

Certification Manual

Scheme : Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) – Trees Outside Forest
NCCF_TOF_MAN_Certification_V1.6



GICIA India Pvt. Ltd.

**B-081, 8th Floor, Tower-B, ATS Bouquet, Sector-132, Gautam
Budh Nagar - 201304 (U.P.), India**

Tel: +91-120-6758612/13

Email: info@gicia.org ; Website: www.gicia.org

Approved by – CEO, July 08, 2024)

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 2

2. Scope 2

3. General 2

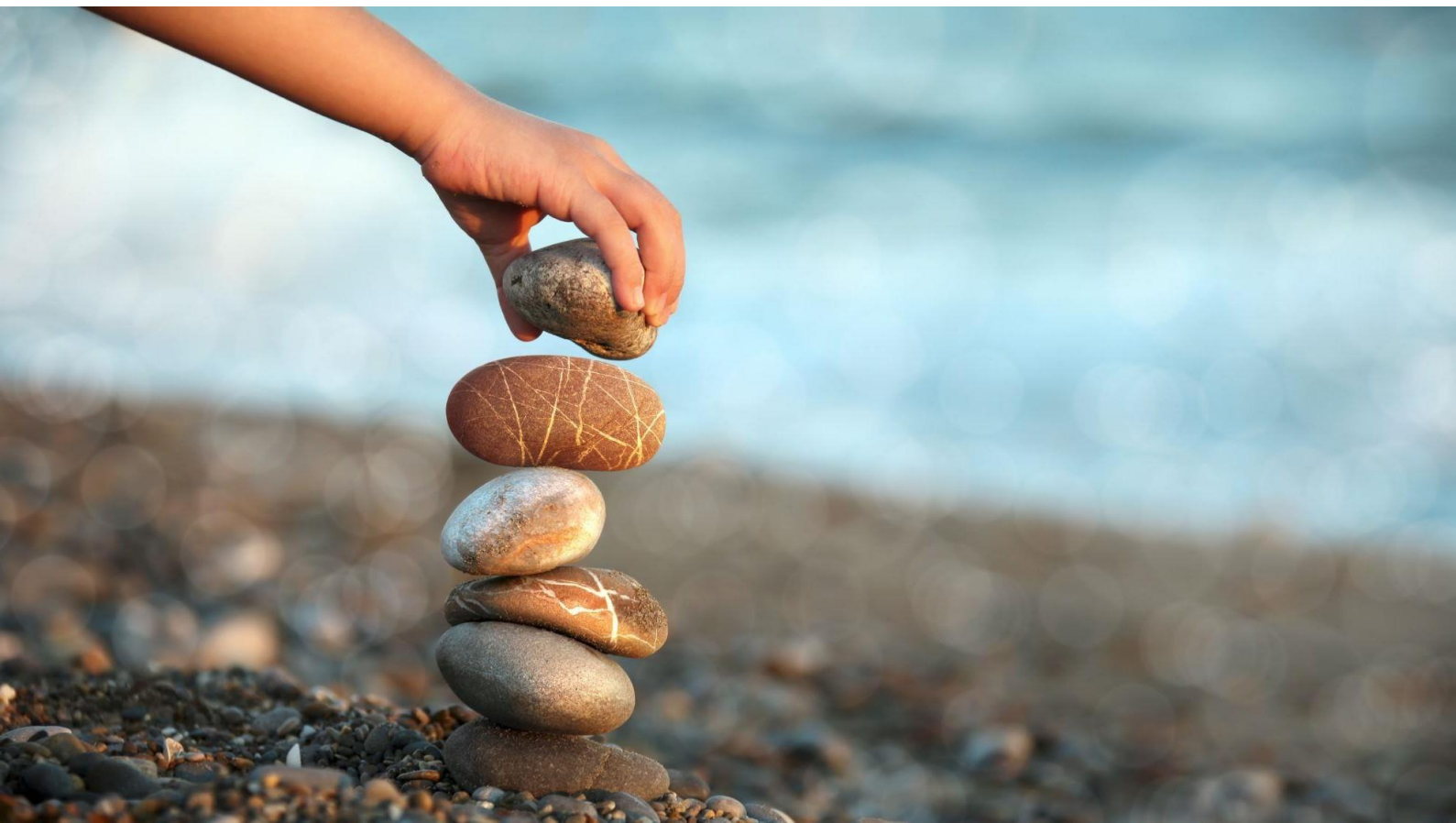
4. Financial Aspects 2

5. Process of Certification 2

6. Certificate Operation 3

7. Rights and Responsibilities 4

8. Complaints and Appeals 5



1. Introduction

GIPL is the premier certification body offering NCCF Trees Outside Forest Certification services. 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 TOF certification needs.

2. Scope

This document contains information about operation of Trees Outside Certification Program, including rules and procedures for operation of this program, financial aspects and rights and duties of clients, including applicants.

