

# ASI-ACCREDITATION SERVICES INTERNATIONAL GmbH

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## FSC Surveillance of GFA in 2009

Forest Management Assessment (Life Forestry Costa Rica SA)

Date of the assessment: 16 - 17 July 2009

*Final report*

	NAME	DATE
Report drafted by:	Carlos Ruiz-Garvia	9/11/2009
Reviewed by ASI:	Frank Katto	9/11/2009
Reviewed by CAB:	Gerhard Kuske	9/11/2009
Finalized by ASI:	Carlos Ruiz-Garvia	29/03/2010
Report last updated:		

## Credits

The author would like to thank the GFA Program and its audit team as well as Life Forestry's Costa Rica S.A. staff members for preparing and making the arrangements that made this assessment possible and efficient.

### 1 Background of the assessment

The operation audited by SGS QUALIFOR

Name of operation	Life Forestry Costa Rica SA
Type of certificate	Forest Management
Total area	FMU 1) 191 ha FMU 2) 68 ha, Total: 259 ha
Type of management	Teak plantations on private land.
Name of contact person	Ing. Manuel Solís
Address	Calle 31, Avenida 8 & 10 #840 San José, Costa Rica Apartado 986-7050 Costa Rica
Country	Costa Rica
URL	<a href="http://www.lifeforestry.com">www.lifeforestry.com</a>
E-mail address	<a href="mailto:info@lifeforestry.com">info@lifeforestry.com</a>

The certification history

<b>Brief description of the operation:</b>	<p>The Life Forestry plantations are located in the north west of Costa Rica in the province of Alajuela and are managed by Life Forestry Costa Rica S.A. and its cooperation partners.</p> <p>The teak plantations (<i>Tectona grandis</i>) were established in 2004 and consists of</p> <p>.2 FMUs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Finca La Aldea de Alajuela: 191 ha<sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>2) Finca Terra Verde del partico de Alajuela: 68 ha</li> </ol> <p>Mr. Manuel Solis - the certification manager, is a consultant and subcontracted to SEEV (<i>Mantenimiento Integral Holandes S.A.</i>). 7 persons (workers) work for SEEV in 2 FSC certified FMUs.</p> <p>The young trees are planted in mechanically processed soil at an intervals of 3 meters.</p> <p>LF regularly cuts back the young trees to encourage</p>
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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.lifeforestry.com/2/lfg-plantations/general-information/>

	<p>growth and to prevent the development of knots and irregularities.</p> <p>Thinning-out is usually undertaken after 4, 7, 10 and 15 years, with a selective harvesting after 10 and 15 years and in which commercially utilisable timber that is obtained constitutes an important proportion of the financial return. In a return-optimised system employed by the Life Forestry Group, some 210 trees of each initially planted 1000 are left standing until the end of the 20-year rotation period where all the remaining trees are felled.</p> <p>While preparations are made to transport the timber to the purchaser, the trees are felled, sorted and brought to the collection points. According its website, the LF projects a yield of about 284 cubic meters of commercially utilizable timber from the originally planted 1000 teak trees</p>
<b>Main GFA audit:</b>	27/08/07, fecha del informe (18/09/07, Juan Carlos Romero A.)
<b>Date of certificate issue</b>	GFA-FM/COC-001468,17/01/08
<b>Date of 1<sup>st</sup> GFA surveillance</b>	16/09/08 - 06/10/08 (Lead auditor: Juan Carlos Romero A.)
<b>Date of 2<sup>nd</sup> GFA surveillance</b>	This Audit

ASI Assessment Details

<b>Purpose of assessment</b>	FM GFA - ASI surveillance 2009
<b>ASI Assessors</b>	Carlos Ruiz-Garvia
<b>ASI Local Expert</b>	N/A
<b>Language</b>	Spanish
<b>Sites visited</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) La Aldea, Pocosol, San Carlos; Alajuela</li> <li>2) Finca Terra Verde del partico de Alajuela</li> </ol>

