



Implementation of Annex H: Frequently Asked Questions

Annex H, Interim Indicators – is an important part of the new Standard and is key for its successful implementation. It is imperative that certification bodies and certificate holders correctly understand the Annex. This information needs to be read in parallel to the National Forest Stewardship Standard (NFSS), including Annex H.

When do Annex H interim indicators come into effect and when do they expire?

Interim indicators are in effect until the *achievement date* which is the date when *The Organization* must demonstrate conformance to the Standard *Indicator*. At this time, the validity of the interim indicator expires. (Reference: Annex H, second bullet of Part 1)

When are Certificate Holders (CH) required to be in conformance with interim indicators?

The tables below represent an alternative way of illustrating when certificate holders are required to be in conformance with interim indicators and some identified Standards indicators.

“Year 1” is the first evaluation under the new Standard, “Year 2” and “Year 3” are the second and third evaluations respectively.

In summary, the certificate holders **shall be in conformance with all interim indicators at the first evaluation (year1), regardless of whether the interim indicators are being audited by the certification body or not.**

Table 1: Landscape Indicators Conformance Schedule (Ref. Table H-1)

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
6.1.0 (see list of specific indicators from the old Standard in NFSS Table H-1)	6.1.0 (see list of specific indicators from the old Standard in NFSS Table H-1)	
6.1.4i	6.1.4	6.1.4
6.8.1i	6.8.1	6.8.1
		6.8.2
6.8.3i	6.8.3	6.8.3
		6.8.4

Table 2: Criterion 6.5 Conformance Schedule (Ref. Table H-2)

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
6.5.0 (C 6.4 of old Standard)	6.5.0 (C 6.4 of old Standard)	
6.5.1i	6.5.1	6.5.1
6.5.2i	6.5.2	6.5.2
		6.5.3
		6.5.4
		6.5.5
		6.5.6
6.5.7i	6.5.7i	6.5.7
6.5.8i	6.5.8i	6.5.8
		6.5.9



		6.5.10
6.5.11i	6.5.11i	6.5.11
		6.5.12

Is the Certification Body (CB) required to audit all interim indicators at year 1?

Following all relevant FSC standards and policies, it is the responsibility of the CB to establish the audit schedule and scope including when Principle 6 is audited. While there is no obligation for CBs to audit Principle 6 during the period when interim indicators are effective, CBs are strongly encouraged to audit interim indicators to assess the progress made towards meeting the Standard indicator and to foster a smooth transition.

How to deal with the following scenarios?

1. Transition of landscape indicators from the old regional standards to the NFSS

Situation:

- The certificate holder is transitioning from the National Boreal Standard to the new NFSS.

What are the CH conformance requirements?

- During the first evaluation of the new NFSS, the certificate holder needs to continue to be in conformance with the landscape related indicators 6.1.5, 6.1.6, 6.3.4, 6.3.5, 6.3.6 and 6.3.12 of the National Boreal Standard and will need to be in conformance with the interim indicators 6.1.4i, 6.8.1i and 6.8.3i (See Table 1 – Year 1 above).
- During the second evaluation of the new NFSS, the certificate holder needs to continue to be in conformance with the landscape related indicators 6.1.5, 6.1.6, 6.3.4, 6.3.5, 6.3.6 and 6.3.12 of the National Boreal Standard and will need to be in conformance with the new NFSS indicators 6.1.4, 6.8.1 and 6.8.3 (See Table 1 – Year 2 above).
- During the third evaluation, the certificate holder will need to be in conformance with all the landscape indicators of the new NFSS.

What are the CB auditing requirements?

- The CB will audit the indicators listed in Table 1 if these indicators are planned in the audit program.
- There is no obligation for the CB to audit any of the old indicators during the two years period when the old landscape indicators of the National Boreal Standard are effective or the interim indicators, if they are not planned in the scope of the audit.
- However, CB are encouraged to audit these indicators during the interim period.

2. Implementation of Indicator 6.5.7 of the NFSS

Situation:

- Indicator 6.5.7 is planned to be evaluated during the first evaluation to the new NFSS.

What are the CH conformance requirements?





- During the first evaluation with the new NFSS, the certificate holder needs to be in conformance with interim indicator 6.5.7i (*Evidence is provided to demonstrate how each of the numbered points in Indicator 6.5.7 is being, or will be addressed in identifying the total proposed area of the Conservation Area Network*.*)
- During the second evaluation, the certificate holder will still need to be in conformance with the interim indicator 6.5.7i.
- During the third evaluation, the certificate holder will need to be fully in conformance with the new indicator 6.5.7 (*The Conservation Areas Network* comprises a minimum of 10% of the area of the Management Unit*. The extent of the Conservation Areas Network* on the Management Unit* is identified by considering (...)*)

What are the CB auditing requirements?

- During the first evaluation of the new NFSS, the CB will audit interim indicator 6.5.7i.

Rationale:

- To fully meet indicator 6.5.7 of the new NFSS, several previous actions are required (e.g. identification of gaps in the Conservation Areas Network) that would make it difficult to meet this requirement during the normal one-year schedule.

3. Criterion 6.5 is not in the scope of the first evaluation

Situation:

- Indicators of Criterion 6.5 of the NFSS are not in the scope of the first evaluation to the new NFSS. In this scenario, Criterion 6.5 is scheduled to be audited only during the second evaluation with the new Standard.

What are the CH conformance requirements?

- During the first evaluation with the new NFSS, the certificate holder needs to be in conformance with all the indicators listed under “Year 1” of the Table 2 above regarding Criterion 6.5
- During the second evaluation of the new NFSS, the certificate holder will need to be in conformance with all the indicators listed under ‘Year 2’ of the Table 2 above regarding Criterion 6.5.

What are the CB auditing requirements?

- During the first evaluation of the new NFSS, no indicator of Criterion 6.5 will be audited.
- During the second evaluation of the new NFSS, the CB will audit the indicators listed under ‘Year 2’ of the Table 2 above regarding Criterion 6.5.

Rationale:

- Even if 6.5 is not in the scope of the audit evaluation, it is still expected that the certificate holder meets the requirements so that at the time of the next evaluation, the certificate holder is in conformance with the interim indicator schedule.