Home of Fair Trade Enterprises

Requirements for WFTO certification processes and certification bodies

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Home of Fair Trade Enterprises

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1 General

These requirements set out the fundamental organizational, technical, and procedural prerequisites that a certification body and the appointed auditors must fulfil in order to operate within the framework of the WFTO certification system and the WFTO Fair Trade Standard. The aim is to ensure that certifications are carried out independently, transparently, consistently, and on a technically sound basis. The requirements serve to protect the integrity of the certification system as well as the trust of applicants, certificate holders, market participants, and other interested parties.

2 Scope

These requirements apply to all conformity assessment bodies that conduct certification procedures and conformity decisions for processes, management systems, or other defined certification objects within the WFTO certification system. They apply regardless of whether the certification body operates as an independent legal entity or as an organizationally separate unit within a larger organization. Additional program-specific or sector-specific requirements remain unaffected and must also be complied with.

2.1 Certification process

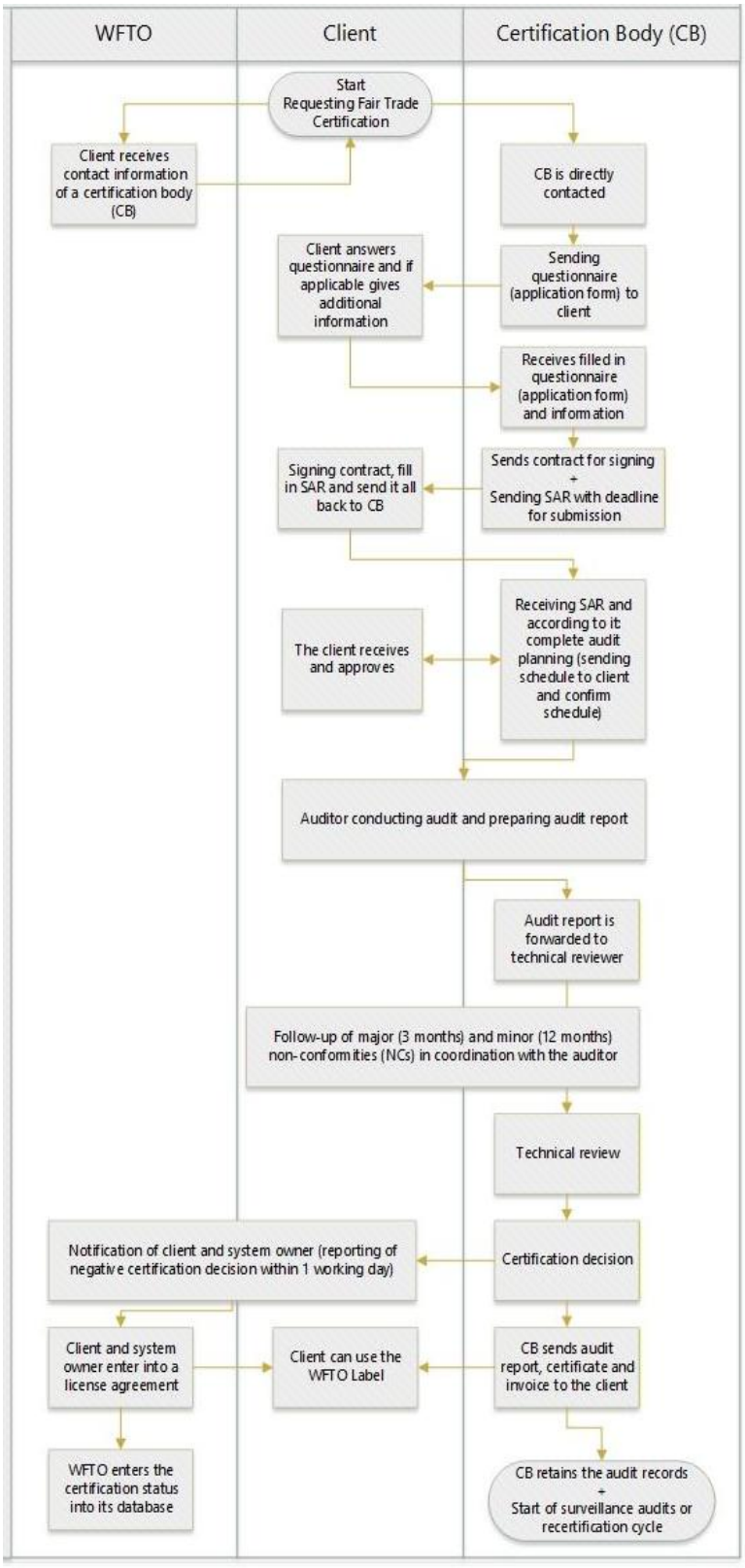

Figure 1 Certification process for WFTO Fair Trade Standard

3 Requirements for certification bodies

Applicants seeking certification are audited by independent certification bodies. Certification bodies are approved by WFTO before they begin operations and are contractually integrated into the WFTO system.

In addition, all certification bodies should, as a best practice, fully comply with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065, although an accreditation for ISO/IEC 17065 is not required at this state.

Requirements for ISO/IEC 17065 are:

- The certification body has legal responsibility for all certification activities as it shall be either a legal entity or a defined part thereof. A governmental certification body is considered to be a legal entity based on its governmental status.
- The certification body shall perform its conformity assessment activities objectively, consistently, and free from undue influence, such as commercial, financial or other pressures. The certification body is responsible for not allowing its impartiality to be compromised.
- The certification body must be able to demonstrate that it has sufficient personnel, technical, organizational, and financial resources to carry out the certification assessment activities.
- A risk management framework for audit planning should be in place in a structured and transparent manner and should be implemented by the responsible personnel.
- The certification body must comply with all requirements of the respective certification program as well as the relevant normative and regulatory provisions.
- The certification body must have established suitable procedures, in form of a Quality Management, for the control of its processes, documents, records, and decisions and apply them effectively.

3.1 Admission of certification bodies

Upon written request, WFTO will review the eligibility of a certification body for initial or renewal admission within the WFTO system.

Once eligibility has been determined, the certification body enters into a framework agreement with WFTO regarding independent auditing activities within the WFTO system.

Admission Requirements and Procedures

The following documents, at a minimum, must be submitted, to verify eligibility for admission:

- Quality Management Manual (draft, if applicable) for the implementation of audit and certification activities regarding the WFTO certification system. At least the following topics, listed in bullet points, must be included:
    - General provisions, e.g., regarding the legal responsibility, legal autonomy, and financial independence of the certification body, and safeguards through appropriate measures (e.g., legal protection and liability insurance)

  - Specifications regarding organization and responsibilities, including the designation of responsible persons (contact persons), implementation of the dual-control principle, document management, and crisis management
  - Drafting of contracts with customers
  - Ensuring impartiality, conducting regular risk analyses
  - Ensuring the qualifications of the personnel assigned (particularly for auditing and certification activities)
  - Regular implementation of internal control measures, including documentation
  - Complaint management
- Declarations of consent and commitment to the Code of Conduct for the WFTO certification system
- Declarations of consent regarding data protection and the publication of the certification body's contact information on the WFTO website

3.2 Impartiality and objectivity

The certification body must perform its activities independently and impartially. It shall continuously identify, analyse, assess, and eliminate risks to its impartiality or reduce them to an acceptable level by means of suitable measures. This applies to economic, personnel-related, organizational, or contractual relationships that could be capable of impairing the objectivity of the evaluation or certification decision.

