenser baerii – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Acipenser gueldenstaedtii – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Acipenser naccarii – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Acipenser ruthenus – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Acipenser stellatus – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Acipenser transmontanus – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Argyrosomus regius – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Dentex dentex – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx

FOS-Aqua – Dicentrarchus labrax – Fish Welfare StandardWorld	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Diplodus puntazzo – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Huso huso – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Liza ramada – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Mugil cephalus – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Oncorhynchus mykiss – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Rachycentron canadum – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Salmo carpio – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Salmo salar –	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx

Fish Welfare Standard				
FOS-Aqua – Salmo trutta – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Salvelinus alpinus – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Salvelinus fontinalis – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Scophthalmus maximus – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Seriola dumerilii – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Seriola lalandi – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx
FOS-Aqua – Sparus aurata – Fish Welfare Standard	Rev. 1 xxx	Fish welfare in aquaculture	xxx	xxx