



Certification



FSC® ACC-009

- FSC® Chain of Custody certification · FSC certification of Forest Management
- Combined Chain of Custody certification according to FSC and PEFC standards
- Certification according to FSC standards for 'Controlled Wood'

Quality Maintains Market Protection

GFA Consulting Group was the first German company to be accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council® in 2000. Since then, we have been serving our customers by providing



- FSC Chain of Custody certification
- FSC Forest Management certification
- Combined Chain of Custody certification according to FSC and PEFC standards (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes)
- Certification according to FSC standards for 'Controlled Wood'
- Studies regarding certification and responsible forest management
- Development and testing of forest management standards
- Development of tracing systems regarding the origins of wood products
- Development and implementation of Legality Assurance Systems
- Appraisal of forest and concession management plans
- Consultation regarding national forest certification initiatives



“Our global network of clients, partners, auditors and consultants enables GFA Certification to accomplish certification services in a timely and cost-efficient manner worldwide.”

Dr. Hans-Christoph Schaefer-Kehnert, Managing Director, GFA Consulting Group



Certification Means Credibility

Responsible forest management means active climate and environmental protection. A wide majority of consumers increasingly demand related products so that their market share is steadily on the rise.

Companies, and forest owners, which meet internationally recognized standards, indicate an environmental responsibility and commitment towards a holistic management concept regarding wood as a raw material. Hence, certification has become an important marketing tool of this sector, and its supply chains, worldwide.

Certification means credibility; and **GFA Certification** offers this credibility. We are one of the leading certification bodies regarding forest management, as well as wood and paper related chains of custody, according to the internationally recognized FSC standards. Moreover, we offer companies certification services in line with FSC standards for 'Controlled Wood', as well as the development and implementation of tailored Legality Assurance Systems.

GFA Certification, in cooperation with qualified partners, also offers combined Chain of Custody certification according to FSC and PEFC standards. This helps our customers reduce costs, time and red tape to a minimum.

Carbon neutral printing has become another innovative field in which GFA is cooperating with one of the leading service providers in the market. In addition, **GFA Certification** organizes events related to certification and offers studies regarding forest management, certification standards and concession management.

GFA Certification is a technical department of GFA Consulting Group, which has been providing effective solutions to the challenges of the global development consulting market since 1982. We provide services in close cooperation with our subsidiaries abroad, and we are supported by selected local and international partners. **GFA Certification** benefits from this global network of clients, partners, auditors and consultants as it enables us to accomplish certification services in a timely and cost-efficient manner worldwide.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hans-Christoph Schaefer-Kehnert'.

Dr. Hans-Christoph Schaefer-Kehnert
Managing Director, GFA Consulting Group

Chain of Custody Certification (CoC)

Environmental awareness is on the rise. Not only individual consumers, but also major private corporations, retailers and public institutions, have committed themselves to certified wood and paper products in their procurement policies.

The most important aspect of Chain of Custody (CoC) certification is the traceability of certified products to the forest they originate from.

Every link in the chain of custody that would like to retail relevant products with a 'FSC certified' status requires a CoC certification. This applies to all CoC processes – from timber sales at a forest, via distribution, processing and trading links, to the final product at the consumers' end.

Companies certified by **GFA Certification** may attach the FSC label to their merchandise and pass these products on to their customers with a 'FSC certified' status. The certificate enhances corporate communication and branding as it creates a unique selling proposition and marketing advantage, especially when positioning in competitive markets.

The duration of the CoC certification process, in accordance with FSC standards, depends on the size and complexity of the respective company and its products to be certified. Given appropriate provisions by the company, GFA generally facilitates this process within 4–8 weeks.

FSC certification is not a static system using fixed prices. Costs are determined by the duration of the audit, which depends on the certification's scope and the complexity of the company's operating procedures. Within a few days

GFA Certification will submit a non-binding quotation for services, free of charge, based on the online form provided at www.gfa-certification.de

GFA Certification also offers combined chain of custody certifications according to FSC and PEFC standards in cooperation with experienced partners.

