



Conformity Assessment Body Manual

Agricultural Production Standard & Capture Fisheries Standard

Version 3.0.0

Fair Trade USA

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1. Introduction

Fair Trade USA a nonprofit organization, is the leading certifier of Fair Trade Certified™ products in North America. Fair Trade USA and partnering Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) audit and certify supply chains to help ensure that farmers, fishers, and workers are paid fair prices and wages, work in safe conditions, protect the environment, and earn community development funds to improve their lives.

Fair Trade USA empowers farmers and workers to fight poverty in ways that improve lives and protect the environment. Rather than creating dependency on aid, it harnesses the power of markets to help producers, businesses, and consumers alike to invest in a better future.

2. Scope

This *Conformity Assessment Body Manual (CAB Manual)* applies to all 3rd party organizations approved as a CAB by Fair Trade USA to support *Agricultural Production Standard (APS)* and *Capture Fisheries Standard (CFS)* assurance under the Fair Trade USA certification programs. CABs must adhere to the requirements described in this *CAB Manual* to enter and maintain a working relationship with Fair Trade USA.

Where the terms *assessment*, *audit*, *auditor*, *certification*, *conformance*, *personnel*, *records*, or other related terms are used in this document, they are referring to people and activities of the CAB acting on behalf of Fair Trade USA, and do not apply to the people or processes of the CAB involved in carrying out such activities under any other scheme.

3. Normative Documents

- 3.1. The Fair Trade USA certification program and Fair Trade USA standards are explained through normative documents: policies, guidance documents, and interpretation notes that describe requirements and activities which CABs and Certificate Holders are required to follow. These normative documents are made available by Fair Trade USA on its website and communicated to CABs.
- 3.2. This *CAB Manual* is the fundamental normative document for CABs. Other particularly relevant documents to be used in conjunction with the *CAB Manual* are Fair Trade USA's *Quality Manual* and the *Program Assurance Manual (PAM)* associated with applicable Fair Trade USA programs.

4. Eligibility Requirements for CABs

- 4.1. The Fair Trade USA *Quality Manual* outlines the approach Fair Trade USA uses in developing CAB relationships.
- 4.2. CABs must use a management system approach to operating their Fair Trade USA assurance program. The management system approach must be consistent with the management system requirements in *International Standardization Organization (ISO)* or *International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)* 17065, ISO/IEC 17021, or a similar standard for conformity assessment bodies conducting certification.

- 4.3. CABs must be approved to conduct audits for one or more relevant sustainability or social accountability standards or schemes such as a national organic standard, SA8000, GLOBALG.A.P., Rainforest Alliance, etc.
- 4.4. Fair Trade USA prefers that CABs who will provide audit services to the Factory Program be a member of *Association of Professional Social Compliance Auditors* (APSCA).
- 4.5. Fair Trade USA ensures that CABs have all the necessary, up-to-date documents to ensure professional auditing and certification procedures. Fair Trade USA periodically updates program standards and assurance systems and will communicate any and all such changes to CABs as soon as possible.
- 4.6. CABs shall appoint a contact person for all questions and requests from Fair Trade USA and ensure availability for answering questions and provide information related to any oversight activity.
- 4.7. CABs shall share the cost of audits performed with Fair Trade USA no less than annually in a manner instructed by Fair Trade USA.
- 4.8. If a CAB wishes to begin working with Fair Trade USA, they should:
 - Review the requirements of this manual;
 - Evaluate whether the systems of the CAB can meet the needs of Fair Trade USA; and
 - Contact certification@fairtradeusa.org to propose a potential business relationship

5. Decision Authority

- 5.1. CABs shall recognize all decisions made by Fair Trade USA related to certification or the Fair Trade USA certification program. Fair Trade USA retains ultimate authority over the ownership of its certification program, partner relationships, name, logo, and seal use.
- 5.2. CABs shall hold full responsibility for actions and decisions made by themselves while acting on behalf of Fair Trade USA.
- 5.3. Fair Trade USA retains sole authority to grant exceptions to the certification process or standards.

