



ForestFit

CERTIFICATION PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Setting the standard for forest contracting businesses in Australia

Participant Guide Contents

Your step by step guide through the certification process.

This interactive guide will provide businesses with an understanding of the ForestFit certification process and how to access support while they work to achieve certification.

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Certification for forest contracting businesses



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What is ForestFit Certification?

An industry led initiative to provide national standards for forest contracting businesses.



National Standards

ForestFit Certification has four standards:

- Standard 1: General Requirements (mandatory)
- Standard 2: Business Sustainability
- Standard 3: Work Health and Safety
- Standard 4: Environmental Practices.

ForestFit Certification aims to foster continual professional development and improvements in business competency, operational compliance and risk management.

Scopes

ForestFit has established certification scopes based on the forest operations currently undertaken by, or planned to be undertaken by businesses applying for certification.

These have been established by grouping together certification criteria within each certification standard by their relevance to a particular type of forest operations. The certification scopes include:

- Harvest
- Haulage
- Civil
- Silviculture
- Minor forest products (eg firewood).

The purpose of establishing certification scopes is to ensure that participants are only assessed against certification criteria that are relevant to their specific operations, improving the efficiency of the certification assessment process. You will be required to select the certification scopes relevant to your business when completing the Certification Application.

Benefits of certification

The benefits of ForestFit Certification for forest contracting businesses may include:

- Streamlines auditing and reduces auditing burden.
- Designation of a 'preferred contractor status', in recognition of your skills and performance.
- Promotion of continuous improvement across business, work health and safety and environmental performance.
- Streamlined compliance and auditing processes.
- Reduction in costs and staff turnover.

Criteria

The criteria for each standard is detailed in the Assessment Guide.

The Assessment Guide is intended to be used by both assessors and participants and ensures there is transparency in the assessment process.

Assessors will assess participant's systems, processes and practices against the information, guidance and evidence requirements in the Assessment Guide.

Participants can use the Assessment Guide to understand the intent and evidence requirements of each certification criteria and to prepare their systems, processes and practices for certification.

What is ForestFit Certification

Alignment with other industry certifications

The ForestFit Certification Standards are aligned with the requirements of other certification schemes and auditing standards, including:

- Responsible Wood (PEFC) Sustainable Forest Management certification.
- Forest Stewardship Council Forest Management Certification.
- Green Triangle Work Health and Safety (WHS) audit standard.
- Australian/New Zealand Standard 45001 – Occupational health and safety management systems.

This alignment will enable streamlined auditing processes and make it easier for ForestFit certified businesses to demonstrate compliance to these standards.

Deemed to comply

ForestFit Certification has been further strengthened by achieving Deemed to Comply status with Responsible Wood. This process will be finalised with the JAS-ANZ endorsement of ForestFit.

ForestFit certified businesses will not need to be audited for the purpose of their forest grower's Responsible Wood Sustainable Forest Management certification.

Certification process and timeframe

ForestFit certification includes:

1. Readiness Assessment and application
2. Initial Certification Assessment
 - Stage 1 Assessment
 - Stage 2 Assessment
3. Certification maintenance
 - Annual Surveillance Assessments
 - Five yearly Renewal Assessment.

The purpose of the certification process is to verify whether your systems, processes and practices conform to the requirements of the relevant certification standard(s).

