



QUALIFOR PROGRAM
Associated Documents

Number	AD 65
Title	FM Main Assessment Report
Page	i of 31
Issue	04
Date	april 1, 2000

Forest Management Certification

Public Summary Information

Project Number:	7450-CH
Client:	Forestry Association Both Basel (Waldwirtschaftsverband beider Basel)
Country:	Switzerland
Scope:	Group Forest Management Scheme
Main species/products:	All naturally occurring hardwood and softwood species; round timber, industrial wood and firewood.
Annual production:	Approximately 32,800 m ³
Assessment date:	26 – 28 November 2001
Certificate Number:	SGS-FM/COC-0923
Date of Issue:	31/01/2002
Duration:	5 Years
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SECTION I - PUBLIC SUMMARY REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

This report presents the results of an assessment of forest management operations of a part of the forests in the cantons of Basel Country and Basel City in Switzerland. The assessment was conducted for the group certification of the Forestry Association Both Basel (WbB). The assessment of the forest management operations was carried out in the forestry enterprises of those Association members, which had declared their participation in the group certification program of the WbB in a binding agreement with the Association.

The purpose was to assess all operations of the group representative of the WbB according to the FSC requirements and also to assess the forest management operations of the participating forest owners according to the requirements of the QUALIFOR Program, the SGS Group's forest certification program accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This includes all principles and criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC P&C). An integral part of the assessment was the National Standards for Forest Certification in Switzerland dated June 1999.

At the extraordinary general meeting held on August 14, 2001, the WbB passed a resolution to conduct the group certification according to the FSC principles and criteria. The board of directors was given the authority to initiate the appropriate actions and to have a certification committee accompany the certification.

Those owners and forestry enterprises, desiring to join, were offered an option with their registration. The option allowed them to choose to participate in one of the three planned certification sections and to do this, they were required to fill out a declaration. The types of ownership and the corresponding distribution of the area of the first section are as follows:

Type of Ownership	Area ha
Communities	4559
Residents' communities	319
State	223
Various corporations	369
Private	81
Total	5551

The first section for the group certification program is mainly composed of communities. As a rule, several communities are combined to form a forest administration or a district with a forester as the manager. The state, as a

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member of the WbB, also participates in the program on a district basis. The many owners of small and very small forest areas can also participate in the program based on a subagreement with the district foresters, who are registered. Such a method of joining is possible at any time. At the present time, only a few forest owners have taken advantage of this opportunity. The foresters want to maintain contact with the private forest owners mainly through joint actions such as the tending of the forest edge.

The certification was conducted as a double certification according to FSC and QUALIFOR requirements. This report deals strictly with the results of the QUALIFOR assessment by the SGS Switzerland SA according to the principles and criteria of the FSC.

2. COMPANY BACKGROUND

The Forestry Association Both Basel is the organization in the cantons of Basel Country and Basel City, which represents the interests of the forest owners. Membership is open to all types of forest owners.

According to the statutes of the WbB, the goals of the Association include:

- Preservation of the interests of the forest owners at the canton and federal level
- Promotion of forestry and the use of raw materials
- Cooperation with associations and institutions, which have similar purposes, and where appropriate outside the Association area as well.
- Provision of services to members

The Association achieves its goals through activities including:

- Information and public relations work for forest and wood
- Handling of forest policy tasks
- Price negotiations with sawmill association
- Promotion and cofinancing of training and advanced training
- Providing consultation to forest owners
- Promotion of cooperation of forest owners

The most recent example of the implementation of its goals is the offering of this certification program coupled with an active information policy directed to external sources.

The highest body of the Association is the member meeting and all members have voting rights. The president and the board of directors manage the WbB, supported by an office on a part-time basis. In order to handle all questions associated with the certification correctly from a technical aspect and in a prompt manner, a certification committee was

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formed. It consists of a chairperson, one member from the board of directors, the managing director, a representative of the Both Basel Forestry Office and a representative of the Foresters' Association. This body will be responsible for internal controlling in the future.

The main part of the management of the forests is conducted by the personnel hired by the communities, the state and the forest administrations. The jurisdictional functions are exercised by the county forestry offices and the forest rangers. The forest rangers in the canton of Basel Country are also the managers. There is also a city forest administration, which is headed by a forestry engineer.

In the canton of Basel City, both public and private forest owners are not organized into joint businesses. Cooperation is normally conducted based on contracts.