6. Conformity Assessment Personnel

- 6.1. The Fair Trade USA *Quality Manual* outlines the fundamental requirements for CAB personnel. The specifications below are in addition to those listed in the *Quality Manual*.
- 6.2. Conformity assessment personnel include technical reviewers, auditors, and any other individuals involved with conducting, reviewing, or making decisions regarding conformity assessment activities, whether as employees or contractors for the CAB. Individuals involved in conformity assessment activities only in an administrative capacity, and who are not engaged in technical review or decisions, are not considered conformity assessment personnel subject to the following qualifications and training.
- 6.3. CABs shall share all necessary and relevant information and instructions with all conformity assessment personnel, including timely communication of any updates.
- 6.4. CABs must keep a list of all conformity assessment personnel and record of the professional qualifications and trainings for each.

- 6.5. CABs shall ensure that conformity assessment personnel receive initial training and ongoing professional development appropriate for their position, including providing periodic performance reviews to any personnel regularly conducting conformity assessment activities.
- 6.6. All conformity assessment personnel are held to the same standard of quality and requirements for training and qualifications, regardless of employment type or status (whether employees or contractors).
- 6.7. Conformity assessment personnel must:
- Provide the CAB with a resume or Curriculum Vitae that demonstrates applicable experience in the field and knowledge and skills in relevant disciplines
 - Have university-level education (or equivalent)
 - Have a minimum of two years (five years for Lead Auditors) professional experience in a relevant field
 - Have work experience that involves technical report writing or equivalent professional written communication
 - Declare to the CAB and document any conflicts of interest (as per the Fair Trade USA *Quality Manual*), and disclose:
 - If the personnel provided consulting for the company being audited within previous two years
 - If the personnel has a financial interest in the company being audited
 - If the personnel has a personal relationship with personnel from the company being audited that would bias the auditor's ability for objective evaluation
 - Adhere to all CAB and Fair Trade USA guidelines and procedures.
- 6.8. In addition to the qualification requirements for conformity assessment personnel, all auditors must have:
- Knowledge of national and local laws where audits are to be conducted
 - For APS and CFS audits: Sufficient language proficiency to be able to write the audit report in, and read and understand one of the officially published translations of the Fair Trade USA standard to which they are auditing
 - Knowledge of international labor and human rights standards including International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions
 - Successfully completed ISO 9001 Lead Auditor training, or comparable auditor training
 - Successfully completed training to Fair Trade USA standards, compliance criteria and auditing methodologies, conducted by either Fair Trade USA or the CAB
- 6.9. In addition to the qualification requirements for auditors above, Lead Auditors must have, for APS or CFS:
- Observed a Fair Trade USA audit conducted by a Lead Auditor;
 - Conducted at least one Fair Trade USA audit (on-site or hybrid) that is witnessed by a Lead Auditor, and judged by the Lead Auditor to be competent to perform audits; and
 - Been approved by Fair Trade USA for Lead Auditor status based on successful completion of the witnessed audit(s), positive evaluation by the witness Lead Auditor, and review of other audit performance for quality and competency necessary in a Lead Auditor
- 6.10. When expanding into new geographies, there may not be a qualified Lead Auditor available to facilitate the training requirements described in 6.9. In these cases, the CAB may provisionally

approve auditor that meets all other requirements in this section. The CAB has up to 1 year from the date of the provisional approval to meet the requirements in 6.9

- 6.11. CABs shall coordinate Lead Auditor approval and cover any associated costs. Documentation of the witness audits, evaluation and approval shall be kept as part of the auditor's personnel record.
- 6.12. Only Lead Auditors may conduct audits individually. Auditors not documented as approved as a Lead Auditor may only conduct audits as part of a team of multiple auditors.
- 6.13. Where there are Lead Auditors and secondary auditors, the Lead Auditor bears full responsibility for ensuring all audit activities are conducted correctly and completely.
- 6.14. CABs shall implement an ongoing calibration program for auditor and assurance personnel to ensure uniformity of application of the standard and assurance system requirements.