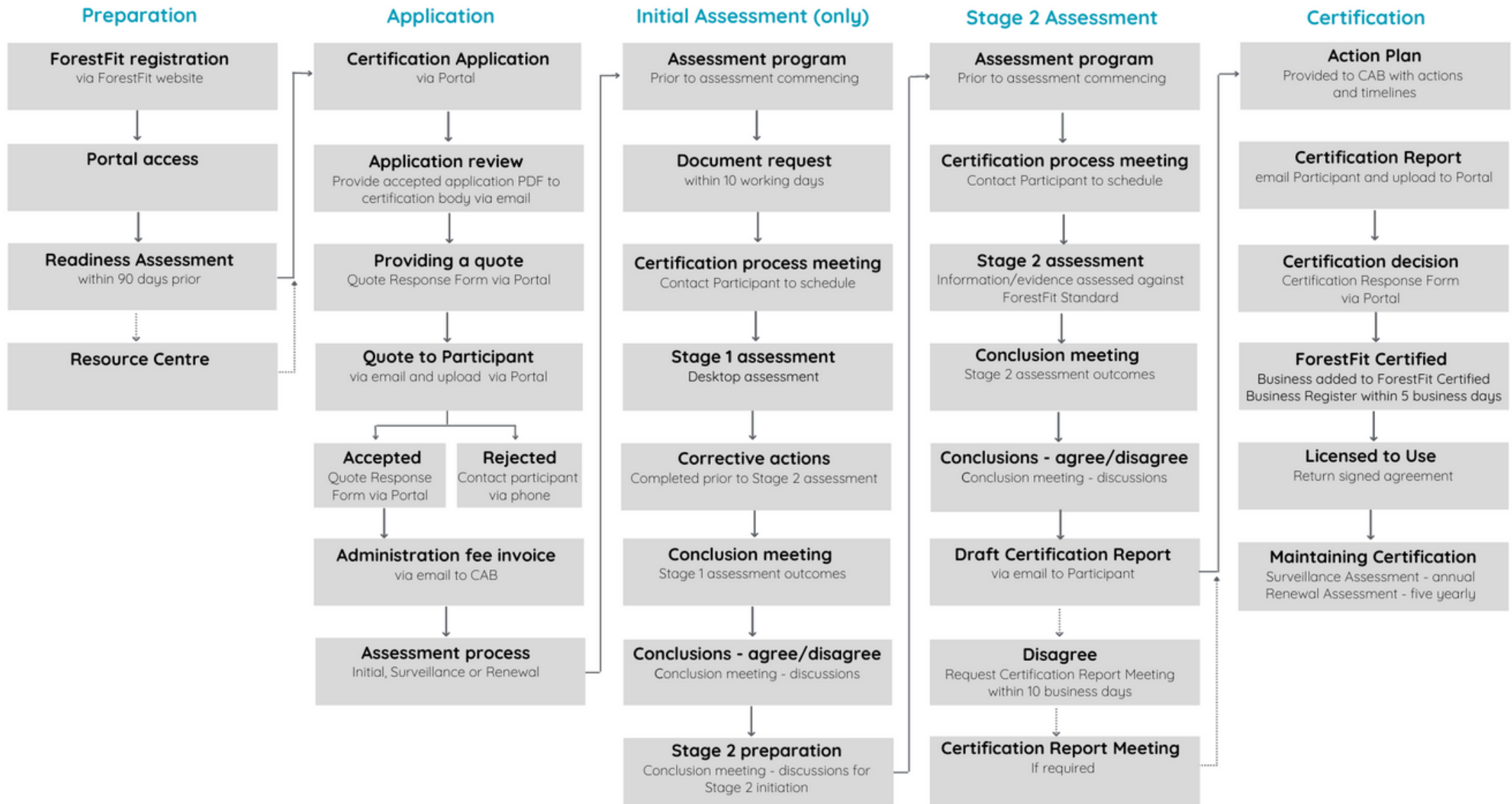
There is no set timeframe for the certification process as all businesses are different. As an estimate, certification may take up to 90 days from your initial application.

Certification assessors

To maintain independence and confidence in ForestFit, all certification assessments are performed by JAS-ANZ accredited third-party assessors that are selected by participants.

All assessors have qualifications and expertise in auditing management systems and an understanding of forest industry and forest operations.

What is ForestFit Certification



Readiness Assessment

Yes/no assessment against standard criteria of readiness to be certified.

What is the Readiness Assessment?

For every standard there are a series of yes/no questions that relate directly to the criteria and the assessment guidance used by assessors during the initial, surveillance and renewal assessments.

The Readiness Assessment is a self-guided online questionnaire that will:

- Help you understand your readiness to be certified.
- Help you identify gaps within your systems and processes against the certification standards and criteria.
- Provide you examples of documents or evidence that may be required as part of the certification process.

Is the Readiness Assessment mandatory?