To safeguard the independence of the certification process, the certification body must refrain from any activity that could compromise or be perceived as compromising its impartial role. Consultancy services that may later become the subject of certification by the same body must therefore be avoided. Where such risks may arise, they must be addressed through clear organisational separation, robust incompatibility rules, and effective controls, if this is permitted within the applicable legal and accreditation framework. Individuals who have taken part in the evaluation process may only be involved in the certification decision where any potential conflict of interest has been ruled out and where the certification system expressly allows such involvement. A documented mechanism for safeguarding impartiality must be in place and must be regularly reviewed and updated.

- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Maintain separation between certification and consulting activities
- Prevent undue influence on audits or certification decisions at all organizational levels

3.3 Organization, roles and responsibilities

The certification body shall designate a responsible contact person and a deputy for all activities related to the WFTO certification system.

The activities for the WFTO system must be organized in such a way that the requirements of the WFTO system are monitored according to uniform rules. In addition, the certification body ensures that the auditors are informed about technical and legal requirements in their field of activity.

The certification body shall ensure that certification decisions and the approval of audit reports are carried out by a qualified person, such as an approving officer, who was not personally involved in conducting the conformity assessment, thereby maintaining the dual-control principle.

The certification body must have a documented organizational structure from which responsibilities, reporting lines, and decision-making authority clearly emerge. Top management is responsible for the effectiveness of the system, the provision of adequate resources, and compliance with the requirements of this certification system. It must be ensured that evaluation and decision-making functions are separated or controlled in an appropriate manner so that the objectivity of the procedure is maintained.

The certification body must ensure that all persons involved in certification possess the competence required for their tasks. This includes, in particular, technical knowledge of the certification object, knowledge of the certification program, audit and evaluation competence, decision-making ability, as well as knowledge of the applicable legal and normative requirements. Competence requirements shall be defined for the respective roles, regularly assessed, and maintained through induction, training, observation, and ongoing qualification.

- Tasks, authorities, and competence requirements must be defined in writing for each function in the certification process.
- The certification body must have sufficient qualified personnel for application review, evaluation, assessment, technical review, certification decision, and surveillance.
- External experts or external auditors may only be used if their qualification has been demonstrated, their activities are controlled, and their confidentiality and impartiality are contractually ensured.
- Records of personnel qualification, authorization, training, performance monitoring, and ongoing competence assessment must be maintained.

4 Certification Procedure

The certification body is responsible for the issuance, maintenance, and revocation of certification. The certification body must operate a documented certification procedure that comprises at least the steps of application, application review, planning of the evaluation, conduct of the evaluation, assessment of results, certification decision, issuance of certificates, surveillance, changes to certification status, as well as suspension, restriction, and withdrawal of certificates. The procedure must be transparent, reproducible, and suitable for enabling sound decisions on the conformity of the certification object.

- The certification body shall have a legally enforceable agreement with each client for the provision of certification activities.
- Before accepting an engagement, it must be examined whether the scope is clearly defined and whether the certification body has the required competence and capacity.
- Evaluation scope, evaluation criteria, methods, and, where applicable, sampling approaches shall be defined on a risk-based and program-compliant basis.
- Deviations, non-conformities, or other findings shall be documented in a traceable manner and communicated appropriately to the applicant or certificate holder.

- The certification body must define criteria under which corrective actions are required and how their effectiveness is to be evaluated.
- All procedure-relevant steps must be documented in such a way that the decision path can be traced at any time.

If changes that could affect certification come to light, it is the responsibility of the CB to take appropriate measures. This specifically includes changes that have occurred after certification has been granted. It also applies accordingly to an expansion or restriction of the scope of certification, as well as to the suspension of certification.

4.1 Pre-certification activities

4.1.1 Application

Clients that are requesting a certification under the WFTO certification system, can either contact WFTO, who will provide the client with the contact information of an approved certification body (CB) or directly contact a suitable CB. Then they will receive the specific questionnaire from the CB and the WFTO Self-Assessment Report (SAR) template.

The certification body should at least obtain the following information from the applicant:

- Legal name (including local or trade name);
- Registered address and mailing address;
- Registration number or tax identification number;
- Contact person
- Legal Status of your Organisation
- Number of female and male employees
- % of sales made up from Fair Trade products and services
- Number of unverified suppliers

Once the client filled in the application form and submitted it with the required supporting documents, the CB will assess the application and get back to the client if any further information is needed. After the client's successful application, the signing of a contract between the client and the CB is concluded, thereby registering the client with the CB.

Further the SAR must be prepared in advance and has to be submitted to the CB. This prepares the ground for the audit planning process and the document review (Stage 1 audit).

WFTO membership is separate from certification; if the customer wishes to become a member, they may submit the application and SAR results to the WFTO Global Office.

4.1.2 Application review

The certification body shall reject the application for certification by an organization that has been blocked from the WFTO system. The list of blocked organizations can be accessed at the WFTO certification database (webpage). The blocked organizations' certification status is marked as 'Suspended and Blocked' or 'Terminated and Blocked'.

4.1.3 Evaluation

The certification body shall assign an audit team in conformity with the following requirements. An audit team shall always include at least one qualified WFTO lead auditor. The 'team' may consist of a single qualified auditor who is then also the leader of the 'team'. At least one team member should be fluent in the main language of the area the audit takes place. Otherwise, also an independent interpreter (not an employee or consultant of the company) can be engaged. If the company has a corporate language and the records and procedures are written in the corporate language and the management staff can communicate fluently in the corporate language, the auditor must be fluent in the corporate language.

The audit team might be accompanied by a technical expert. The role of technical experts during an audit activity shall be agreed to by the certification body and client prior to the conduct of the audit. Technical experts shall not act as auditors in the audit team. They shall neither make conclusions on the conformity with certification requirements nor communicate them to the organization. Their time spent shall be specified separately in the audit plan. The technical experts shall be accompanied by an auditor. Their time spent shall be specified separately in the audit plan.

The audit team leader, in consultation with the audit team, shall assign to each team member responsibility for auditing specific processes, functions, sites, areas or activities.

4.1.4 Determining audit time

4.1.4.1 Certification and re-certification audits

The audit length shall be decided at the quoting stage. The table below is setting out the number of auditor days spent on-site, the number of interviews and the time estimated for each interview.

The auditor shall follow the below table as a minimum on auditor days on-site and total worker interview numbers. Taking into consideration the following aspects may increase the audit time:

- Complexity of the client and its management system
- Any outsourcing of any activities included in the scope of the management system
- The results of any prior audits
- The risks associated with the products, processes or activities of the organization
- number of mandatory indicators (related to the year of the audit cycle)

Where justified, the on-site audit time specified in the table may be reduced for organisations with a single-digit number of employees or with employee numbers at the lower end of the applicable range, provided that the organisation's complexity, risk level, available evidence, and the required number of employee or worker interviews allow all audit objectives to be adequately covered. The justification for any reduction shall be documented.

Time spent travelling to and from audited sites is not included in the calculation of the duration of the audit days. The duration of the audit and its justification shall be recorded.

Additional time shall be allocated for audit preparation and report writing. One man day shall normally be included for audit preparation, taking into account the review of the SAR, audit planning and the preparation of worker interviews. Report writing shall normally require between 0.5 and 1 man-day, depending on the complexity of the organisation, the findings identified during the audit and the stage of the certification cycle, including whether further mandatory requirements have become applicable.