Within the scope of this certification program, the forest administrations and the forest districts are the operational units, which are organized in the certification group.

3. FOREST MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

3.1. Bio-physical setting

In principle, the certification area encompasses all forest property in the cantons of Basel Country and Basel City, but each forest owner must apply for participation in the program. The forest owners participating at the time of the assessment are distributed across the canton area with the exception of the administrative district of Laufen.

Geographically, the area is characterized by the Jura Mountains and the Rhine Plain. The elevations vary between about 250 m above sea level (ASL) on the Rhine up to about 1170 m ASL on the back part of the Egg. This produces a considerable geological, topographical, climatic and forest diversity. This is characterized by the formation of a network of urban areas and remote natural areas within short distances.

There are plant-sociological maps for the entire canton according to the system from Ellenberg+Klötzli. As a supplement to this, there is also a commentary, which is available in bookstores as a second edition: Forest Communities and Forest Sites in the Canton Basel Country. This contains all of the basic information for the selection of tree species. It shows what the natural distribution of the tree species would be and which tree species in a commercial forest are site-adapted and to what extent. The natural main tree species is beech, followed by silver fir, pine, maple and ash.

3.2. History of use

The history of use of the forests in the Association area was not examined in detail, but it can be traced in the economic plans for decades. One

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obvious fact is, however, that this area was spared to a large degree from the management practice of the last 80 to 120 years with its pure spruce stands. Thus, the present forests are in a near-natural state with a great diversity of species. The rule is small areas of regeneration, according to the felling principle. In individual cases, new approaches for stage management according to the continuous forest principle are being applied.

3.3. Planning process

The forest rangers are responsible for the management and they are supervised by the county foresters from a jurisdictional and technical standpoint. The forestry enterprises consist, in some cases, of a single owner. District associations have been formed in several cases.

There is forest planning above the enterprise level and this is called a forest development plan. The center of the forest development plan is the fulfillment of forest functions and coordination with regional planning. The participation of the population is legally based and promoted accordingly. The Both Basel Forestry Office takes the lead and has prepared a planning program for the next nine years to cover all regions.

The forest development plan provides various planning elements such as ownership relations and limitations, protective zones, forest reserves, area-wide inventories, trail systems for bicycles, riding and hiking, a danger map, a stand map, soil and vegetation conditions, growing stock and growth, gene reserves and seed harvesting stands, projects authorized subsidization, buildings and facilities.

At the present time, a forest development plan is in effect and at least two additional ones are almost complete.

Management planning is the responsibility of the forest owner. Those owners with more than 25 ha of forest, who are part of a forest district, must prepare a management plan. Within a district, the forest owners can prepare a joint management plan. This plan is approved by the canton. It is to be revised every 15 years and an approval time limit of two years applies. Paragraph 70 of the Transitional Law requires that management plans be submitted for approval within two years after the approval of the forest development plan. Before this time limit, the previous economic plans continue to apply regardless of their currency and age.

The management plan is composed of an analysis, planning and monitoring section. It considers the inventory results and contains extensive silvicultural planning and instructions for the implementation of the forest development plan in the enterprise.

Those forest owners, who are required to prepare a management plan, must prepare an annual tending and usage program and have it approved by the county forester.

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There is no planning requirement for smaller forest properties. However, forest cropping for the sale of more than five cubic meters requires approval.

3.4. Harvest and regeneration

The basis for the timber harvest is the silvicultural planning and the annual allowable cut, which is set in the management plan. The timber harvesting is done motor-manually in many cases. In flatter and less sloped terrain, harvesters are used in thinning stands of almost pure softwood. Mobile chipping machines are often used for the processing of thinnings from all tree species. This work is normally done by contractors. Many contractors still work with motor-manual processes. The employment of contractors for felling varies considerably between the individual enterprises and depends partly on the number of their own personnel. There is often close cooperation between their own personnel and the contractors such as for skidding work with a mobile cable crane.

Skidding tracks or cable lines are established for the timber hauling. The basis for this is a network of permanent machine paths and forest truck roads. The degree of access is useful in most locations.

The regeneration techniques are primarily dependent on the silvicultural planning. Femel felling, border felling and shelterwood felling are practiced and there is an increased use of selective cutting. The type of regeneration is mostly dependent on the tree species selection and natural regeneration is the normal case. If regeneration is difficult, desired tree species are added. Area planting is the exception. One finds this in stands, which were damaged by storm Lothar and are now to be converted to hardwood, for example, oak.

