



# Forest Management Certification Manual

Scheme - Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF)  
NCCF\_FM\_CertificationManual\_V1.4\_April 2023



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**(Approved by – CEO, April 2023)**

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## 1. Introduction

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GIPL is the premier certification body offering Forest Management Certification. We are pleased that you are considering GIPL as your certifier. GIPL offers fast turnaround, competitive rates, attentive service and value for your money. We have a dedicated team of professionals and a network of skilled auditors ready to assist you with all your Forest certification needs.

## 2. Scope

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This document contains information about operation of forest management certification programme, including rules and procedures for operation of this programme, financial aspects and rights and duties of clients, including applicants.

## 3. General

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The first step in pursuing certification will be to complete GIPL Application. You can find our application online at <http://www.gicia.org> or obtain a copy on request from [nccffm@gicia.org](mailto:nccffm@gicia.org).

We recommend that you review the relevant Forest Management Standard that is applicable to you for which certification is sought. In pursuing the certification, key determinants of timely processing include your reviewing these documents, your preparation of required documentation [management plan, High Conservation Values Forest (HCVF) identification and assessment, and other procedures], and coordinating closely with GIPL and your assigned auditor to set an audit date.

## 4. Financial Aspects

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Our fees for forest management certification is based on the professional fees of our auditors as well as their travel costs and competitive overhead rates, which cover the necessary time our staff devote to each client. The amount of time required to complete a Forest Management audit is based on an operations location, contiguousness, size, complexity, relationship with stakeholders, controversial issues, heterogeneity of forest, forest use rights, distance between two sampled locations and other factors. To properly scope and budget forest management main assessment, it is imperative that the applicant submits an application or a Request for Proposal. This document would be reviewed by GIPL before a work order/proposal could be issued. Upon receipt of your application or Request for Proposal, we will scope and source the certification services requested by your company and shortly thereafter provide you with our proposal.

## 5. Process of Certification

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Given below are the main steps for Forest Management certification:

### **5.1 Application**

Representatives of the forest management operation fill out an application or provide a request for proposal to undergo the certification evaluation process.

### **5.2 Project Proposal**

GIPL evaluates the application and prepares an audit plan and proposal, including the costs and a timeline for the evaluation process. The work order including quotation is sent to the applicant and on its acceptance, agreement is prepared and sent to the applicant. The applicant then authorizes the work order, signs the agreement and the certification process begins.

### **5.3 Preliminary assessment**

If the client is going for the NCCF FM certification for first time then Pre-assessment audit will be conducted to find out the gaps between the Forest management operations and requirements of NCCF-FM Standard

### **5.4 Stakeholder Consultation**

GIPL will inform NCCF 45 days prior to the main evaluation audit and NCCF will release 30 days stakeholder announcement via its website.

### **5.5 On-Site Audit**

The audit team conducts an on-site audit to determine if the applicant's management system is being implemented in conformity with the Forest management standards. Forest conditions are also assessed.

### **5.6 CAR Form Draft Report**

- Corrective Action Request (CAR) form will be shared with the client within ten (10) days from the day of audit closing meeting.
- Draft report will be shared with the client within 45 days from the day of audit closing meeting.
- Client will have 30 days to review the report for any factual accuracy.

### **5.7 Final Report**

Report will be finalized within 75 days from the date of the audit closing meeting.

### **5.8 Decision**

Based on the recommendations from audit team leader and technical reviewer, the Program Manager shall decide and approve certificate issuance.

### **5.9 Grant of Certificate**

Certificate is granted if all the requirements have been fulfilled and the certification agreement has been signed.

### **5.10 Issuance of Certificate**

Certificate is issued if all the requirements are met, with validity of five (5) years subjected to four annual surveillance audits.

Same Procedure is followed for re-evaluation audit except for requirement of – Application form, Proposal (unless required by the client), Pre-assessment audit.

## 6. Certificate Operation

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Forest Management certificates are valid for five (5) years, subject to annual surveillance audits. GIPL shall confine requirements, evaluation and decision on certification to matters specifically related to the scope of the certification programme being considered.

The scope of certification may be extended or reduced during the operation of the certificate, if the observations so warrant.

GIPL reserves the right to suspend or terminate certificates. Reasons for suspension and termination include but are not limited to: unwillingness or inability to correct non-conformities; unwillingness or inability to meet financial or contractual arrangements; misusing or damaging the integrity of the GIPL or relevant governing body logos; intentional violation of requirements; or association with fraud.

## 7. Rights and Responsibilities

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GIPL Clients have a right to non-discriminatory policies and procedures. GIPL procedures do not impede or inhibit access to applicants. GIPL services are available to all applicants whose activities fall within our field of operation and are conditional neither upon the size of the client's operations, nor upon the number of certificates already issued. The criteria against which the product of a client is evaluated are outlined in the applicable Standards.

Subject to conditions of grant and operation of certificate, client will have right to make claim about it and use the logo(s) in the prescribed manner, if permitted

According to the regulations dictated by GIPL policy, GIPL contracted clients shall:

1. Not make any forward claims prior to issuance of a Forest Management certificate;
2. Always comply with the relevant provisions of the certification program; including implementing appropriate changes when they are communicated by the certification body.
3. Make all necessary arrangements for:
  - a) the conduct of the evaluation and surveillance, including provision for examining documentation and records, and access to the relevant equipment, location(s), area(s), personnel, and client's subcontractors;
  - b) investigation of complaints;
  - c) the participation of observers, if included in the audit team

4. Make claims regarding certification only to indicate that products are certified as being in conformity with specified Standards in respect of the scope for which certification has been granted, and notify GIPL immediately of any changes in scope;
5. The client does not use its product certification in such a manner as to bring the certification body into disrepute and does not make any statement regarding its product certification that GIPL may consider misleading or unauthorized;
6. Upon suspension, withdrawal, or termination of certification, the client discontinues its use of all advertising matter that contains any reference thereto and takes action and returns any certification documents as required by GIPL;
7. If the client provides copies of the certification documents to others, the documents shall be reproduced in their entirety and ensures that neither certificate or report nor any part thereof is used in a misleading manner.
8. In making reference to its product certification in communication media such as documents, brochures or advertising, the client complies with the requirements of GIPL.
9. The client complies with any requirements that may be prescribed in the certification scheme relating to the use of marks of conformity (logo), and on information related to the product;
10. The client keeps a record of all complaints made known to it relating to compliance with certification requirements and makes these records available to GIPL when requested, and
  - a) takes appropriate action with respect to such complaints and any deficiencies found in products that affect compliance with the requirements for certification;
  - b) documents the actions taken;
11. The client informs GIPL, without delay, of changes that may affect its ability to conform with the certification requirements.

**Note:** Examples of changes can include the following:

- the legal, commercial, organizational status or ownership,
- organization and management (e.g. key managerial, decision-making or technical staff),
- modifications to the product or the production method,
- contact address and production sites,
- major changes to the quality management system.

## 8. Complaints and Appeals

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GIPL has a policy to give utmost importance to the complaints and appeals. It feels complaints are good source of feedback and useful in taking corrective action for improvements of its activities. It respects the

right of persons and entities to disagree with the decisions of GIPL and to prefer an appeal for the reconsideration of its decision. With this view, it has prepared a detailed procedure on the subject. Copy of this procedure can be provided on receipt of request.

Please contact our office if you have any questions regarding the certification process or any other aspect of Forest Management Certification.

**Note:** Reference to “product” includes “process” also.