The time spent by any team member that is not assigned as an auditor (i.e. technical experts, translators, interpreters, observers and auditors-in-training) shall not count in the above established duration of the audit.

For the purpose of calculating the worker sample and auditor days all employees must be included, with the exception of management personnel. This includes, but is not limited to, security guards, canteen staff, cleaning personnel, and any other non-management staff present on-site.

<table>
<tr><th>Employees No.</th><th>On-site audit man-days required</th><th>No. of interviews</th><th>Time spent on interviews</th></tr>
<tr><td>1-5</td><td>1[1]</td><td>All employees</td><td rowspan="6">No. interviews*0.25h</td></tr>
<tr><td>6-100</td><td>1.5</td><td rowspan="5">Square root of employees No.[2]</td></tr>
<tr><td>101-500</td><td>2.5</td></tr>
<tr><td>501-1000</td><td>3.5</td></tr>
<tr><td>1001-2000</td><td>4.5</td></tr>
<tr><td>>2001</td><td>5</td></tr>
</table>

In justified cases, the audit duration of two enterprises with a relevant operational, organisational, ownership or supply-chain relationship may be combined and subsequently allocated between two respective audits, provided that the total audit time remains unchanged. Such allocation shall be documented and justified to ensure that the audit objectives and coverage for each enterprise are adequately achieved. This also applies to multi-site organizations. The total number of employees across all sites shall determine the total audit time to be allocated between the head office and the individual sites. The largest proportion of the audit time shall be allocated to the head office, as most of the requirements of this standard are assessed at this level. Audit time allocated to individual sites shall be based on the number of

[1] The one-day on-site audit applies only where a physical workplace exists; otherwise, remote audit provisions apply, provided sufficient evidence and confidential interviews can be ensured.

[2] Consideration is given to allowing a justified deviation from the square-root sampling rule where necessary to ensure that the audit can be completed within the applicable number of audit days based on the total number of employees.

worker interviews required and any site-specific activities, processes, or issues that need to be assessed.

4.1.4.2 Surveillance audits

During surveillance audits, the continued effectiveness of the management system and ongoing compliance with the requirements of this standard shall be evaluated.

The duration of a surveillance audit shall be determined based on factors including:

- the number and significance of non-conformities to be verified and closed;
- the number of new mandatory criteria to be assessed in comparison with the previous audit cycle;
- the number of worker interviews required; and
- where applicable, the need to visit SMS suppliers.

The audit duration given in the table above may be increased where additional verification activities are necessary. It may be reduced where justified by the audit findings, the maturity of the management system, and the demonstrated level of conformity.

4.1.5 Planning of audits

Based on the SAR and the resulting risk assessment the auditor will develop a schedule for the certification audit, to use the audit time as efficiently as possible.

The certification audit shall be conducted on-site at the system participant's location. Based on the SAR and the risk assessment, the auditor prepares the audit schedule to ensure that the audit time is used efficiently. The final risk category is confirmed during the audit and forms the basis for the subsequent surveillance and re-certification cycle. The procedure for determining the monitoring risk categories is explained in Annex A.

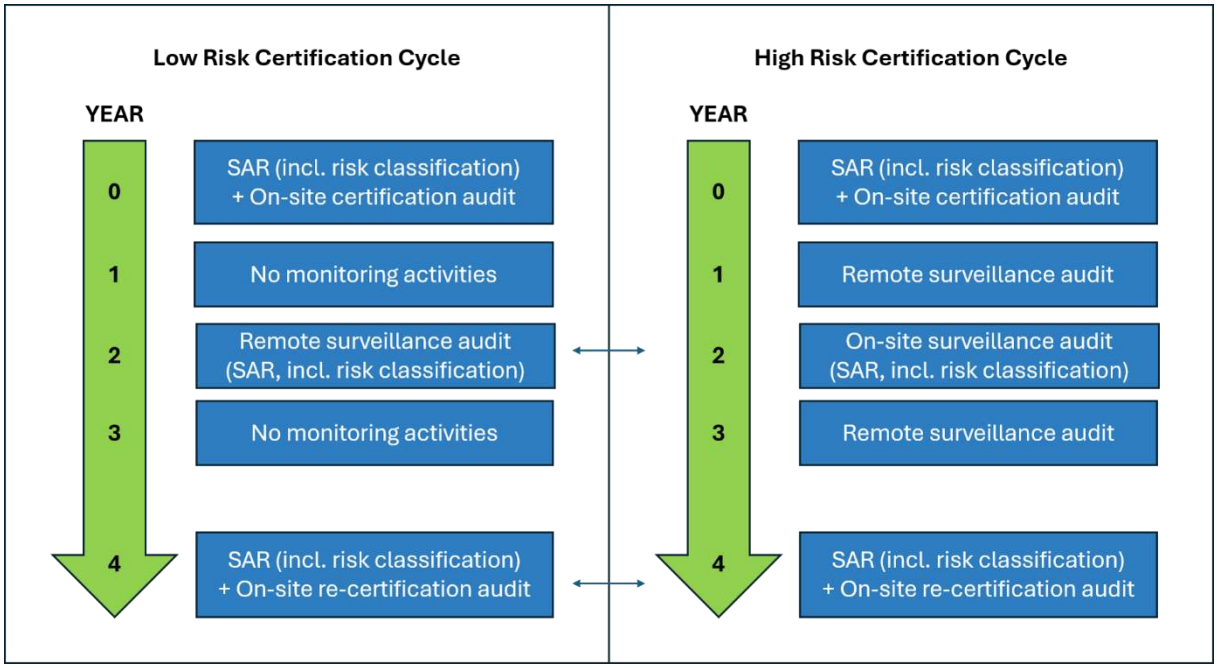

Figure 2 Certification cycle in relation to risk classification

In addition, the number of unverified supplier groups, which the enterprise must provide together with the SAR, is used to calculate the sample size for those supplier groups to be visited.

Table 1 Determination of the sample size for supplier visits

Number of unverified suppliers	Number of suppliers to be visited
1	1
2-5	2
6-10	3
>10	Square root

The auditor has to provide the client with the audit plan, including the audit topics and an indicative timetable. Every audit begins with an opening meeting and ends with a closing meeting, with the remaining audit time scheduled in between so that all the applicable criteria of the WFTO Fair Trade Standard can be properly assessed.

4.1.6 Conducting audits and reporting requirements

The aim of the on-site audit is to evaluate the performance of an employment site against the WFTO principles. For very small organisations without a physical headquarters, office premises, or other facilities to be visited, particularly where all staff work from home, the audit may be conducted remotely where this is justified and documented. However, the certification body shall ensure that employees and workers, where present, can be interviewed confidentially and without management influence. Any production, storage, or other operational facilities where workers are present shall be included in the audit and visited where necessary to obtain sufficient objective evidence.

Auditors shall conduct the audit in a respectful, objective and professional manner, with respect shown to everyone on-site. They shall remain impartial throughout the audit, not allow their own personal views or interests to influence their judgement, and handle challenging situations with appropriate discretion and diplomacy. Auditors shall always act with integrity and shall not promote or offer consultancy services during or after the audit. Any observed or suspected instances of unethical behaviour shall be reported through the appropriate channels.

The same auditors shall not be assigned to audit a client for whom they have provided consultancy services within the previous three years.