3.5. Silviculture

The selection of the silvicultural methods is left up to the owner, but the cantonal forest law requires that the forest management be near-natural. The details are regulated in the planning instruments. See above. The information contained in the commentary on the site maps provides the foresters with a useful aid for the selection of the tree species.

Depending on the site conditions and development of the access, the age-class forestry is being converted to continuous forest management. However, small area femel felling and border felling are still used the most.

Lothar, the storm of the century, caused relatively little damage in the Association area. Although topographic conditions are also very important for the degree of damage, it may still be concluded that most of the forest stands are relatively stable in their structures.

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3.6. Monitoring processes

Monitoring activities connected with the management of the forests in the Association area are accomplished at various levels. The country-wide forest inventory and the permanent sampling network, which exists throughout the country, provides Switzerland with excellent data for long-term regional and national forest development. These data also provide important information for the cantonal level.

According to law, the government council determines the division of the forest counties and forest districts. This is listed in the Forest Regulation. The county forest engineer is a cantonal employee. The selection of the forest ranger is done by the district association and approved by the canton. He exercises the supervisory, implementation and monitoring functions in the entire district area including for the private forest.

The monitoring of the cantonal forest service consists of the requirement to approve the management plans and the felling and tending programs of the forest owners. The forest rangers also report all relevant numbers to the forestry office as an annual report in tabular form. Due to the close cooperation with the forest rangers and the limited size of the counties, the county forest engineers are also present on the terrain.

The Swiss Accident Insurance Institute plays a significant role with respect to work safety. The technical basis is found in the Swiss Commission for Work Safety guideline No. 2134, Forest Work, which contains safety regulations. The inclusion of doctors for occupational medicine and other specialists for work safety is regulated in the Swiss Commission for Work Safety guideline No. 6508. The implementation of these guidelines, which is obligatory for all forestry enterprises with employees, is assured by the Branch Solution Forest of the Forestry Association of Switzerland and the Forest Contractors Association. Inspections in this area are conducted internally and by external sources through assessments of the associations and the Swiss Accident Insurance Institute.

Practically all public forestry enterprises conduct cost accounting according to the model of the Forestry Association of Switzerland. The evaluation is done in cooperation with a private office. Each enterprise has time series for the most important financial ratios for a period of many years, which are evaluated graphically and then interpreted.

The monitoring of the work quality of their forestry personnel and of the contractors employed is accomplished by the forest rangers.

4. SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

4.1. Social aspects

The cantons of Basel Country and City are characterized by a predominating portion of public forest. The communities are the most

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frequent forest owners. Thus, they are of great importance with respect to the forest itself.

The socioeconomic environment is very diverse. The forest has a very important function in the vicinity of population centers as a recreational area for the nearby population.

There is less use of forests in remote areas for recreational purposes. However, there is a certain pressure exerted by recreation seekers and other more intense sports enthusiasts in areas such as riding, climbing, motocross, mountain biking, hiking and orienteering races etc.

Most protective functions play a subordinate role. However, there are several subsidized silvicultural projects for forests with particular protective functions according to the definition of the Federal Office for Environment, Forest and Landscape. Its perimeter is relatively small in comparison to the conditions in the area of the Alps.

As a whole, all forests in the Association area are situated in an interesting competitive field of interest due to the various usages. The forest rangers are thus accordingly and intensively involved in public relations work.

Due to economic reasons, there has been a continuing structural change in the Association area for some years through the consolidation of the individual communal forestry enterprises to achieve joint management with a main enterprise or consolidation into a district association. These consist of several communities, which own forests. In some cases, state forests, residents' communities and foundations also belong to these consolidated organizations. This process is being supported by the new forest law, but should be finished by the end of 2003. This restructuring also affects the employment situation. There is an increasing number of private forest contractors compared to full-time forestry personnel.

4.2. Environmental aspects

The following environmental aspects have been identified as being most important:

- Cantonal concept nature protection in the forest
- Diverse communal nature protection concepts
- Occurrence of rare animal and plant species
- Selection of tree species within the flexibility of the plant-sociological site mappings
- Selection of the harvesting methods and the corresponding development of access through a skidding track system
- The use of fuels and chemical protective agents in the forest
- Work facilities and especially the storage of fuels and disposal of waste

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- Forest-game-damage situation

4.3. Regulations

- The legal basis in the cantons of Basel Country and Basel City is extensive. The management of the forests in the canton of Basel Country is based on the provisions of the new Forest Law dated June 11, 1998, which became effective on January 1, 1999, and the Forest Regulation dated December 22, 1998, which became effective on January 1, 1999. The forest law in Basel City has just been revised and will become effective on January 1, 2002. It is very closely associated with the laws of the neighboring canton. The conditions have already been evaluated with respect to the new laws.