7. Professional Conduct

- 7.1. All representatives of the CAB shall conduct themselves professionally with all businesses and individuals, in accordance with ISO 19011 Guidelines regarding professional conduct, and as outlined in the *Quality Manual*.
- 7.2. CABs shall be transparent with Fair Trade USA, applicants, and Certificate Holders on all certification related matters within the bounds of applicable confidentiality requirements. CABs shall not withhold any information relating to their Fair Trade USA certification program from Fair Trade USA and shall respond to any communications from Fair Trade USA in a timely manner.

8. Records to be Maintained by CABs

- 8.1. CABs shall maintain a regularly updated, publicly available list of Certificate Holders certified by the CAB on its website (name and Fair Trade USA ID).
- 8.2. CABs shall maintain a schedule of certification fees that is made available upon request to applicants and certificate holders and must be transparent about anticipated costs to the auditee (including but not limited to any additional administrative fees such as exception review, document translation or noncompliance review).
- 8.3. CABs shall retain records to demonstrate that all certification process requirements have been effectively fulfilled.
- 8.4. CABs shall keep all records and information obtained in the course of performing its work confidential in accordance with the mutual non-disclosure agreement between Fair Trade USA and CAB.
- 8.5. CABs shall keep the following records for at least seven years and ensure they are readily available in electronic format for evaluation by Fair Trade USA:
 - a) Conformance assessment personnel (staff and auditors) records including contracts, CVs, qualifications, confidentiality agreements, training records, declarations of potential conflicts of interest and performance reviews;
 - b) Certification applications;
 - c) Audit services agreements;
 - d) Audit reports and associated records;

- e) Records of certification decisions and notification of such decisions; and
- f) Certification complaints, appeals and disputes, including records of review and follow-up on such complaints, appeals, or disputes

9. Communication to Fair Trade USA

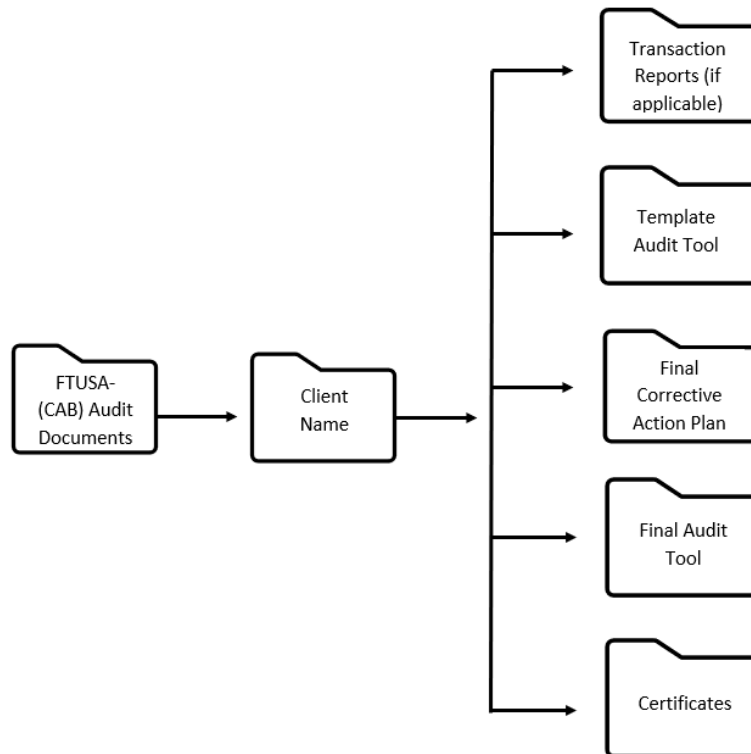
- 9.1. CABs shall copy Fair Trade USA on email communication with applicants and Certificate Holders as per instructions provided by Fair Trade USA.
- 9.3 Fair Trade USA will conduct regular meetings with each CAB to discuss operational and oversight issues. These topics may include:
 - Questions/Clarifications on interpretation of standards;
 - Questions/Clarifications on audit and certification procedures;
 - Feedback on Calibration Assessments and other aspects related to CAB Oversight;
 - Collect/share information relevant for future CAB/Auditor trainings; and
 - Discussion of specific cases/operative questions/program development
- 9.4 CABs shall use the Fair Trade USA audit management systems as instructed by Fair Trade USA to communicate audit documents and certificates.
- 9.5 CABs shall request Audit Tools for each audit from Fair Trade USA at least 3 weeks before the date of the audit by emailing Audits@fairtradeusa.org with the following information:

Fair Trade USA ID:
Name of Auditee:
Date of Signed Service Agreement:
Audit Start Date:
Audit End Date:
Tentative or Confirmed:
Type of Audit: [Initial Evaluation; Surveillance; Recertification; Follow-Up]
Audit Year:
Additional Products to be added to scope (not applicable to Year 0 audits):

- 9.6 If there are any problems with an Audit Tool, the CAB should contact audits@fairtradeusa.org.
- 9.7 CABs shall transfer files relating to audits and Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) using the cloud-based system, Box. When a file is uploaded by the CAB to the Box folder, Fair Trade USA Certification team receives a notification.
 - a) Fair Trade USA sets up and shares a Box folder with each CAB with full Editor permission (see the diagram below). When a CAB requests an audit template, Fair Trade USA creates a folder with the name of the client and the Audit ID number. The folder will be immediately visible within the CAB's folder. Fair Trade USA will use this Box folder to share files associated with that audit

i.e., Audit Template and Transaction Reports) and the CAB shall retrieve these documents using the link provided.

- b) The CAB shall use the same Box folder to submit the final Audit Report, final CAP and current Certificate to Fair Trade USA. In case the audit does not identify non-compliances (NCs), the CAB shall upload the final non-conformity report (NCR) in the folder called *Final Corrective Action* at the same time the final audit tool is uploaded.



10. CAB Assurance Activities

10.1. CABs shall conduct the following assurance activities on behalf of Fair Trade USA according to the requirements and process laid out in this manual, Fair Trade USA's *PAM(s)* and other normative documents:

- a) Prepare audits;
- b) Conduct audits;
- b) Complete audit reports;
- c) Perform follow up assurance activities as directed;
- d) Manage CAPs;
- e) Review applicants for certification; and
- f) Make certification decisions and issue certificates

10.2. Exception requests for Certificate Holders shall be sent first to the CAB. The CAB will review the request and supporting documentation, and send both within 7 days to Fair Trade USA (certification@fairtradeusa.org) with an assessment of whether the exception would result in a

dilution or reversal of the impact of benefits intended by the program requirement for which the exception is being sought.

10.3. For Certificate Holders who have been granted exceptions, CABs shall ensure audits review compliance with all stipulations in the relevant *Exception Guidance* and *Exception Granted* form.

10.4. The specific timelines and activities for initial, surveillance and recertification audits can be found in the *PAM(s)*.

11. Oversight of CABs by Fair Trade USA

11.1 The general approach to CAB oversight is described in the *Quality Manual*. Specific requirements for CABs under the Fair Trade USA oversight program are listed below.

11.2 Fair Trade USA annually assesses CAB performance to identify recurrent assessment issues, or actions out of compliance with operational requirements laid out in the relevant normative documents.

11.3 The annual performance assessment process is designed to hold approved CABs accountable for delivering high quality services in accordance with Fair Trade USA requirements, and to hold Fair Trade USA accountable for ensuring that quality of service is delivered by rigorously and regularly assessing CAB performance, in the spirit of continuous improvement.

11.4 The assessment process supports:

- a) CAB compliance with each of Fair Trade USA Program's requirements
- b) An understanding of and adherence to the assurance model employed by the relevant program
- c) The integrity of certification decisions and related supply chains
- d) Delivery of the highest quality of service for Fair Trade USA Certificate Holders

11.5 The scope of the CAB oversight program is CAB compliance to the requirements in this CAB Manual, the relevant *PAM(s)*, and any supporting policies, procedures, and guidance materials.