The audit includes:

- The opening meeting
- Site tour
- Management and worker interviews
- Document review
- Closing meeting with the summary of findings

4.1.7 Opening meeting and site tour

The opening meeting is held to explain the procedure, the breakdown of the assessments, and, if applicable, any changes to the audit plan.

The site tour enables the auditor to gain a practical understanding of the employment site by observing its layout, working conditions, health and safety practices, and the types of activities carried out while workers are operating. The tour should be planned and led by the auditor, based on a site map where appropriate, and should not disrupt or delay production. The auditor should be able to access relevant areas freely, observe busy production periods, and speak informally with workers and management across different operations.

The site tour also helps identify vulnerable worker groups, subcontracted operations, management practices, worker demographics, and the general workplace culture. Observations made during the tour shall be triangulated with evidence from management interviews, document reviews and worker interviews. The tour may also be used to identify an initial representative sample of workers for interviews, including potentially vulnerable workers such as those in hazardous roles, migrant workers or women workers.

4.1.8 Management interviews

Management interviews are used to verify whether policies and procedures are actually implemented in practice. They support the triangulation of audit evidence together with worker interviews and document review. The auditor should speak with relevant managers, administrative staff and less senior managers to understand how compliance is managed across all applicable areas. Clear, open and non-leading questions should be used to obtain reliable information and supporting evidence. Where available, worker survey feedback may also be considered. The auditor should be prepared to challenge management where necessary, while remaining professional, courteous and cooperative.

4.1.9 Worker interviews

Worker interviews are essential to verify whether policies and procedures are effectively implemented and whether workers' rights are protected in practice. Workers must be selected independently by the auditor, without management influence, and should represent the workforce, including vulnerable groups. Interviews must be confidential, voluntary, and conducted in a private setting, preferably in the workers' own language. The auditor should use open, non-leading questions and protect workers from any risk of retaliation.

Worker interviews should be conducted with discretion, empathy and professionalism. The auditor should create a relaxed and trustful atmosphere, explain the purpose of the audit, and use open, clear and non-leading questions that encourage dialogue. Interviews must be confidential and voluntary, and questions should be adapted to the worker's background and level of understanding. The auditor must ensure that information cannot be traced back to individual workers and that workers are protected from any risk of retaliation. A confidential contact option should be provided in case workers wish to share additional information later.

The document review is used to verify how the site manages and demonstrates compliance with the applicable requirements. Relevant documents must be available during the audit, including payroll, working hours records, personnel files, policies, procedures, permits, inspection reports and other evidence of implementation. The auditor checks not only whether documents exist, but also whether they are accurate, valid, complete and consistent with other audit evidence, including site observations and worker or management interviews.

Sampling must be risk-based and sufficiently representative, especially for wages, working hours and statutory benefits. If documents are missing, incomplete, falsified or inconsistent, the auditor must investigate the reasons, assess the impact on the audit findings, and record the issue appropriately. Document inconsistencies should be raised with management during the audit, without disclosing sensitive worker information.

4.1.10 Closing meeting and completion of the audit

The closing meeting is used to present and discuss the audit findings with site management and relevant representatives, including worker representatives where applicable. Before the meeting, the auditor shall review all evidence, identify findings, good practices, required corrective actions and any management system gaps, and prepare a draft audit report including any identified non-conformities. During the meeting, the auditor shall explain the findings, discuss possible corrective actions and proposed timeframes, and give the site an opportunity to provide additional evidence or raise concerns. By the end of the on-site audit, the organization shall be informed of the number and nature of all non-conformities raised. Any remediation measures proposed by the organization, together with the agreed timeframes for corrective action, shall be recorded in the audit report. The auditor shall not act as a consultant or prescribe specific solutions. At the end of the meeting, the auditor shall explain the next steps, including report distribution and the follow-up process.

The audit shall review all principles and criteria of the WFTO Fair Trade Standard. However, not all criteria are mandatory in every year of the certification cycle. Criteria that become mandatory only in later years of the certification cycle, as well as Continuous Improvement criteria, shall be assessed through a separate Status Assessment included at the end of the relevant principle.

The purpose of the Status Assessment is to document the organisation’s current level of implementation and performance in an objective and transparent manner. Until a criterion becomes mandatory for the respective certification year, non-conformities shall not be raised against that criterion.

Continuous Improvement criteria shall be assessed through the Status Assessment from the beginning of the certification cycle in order to establish a baseline and monitor progress over time. From Year 4 onwards, the results of the Status Assessment shall be compared with those of previous certification years to evaluate whether the organisation has demonstrated continuous improvement in implementing the relevant criteria.

Non-conformities related to Continuous Improvement criteria shall only be raised where the organisation fails to demonstrate reasonable and ongoing progress over successive assessments, taking into account its size, context, available resources, and capacity to implement improvements.

The auditor in charge uses the checklist (CL) to verify that all criteria of the WFTO Fair Trade Standard are met and to identify non-conformities. Based on the CL and all audit findings the auditor prepares the audit report. In addition to information on the site and the evaluations - including detailed comments on the requirements reviewed- the audit report also consists of the preliminary audit results and, if necessary, of the action plan, with the agreed upon corrective actions, for all non-conformities found.

The complete audit report should be sent to the audited system participant promptly after completion. If the report is created and signed digitally, an electronic copy must be sent to the audited location without delay. The auditor performs his or her duties in accordance with the Code of Conduct for all auditors.

If, following the audit, changes while reviewing the report are identified by the CB, it shall notify the system participant of these changes in writing without delay.

An audit must always be conducted in its entirety; therefore, all requirements must be checked and evaluated. If factory management does not cooperate or obstructs the audit process, the audit may be terminated. This includes, for example, denying access to relevant areas, interfering with confidential worker interviews, or behaving in an abusive or threatening manner towards the auditors. In such cases, the visit will be considered abortive, and the payee remains responsible for the full audit costs.

If the client refuses or cancels the audit after the auditor has arrived on-site, the audit will be treated as failed and charged in full.

4.2 Classification of non-conformance and handling of corrective actions

Identification and classification of non-conformities

The auditor shall record all non-conformities identified during the audit in the WFTO checklist and audit report. Non-conformities are identified where an organisation does not meet applicable requirements of the WFTO Fair Trade Standard or related certification requirements. They shall be documented in a clear and traceable manner, communicated to the organisation, and addressed within the applicable deadlines.

Non-conformities are classified as follows:

Major non-conformities may be raised where mandatory process elements are missing or not effectively implemented, where the non-conformity results or may result in a failure of the organisation's management system, where there is a risk to worker health and safety or human rights, where product or claim integrity may be affected, where systematic non-conformity is identified, or where several minor non-conformities together indicate a broader system failure.

Major non-conformities must be closed within 3 months; however, in certification and re-certification audits, they must be verified and formally closed before certificate issuance.

Minor non-conformities may be raised where a requirement is not fully met, but the non-conformity is isolated, does not indicate a systemic failure, does not create an immediate risk to

workers, suppliers, product integrity or certification credibility, and does not compromise the overall effectiveness of the management system.

Minor non-conformities must be closed within 12 months; however, in certification and re-certification audits, they must be verified and formally closed before certificate issuance.