Yes it is mandatory for businesses who want to be ForestFit certified to complete the Readiness Assessment within 90 calendar days prior to applying to begin the certification process.

Your responses to the Readiness Assessment questions are independent and will not be used as part of the certification process.

For certified businesses it is highly recommended that you complete the Readiness Assessment to prepare for any upcoming surveillance assessments.

For existing certificate holders it is mandatory for you to complete the Readiness Assessment within 90 calendar days prior to applying for your five yearly Renewal Assessment.



Readiness Assessment

How to complete the Readiness Assessment

Select the Readiness Assessment for the standards for which you may want your business to be certified.

The Readiness Assessment is composed of questions requiring either a Yes, No or Not applicable answer. Each question has a notes section to add any information for later reference.

All questions within the Readiness Assessment also have a link to the Assessment Guide which will provide you detailed guidance on the requirements of the ForestFit certification standards.

You can stop and start the assessment at any time or come back later. Once all the questions have been answered and you click the 'Finalise Readiness Assessment' a PDF version will be emailed to you within 30 minutes. If not received please email the ForestFit team.

You can complete the Readiness Assessment as many times as you require.

What happens after finalising your Readiness Assessment?

After finalising your Readiness Assessment and following up any actions from your PDF, you should decide if you are sufficiently prepared to proceed with the certification.

If you are ready to proceed, complete the Certification Application on the ForestFit Portal.

If after completing the Readiness Assessment you decide you are not prepared to proceed with certification you can:

- Access support materials via the ForestFit Resource Centre that will help you with addressing the gaps identified by the Readiness Assessment and improving your systems and processes.
- Contact the ForestFit team if you require support that is not available on the Resource Centre.

Resource Centre

Guidance, factsheets and templates to support you.



Here to support you

The ForestFit Resource Centre has been established to provide guidance, factsheets and templates to support forest businesses in achieving certification.

Where practicable guidance, templates documents and evidence have been developed to support documentation and evidence requirements of the standards. These have been categorised by standard:

- Business Sustainability, which also includes documents for General Requirements
- Work Health and Safety
- Environmental Practises.

Have a contribution, suggestion or edit

We are striving to ensure the Resource Centre meets the needs of the businesses being certified.

By working together to share resources that we know meet business needs we are creating a safer more sustainable industry.

If you have a contribution, suggestion or edit please contact the ForestFit team.

How to search the Resource Centre

Use the search and filter functions to help you find relevant content.

There are three easy ways to search the Resource Centre:

1. Use the search bar at the top - as soon as you start to type it will automatically start to filter the resources.
2. Use the filter function - select as many of the topic, category or document type options to filter the resources.
3. Use a combination - filter then begin to type in the search bar.

Certification Application

Online form collecting information related to your business and is where you select the certification scope(s) and standard(s) to be certified to.



Completing the application

After completing the Readiness Assessment complete the Application Form on the ForestFit Portal.

You are required to complete all mandatory fields and sign the acknowledgement before being able to submit the form.

You will be able to select the Standards for which you would like the scopes of your work to be certified against.

Select the scopes that best aligns to your business operations currently, or plan to undertake in the future:

- Harvest operations.
- Haulage operations.
- Civil operations.
- silviculture operations.
- Minor forest products (eg firewood).

Once submitted, you will receive an automated email to confirm successful submission within 24 hours. Where you do not receive this email please contact the ForestFit team.

You will receive a confirmation email of your application acceptance within 5 business days of submission.

If additional information is required you will receive an email detailing what is required within 5 business days of submitting your application. You will need to provide the information within 5 business days.

Certification fee quote from certification body

During the application process you will select to receive a quote from one or both certification bodies that are undertaking assessments of the ForestFit Standards.

The certification body will provide a quote within 14 business days of receiving your application from ForestFit

The fee quote will include:

- Your business name and ABN
- Type of certification fee quote (eg) initial, surveillance, renewal, change in scope or standard.
- Certification body preparing quote.
- Certification scope(s) and standards.
- Location(s) of site visit.
- Methods for payment.
- Timeframes for payment.
- Consequences for late/non-payment.