In addition to the cantonal forest laws and the associated regulations, the most important group of laws are concerned with the following aspects:

- Hunting and the protective of wild mammals and birds
- Regional planning, building and planning law
- Water protection
- Nature protection and protection of local cultural and natural monuments
- Work safety and health protection based on the Swiss Commission for Work Safety guideline No. 2134 and 6508 and the Swiss Accident Insurance Institute guidelines

5. LOCAL STANDARDS

The National Standards for Forest Certification in Switzerland dated June 1999 were used as the local standard. There is no national standard in Switzerland, which is recognized by the FSC International.

6. THE ASSESSMENT

6.1. Schedule

Prior to the assessment, a preassessment was conducted by QUALIFOR Switzerland on 18 and 19 September 2001. This was conducted with two goals: Firstly, the management system of the WbB was examined as the group representative; and secondly the management systems of selected Association members were examined. The central contact persons were the chairperson of the certification committee, the managing director of the WbB, the forest rangers and the county foresters of the forestry enterprises visited.

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The information collected was used for the preparation and planning of the main assessment. The most important stakeholders were identified.

The main assessment was carried out during the period of 26 to 28 November 2001. A detailed schedule is shown in appendix I of the full report.

6.2. Team

Lead Assessor: Forestry engineer with 17 year of professional experience, with three of these years in the assessment of forestry management.

Local Specialist: Forestry engineer with 13 years of professional experience, with five of these years spent in the assessment of forestry management.

Short curricula vitae are provided in appendix II of the full report.

6.3. Peer Reviewers

Three independent experts were selected to review this report. They consist of one internationally recognized expert on Swiss forestry and wood management policies, one specialist for work safety and one scientific forester in the area of ecology.

6.4. Process

The main assessment was conducted in the steps outlined below.

6.4.1 Preparation

The QUALIFOR certification assessment checklist, AD63, served as the basis and the national standards are integrated in this checklist. In addition, the group checklist and the results of the preassessment were used. Further documents such as the cantonal forest law and model were also included in the preparation.

The assessment schedule was prepared and submitted to the office for distribution. This schedule included the opening meeting, the examination of the group management system, a sample from four enterprise visits and the closing meeting.

6.4.2 Stakeholder notification

Organized stakeholders, who were known to the WbB, were contacted by letter to inform them of the planned assessment. They were requested to submit their concerns with respect to forest management and the certification of the WbB in writing. Stakeholders, who are directly involved in the certification in the WbB, were not contacted separately. The stakeholders, who were contacted in writing, represent environment and nature protection associations, regional tourism, hiking trails, sports associations, the Sawmill Association and the Game Protection Club etc.

See appendix IV of the full report.

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6.4.3 Opening meeting

An opening meeting was held with the chairperson of the certification committee and the representative of the Both Basel Forestry Office. The scope of the assessment was explained and schedules were confirmed. See appendix I of full report concerning attendees.

6.4.4 Management system of the group representative

Following the opening meeting, the group management system of the WbB, as the group representative, was examined for the fulfillment of the FSC requirements for group certification programs.

6.4.5 Document review

The most important management documents were reviewed on-site with the managers to determine their completeness and appropriateness concerning the QUALIFOR program requirements. These documents included a draft of the regional forest development plan, management plans, enterprise management systems, schedules, working instructions, monitoring mechanisms and daily performance records.

6.4.6 Field assessments

Field assessments were conducted to determine how closely activities in the field complied with documented management systems, QUALIFOR Program requirements and the national standards. Interviews were conducted with representatives of the forest service, the certification committee of the WbB, forest rangers and managers, forestry personnel of the enterprises and contractor employees to determine their familiarity with and their application of management models, procedures and instructions that are relevant to their activities.

6.4.7 Stakeholder interviews

The national stakeholders are informed monthly about the currently planned projects and the projects being conducted. Several of these are also represented at the regional level and were included in this way in the certification process.