4.2.1 Corrective action plan and root cause analysis

For each non-conformity, the organisation shall submit a corrective action plan. Corrective actions shall address the root cause of each non-conformity and support sustainable improvement. The corrective action plan shall include, as applicable, the correction or containment measure, root cause analysis, corrective action to prevent recurrence, responsible person, implementation deadline and evidence to be provided. Wherever possible, the proposed corrective action plan should be discussed during the closing meeting. Where this is not possible, the organisation shall submit the corrective action plan to the certification body within a defined timeframe. For minor non-conformities, this should normally be no later than 90 days after the last day of the audit. For major non-conformities, the corrective action plan and the evidence required for closure shall be submitted early enough to allow verification and closure within the 3-month deadline. For re-certification audits, shorter deadlines may be required to ensure that the certification decision can be completed before the current certificate expires.

The process of defining and implementing corrective actions shall include the following steps:

- identifying the root cause of the non-conformity through a root cause analysis;
- taking appropriate correction or containment measures, where necessary;
- eliminating the root cause of the non-conformity;
- implementing appropriate corrective and preventive actions to prevent recurrence;
- documenting the actions taken and the evidence of implementation.

The certification body shall review the proposed corrective action plan and determine whether the proposed actions are appropriate to address the identified non-conformity and its root cause. Acceptance of a corrective action plan does not in itself close the non-conformity.

4.2.2 Verification and closure of non-conformities

The certification body shall verify the implementation and effectiveness of corrective actions within the applicable closure deadline. Verification may be carried out through document review, remote review, interviews, photographic evidence, records review or an on-site follow-up, depending on the nature, severity and risk of the non-conformity. For major non-conformities, the certification body shall determine whether the severity and nature of the issue require an on-site follow-up, or whether sufficient objective evidence can be verified remotely. Where the review is not conducted on-site, the submitted evidence must clearly show when and how the action was implemented and must be sufficient to confirm that the non-conformity has been effectively addressed. The method of verification and the evidence reviewed shall be documented.

For certification and re-certification audits, all major and minor non-conformities shall be verified and formally closed before the certification decision to grant or renew certification is taken. The

general closure deadlines defined above do not permit certificate issuance with open non-conformities

4.2.3 Interim verification for low-risk organisations

For low-risk organisations where the next scheduled audit takes place more than twelve months after the audit in which a minor non-conformity was raised, the certification body shall perform an interim verification before expiry of the twelve-month closure deadline. This interim verification may be conducted remotely or through a document review, provided that the evidence submitted is sufficient to confirm implementation and effectiveness. If the evidence is insufficient, inconsistent or cannot be verified remotely, the certification body shall request additional evidence or arrange an appropriate follow-up assessment.

4.2.4 Failure to close and record keeping

A non-conformity shall only be closed when the certification body has confirmed that the required corrective action has been implemented and is effective, or where sufficient evidence demonstrates that the risk of recurrence has been adequately addressed. The certification body must record the proper and timely review of corrective actions in its documentation within the applicable closure deadline. Where corrective actions are not implemented within the required timeframe, are ineffective, or the organisation fails to provide sufficient evidence or does not respond, the certification body shall take appropriate action, which may include suspension, withdrawal or other sanctions in accordance with the WFTO certification rules.

Records of corrective action plans submitted evidence, verification activities, closure decisions and any related certification decisions shall be retained by the certification body.

4.3 Technical review and certification decision process

The decision on granting, maintaining, suspending, or withdrawing certification shall be made on the basis of an appropriate technical review of all relevant information, including the complete audit report, the CAR sheet, the verification and closure status of any non-conformities, documented violations by the system participant, and any other relevant evidence. Where non-conformities have been identified during a certification or re-certification audit, a positive certification decision shall only be made once all major and minor non-conformities have been verified and formally closed.

The certification body ensures that the certification decision and the approval of audit reports are carried out by at least one qualified and technically competent person (approving person) who is authorized. The approving person must not have conducted the conformity assessment themselves or be involved in the preceding evaluation in an impermissible manner. The dual-control principle must be observed. The basis for the decision, the decision itself, as well as any conditions or requirements, shall be documented.

4.4 Surveillance and re-certification

The surveillance and re-certification cycle is based on the risk category confirmed during the certification or re-certification audit. The risk category determines the timing and type of surveillance audits and may be adjusted during the certification cycle if the audit evidence demonstrates sufficient improvement.

Low-risk participants are subject to a remote surveillance audit in year 2 and a re-certification audit in year 4. High-risk participants are subject to remote surveillance audits in years 1 and 3, an on-site surveillance audit in year 2, and a re-certification audit in year 4. The on-site surveillance audit in year 2 also provides the basis for determining whether a high-risk participant may be reclassified as low-risk for the remaining certification cycle.

Surveillance audits are conducted to verify continued conformity with the WFTO Fair Trade Standard between certification and re-certification. They may be carried out remotely or on-site, depending on the participant's risk category and the stage of the certification cycle. They shall address the implementation of continuous improvement requirements, criteria that become mandatory during the certification cycle, and the availability of adequate records and evidence supporting ongoing compliance. The certification body is responsible for scheduling each surveillance audit within the applicable certification cycle and for defining an appropriate audit time frame. The system participant must agree to the proposed audit date and ensure that the surveillance audit can take place within the defined time frame.

The SAR is a key element of the surveillance process. It must be prepared and updated annually by the system participant as part of the internal monitoring system and submitted to the certification body every two years. The SAR is reviewed during each surveillance or re-certification audit and serves as important evidence for assessing continued conformity with the WFTO Fair Trade Standard.

A re-certification audit is required every four years. It is conducted in the same manner as an initial certification audit and includes a full assessment of conformity with the WFTO Fair Trade Standard, including the review of the SAR, the checklist, audit evidence, previous audit results and a reassessment of the risk category. Upon successful re-certification, the certification cycle starts again.

4.5 Certificate issuance

A certificate shall only be issued after a positive certification decision and once all major and minor non-conformities identified during the certification or re-certification audit have been verified and formally closed by the certification body. No certificate shall be issued while any major or minor non-conformity remains open. The closure decision, including the evidence reviewed and the verification method applied, shall be documented before the certificate is issued.

The following elements should be included in the certificate:

- The name and geographical location of the system participant (headquarter and if applicable any sites within the scope)

- the name and address of the certification body
- the date certification is granted,
- the certificate's expiration date
- a unique identification code (see rules for its creation below)
- the name standard (WFTO Fair Trade Standard), including indication of issue status (e.g. revision date or number) used for audit of the certified client
- the scope of certification with respect to the type of activities, products and services as applicable at each site without being misleading or ambiguous
- WFTO Logo
- a clear statement to the effect that the certificate shall remain the property of the certification body that issued it, and that the certificate and all copies or reproductions of the certificate shall be returned or destroyed if requested by the certification body;
- a disclaimer stating: “The validity of this certification shall be verified on the WFTO website”

The unique identification code should be created according to the following general rules:

WFTO-CERT-YYYY-NNNN-Ix

WFTO:	Certification scheme / scheme owner
CERT:	identifier as certificate
YYYY:	Year of initial certificate issuance
NNNN:	four-digit sequential certificate number assigned within the respective calendar year
Ixx:	Issue number, e.g. I01 for the initial certificate, I02 for a re-issued, renewed, or amended certificate

Any wording, to be included on certificates in addition to the information as required above is subject to prior written approval by WFTO.

4.6 Certification documentation

The CB should send a notification to WFTO for registering the certification in the WFTO database.