An initial assessment quote must also include:

- Administration fee - based on business size of participant.
- Initial assessment - Stage 1 fee and travel costs.
- Initial assessment - Stage 2 fee and travel costs.

A surveillance or renewal assessment quote must also include:

- Administration fee - based on business size of participant.
- Assessment fee and travel costs.

Certification Application

Certification fees

Certification fees are unique to your business and they will be calculated based on:

1. ForestFit administration fees based on business size of the participant (number of FTE).
2. The certification assessment fees based on the certification standards and number of sites selected.
3. The travel time and travel costs for undertaking the certification assessments.

To estimate your potential fees, refer to the ForestFit Certification – Schedule of Fees.

When do I pay the certification fees?

You must pay the certification fees within 60 calendar days of receiving the quote, or as required by agreement with the certification body.

You have two payment options:

1. All fees prior to Initial assessment - Stage 1.
2. The fees are split in two payments
 - a. Prior to Stage 1 - Administration fee, Stage 1 fees and travel costs.
 - b. Prior to Stage 2 - all remaining assessment fees and travel costs.

What happens after the fee is paid?

After the fee has been paid you will receive a tax invoice and an email confirming the details of the assigned assessor.

Your assessor will also contact you directly to set up the certification process meeting.

If an assessor has not contacted you within 10 business days of fee payment please contact us.

Certification process meeting

At the meeting the assessor will:

- Provide you an estimate of the overall time for the Initial Assessment - Stage 1 and 2
- Discuss your business context and provide you an overview of the certification process
- Confirm the scopes and standards that you have selected for certification
- Discuss expectations, provide you guidance and answer questions you have regarding the process.
- Discuss the document request and how to send documents/evidence.

Meeting attendance

The meeting must be attended by the top management as well as persons that are responsible for managing areas being assessed for certification (eg finance, health and safety, environment, human resources).

At the meeting you should discuss expectations for the certification scopes and standards with the assessor.

If changes are required to your certification scopes or standards following the meeting you must submit a change request via the ForestFit Portal. The Stage 1 Assessment will begin once the change request and any associated fees have been processed and confirmed via email.

Withdrawal from certification process

You can voluntarily withdraw from the certification process at any stage. However, please note that all fees are non-refundable, and if you withdraw from the process after paying the fees, you will not be provided a refund.

To withdraw you must formally notify ForestFit using the Certification Withdrawal Form via the Portal. If you are listed on the Register your status will be updated within 5 business days. The ForestFit team will provide the certification body within 48 hours of receiving your withdrawal form.

Certification assessments

Verification of management systems, processes and practices.



Assessment program

The purpose of the assessment program is to formally provide you with all of the assessment activities required over the course of the full certification cycle (ie five years) and the estimated timelines for each assessment activity.

The first five-year certification cycle begins with the certification decision and subsequent cycles begin with the renewal decision. The assessment program will be prepared by the assessor and capture details regarding:

- Initial certification
- First year surveillance
- Second year surveillance
- Third year surveillance
- Fourth year surveillance
- Renewal.

The assessment program will be provided to you before or at the certification process meeting. The assessment program may need to be updated following the initial certification assessment.

Assessment Plan

For the current certification assessment, each participant will receive an Assessment Plan detailing:

- Assessment activities
- Document request
- Sampling approach, including rationale for any multi-site sampling.
- Reporting and action management.
- Interviews and meetings.

This will form the basis for agreement regarding the conduct and scheduling of the assessment activities.

Assessor selection

Certification assessments are performed by third party certification bodies that are JAS-ANZ accredited. You will be able to select the certification body to undertake your assessment from the provided list on the ForestFit Portal.

Findings

All findings identified by assessors during the assessment will be rated in accordance with:

- Conformance - sufficient evidence to demonstrate conformance to the criteria.
- Major nonconformance - significant gap between the participants systems, processes, or practices and the specified requirements of the criteria.
 - May also be relevant where the assessor identifies several minor nonconformances associated with the same requirement or issues that demonstrate a systemic failure
 - A noncompliance to any legislative requirements or where the finding may impact the integrity of ForestFit.
- Minor nonconformance - a weakness in the systems, processes, or practices that may lead to a major nonconformance against the criteria if not corrected.
- Opportunity for improvement - relevant certification criterion has been met, but the assessor has identified an opportunity for further improvement.
- Not applicable

Initial assessment

Stage 1 is a preliminary assessment of your business to determine preparedness for certification.