Of the total of ten regional stakeholders, who were contacted in writing, two organizations provided replies in writing before the assessment. In addition, one official from the Finance Ministry called one assessor to ask about the purpose of the certification. Two additional organizations provided a reply shortly after the assessment.

The replies concerned the natural regeneration, nature protection, hunting and public finances. No additional personal discussions were held with stakeholders in connection with the certification assessment. During the course of the winter, a stakeholder meeting will take place, which is intended to continue this process of participation and influencing actions.

6.4.8 Summing up and closing meeting

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At the conclusion of the field assessment, findings were presented to the representatives of the WbB and the Both Basel Forestry Office at a closing meeting. All non-compliances with the QUALIFOR requirements were formulated in two differently weighted corrective action requests (CAR).

- **Major CARs** - which must be eliminated and reassessed before certification can proceed.
- **Minor CARs** - which do not preclude certification, but must be eliminated within an agreed time frame, and will be checked at the first surveillance visit.

6.5. Sampling

Various forestry enterprises and district associations were selected and visited from those members of WbB, who registered for the group certification program.

The selection for the random sampling of the enterprises visited was conducted according to the following criteria: regional distribution such as the city and population center, rural areas; ownership structures, cross-boundary forest management and the consideration of the preassessment and internal main sampling. This resulted in the coverage of seven of the 10 forest districts, which were registered for the first section of the assessment.

In those enterprises visited, the areas for certification requirements were selected at random. Following a general on-site discussion, the main emphasis was placed on the selected areas of the certification requirements. Documents, work facilities and stands were examined and work in the forest such as tending, thinning, regeneration areas and the restoration of windthrow areas was visited to determine if the work conducted was in accordance with the required instructions.

The following areas were examined as the main areas of concentration during the field visits:

- Stands, in which timber harvesting was in progress with their own personnel
- Restored windthrow areas
- Stands, in which thinning or harvest cutting was conducted in the last three years
- Stands, in which work with contractors was conducted
- Reserves, research objects and nature priority areas
- Forestry enterprise work facilities

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7. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Detailed assessment findings are included in the full report. The related findings, observations and corrective actions raised are described for each QUALIFOR requirement.

The main issues are discussed below. They refer to the requirements of the FSC for group certification (requirements for the group representative), the general QUALIFOR program and fulfillment of the national standards.

7.1. Findings related to the requirements for the group representative

The Forestry Association Both Basel (WbB) is the group representative for its members for the FSC certification process. In doing this, the WbB assumes the main responsibility for the fulfillment of the certification requirements by the participating forest owners. Primarily, this main responsibility must include the establishment of acceptance, resignation and expulsion procedures, an internal control process including assessments and the maintenance of a participant directory.

The WbB has accomplished considerable developmental and information work for the members of the Association and the foresters in this respect. The handbook, Forest Management, describes in detail the required processes and responsibilities for the FSC group certification. It was developed on the basis of the handbook of the Aargau Forestry Association, which has proven itself as a handbook for the last one and a half years.

The first part (H1) provides a short description of the Forestry Association Both Basel and its purpose. Ten basic ideas form the guiding principle for the forest management. These are communicated to all participating members and to the forestry contractors etc.

The second part (H2) is concerned with the total organization, the planning and the entire control mechanism for the group. All participants and partners of the WbB are shown in a hierarchy structure and the contractual requirements are explained. The organization charts for the WbB and the cantonal forest service are included to the degree that they are relevant for the group certification. Following this, the internal planning of the WbB is described, which is intended to establish areas of concentration with respect to continual improvement. The control system functions at three levels.

- The internal monitoring of the forest managers
- Monitoring of non-compliances by the certification committee and planning of internal assessments
- Evaluation and adjustment of the management system by the responsible agency

The internal monitoring also functions based on three instruments:

- Internal assessments of the group members

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- Annual reports of the cantonal forest service on legal violations and a compilation of the results from the annual reports
- Annual reporting of the member forest owners

In the first phase, trained assessors of the Aargau Forestry Association are employed for internal assessments. At the same time, their own internal assessors are being developed. A basic assessment plan for 2002 has been prepared. Within the five-year period of validity of the certificate, it is planned to conduct at least one assessment of each member forest owner or his representative for the maintenance of the certification requirements. Based on the internal assessments, the effectiveness and the degree of implementation of the group management system itself are also examined.