The following information has to be submitted to WFTO:

- Nature of certification decision (certification status)
- Name of the company
- Address, ZIP Code, city, country
- Certificate number
- Copy of the certificate

4.7 Termination, suspension or withdrawal of certification

The certification body shall define and implement documented rules for the termination, suspension and withdrawal of certification. These rules shall ensure that changes to the certification status are handled consistently, transparently and without undue delay.

The certification body shall suspend certification where serious or unresolved non-conformities are identified, where required corrective actions are not implemented within the defined timeframe, or where the system participant prevents the certification body from obtaining sufficient evidence to maintain certification. Suspension may also be applied where the system participant no longer fulfils contractual or procedural requirements necessary for maintaining certification.

A suspension shall not exceed six (6) months. During the suspension period, the system participant shall implement appropriate corrective and remedial actions to address the causes of the suspension. The certification body shall verify the effectiveness of these actions before lifting the suspension.

The certification body shall withdraw certification where the conditions for suspension are not resolved within the defined suspension period, where certification requirements are no longer fulfilled, or where the system participant terminates the certification agreement. Where the reasons for suspension have not been satisfactorily resolved within six (6) months, the certification body shall withdraw the certification.

The certification body may also terminate certification in accordance with the contractual arrangements with the system participant. The certificate shall be withdrawn if the enterprise stops meeting the WFTO system requirements. The certification body and WFTO shall notify each other of any exclusion from the system, termination, or revocation of a certificate. If a system participant re-registers, a new audit must be conducted.

When certification is suspended, withdrawn, or terminated, the certification body shall inform the system participant in writing. The notification shall include the changed certification status, the effective date, the reason for the decision, any required actions, and the consequences for the use of certificates, claims, marks or labels. Following suspension, withdrawal or termination, the system participant shall stop using the certificate and any WFTO-related claims, marks or labels affected by the change in certification status. WFTO shall verify, where appropriate, that these obligations have been fulfilled.

Certification may be reinstated after suspension only if the certification body has verified that the reasons for suspension have been fully addressed and that the system participant again fulfils the applicable WFTO requirements.

4.8 Change of certification authority

A change of certification body during an ongoing certification cycle shall be exceptional and shall only be permitted where justified by objective reasons. Commercial considerations alone, including lower certification fees or more favourable contractual terms, shall not constitute

sufficient justification for changing the certification body during an ongoing certification cycle. A change of certification body shall not be used to avoid audit findings, corrective action obligations, surveillance requirements, follow-up audits, sanctions, suspension, withdrawal or any other certification-related consequence.

The system participant shall submit a written transfer request to WFTO and to the current certification body, stating the reasons for the intended change and identifying the proposed new certification body. The transfer shall become effective only after WFTO has reviewed the justification and has confirmed that there is no objection to the transfer. WFTO may reject or postpone a transfer where the justification is insufficient or where the transfer could impair the integrity, consistency or credibility of the WFTO certification system.

A transfer shall not be accepted where major non-conformities remain open, where suspension or withdrawal procedures have been initiated or are ongoing, where serious complaints, allegations, fraud concerns, traceability issues or label misuse are under investigation, or where there are reasonable indications that the transfer is intended to avoid certification consequences. In such cases, the current certification body remains responsible for completing the relevant certification actions, unless WFTO determines otherwise for reasons of system integrity.

Before accepting a transfer, the proposed new certification body shall conduct and document a transfer review. This review shall include, at a minimum, the current certification status, the scope of certification, the certificate validity, the most recent audit reports, the certification decision, the status of all non-conformities and corrective action plans, any complaints or appeals, any sanctions or pending certification decisions, the applicable risk category, the surveillance and re-certification schedule, and any other information relevant to the continuity and integrity of certification.

The outgoing certification body shall provide all documents and records necessary for the transfer directly to the new certification body without undue delay, subject to applicable confidentiality and data protection requirements. These records shall include, as applicable, application and contract information, audit plans, audit reports, checklists, technical reviews, certification decisions, certificates, corrective action records, closure evidence, correspondence relating to certification status, complaints, appeals, sanctions and any other records necessary to ensure full traceability of the certification history.

The transfer shall not result in a new certification cycle, a reset of closure deadlines, a reduction of surveillance obligations, a downgrade of the risk category, or any other reduction of existing certification requirements unless this is justified by objective evidence and expressly accepted by WFTO. The new certification body shall take over the existing certification cycle, including all applicable deadlines, surveillance obligations, risk classifications, conditions, findings and follow-up requirements.

The new certification body shall only accept the transfer where it has sufficient competence, capacity and information to maintain certification in accordance with the WFTO requirements. If the information provided is incomplete, inconsistent or indicates unresolved integrity risks, the new certification body shall request clarification and shall not confirm the transfer until the

relevant issues have been resolved. The decision to accept or reject the transfer, including the reasons and evidence reviewed, shall be documented and made available to WFTO upon request.

4.9 Handling of documents & communication rules

The certification body must maintain appropriate and controlled documentation of its management system as well as its certification processes, for all its locations. All essential activities, findings, audit reports, TR, decisions, surveillance activities, complaints, appeals, and corrective actions shall be recorded in a traceable form. Retention periods must be defined in such a way that the traceability of certification decisions and compliance with legal as well as program-related requirements are ensured.

The certification body must treat all information obtained in the course of its activities as confidential, unless there are legal obligations to disclose it. Access rights to confidential information must be regulated and restricted to authorized persons. The certification body must ensure that documents, data, and records are protected against loss, unauthorized access, impermissible alteration, and misuse.

The certification body must make publicly available information accessible in an appropriate manner regarding its activities, its scope, the essential procedural steps, the rights and obligations of applicants and certificate holders, as well as procedures for complaints and appeals. Where the certification system provides for requirements regarding the publication of certification status, these must be implemented in an up-to-date and reliable form.

4.10 Customer satisfaction analysis and complaint management

The certification body regularly assesses the quality of its work based on customer satisfaction analyses. As part of the complaint procedure, the certification body documents at least the reason for the complaint, the measures taken in response, and evidence of their implementation.

Documented procedures for the receipt, assessment, and handling of complaints and appeals, must be maintained by the CB. These procedures must be transparent, accessible, and understandable for the parties involved. Complaints and appeals shall be handled impartially, within an appropriate timeframe, and by qualified personnel. The applying or affected party shall be informed of the outcome in an appropriate manner.

In the case of major complaints about WFTO members, certificate holders, or other third parties associated with WFTO or the certification, the certification body notifies WFTO.

5 Label use

The WFTO Label may be used by the certification body only on the certificates and confirmations issued by it in accordance with the current design guidelines. Label use guidelines for certificate holders are provided by WFTO in Annex B-Labelling rules of WFTO Fair Trade Standard.

6 Maintenance of admission of a certification body

Recognition of a certification body within this certification system requires that all applicable requirements be demonstrably fulfilled. The certification body undertakes to notify without delay any changes affecting its structure, its responsibilities, its resources, or its ability to properly conduct certification. The scheme owner reserves the right to define additional requirements, sector-specific clarifications, or transitional arrangements where this is necessary to ensure the effectiveness, credibility, and further development of the certification system.