Initial assessment stages

The initial certification assessment is comprised of two assessment stages.

The Stage 1 assessment is a preliminary assessment that is used to understand your business context and to determine whether you are appropriately prepared for certification.

Stage 1 assessment is only completed in the initial certification assessment for a new applicant and is not repeated in future surveillance or renewal assessments.

If you want to add and/or remove any scopes or standards after the Stage 1 assessment, you must complete and submit the online Change to Scope(s) and Standard(s) form on the ForestFit Portal. Once the changes are confirmed, the Stage 2 assessment process may continue.

The addition of scopes or standards may require additional fees for assessment time.

Stage 2 is a detailed assessment of your management systems and processes against the requirements of ForestFit.

You must have completed payment of all appropriate fees to commence the assessment process.

Documentation request

Following the certification process meeting the assessor will email a list of documents and evidence required to conduct the assessment. The document request is linked to the certification scopes and standards that were selected for certification.

The assessor will issue the document request to you via email after your certification process meeting. The assessor will agree with you a method for sharing the documents and evidence (eg) email, Dropbox or OneDrive.

Initial assessment

Upon receiving the documentation and evidence the assessor will review and evaluate it against the certification standards and criteria.

The assessor will then meet with you, preferably at your premises, to undertake the Stage 1 Assessment, which will include interviews, discussions and document review.

At the conclusion of the Stage 1 Assessment, the assessor will inform of you their initial concerns or findings. The assessor will also schedule a Stage 1 Conclusions Meeting with you to discuss the detailed concerns and findings.

Initial assessment - Stage 1

Providing documentation and evidence

You will need to provide the assessor the requested documents and evidence as soon as possible from the issue of the document request.

If you do not have the requested document (or equivalent), inform the assessor immediately. The assessor will work with you to determine whether there are any other documents or evidence that can help demonstrate conformance with the relevant criterion.

Lack of documentation or evidence

Where no appropriate documents or evidence are able to be provided, the assessor may recommend that you prepare the document or evidence prior to the Initial assessment - Stage 2.

The ForestFit Resource Centre includes a number of templates and guidelines that may help you develop documents prior to the assessments.

Conclusion meeting

The assessor will contact you to schedule a meeting to discuss:

- Any concerns or potential nonconformances that need to be addressed prior to the Stage 2 assessment.
- Determine the time period between the Stage 1 assessment and the Stage 2 assessment, to enable the participant to address any potential nonconformances prior to Stage 2.
- Undertake planning for the Stage 2 assessment.

Action plan (if required)

Whilst not mandatory, you may choose to develop an action plan to capture the actions you will undertake, including persons responsible and timeframes.

You should complete all of the identified actions within the timeframe agreed to with the assessor at the Stage 1 conclusion meeting. Unless agreed otherwise, it is your responsibility to contact the assessor once you have completed your actions.

If you are unable to complete your actions by the agreed timeframe, please contact the assessor as soon as possible and provide a reasonable cause for the delay.

The assessor will work with you to determine a revised timeframe for the start of the Initial assessment - Stage 2 to ensure you can complete all of the actions.

Initial assessment

Stage 2 is a detailed assessment of your management systems, procedures and documentation.

Scheduling the Stage 2 Assessment

After completing any actions for Stage 1, you must inform the assessor that you are ready to proceed with the Stage 2 Assessment.

You must pay any outstanding certification fees before the assessor will plan and schedule the Stage 2 Assessment.

If you need to remove any certification scopes or standards prior to the Stage 2 Assessment, you must complete and submit the online Change to Scope(s) and Standard(s) form on the ForestFit Portal.

The Stage 2 Assessment cannot begin until we have processed the change and confirmed with you via email. The Stage 2 Assessment is intended to be completed in-person at your site(s).