The third part (H3) concerns the acceptance, resignation and the expulsion procedures, and internal and external communications. As the first step, the forest district announces its interest with a registration form, which lists all owners participating in the district. The WbB then sends documents including the agreement, a registration checklist and the national standards. The agreement contains information about the subject matter of the contract, the requirements for all participants, information and data protection, payments, beginning, end and reentry after five years. The agreement is only valid after the other registration documents have been examined and the agreement is countersigned by the president and the managing director. The core of the registration procedure is the enclosed self-declaration by means of a registration checklist: thirty questions, which can be answered with Yes, Partially or No, provide step-by-step guidance for the representative of the registered forest owner through the sensitive areas of the FSC P&C. The significant points covered in the questions in the registration checklist include the law, management, environmental aspects and nature protection. If areas are identified, in which the certification requirements are not fully met, concrete measures must be proposed for improvement of the situation. This registration checklist is checked by the county forester and the internal assessor for plausibility and signed.

Basically, the registration checklist is a good means for evaluating the registering forest owner. During the certification assessment, the assessors found that in the enterprises, which were examined, this checklist was completed in a very self-critical and serious manner. At the time of the assessment, the examination by the internal assessor of the WbB was lacking due to reasons of time, but this was completed before the signing of the agreements.

In order to allow forest owners, which are not district partners, to participate in the group certification, a subagreement was prepared for private forest owners and owners of small public forests. This is handled bilaterally between the forest owner, who submits the request, and the representative of an enterprise, which is already a member. The contents are structured similar to the agreement with the WbB. The subagreement requires the owner to fulfill the national standards in particular and to unconditionally follow the requirements set by the forest ranger. The forest ranger has the

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choice of entering into such a subagreement or not. It can be concluded, terminated or dissolved at any time.

The procedures for suspension and expulsion of participants and internal controls are of decisive importance.

The different levels of responsibility are correctly defined for each step of the resignation and expulsion procedures. This means that in the case of expulsion proceedings there is a finding of non-compliances, the setting of corrective action requests with a two-stage time limit, follow-up checks and the suspension is the responsibility of the coordinator of the certificate, the managing director and the certification committee. The president of the WbB decides about any recourse measures. If the decision is negative then the expulsion follows automatically.

The reorganization of the forest districts has been completed to a large degree. In spite of this, changes are still possible. The group representative must insure that agreements concluded for the group certification remain valid during the reorganization.

Internal communications are not yet at the desirable level. The foresters were certainly well informed about the purpose and the schedule for the certification, however, there are technical gaps, which are relatively important. See CAR 03 for element 1.6.1 of the checklist later in this report. The assessors found that the problem was apparently identified in the certification committee, but was not yet solved. There are several drafts of memorandums and it is urgent that the final version be completed and distributed to the appropriate personnel and possibly training should be given as a supporting measure.

Part H4 of the handbook describes the documentation system. Basically, only a few copies of the handbook are prepared and updated. This reduces the sources of errors.

The abbreviations are explained in part H5.

There is the memorandum and form part, which is structured similar to the main part, and numbered from M1 to M4.

The management system of the WbB is still very young and important areas such internal assessments, sanctions for failure to fulfill the requirements and expulsion procedures etc. are described in accordance with the provisions of the FSC, however, they have not yet been applied in practice.

The handbook management system was examined during the certification assessment and the assessors found that the requirements for FSC group certification are fulfilled.

7.2. Findings related to the general QUALIFOR Program and the National Standards in Switzerland

7.2.1 Compliance with law and FSC Principles

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The management of the forests in the Association area is based on the legal requirements of the cantonal forest laws. The forest rangers are informed about the laws, which directly affect them. The Both Basel Forestry Office maintains a collection of laws and is oriented on changes, which affect the forest, by reports from foresters. All Swiss and cantonal laws can also be viewed in the Internet. All foresters have access to the Internet. A list of the relevant cantonal laws is found in appendix V.

During the assessment, no information was found concerning violations of laws. Some cases of uncertainty were found, when those responsible were questioned about fire prevention regulations for the storage of fuels and the limitations in groundwater protection zones.

The obligation to pay the value-added tax has been clarified by specialists several times. The tax obligation when charging work between various communities (main enterprise) does not exist. The volume of work for third parties (private) is consciously limited in some cases in order to avoid exceeding the threshold of 25,000 francs annual revenue. The sale of timber from one's own forest is not subject to the value-added tax.