Assessment agenda

<b>Monday 17 August 2009</b>	
7:30 - 10:00	Departure from San Ramón Muelle de San Carlos
10:00 - 10:30	GFA Opening Meeting in Hotel Tilajari
10:30 - 13:00	Desk review
13:00 – 17:00	Field visits (FMU1)
<b>Tuesday 18 August 2009</b>	
7:00 - 13:00	Field visits (FMU 2)
13:00 - 16:00	Review of findings (Hotel Tilajari)
16:00 - 17:00	GFA Closing meeting (Hotel Tilajari)
17:00 - 18:00	ASI Closing meeting (Hotel Tilajari)

<b>Wednesday 18 August 2009</b>	
7:00 – 10:00	Departure to San Jose

People involved in the audit

<b>GFAteam</b>	Luis Mauricio Pineda (GFA regional coordinador, FM Lead auditor)
<b>Certified Operation</b>	Manuel Solís (Manager)

**2 Assessment objectives and planning**

Background:

This operation was selected for ASI annual surveillance assessment in Costa Rica to monitor GFA certification activities in Latino America. No formal complaint had been received from stakeholders. .

Objectives:

The objectives of this forest management surveillance assessment are:

1. Evaluation of certification body's performance in implementing the accredited certification system in accordance with FSC accreditation requirements.
2. Witness an audit team to determine whether or not the team:
  - a) adequately applies the procedures and instructions of the certification body;
  - b) members exhibit the characteristics of an auditor as detailed in ISO 19011;
  - c) has the required expertise of the sector in which the audit is being undertaken;
  - d) applies appropriate expertise in the correct sense;
  - e) undertakes the audit effectively and draws correct conclusions.
3. Evaluation of the conformity of the certificate holder with FSC and certification body's certification requirements in so far as this is necessary to verify the performance of the certification body.
4. Evaluation of stakeholder comments or complaints ASI received in relation to this operation.

ASI surveillance assessments are conducted according to the methodology of “*witness audits*” following the recommendations of the ISO/ IAF Accreditation Auditing Practice Group (APPG) published in 2005. ASI assessments are based on a sample of the valid certificates of the assessed CAB within the scope of accreditation. The number of assessments per year is determined by ASI surveillance policy; sampling is based on the ASI sampling procedure. Due to the nature of the ASI surveillance procedure,

assessment evidence is only based on a sample of the information available and therefore there is always an element of uncertainty in the assessment findings.

### 3 ASI stakeholder consultation process

The ASI stakeholder consultation process consists of 3 parts:

1. Announcement of the assessment on the FSC electronic fora about one month prior to the assessment to solicit stakeholder comments and other comments and complaints previously sent by stakeholders to the certification body;
2. Specific messages to local stakeholders requesting input for the ASI field audit;
3. Individual contact, meetings and interviews with selected key-stakeholders prior to, during and/or after the ASI field assessment.

No comments from stakeholders were received for this assessment.

### 4 Audit findings

#### 4.1 CAB AUDIT PERFORMANCE

CAB AUDIT PERFORMANCE	
FSC requirements	Findings and conclusions
Auditor qualification (20-004)	GFA lead auditor for this GFA surveillance audit is from Costa Rica, and has been working with GFA since 2008. He has followed GFA training course for lead auditors and has appropriate experience and qualifications to evaluate all aspects of the FSC P&C during the surveillance audit.  The auditor qualification was in compliance with FSC requirements.
Standard used (20-003)	Generic FM Standard Adapted to Costa Rica, Versión 1.0.
Stakeholder consultation (20-006)	Prior to the audit, ASI requested GFA to provide evidence of appropriate stakeholder consultation process in the certification process of Life Forestry Costa Rica S.A.  GFA office in Costa Rica sent a list of stakeholders that includes the contact person for the working group in Costa Rica, persons from the National Forest Services, persons from indigenous organization and NGOs, and other stakeholders (28 persons in total).  GFA contacted all the listed stakeholders via email. GFA reported to ASI that only 3 persons contacted GFA mainly for questions regarding changes in the