To maintain admission as a certification body, the following requirements must be met:

- The certification body shall monitor its WFTO-related activities through regular self-assessments, at least annually, as part of its quality assurance system. The certification body shall document the results of the self-assessment, any resulting corrective actions, and the outcomes of such actions in writing. These records shall be retained and made available to WFTO upon request or as part of WFTO monitoring activities.
- WFTO may request the submission of self-assessment records at any time, including as part of annual or risk-based monitoring activities.
- The certification body must have at least one approved auditor and one approving authority
- Participation in the informational events conducted by WFTO

If the scheme owner or a competent body determines that a certification body does not or no longer fulfils the requirements of this certification system, appropriate measures shall be initiated.

Violations of the WFTO Management Manual or the Framework Agreement on Independent Auditing Activities will result in sanctions and, if necessary, the revocation or suspension of a certification body's admission by WFTO. In the event of violations of the Code of Conduct for the WFTO System, appropriate measures will be taken to remedy the violation.

In the event of either ordinary or extraordinary termination, as well as in the event of sanctions, WFTO has the right to notify all system partners who have entered into contracts with the certification body within the framework of the WFTO system of the termination or sanctions that have been imposed.

7 Requirements for auditors and approving personnel

Auditors are responsible for conducting audits and assessing conformity with the WFTO Fair Trade Standard. Approving personnel is responsible for reviewing the audit results, supporting evidence and recommendations before the certification decision is made. Their role is therefore of particular importance. The following chapters set out the requirements that must be fulfilled for certification as a WFTO auditor and as an approving personnel member.

Auditors engaged within this certification system must possess the personal suitability, professional competence, and independence necessary to carry out evaluations in a reliable,

consistent, and objective manner. They shall act in accordance with the applicable rules of the WFTO system, use appropriate audit methods, and base their conclusions exclusively on verifiable and relevant evidence. The certification body must ensure that auditors are selected, authorized, monitored, and regularly evaluated in accordance with defined competence criteria.

- Auditors must have demonstrable technical competence in the relevant scope as well as adequate knowledge of the applicable WFTO Fair Trade criteria, audit procedures, and legal and normative requirements.
- They must be capable of planning and conducting audits in a structured and risk-based manner, assessing findings appropriately, and preparing clear, accurate, and traceable audit records and reports.
- Auditors must act impartially and must be free from conflicts of interest in relation to the activities, products, processes, services, or organizations subject to evaluation.
- They must treat all information obtained during the audit as confidential and may use or disclose such information only to the extent permitted by the certification system and applicable legal requirements.
- Auditors must communicate findings factually, clearly, and without undue delay and must distinguish between objective evidence, audit findings, and personal opinions.
- The certification body must maintain records of auditor qualification, authorization, witness audits or other monitoring activities, and continuing professional development, and shall ensure that auditors remain competent for the tasks assigned to them.

7.1 Admission procedure

The auditor admission procedure is initiated by a person applying for approval as a WFTO auditor. The certification body provides the candidate with information on the required documentation, qualification evidence, approval requirements, and evaluation criteria. The candidate submits the required documents and evidence of compliance. The certification body reviews the submitted documentation for completeness and conformity with the applicable qualification requirements and assesses the candidate's eligibility for approval. If all requirements set out in chapter 3.2 are fulfilled, the relevant contractual arrangements are concluded.

7.2 Requirements for auditors

To be eligible for approval, auditors must demonstrate, as a minimum:

- University/College education or equivalent
- Minimum two years industry relevant professional experience
- Successful completion of a basic SA8000 training course (or equivalent); an advanced SA8000 training (or equivalent) is recommendable
- For team auditors: Successful completion of a recognised auditor training in accordance with ISO 19011 (24 hours) including a formal exam
- For lead auditors: Successful completion of a recognized lead auditor training (40 hours) including a formal examination (e.g. ISO19011; ISO 9001 or SA8000)
- Documented understanding of the WFTO Fair Trade principles, audit methodology, integrity requirements, and applicable certification rules.

- Demonstrable, sufficient auditing experience: observation of 3 full social audits, participation in as a team member at 10 man days in full social audits
- Advanced level of English, as well as knowledge of the official language of the country for which the approval is being issued

Evidence of compliance with these qualification requirements must be documented, retained, and verified by the certification body prior to initial approval and as part of a re-approval process. The auditor is responsible for the submission of all requested competence and qualification evidence towards the certification body.

If all the requirements for approval have been met, the certification body files the documents required as evidence and grants approval for auditing activities within the WFTO certification system.

7.3 Maintenance of admission as auditor

The certification body shall regularly verify that auditors continue to meet the applicable qualification and competence requirements. If an auditor no longer fulfils, or is expected to no longer fulfil, any of these requirements, the auditor shall be informed and given a defined deadline to provide the necessary evidence or complete the required qualification measures. If the requirements for the auditor role are not met within the defined timeframe, the auditor shall not conduct WFTO audits until compliance has been restored and confirmed by the certification body. Auditors are responsible for keeping their qualification evidence up to date, while the certification body is responsible for monitoring and documenting continued compliance.

Failure to meet the requirements for auditors or an accumulation of confirmed and serious complaints lead to revocation of the admission as auditor.

7.4 Requirements for approving personnel

Approving personnel include technical reviewers and certification decision makers. The certification body shall ensure that these persons have the technical and professional competence required for their role, including in-depth knowledge of the WFTO Fair Trade Standard, the WFTO certification system, applicable scopes, audit methodology, non-conformity classification, certification decision rules, and WFTO governance requirements. Relevant roles are the technical reviewer and the certification decision maker.

Approval as technical reviewer or certification decision maker shall only be granted after successful completion of an internal certification body training programme covering the WFTO certification system, relevant social auditing principles, technical review requirements, certification decision logic, impartiality, confidentiality, and the handling of conflicts of interest.

Technical reviewers shall be competent to assess whether the audit process, audit report, checklist, evidence, non-conformities, corrective action verification, and auditor recommendation provide a sufficient and technically sound basis for the certification decision. Before authorisation, a technical reviewer candidate shall complete at least three accompanied technical reviews in the field of social audits. Alternatively, documented technical review

activities for other sustainability-related standards may be accepted as evidence of competence, provided that their equivalence is assessed, approved, and documented by the certification body.

Certification decision makers shall be competent to make impartial and evidence-based decisions on granting, maintaining, suspending, withdrawing, reinstating or refusing certification. They shall review the technical review outcome and all relevant evidence before making a decision. The certification decision maker shall not have conducted the audit or otherwise been involved in the evaluation in a way that could compromise impartiality.

The certification body shall define in writing which persons are authorised to perform technical reviews and certification decisions. Authorised personnel shall be directly controlled by the certification body and shall follow the certification body's binding procedures and technical instructions. The approval, suspension or withdrawal of auditor authorisations shall be performed only by personnel with appropriate technical competence and documented authority.

During the initial implementation of the WFTO certification system within a certification body, persons involved in setting up the WFTO service may be authorised as technical reviewers or certification decision makers, provided that their competence is demonstrated, their impartiality is safeguarded, and the authorisation is documented. In such cases, the certification body shall ensure additional quality controls, such as supervised reviews, second-person checks, or documented calibration, until sufficient practical experience has been established.

Ongoing competence is ensured through refresher trainings, documented participation in structured exchange formats (e.g. drop-in calls).