11.6 Oversight activities are carried out by Fair Trade USA staff or field consultants who are wholly independent from the CABs and their affiliated auditors.

11.7 Fair Trade USA Certification Leadership is responsible for designating only qualified individuals to perform oversight activities. Qualifications include:

- a) Having worked within the relevant Fair Trade USA program for at least one year, in a role coordinating compliance with Fair Trade USA requirements with CABs, developing, monitoring, and maintaining audit procedures, and/or training CABs and auditors on following procedures and tracking audit activities throughout the year.
- b) Similar experience resulting in the ability to demonstrate equivalent competencies
- c) Having completed ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems) or 19011 (Auditing Management Systems) training.

11.8 As the oversight body and scheme owner, Fair Trade USA has authority to define the approach to oversight, to set the requirements and components of its oversight program, and to conduct oversight of all approved CABs and assess assurance providers and auditors' performance.

11.9 CABs and auditors conducting assessments to the programs covered by this oversight program must agree to submit to oversight activities, comply with the requirements listed herein, and provide Fair Trade USA with any requested information in service of assessing their performance.

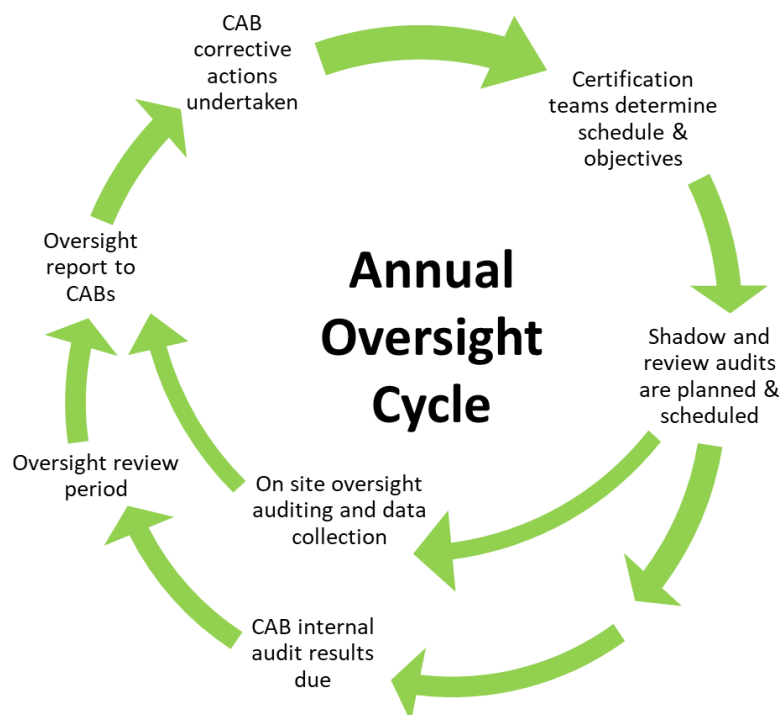
11.10 As a component of this authority, should any findings be issued as a result of oversight activities, Fair Trade USA has the authority to require the issues be addressed and remediated and issue sanctions if not resolved by indicated timelines.

11.11 Oversight activities are conducted annually, with some activities (witness audits and calibration assessment) taking place throughout the year and some activities undertaken during the annual oversight period, a two-week window during which CAB internal audit results, review and witness audits, and other CAB activities from the previous 12 months, or since the date of the last oversight period, are reviewed. The oversight period takes place in October each year typically.

11.12 The Fair Trade USA certification program oversight team sets and communicates to the CAB the annual oversight period and activity schedule each year. The timing of the oversight review period may not vary more than three months (one quarter) from year to year.

11.13 At the end of the oversight review period, Fair Trade USA provides each CAB with an oversight report detailing performance regarding each oversight component and compliance with requirements for the relevant program.