The WbB has defined 10 basic ideas in connection with the certification. These basic principles for group policies have been transmitted to the members and are known in most cases down to the level of the forest warden and contractor. However, the meaning of these principles for everyday work is still not clear enough. For example, contractor contracts are only available in written form in some cases. The model contracts from the Forestry Association Switzerland and the Association of Swiss Forest Contractors do contain some important elements, but some of the missing items include agreements concerning environmental standards. Managers are also not aware of the requirements concerning the storage of fuels. This was not examined, but it is suspected that there is also an information deficit for the forest owners with subagreements, since the national standards need some explaining for laypersons. There are drafts of memorandums on all of these topics in the WbB handbook, but these need some editorial adjustments. The minor corrective action request (CAR) 03 requires the editing of these and the distribution by the first surveillance visit at the latest.

7.2.2 Tenure and use rights and responsibilities

The real property is entered in the land title register and is visible in land parcel plans. The ownership relations in the cantons of Basel Country and City and in the case of forest ownership outside of the canton are clear and undisputed. This also applies to the few forests, which are located in Germany. There, the Swiss forest owners have the status of private forest owners and can conduct the management with their own technical personnel.

The rights of use are clearly determined in the forest laws and adjusted to the new requirements. This includes, above all, the right of free access, which is already guaranteed in the civil code. Events, motor vehicle traffic,

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bicycle riding, horse riding, and residual wood are also regulated by the canton.

7.2.3 Indigenous peoples' rights

Not relevant.

7.2.4 Community relations and workers rights

The forest rangers are responsible for training questions in their function as the forestry enterprise manager. Managers and their own forest personnel are employees of the communities, the forestry enterprise or the state. The primary qualification for employment is training. There is even a slight trend towards overqualification such as foresters working as forest wardens. As a rule, long-term cooperation is the goal for work with contractors. Forestry training opportunities are offered mainly from the Both Basel Forestry Office, the cantonal Forester Association, the WbB, Forestry Association Switzerland, Swiss Accident Insurance Institute and the training center Forest Lyss. The training offered encompasses a broad range of technical and management topics, nature and landscape protection and social, hygiene and medical subjects. In most enterprises, the employees must request advanced training themselves. Systematic support of employees with appropriate advanced training is more often the exception.

Normally, the forest rangers are very involved in the local public relations work and organize excursions and forest days for schools, the people in general or community agencies. The establishment of recreational facilities and the maintenance of these are actively supported and belong to the standard scope of the expected services and especially in the forests close to the cities.

The Branch Solution Forest has been introduced in all enterprises and has already been well implemented. In several forestry enterprise, external safety assessments have been made by technical specialists from the Forestry Association Switzerland or the Swiss Accident Insurance Institute. The deficiencies found at that time were in the process of being eliminated in almost all cases. In order to provide mutual support and balance, a Swiss Accident Insurance Institute assessor accompanied each FSC assessment and vice versa in the Association area for this year.

As a rule, the managers are members of the cantonal forester's association. In one forest county, very close cooperation was found between the neighboring foresters and their employees, which was apparently very fruitful. The degree of organization at the forest warden and foreman level is very low. Discussions with forest wardens have shown that the need for membership in an association is insignificant. The employment conditions have been harmonized through service and salary regulations of the canton and communities. The employment conditions for employees of regular contractors were not a source of complaints. The situation for both temporary piece workers was, however, not discussed in detail.

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The office of the WbB has compiled a list of the important stakeholders. Communications with the stakeholders are regulated in the handbook management system. The participation of the general public is assured as part of the forest development planning because it is consciously promoted there. Any new construction or expansion of forest roads or machine paths is based on the planning requirements procedures of the communities. The criteria concerning construction requirements vary from forest county to forest county.

When work is awarded to third parties, such as for the employment of contractors, the operational goals concerning work safety, conservations of the stands and ecology are not transferred systematically to the contractors. See CAR 03.

7.2.5 Benefits from the forest

The cost accounting system (BAR) of the Forestry Association Switzerland has been prepared for some time in almost all forestry enterprises, which were visited. An external expert supports the enterprises in the recording, evaluation and the interpretation of the results. The BAR cost accounting system provides information per forest owner and for the district on felling volume and revenue per main assortment, timber harvest costs and time expenditures, tending expenditures, administrative costs, services sold to third parties, nature protection tasks, jurisdictional responsibilities and services for the general public. There is an income statement or direct costing for each area. The wood production is still just positive in most cases. Depending on the enterprise, the revenue from nature protection activities already exceeds the revenue from the sale of timber.