Stage 2 Assessment process

The assessor will attend your premises to commence the Stage 2 Assessment against the relevant ForestFit Standard(s).

The Stage 2 Assessment will include:

- A desktop document review of your management systems and processes against the ForestFit Standards.
- Interviews with key persons, including top management, supervisors and workers to review the implementation of the management systems and processes.
- A site visit to one or more of your sites where the assessor can observe forest operations, inspect plant and equipment, review records and interview workers. Assessors will focus on higher risk forest operations and activities undertaken on site.
- A closing meeting to discuss preliminary findings and observations.

Where the Stage 2 Assessment cannot be conducted in-person, the assessor will inform you in advance and work with you to reschedule the assessment.

Initial assessment - Stage 2

Participation requirements

In-person requirements:

- All relevant persons (as agreed to with the assessor) and evidence are available on the day of the site assessment.
- Ensure the assessor is inducted and has access to PPE required on-site.
- Attend the opening and closing meeting with the assessor and provide them reasonable access to all requested personnel, work activities, equipment, operations, and records.

Certification Report

The assessor will prepare a draft Certification Assessment Report that captures the findings and recommendations from the assessment and will detail:

1. The scope and approach of the certification assessment.
2. An executive summary that summarises positive observations and findings against each certification standard and criteria.
3. The detailed findings for all major and minor nonconformances and opportunities for improvement.
4. The assessor's recommendations for addressing the major and minor nonconformances and opportunities for improvement
5. The action plan template (if required) for businesses to complete to demonstrate they have addressed the major and minor non-conformances.
6. A recommendation for certification.

This draft report will be emailed to you. In preparation for the Certification Report Meeting you must:

- Review the draft report in detail to confirm the factual accuracy of the findings.
- Review the recommendations provided by the assessor.
- Prepare an action plan using the template provided.

Action Plan (if required)

You are required to prepare an action plan using the template provided to you by the assessor. The action plan should detail the actions you will take to address the major and minor nonconformances.

You must provide evidence of action completion to the assessor for verification. This evidence may be shared via email or other means agreed to with the assessor.

Major nonconformance must be completed in 90 calendar days. Minor non-conformances must be completed in 60-90 calendar days.

The assessor will send you a reminder one week in advance of the action due date of major nonconformances.

If you are unable to complete the actions in agreed timeframes, it is your responsibility to contact the assessor and provide a reasonable cause for the delay.

The assessor will work with you to determine new timeframes (if required) and you will be required to amend the action plan and provide a new version to the assessor.

Initial assessment - Stage 2

Certification report meeting

The assessor will contact you to schedule a meeting to discuss the draft Certification Assessment Report and your action plan.

You must attend this meeting to:

- Discuss the findings and provide any feedback regarding factual accuracy.
- Present your action plan (actions and timeframes) to address the assessor's recommendations.
- Seek agreement on the findings and action plan.

If you and the assessor are unable to resolve any disagreements during this meeting, the assessor will make a note of these disagreements.

Certification decision

The certification body makes the decision for granting or refusing certification. Upon finalising the Certification Assessment Report the certification body will provide you notification of the certification decision by emailing a copy of the report to you.

If certification has been granted the certification body will also provide you:

- The License to Use Agreement for signature.
- Your ForestFit certificate

Any disagreement regarding the certification body's decision must first be appealed via the certification body's appeals process. Appeals can only be forwarded to ForestFit with documented evidence that the appeal has not been, or cannot be, resolved.

ForestFit Certified Business Register

Your business will be added to the publicly accessible ForestFit Certified Business Register within 5 business days of ForestFit receiving the signed License to Use agreement.

The register provides status and details of certified businesses, including scope(s) and standard(s) to which they have been assessed.

License to Use Agreement

Once you are ForestFit certified you and have signed the License to Use Agreement you are permitted to use ForestFit certification badges and statement.

The License to Use Agreement provides guidance on the proper use of the ForestFit certification badges (mark of conformity) and statement to help promote your business.

It includes the importance of protecting the ForestFit brand and all the intellectual property associated with and owned by ForestFit. It also explains infringement and infractions of brand use.