	<p>legal framework rather than the certificate holder performance.</p> <p>From the updated email stakeholder distribution list provided by GFA, the ASI assessor verified that relevant NGOs for this certification process were previously consulted.</p>
Evaluation process (20-007)	<p>Compliance with FSC-STD-20-007 V2-1 was evaluated during this ASI Assessment as GFA main evaluation took place in 2006.</p> <p>LF announced changes of the certificate scope in June 2009 because additional 68 ha were bought. LF also considered excision of areas from the scope of the certificate. However, following the discussions, there was no clarity that the FSC policy (FSC-POL-20-003) for excision of areas was not properly communicated to the client.</p> <p><b>See minor NC.GFA.FSC.FM.CR.2009.01.</b></p>
Decision making (20-002 Part 2)	<p>GFA reviewed all open Corrective Action Requests (CARs) and Recommendation (Observations) which were raised in previous audits.</p> <p>Recommendations not properly addressed by the company were raised as minor CARs and Minor CARs upgraded to Major CARs (e.g SAC 2008-3 upgraded) according to GFA procedures.</p> <p>GFA did adequately implement FSC requirements regarding conditions and corrective action requests.</p> <p>At the closing meeting, GFA announced a recommendation for suspension of Life Forestry Costa Rica S.A. due to the number and grade of Nonconformities. The ASI assessor considered this recommendation as appropriate and in line with FSC procedures.</p>
GFA Auditor performance (ISO 19011)	<p>No-noncompliance against this requirement was identified by ASI assessor in this assessment.</p>
GFA Audit report (20-008)	<p>By the time of drafting of this report no GFA report from this audit was available for review (GFA submitted the audit report on the 7/09.2009).</p> <p>The ASI assessor reviewed the last audit report. The Major Nonconformity SAC2007-05 (page 4, 10.4) is not consistent and not in line with the list of</p>

	<p>CARs provided in the GFA Audit report.</p> <p><b>See minor NC.GFA.FSC.FM.CR.2009.02.</b></p>
GFA Public summary (20-009)	No-noncompliance against this requirement was identified by ASI assessor in this assessment.

#### 4.2 OPERATION'S COMPLIANCE WITH CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

<b>OPERATION'S COMPLIANCE WITH CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS</b>	
<b>FSC requirements</b>	<b>Findings and conclusions</b>
Principle 1	<p>Gasoline tanks were found next to the house in the Terra Verde which is not in line with FSC requirements and legal requirements for HSE. In addition, no first aid kit was available in Terra Verde. A major NC was appropriately announced by GFA to the certificate holder.</p> <p>Throughout the audit, the auditors identified that the workers were not appropriately informed about the ownership of the company. Contracts between SEEV, Life Forestry and the manager couldn't be clarified and remained unclear. GFA announced a Major NC to the certificate holder.</p>
Principle 2	Not included in the scope of this audit.
Principle 3	Not included in the scope of this audit.
Principle 4	<p>A number of nonconformities mainly related to safety issues in particular in the FMU "Terra Verde" were announced by GFA in relation to 4.1.6., 4.1.7., and a Major NC against 4.2.</p> <p>No-noncompliance to GFA against these requirements was identified by ASI assessor in this assessment.</p>
Principle 5	No-noncompliance to GFA against these requirements was identified by ASI assessor in this assessment.
Principle 6	<p>Eight minor nonconformities and a major nonconformity against P6 (use and inappropriate disposal of pesticides) were announced by GFA in relation to the FMU "Terra Verde".</p> <p>No-noncompliance to GFA against these requirements was identified by the ASI assessor in this assessment.</p>
Principle 7	<p>Two major NCs against 7.1 and 7.3 for a lack of FMP for Terra Verde and insufficient training to Workers were announced by GFA.</p> <p>No-noncompliance to GFA against these requirements was identified by ASI lead assessor in this assessment.</p>
Principle 8	Not included in the scope of this audit.

Principle 9	GFA raised a major NC against P9 (Ref. <i>Guía para la identificación de HCVF</i> ). This major was considered as adequate by the ASI lead assessor.
Principle 10	The company didn't demonstrate compliance against 10.9 and GFA announced a Major NC.  GFA raised 3 minor NCs against 10.1.3., 10.5.4 and 10.7.8
Chain of custody issues and controlled wood	No noncompliances were identified in relation to CoC requirements.
Use of FSC trademark	GFA identified serious misuse of FSC logo in <a href="http://www.lifeforestry.com">www.lifeforestry.com</a> web site. Life Forestry is promoting its certificate for LF Ecuador even though: LF Ecuador is not certified. GFA appropriately addressed this Nonconformity

## 5 Nonconformities and observations

Major CAR(s)	Minor CAR(s)	Observations
0	2	0

See nonconformity reports (attached) for details.