7.5 Training and information events

Information sessions and training are conducted by WFTO and the certification body. The auditor training sessions provided by WFTO primarily address the technical content of the respective levels and the related harmonization of audit procedures. To support these auditor training sessions, information events are held with the responsible representatives of the certification bodies. In light of the ongoing development of the WFTO certification system, these events serve to jointly enhance the controls and promote the exchange of experience. Participation in these events is mandatory for the certification body.

8 Rules for independent control of certification bodies

To ensure the effectiveness of the quality assurance measures implemented by certification bodies, WFTO may conduct monitoring activities as part of its internal oversight system. These activities are intended to assess whether the certification body's processes are implemented consistently, effectively and in accordance with WFTO requirements. They also support the continuous improvement and further development of the WFTO certification system.

WFTO monitoring may include two main measures: remote office audits conducted by WFTO to review the certification body's WFTO-related processes, and self-assessments carried out by the

certification body and reviewed by WFTO. These measures serve as integrity checks and may be applied regularly or on a risk-based basis.

8.1 Office audit of the certification body

Certification bodies shall be evaluated through remote office audits at least every four years to verify the correct and consistent implementation of the WFTO certification system. A fee may be charged for these office audits. Remote office audits are required both for the initial admission and for the renewal of admission as an eligible certification body.

WFTO may conduct such audits using its own personnel or assessors commissioned by WFTO. The certification body shall provide WFTO, or any person or organisation appointed by WFTO, with all information necessary for the assessment and shall grant access to all documents and records related to its WFTO certification activities.

8.2 Validation of the certification body self-assessment process

WFTO shall review the self-assessment reports submitted by certification bodies at defined intervals. The review shall assess the completeness, traceability and plausibility of the information provided and shall support the consistent implementation of WFTO requirements by all certification bodies.

The certification body shall cooperate with WFTO in clarifying any questions or inconsistencies identified during the review. Where necessary, the certification body shall correct or supplement the self-assessment report within a reasonable timeframe. Based on the outcome of the review, WFTO and the certification body shall agree on appropriate corrective actions, where required. The certification body shall implement the agreed corrective actions within the defined timeframe, which shall not exceed one year unless otherwise justified and agreed with WFTO.

9 Annex A – Determination of the monitoring risk category

1. Purpose

This framework is designed to classify certified organizations into monitoring risk categories after completion of their first audit. The purpose is to:

- Allocate monitoring resources proportionally to risk.
- Support defensible, evidence-based surveillance intervals.
- Allow third-party certification bodies and auditors to apply the methodology consistently.

2. Risk categories

Risk Category	**Monitoring cycle (see chapter 2.1.4 & 2.1.8)**
Low risk	Reduced surveillance between certification cycles
High risk	Increased surveillance between certification cycles

3. Risk assessment structure

The risk classification is based on two groups of indicators:

Section	**Purpose**
A. Inherent risk	Structural complexity and exposure
B. Performance & compliance risk	Audit performance and control effectiveness

Both groups of indicators are assessed together to determine the overall risk category.

4. Scoring methodology

Step 1 – Assign Scores

Each indicator is scored from 1 to 4:

Score	**Meaning**
1	Low risk
2	Moderate risk
3	Elevated risk
4	High risk

Step 2 – Calculate Total Score

The final score is calculated by adding all indicator scores.

Final Risk Score = Sum of Indicator Scores

Step 3 – Assign risk category

Final risk score	Risk category
7–19	Low risk
>19	High risk

5. Risk indicators

A. Inherent risk indicators

A1. Organisation type

Organisation type	Score
Non-trading support organisation	1
Producer organisation	2
Domestic marketer/exporter	3
Fair trade importer/trader	4

Rationale: Trading entities generally present higher traceability and transaction risks.

A2. Number of excluded suppliers

Number of excluded suppliers	Score
1–5	1
6–15	2
16–50	3
51+	4

Rationale: A higher number of suppliers outside the regular SMS reduces direct monitoring and control

A3. Number of product lines

Product lines	Score
1–3	1

4–8	2
9–18	3
19+	4

Rationale: Additional product lines increase audit complexity and traceability risk.

B. Performance & Compliance Indicators

B1. Internal Control Quality

Internal control quality	**Score**
Very good	1
Good	2
Sufficient	3
Poor	4

Rationale: Effective internal controls reduce the risk of non-compliance and support reliable implementation of the standard.

Auditors should evaluate:

- Documented procedures
- Traceability systems
- Segregation of Fair Trade/non-Fair-Trade suppliers
- Internal inspections
- Corrective action follow-up
- Staff competence

B2. Serious complaints or allegations (Last 24 Months)

Serious complaints	**Score**
1–2	1
3–4	2
5–6	3
7+	4

Rational: Verified, substantiated or credible complaints may indicate system weaknesses or integrity risks.

Definition of serious complaint:

A complaint involving:

- Fraud or falsification
- Labour rights violations

- Environmental breaches
- Misuse of label/claims
- Traceability failures
- Obstruction of audits

Only substantiated or credible complaints should be counted.

B3. Audit non-conformities

Audit findings	**Score**
No major NCs and ≤2 minor NCs	1
1 major NC or 3–5 minor NCs	2
Multiple major NCs	3
Repeated major NCs	4

Rationale: Audit performance is the strongest predictor of future compliance risk.

6. Mandatory escalation rules

Regardless of total score, an organisation shall automatically be classified as high-risk if any of the following occur:

- Fraud or intentional misrepresentation
- Critical labour rights violations
- Evidence of product substitution
- Obstruction of audits
- Repeated suspension history
- Major unresolved traceability failure

These automatic triggers prevent low numerical scores from masking integrity threats.

7. Governance and auditor guidance

7.1. Responsibilities

Role	**Responsibility**
Auditor	Completes scoring and provides evidence-based justification
Certification body	Reviews and approves final risk classification
Certification body	Maintains records, and ensures consistency
WFTO	Conducts reviews of the scoring system

7.2. Scoring rules

- All scoring decisions must include short written justification in the audit report.
- Auditors shall rely on objective evidence.

- Evidence sources may include audit findings, transaction records, complaints, traceability records, corrective action reports, and interviews.
- Guidance examples should be maintained internally for each scoring level.

7.3. Override procedure

Risk classifications may only be adjusted through a documented override process.

Any override must include:

- Justification for the change
- Supporting evidence
- Approval by WFTO
- Documented records of the final decision.

Overrides may increase or decrease the final risk category where justified.

7.4. Separation from certification decisions

Risk classification determines monitoring frequency only. It shall not automatically determine the certification approval, suspension or withdrawal decisions. The certification decisions must remain independent and based on compliance with certification requirements.

7.5. Auditor training and calibration

Auditors applying this methodology shall receive:

- training on the scoring system incl. calibration exercises, practical case examples
- periodic refresher training whenever the scoring system is adjusted

8. Risk review and reclassification

Risk categories shall be reviewed:

- after every audit,
- after substantiated complaints,
- following major organizational changes,
- or following suspension or reinstatement.

Positive performance over time should allow movement into lower-risk categories.

The certification body should also periodically provide statistics on:

- distribution of risk classifications,
- complaint trends,
- suspension rates,
- non-conformity trends,
- and effectiveness of surveillance frequency.

This review should be conducted at least every two years to confirm that the methodology remains proportionate and effective.

9. Example calculation

Indicator	Score	Final Classification:
A1. Organization type	3	
A2. Producers	2	
A3. Product lines	3	
B1. Control system	2	
B2. Complaints	1	
B3. Audit findings	2	
TOTAL	13	Low Risk