The information associated with ForestFit is fully protected under all applicable Australian Intellectual Property laws.

The digital files will be provided to you upon receiving the signed agreement.

Maintaining Certification

Once certified there will be annual Surveillance Assessments and five yearly Renewal Assessments.



Ongoing compliance with certification requirements

You are responsible for ensuring that your systems and processes continue to conform to the requirements of the ForestFit certification standards.

This includes self-reporting, within 15 business days, any matters that may have an impact on your certification or the integrity of ForestFit. The matters requiring self-reporting may include:

- Significant changes to your business ownership or governance structure.
- Significant changes to the type or volume of work you undertake.
- Major prosecution of your organisation by a regulatory body.
- Major non-compliance identified by a regulatory body.
- Significant work health and safety incidents (i.e. fatality or permanent disabling injury).
- Significant credible complaint made against you in relation to your conduct in the forest industry that may bring ForestFit into disrepute.
- Any other matters that may compromise the integrity of ForestFit.

Annual Surveillance assessment

To maintain your certification, annual surveillance assessments are mandatory to verify your continued conformance to the certification standards. The exception being for year five where the renewal assessment will be conducted.

The Surveillance assessment is shorter in length to the Initial Certification Assessment and focuses on higher risk areas within the relevant ForestFit Standard as relevant to your operations.

Your Surveillance assessment due date is captured on your certificate and the ForestFit Certified Business Register. In addition to the annual surveillance assessments, we may require ad hoc surveillance assessments as a result of self reporting compliance requirements.

We will email you a reminder 90 calendar days in advance of your surveillance assessment to to be completed to remind you to apply for your assessment.

Maintaining Certification

Renewal Assessment certification fees

We will contact you in advance of your Renewal Assessment to remind you of the assessment, answer any questions about the process, validate your scopes and standards, and share the certification fee quote.

Renewal certification fees must be paid using the same approach as that detailed in the Certification Assessment before the assessor will commence the assessment process.

If you need to change your certification scopes or standards prior to the renewal assessment, you must submit a change request via the ForestFit Portal. The Renewal Assessment cannot begin until we have processed the change and confirmed with you via email.

To estimate your potential renewal fees, refer to the ForestFit Certification – Schedule of Fees.

Renewal Assessment

Five yearly Renewal Assessments are mandatory to verify your continued conformance to the certification standards. Your due date of renewal is captured on your certificate and the ForestFit Certified Business Register.

In preparation for the Renewal Assessment, you must complete the Readiness Assessment to understand you are prepared.

Your obligations and participation requirements for the Renewal Assessment mirror those detailed in the Initial Assessment - Stage 2 process.

Similar to the Initial Certification Assessments, you are required to complete all agreed actions to address major nonconformances to maintain certification.

You must provide evidence of action completion to the assessor for verification. This evidence may be shared via email or other means agreed to with the assessor.

Review of certification standards and criteria

The certification standards and criteria will be reviewed by ForestFit two years after initial roll out and then every five years.

The review of the certification standards and criteria will be completed by the ForestFit Technical advisory panel that is comprised of subject matter experts in forest industry and certification schemes.

ForestFit participants, as well as the public, will have the opportunity to provide comments and feedback on any proposed changes to the standards and criteria.

Once the standards and criteria have been finalised, all ForestFit participants will be formally informed of the changes and provided an adequate transition period to ensure their systems, processes and practices align to the updated standards and criteria. ForestFit will provide support and coaching to ForestFit participants during the transition period.

Maintaining Certification

Suspension

Suspension is where your certification is suspended, but you are not removed from the ForestFit Certification (ie terminated).

You can be suspended for several reasons, including but not limited to:

- Failure to complete actions from Surveillance and Renewal certification assessments in agreed timeframes.
- Failure to pay certification fees in agreed timeframes.
- Conduct that compromises the integrity of ForestFit.
- Failure to comply with ForestFit rules and lawful direction of ForestFit.
- Substantiated serious complaint or allegation that requires us to investigate, including work health and safety issues.