3. General

The first step in pursuing certification will be to complete the GIPL Application Form. You can find our application form online at <http://www.gicia.org> or obtain a copy on request from nrd@gicia.org

We recommend that you review the relevant Trees Outside Forest 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

Our fees for TOF 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 TOF audit is based on an operations location, contiguousness, size, complexity, relationship with stakeholders, controversial issues, heterogeneity of plantation area, forest use rights, distance between two sampled locations and other factors. To properly scope and budget Plantation 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

Given below are the main steps for Trees Outside Forest certification:

a. Application

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

b. 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 workorder, signs the agreement and the certification process begins.

c. Preliminary assessment

Pre-assessment generally provides the client with a status of readiness for the main evaluation audit. It is carried out to assess & confirm, scope and objectives of main evaluation audit. (This is not a mandatory step in TOF certification)

d. Stakeholder Consultation

GIPL team conducts stakeholder consultations to acquire outside input regarding the applicant's management performance in relation to the certification criteria.

e. On-Site Audit/Full Evaluation Audit

The audit team conducts an on-site audit to determine if the applicant's management system is being implemented in conformity with the applicable standards. Plantation condition are also assessed. A report is produced that details the results of the evaluation. Client is informed of nonconformities, if any, observed during the on-site audit and information is provided regarding additional evaluation task needed to verify that corrections have been made and corrective action taken on nonconformities.

f. Report Review

The audit report is reviewed by the applicant for factual accuracy, and then submitted to independent peer review to validate the appropriateness of the team's analytical methodology and conclusions. A public summary of the report is prepared and sent to the client for placing on its web site.

g. Certification

Following peer review, the GIPL reviews the report and other relevant information to decide whether to approve certification. If certification is not approved, reasons thereof are communicated to the applicant. If the certificate is approved then the certificate would contain the following information:

- i. GIPL and its office address
- ii. Date of certification granted and its validity (Please note: The date of certificate granted shall not precede the date on which the certification decision was completed);
- iii. The name and address (s) of the client;
- iv. Product(s);
- v. Scope of certification and its validity;
- vi. normative standards reference
- vii. signatures and credentials of the authorized personnel from GIPL and NABCB and/or NCCF.
- viii. Mark/ Logo of NCCF and/or NABCB

h. Requisite Annual Surveillance Audit

A surveillance audit is confirmed (via Work Order) and conducted; Audit Report is prepared by Auditor and reviewed by GIPL. The public summary is updated with the results of the

Surveillance audit.

Note: For renewal of the certificate, similar procedure, as applicable, is followed.

6. Certificate Operation

TOF certificates are valid for five (5) years, subject to four (4) annual surveillance audits. GIPL shall confine requirements, evaluation, and decision on certification to matters specifically related to the scope of the certification program 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

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 TOF certificate;
2. Always comply with the relevant provisions of the certification program; including implementing appropriate changes when they are communicated by the certification body.

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
3. 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;
 4. 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;

5. 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;
6. 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.
7. In making reference to its product certification in communication media such as documents, brochures or advertising, the client complies with the requirements of GIPL.
8. 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;
9. 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;
10. 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

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 Trees Outside Certification.

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

9. Suspension and Termination

GIPL reserves the right to suspend or terminate certificates. GIPL conforms with ISO/IEC 17065 for suspension and termination.

9.1 Suspension

9.1.1 Conditions for Suspension:

The following are the conditions under which the client may be suspended

- Non-compliance with certification requirements including timely conduction of annual surveillance audits.
- Failure to address non-conformities within a specified timeframe.
- Misuse of certification marks or claims.
- Any other issues that may affect the client's ability to meet certification requirements

9.1.2 Notification

- GIPL will inform the client in writing of the suspension decision before 10 days of the actual suspension coming into effect.
- GIPL will inform the client in writing of the suspension decision and enlist the reasons for the suspension and the conditions for lifting it.

9.1.3 Actions During Suspension:

- The client must cease using all promotional materials that contain any reference to certified status.
- The client would be required to refrain from making any further claims regarding certification.
- The client would be required to intimate all its clients using certified material with 10 days of the suspension notice.

9.1.4 Resolution:

- The suspension can be lifted once the client addresses the issues that led to the suspension.
- If the client fails to resolve the issues within 12 months of suspension, further actions such as termination shall be considered.

9.2 Termination

9.2.1 Conditions for Termination:

The following are the conditions under which the client may be terminated

- Continued Non-compliance with certification requirements including timely conduction of annual surveillance audits after the suspension
- Gross misuse of certification status.
- Failure to pay fees or meet contractual obligations.
- Any other significant issues that prevent the client from maintaining certification requirements.

9.2.2 Notification

- GIPL will inform the client in writing of the termination decision before 10 days of the actual termination coming into effect.
- GIPL will inform the client in writing of the termination decision and enlist the reasons or the suspension along with the effective date.

9.2.3 Actions During Termination:

- The client must cease all use of certification marks and any reference to certified status.
- The client would be required to refrain from making any further claims regarding certification.
- The client would be required to intimate all its clients about termination of the certificate within 10 days of the termination notice.

9.2.4 Reinstatement:

- The client may apply for certification again, but they must address the reasons for termination and meet all certification requirements again.