11.14 Calibration exercises and the auditor training program are informed by the performance results and insights described in the annual oversight report.



12. CAB Internal Audit

12.1 CABs are required to conduct an annual internal audit to assess compliance with the requirements of the relevant Fair Trade USA program and ensure they are meeting auditor competency requirements, obligations to clients, and requirements of the assurance system.

12.2 CABs use the internal audit template developed by Fair Trade USA and provided each year as part of the oversight period planning process. This template defines a selection of requirements to include in the evaluation each year.

12.3 Results of the internal audit must be provided to Fair Trade USA before the beginning of the oversight period, including a description of the evidence of compliance and NC with all Fair Trade USA requirements. If corrective actions are identified and/or implemented by the CAB, these must be provided to Fair Trade USA.

13. Audit Sample Assessment

- 13.1. During each CAB's annual oversight period, a percentage of the audits conducted since the last oversight period are sampled by Fair Trade USA to review compliance with the requirements for each stage in the audit process.
- 13.2. This evaluation includes operational requirements and as well as requirements related to the correct interpretation of the standard and Fair Trade USA guidelines for compliance evaluation.
- 13.3. The sample is a stratified random sample considering the main regions and the program. In addition, the sample always includes any audits for which a witness assessment was conducted.
- 13.4. CABs shall provide to Fair Trade USA the following information for each review audit selected:
 - a) All audit annexes required in the *PAM*;
 - b) Audit Plan; and
 - c) Updated application form

14. Calibration Assessment

- 14.1. A calibration assessment consists of analyzing the approach followed by the auditor and the CAB when evaluating compliance of specific topics or sections of the standard and serve to identify inconsistencies in interpretation between auditors, CABs and/or regions.
- 14.2. The calibration assessments include:
 - a) Comparing evidence presented with auditor's interpretation of compliance to see if similar and correct conclusions are being drawn, and
 - b) Comparing accepted CAPs and evidence of implementation, to determine if there are major variations in the approach for the NC closure.
- 14.3. The number of calibration assessments in the period under evaluation, the topics covered, and the audit reports selected for each calibration assessment are chosen at the sole discretion of Fair Trade USA and determined by program needs. Usually, topics of importance to stakeholders, issues considered priority or topics identified as being at high risk for NC are selected.
- 14.4. If the assessment results in significant questions of consistent requirement interpretation, Fair Trade USA will note the requirements in the oversight report and address them through planned calibration exercises and CAB training.

15. Witness of CAB Audits

- 14.1. Witness audits are conducted by Fair Trade USA personnel observing the CAB's audit team during a regularly scheduled audit. The purpose of a witness audit is to assess auditor performance and to ensure audits are conducted according to Fair Trade USA's requirements.
- 14.2. The Fair Trade USA witness auditor is not considered a member of the audit team and is not responsible for assessing Certificate Holder compliance during the audit. Rather, their role is to observe the auditors and their execution of the audit, to assess adherence to Fair Trade USA requirements and use of best practices in auditing methods.

- 14.3 Fair Trade USA aims to witness approximately 2% of all audits conducted in a given program over the course of one year, with the precise number of witness audits determined by Fair Trade USA. Witness audit frequency is intended to provide a representative picture of auditors' field performance and auditing skills.
- 14.4 Witness audits are selected at the sole discretion of Fair Trade USA.
- 14.5 The CABs and auditors are provided with a report within three weeks of receipt of the audit report, noting the review of the auditor's performance in key areas.

16. Complaints Against CABs

- 15.1 A complaint received at any point during the year informs the selection of on-site review and witness audits, which may be conducted as a component of complaint and allegation investigations.
- 15.2 Complaints from the preceding year are reviewed during the annual oversight period as an indicator of CAB performance.