Consequences of suspension:

- Not permitted to seek any benefit from ForestFit or use branding and logos or promote yourself as ForestFit Certified.
- Your status will be changed to 'Suspended' on the ForestFit Certified Business Register.

Returning from suspension:

- Suspension may be lifted after you have completed relevant actions to address reason for suspension as advised by the certification body.
- You will not need to go through the full certification process to return to ForestFit.

Termination

Termination is where you are removed from ForestFit Certification. Termination issues are generally more severe or leading on from a suspension.

Reasons resulting in termination:

- Serious criminal convictions or prosecutions (business and/or directors).
- Bankruptcy or liquidation proceedings (business and/or directors).
- Conduct that compromises the integrity of the ForestFit.
- Failure to comply with ForestFit rules and lawful direction of ForestFit.
- Substantiated serious proven complaint, including work health and safety.
- Failure to address issues that resulted in a suspension.

Consequences of termination:

- Not permitted to seek any benefit from ForestFit or use the branding and logos or promote yourself as ForestFit Certified.
- Status will be changed to 'Terminated' on the ForestFit Certified Business Register until the date of next renewal after which you will be removed from the register.

Returning from termination:

- Complete the certification process (Stage 1 and Stage 2 Assessments).
- ForestFit may require you to complete certain actions to reapply for certification post-termination.

Termination (cont.)

Example of actions may include review and update of documentation, evidence of how particular issues are being rectified, requirement to provide director declaration.

Withdrawal

You can voluntarily withdraw from the certification process at any stage. However, please note that all fees are non-refundable, and if you withdraw from the process after paying the fees, you will not be provided a refund.

You must formally notify ForestFit by completing the Withdrawal Notice Form via Portal.

If you are currently certified your status on the ForestFit Certified Business Register will be updated to 'Withdrawn'.

Communication

Providing feedback or lodging an appeal or complaint.



ForestFit Review

The Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) is the primary technical and governance body to ensure ForestFit meets its objectives, is fit for purpose and remains contemporary. The TAP is responsible for providing advice in relation to certification and the forest industry, managing certain complaints and appeals and reviewing ForestFit.

A Review Committee will be established by the TAP for the review of ForestFit two years after inception and every five years thereafter, unless there are significant changes to legislation, standards, codes of practice or industry context requiring an earlier review.

The review will confirm the validity of ForestFit and identify areas requiring improvement, taking in account feedback from stakeholders. The review will include examination of:

- Governance structure.
- Operational rules and processes.
- ForestFit Standards.
- Guides and other relevant documents.

Review Committee representatives will comprise:

- AFCA and the TAP
- Certification bodies and JAS-ANZ
- ForestFit participants and industry
- Others as determined by the TAP.

As a participant, you and the public will have the opportunity to provide input into the certification review. The outputs and outcomes from the review will be captured on the ForestFit website and Portal.

Feedback

You can provide us with any feedback at anytime that will contribute to the improvement or refinement of the portal, the certification process or any part of the ForestFit Certification program.

Appeals

You may appeal any decisions made by ForestFit or assessors related to certification, suspension, termination, and complaints. You can only appeal a decision once and the appeal body's decision is final.

You must lodge appeals in the ForestFit Portal within 10 business days of receiving a decision. You must provide all relevant evidence when submitting your appeal.

Complaints

In all instances you must first attempt to resolve your complaint with the relevant party (eg) assessor.

If your complaint or appeal has not, or cannot be addressed you may lodge a complaint in the ForestFit Portal.

Your complaint should be supported with sufficient descriptions, details and evidence related to the complaint. You will be kept informed throughout the complaint process. The final outcome of the complaint will be provided to you in writing.

NOTE: Anonymous complaints will not be addressed..

Contact Us

We are here to help if you have any questions or require support.



ForestFit Team

The ForestFit team are here to provide assistance so you can succeed in certifying your business. The ForestFit team are based in Victoria.

Call us +61 417 786 179

Sometimes it is quicker and easier to speak with someone. During business hours if you have a question or for any assistance please call us.

forestfit@afca.asn.au

Think of something outside of business hours or would like to confirm something in writing, email us at any time.

ForestFit address

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ForestFit™

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