Partners of GFA Certification

American Green Business, LLC

implements FSC standard CoC certifications in the United States of America, as commissioned by GFA
www.americangreen.net



Intertek China

implements FSC standard CoC certifications in China, as commissioned by GFA
www.intertek.com.cn



Alko-Cert

is a cooperation partner in the context of combined certification according to PEFC
www.alko-cert.de



ClimatePartner

is a cooperation partner for carbon neutral printing
www.climatepartner.com

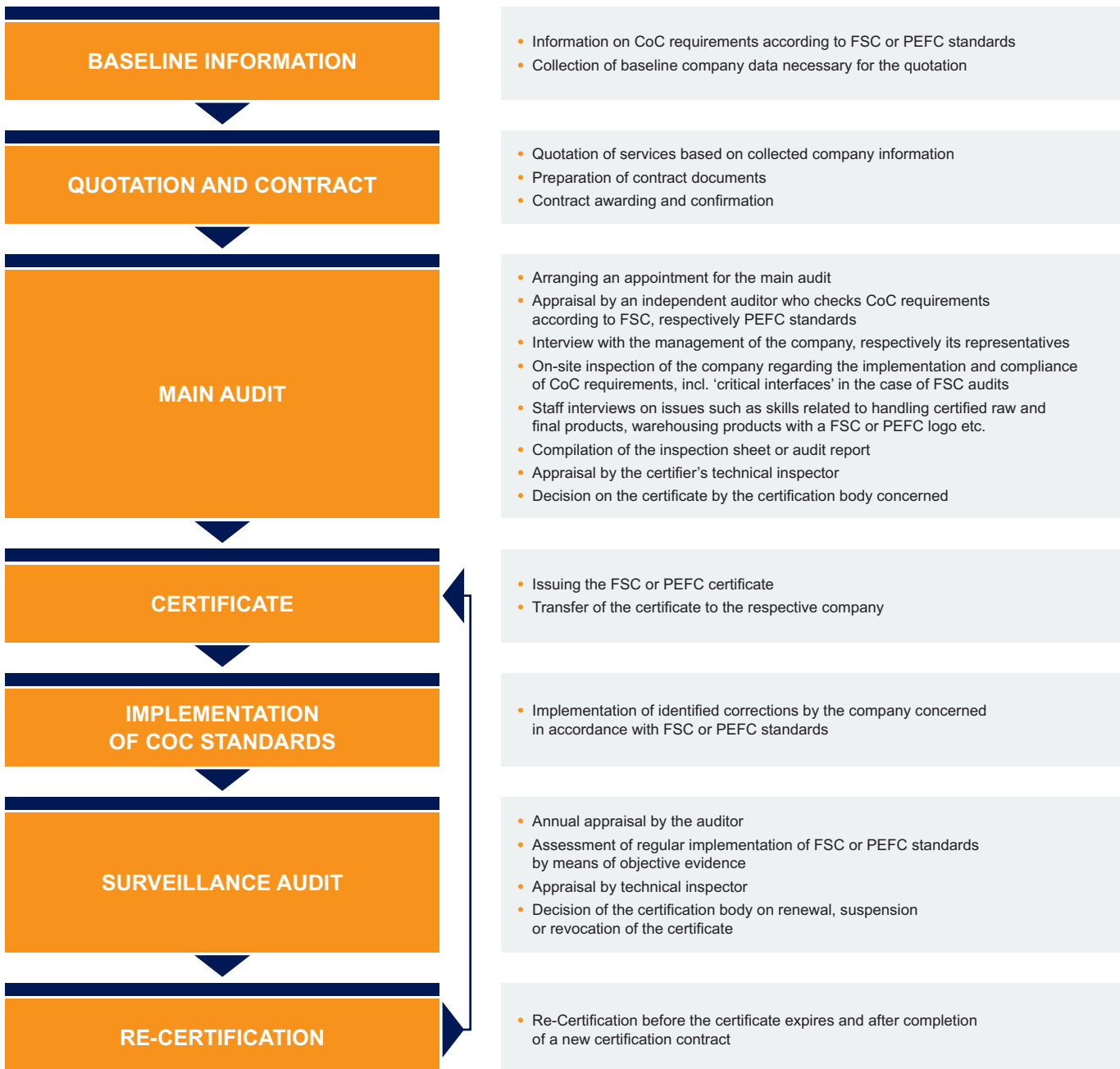


"To the Otto Group, FSC is a crucial contribution to environmental protection. Cooperation with a reliable partner is a key requirement in order to cope with related red tape successfully. GFA's pragmatic, straightforward and swift mode of operation provided for smooth operational procedures. We truly benefit from the long-standing experience and competence of GFA Certification."

Olaf Dechow, Environmental Manager, Otto Group, Germany



Flowchart of Chain of Custody Certification



Forest Management Certification

FSC certification of forest and plantation management signifies the responsible use and added value of available forest resources. The copyrighted FSC trademarks express a commitment to forests as an ecosystem and grant credibility to a company's communication with customers and the public.

The most crucial aspects of a certificate are the internationally recognized standards developed by FSC. These comprise ten principles, valid worldwide, which combine environmental and social responsibility with economically sustainable forest management.

In the process of the Forest Management certification, **GFA Certification** conducts an independent appraisal of a forest enterprise based on a national checklist of indicators. This is to evaluate the conformity of the respective management system with FSC principles and criteria, and the latter's effective implementation within the enterprise.

Enterprises certified by **GFA Certification** may sell their products as 'FSC certified' and attach the FSC label accordingly. The label safeguards companies' competitive edge when they position their products in critical markets, and it improves their positive image through marketing the quality of their forest management.

The duration of a forest management certification process depends on the size, forest area distribution and complexity of the respective enterprise and its products to be certified. Given appropriate provisions by the enterprise, GFA generally facilitates this process within 4–6 months.



FSC certification is not a static system using fixed prices. Certification costs are determined by the duration of the audit, which depends on the certification's scope and the complexity of the company's operating procedures. Within a few days **GFA Certification** will submit a non-binding quotation for services, free of charge, based on the online form provided at www.gfa-certification.de

In order to meet the rising demand for proof of origin, **GFA Certification** has also developed and introduced a system for forest management certification according to the FSC standard for 'Controlled Wood' (FSC CW). At the request of forest enterprises, meeting the FSC CW standard can be verified either separately, or as part of a regular FSC pre-audit. Hence, a phased certification approach can be applied.