16. Annual Oversight Findings

- 16.1. Fair Trade USA may issue findings against any requirement in this *CAB Manual* (including any ISO standard requirements referenced therein), the relevant *PAM*, and any supporting normative policies, procedures, or guidance materials relevant to the program and/or audit.
- 16.2. If Fair Trade USA observes NCs in the scope of the CAB's audit which do not appear to have been detected during the audit or communicated to the auditee at the closing meeting, Fair Trade USA shall issue a finding to the CAB for inadequate evaluation of the relevant requirement, as required by the relevant *PAM*. The same applies for NCs identified that are not based on a correct interpretation of the standard or the compliance evaluation procedures.
- 16.3. If Fair Trade USA observes behaviors or actions on the part of the auditor that are in NC with any requirements, including individual auditor competency and conduct requirements, as noted in the relevant *PAM*, Fair Trade USA shall issue a finding.
- 16.4. All findings are issued to the CAB, rather than to the individual auditor, as the expectation for development and implementation of management systems that support compliance with relevant Fair Trade USA requirements rests with the CAB, not with the individual auditor.
- 16.5. Findings are formally issued, in writing, in the report given to the CAB following the oversight activity. Fair Trade USA issues annual oversight review reports, which contain a compilation of findings from all oversight activities, as well as witness audit reports and review audit reports.
- 16.6. Written findings shall include:
 - a) A reference to the normative requirement;
 - b) A statement of non-conformity;
 - c) A narrative description of the evidence of nonconformity;
 - d) The type of nonconformity; and
 - e) The timeline for corrective actions to be undertaken

- 16.7. CABs have the right to contest findings issued by Fair Trade USA through oversight activities. If a CAB wishes to contest a finding, they must submit an argument within two weeks of the finding being issued. Fair Trade USA will respond to all contested findings within one month of submission by the CAB to indicate whether the finding still stands, changes have been made to one component, or the finding has been rescinded.
- 16.8. For every finding issued, CABs must respond using the Oversight CAP template, and must conduct a root cause analysis and corrective actions to address any NCs. All relevant sections of the CAP template must be completed by the CAB by the due date listed for each finding.
- 16.9. Fair Trade USA findings include critical NCs, moderate NCs, and opportunities for improvement.
- 16.10. Critical NCs:
- a) Demonstrate a pattern of behavior, actions or audit results that call into question the CAB's systems to ensure the validity of the certification
 - b) Indicate a significant breakdown in systems that support key process requirements, transparency, and customer service with the Certificate Holder
 - c) Result from NCs that were not addressed by the CAB within the agreed upon timeline
 - d) Are repeatedly issued, despite corrective actions having been undertaken
- 16.11. NCs issued during a witness audit are considered critical if they:
- a) Point to a systematic problem, for example numerous NCs issued against multiple requirements, with the same root cause; or
 - b) Call into question the validity of the certification decision, (for example due to questions of auditor objectivity or issues of conflict of interest)
- 16.12. NCs are considered moderate if they:
- a) Are isolated incidents of NC with individual requirements
 - b) Do not represent systematic issues with CAB requirements
 - c) Do not jeopardize a CAB's ability to perform audits, or an auditor's ability to render certification decisions in compliance with the program requirements
- 16.13. Opportunities for improvement are issued when there is no evidence of NC with a requirement, but Fair Trade USA wishes to note behavior or activities which could lead to future NCs, or which, if altered, would support greater compliance with a requirement. Opportunities for improvement do not require a root cause analysis to be conducted, nor are responses mandatory. If a CAB wishes to make changes to address the issue noted, they may describe the changes made in the template.
- 16.14. Responses to findings issued in witness audit reports are ONLY required for critical NCs.
- 16.15. Responses to moderate NCs are due within six months of the close of the annual oversight review period. If a CAB does not sufficiently address a moderate NC in the required timeline, and no extension has been formally requested, the finding shall be increased to a critical NC, and a new deadline established for corrective actions.
- 16.16. Responses to critical NCs are due within three months of the finding being issued, regardless of when in the oversight cycle the finding was issued.
- 16.17. Fair Trade USA reserves the right to set and hold CABs accountable to custom timelines for individual NCs, as deemed necessary.