*Note 1: the failure to successfully address MAJOR CARs within the given timeline may result in disciplinary measures, including the suspension of accreditation.*

*Note 2: Observations are related to an area of concern, a process, document, or activity that is currently conforming that may if not improved, result in a nonconforming system, product or service. Thus, observations which are not considered by the CB may lead to corrective action requests in the future.*

## 6 Conclusion and recommendation

The GFA audit team conducted a professional and systematic surveillance assessment.

Based on the findings of this assessment, the ASI lead assessor recommends to FSC AC the continuation of the FSC forest management accreditation for GFA, subject to the timely closing of the nonconformities identified during the audit and specified in the nonconformity reports (attached).

### Attachments

Annex 1: Nonconformity reports (NCRs)

Annex 1

<h2 style="margin: 0;">ACCREDITATION SERVICES INTERNATIONAL GmbH</h2> <p style="margin: 5px 0 0 0;">Charles-de-Gaulle-Str. 5 • 53113 Bonn, Germany • Tel.: +49 - 228 - 367 66 0 • info@accreditation-services.com</p>				
<h3 style="margin: 0;">NONCONFORMITY / CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUEST</h3>				
REF. No.	NC.GFA.FSC.FM.CR.2009.01.	Date	17 July 2009	
Nonconformity detected by (name of auditor)		Carlos Ruiz-Garvia		
Through (e.g. office audit, document review)		FM surveillance Audit 2009		
Nonconformity		Status	<input type="checkbox"/> MAJOR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MINOR <input type="checkbox"/> OBSERVATION	
LF announced changes of the certificate scope in June 2009 because additional 68 ha were bought. LF also proposed excision from the scope of the certificate. However, following the discussions, there was no clarity that FSC policy (FSC-POL-20-003) for excision of areas was not properly communicated to the client.				
Normative Reference(s)		FSC-STD-20-007 V2-1, Clause 2.1, FSC-POL-20-003:2004		
Corrective Action Request: <b>CB shall implement appropriate measures to correct the nonconformity detected in this audit and described above within the given timeline. The measures shall be adequate to correct the current problems and to eliminating causes of nonconformities in order to avoid recurrence.</b>				
Timeline for implementation		Next office audit		
Corrective Action implemented by Certification Body				
<b>Here: describe action taken in detail</b>				
Corrective Action evaluated by ASI				
<b>Here: describe conclusion in detail</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> CLOSED <input type="checkbox"/> UPGRADED <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER DECISION*		Name auditor:		Date:
Comments:				

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### NONCONFORMITY / CORRECTIVE ACTION REQUEST

REF. No.	<b>NC.GFA.FSC.FM.CR.2009.02.</b>	Date	17 July 2009	
Nonconformity detected by (name of auditor)		<b>Carlos Ruiz-Garvia</b>		
Through (e.g. office audit, document review)		<b>FM surveillance Audit 2009</b>		
Nonconformity		Status	<input type="checkbox"/> MAJOR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>MINOR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> OBSERVATION	
The ASI assessor reviewed the last audit report. The Major Nonconformity SAC2007-05 (page 4, 10.4) is not consistent and not in line with the list of CARs provided in the GFA Audit report.				
Normative Reference(s)		FSC-STD-20-008 v2.1., 4.4 sub clause 5.1.		
Corrective Action Request: <b>CB shall implement appropriate measures to correct the nonconformity detected in this audit and described above within the given timeline. The measures shall be adequate to correct the current problems and to eliminating causes of nonconformities in order to avoid recurrence.</b>				
Timeline for implementation		<b>Next office audit</b>		
Corrective Action implemented by Certification Body				
<b>Here: describe action taken in detail</b>				
Corrective Action evaluated by ASI				
<b>Here: describe conclusion in detail</b>				
<input type="checkbox"/> CLOSED <input type="checkbox"/> UPGRADED <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER DECISION*		Name auditor:		Date:
Comments:				