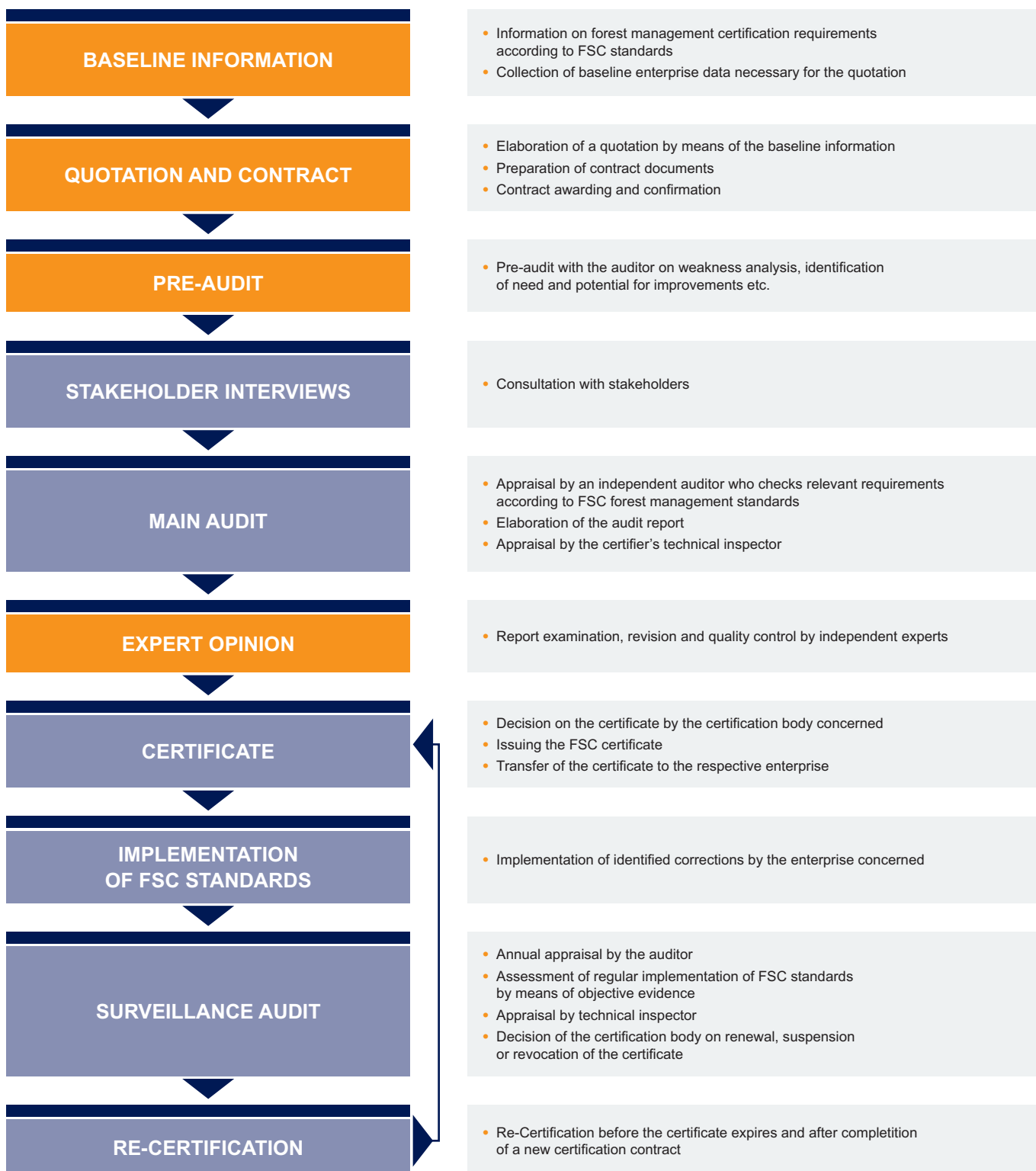
GFA Certification builds on a worldwide network of corporate partners, associations, research institutions, auditors and forest experts so that customers can rely on short-term and cost-efficient certifications in more than 30 countries – e.g. in the United States of America, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, China, Vietnam, Russia, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Chile.

“The cooperation of JSC Ilim Group with GFA Certification began in 2003. Much assistance was provided by GFA during the initial phase of the certification process which was most difficult for us. GFA held a series of awareness-raising workshops which defined how people understand the problem and their own role in the certification of logging companies and processing enterprises. This task was performed brilliantly. We are confident that, assisted by GFA, we will cope with all upcoming challenges.”

Gennady Ivanov, Lead Specialist, Technology and Organization of Logging Operations, Ilim Group, Russia



Flowchart of Forest Management Certification



Steps marked in the flowchart indicate the elements of the evaluation process necessary to achieve FSC Controlled Wood certification. At the request of forest enterprises, meeting the FSC CW standard can be verified either separately, or as part of a regular FSC pre-audit.



GERMANY & EUROPE

GFA Consulting Group GmbH

Eulenkrogstraße 82

22359 Hamburg

Germany

Phone: +49 40 60306-141

Fax: +49 40 60306-149

E-mail: certification@gfa-group.de

Internet: www.gfa-certification.de

Russia

E-mail: gfa.russia@gfa-group.de

Costa Rica & Chile

E-mail: gfa.centroamerica@gfa-group.de

China

E-mail: gfa.china@gfa-group.de

Vietnam

E-mail: gfa.vietnam@gfa-group.de