- 16.18. Findings that are issued against the same normative reference, after corrective actions have already been submitted to Fair Trade USA in response to previous findings, are considered repeat NCs. Three consecutive repetitions of a moderate NC shall result in the finding being raised to a critical NC, with a commensurate deadline for response. In cases of repeat moderate NCs, Fair Trade USA reserves the right to set response timelines on a case by case basis.
- 16.19. Findings that are issued against the same normative reference, for which corrective actions have not already been submitted to Fair Trade USA, are considered cumulative findings. Cumulative findings are assessed during the annual oversight review period.
- 16.20. CABs may request an extension of the deadline for submission of a response to a NC. Requests for extension must be submitted at least one month prior to the due date of the response and include justification for the request. The deadline of critical NCs may be extended one time, not to exceed an additional three months,
- 16.21. Following a CAB's submission of response to a moderate or critical NC, Fair Trade USA will respond within one month, indicating in the written response whether the corrective actions undertaken adequately address the NC or not. If not, Fair Trade USA may extend the timeline of the finding, and request that the CAB resubmit their response.

17. Suspension of CABs

- 17.1. The following situations will result in the suspension of a CAB:
- a) If a CAB does not sufficiently address a critical NC in the required timeline
 - b) Three consecutive repetitions of the same critical NC
 - c) Five or more critical NCs issued during the same year under review is considered an indication of a systematic problem
 - d) Three or more critical nonconformities issued against audit process requirements listed in the *CAB Manual* calls into question the CABs ability to implement the program's certification system
- 17.2. While suspended, CABs are not permitted to take on new work, but may continue to service existing clients. New work is defined by each program and may mean signing new service agreements or being awarded new audits.
- 17.3. Suspension is only lifted with a positive review from Fair Trade USA after the finding has been adequately addressed through corrective actions.

18. Calibration and Training

- 18.1. Results collected during the oversight cycle, including findings listed in the oversight report, inform the following activities for the coming year:
- a) Oversight schedule
 - b) Calibration topics and cadence
 - c) Auditor training
- 18.2. Once the oversight report has been completed, Fair Trade USA assesses the findings to determine if oversight activities in that program should be adjusted, such as focusing witness audits in a particular region, or conducting review audits to assess edits in a particular standard.

- 18.3. Results and insights from any review audits conducted and the audit report calibration assessment inform the specific requirements for which interpretation, clarification, and guidance is needed, and calibration exercises required to ensure Fair Trade USA personnel and auditors have the same understanding of the requirements and are aligned in their assessment of conformance.
- 18.4. Topics highlighted for interpretation and calibration work are discussed internally, and formal interpretations and guidance are issued when warranted.
- 18.5. Calibration activities may include trainings, communications, webinars, etc. They are held for CAB staff and auditors to convey any new interpretation of requirements and to address findings of NC regarding requirements interpretation.
- 18.6. Based on the findings of the oversight program, the auditor training program will be updated so that topics are specified to auditors' performance needs within each CAB assessed.

Change History

Version	Change Summary
3.0.0	- Removed sections covered in other normative program documentation - Incorporated CAB oversight procedure - Section 4: Updated expectations on ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation - Section 6: updated definition of conformity assessment personnel; added requirement to declare conflicts of interest; clarified language proficiency requirements; added provision for qualifying auditors in new geographies when there is no Lead Auditor available to observe - Section 8: allowance that fees must be made available on request instead of provided

ABOUT FAIR TRADE USA

Fair Trade USA® is a nonprofit organization and the leading certifier of Fair Trade Certified products in North America. Its trusted Fair Trade Certified™ seal on a product signifies that it was made according to rigorous fair trade standards that promote sustainable livelihoods and safe working conditions, protection of the environment, and strong, transparent supply chains. Rather than creating dependency on aid, Fair Trade USA's model empowers farmers, workers, and fishermen to fight poverty and earn additional money to improve their communities. Visit FairTradeCertified.org for more information.

Contact

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Website: FairTradeCertified.org