Based on the standardized procedures of the BAR cost accounting system, the comparison of enterprises is possible, but must be interpreted with appropriate caution.

In addition to this internal management instrument, the financial accounting prepares budgets and annual invoices, which are distributed to the representatives of the public forest owners. The charts of accounts of the new invoicing model from the finance director's conference are used. Depending on the regulation of responsibilities, the community meeting or the selected agency decides about the approval.

During the visits to the enterprises, the assessors found that investments are continuing to be made and mainly in skidding vehicles and work facilities.

The exercise of the forestry police functions is possible due to the area-wide division of the forest into districts and the associated connection with the forestry enterprises and district associations. The jurisdictional services provided are compensated by the canton.

Motor-manual procedures, which conserve the stands, are the rule. The cooperation between the forest team and the contractor or subcontractor is good. Felling files are prepared, which contain the emergency organization

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and the work order including harvesting method. Assortment lists are a standard part of the felling file and the contractor contracts. In general, the employees are aware of the importance of forest management, which conserves the soil and stands.

During the acceptance procedures used by the forestry enterprises, they ask the forest contractors if they participate in the Branch Solution Forest. The written contract conditions between the forestry enterprise and the contractor are based mostly on the model contract from the Association of Swiss Forest Contractors and the Forestry Association Switzerland dated 1995. However, this model contains little concerning concrete measures to avoid damage to the soil and stand and additional environmental protection measures. A memorandum for foresters is being prepared. It is urgent that the revision, publication and implementation be completed quickly. See CAR 03.

The harvested timber is measured by the forest rangers at the plant or on the contractor's machine, for example, for chips. The invoicing is done by the manager, normally in the name of the owner. In addition to the broad range of normal timber assortments, end products such as tables, benches, troughs for wells, posts, wooden torches, firewood and chips etc. are offered by the forestry enterprise.

There are a large number of central chip furnaces, which is leading to a visible improvement on the timber market for low-quality assortments. All factors concerning logistics have been optimized for the long-term with a highly specialized wood processing plant from the region and this is having a positive effect on the prices.

Several measures are being taken to avoid quality losses of the felled timber. The coordination of the delivery times for hardwood is optimal. The sale of softwood is slow at this time. In individual cases, there were large lots of stored, unprotected Lothar timber, which had been sold, but not hauled away yet. This timber will likely have storage damage. Other stacks of timber are covered with sheeting, which provides better protection.

In the past years, the markets have hardly provided any incentive for overuse. Enterprises, which were affected little by Lothar, have reduced their harvesting. In the mid-term, compensation for the reduced harvesting should be the goal in order to maintain the annual allowable cut within 15 years.

7.2.6 Environmental impact

The effects of forest management on the environment and the forest ecosystem are topics, which are found mainly in the forest development plan. The implementation in the enterprises is accomplished through the management plan, an annual program, projects, the organization of felling and the training of employees.

The timber harvesting procedures are adjusted to the topographic conditions and the soil. Mobile cable cranes are normally used on slopes.

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Both cantons began, at an early time, to make inventories of special habitats. The inventories include inventories of important natural forest objects, an ornithological inventory, reptile inventory, and an inventory of geological natural-history monuments. This basic information was used for the communal and canton nature protection areas.

The cantonal concept for nature protection in the forest is to be approved in the near future. In addition, there are many nature protection concepts at the community level, which have been practiced for a longer period of time. The assessor found that the cooperation with the canton technical office was good and also functions on the terrain.

There was varying feedback from the forest management side concerning the hunting question. Some foresters participate actively in hunting. Others attempt to make contact with the hunters, but this is not always optimal.

Hunting in the district is done on a leasing basis. The canton Hunting Administration sets the numbers to be shot based on the game estimates of the hunting lessees, which are signed by the forester. In some cases, the game estimates are adjusted to the needs of the hunters. This results, in some cases, in underusage of the game populations. Since the objectivity of the game estimates is questionable, the Association should seek solutions with the appropriate cantonal agency.

The forests in those enterprises, which were visited, made a very near-natural impression. There are practically no areas of regeneration except due to the influence of violent forces of nature. In Basel Country, an area of 0.5 ha is considered to be clear cutting, which is a significant intensification of the national standards.

Considerable value is placed on natural regeneration, wherever this is possible, and the promotion of special tree and shrub species during tending. Current young growth and thicket areas show that planting is only conducted as an exception. The assessors found only few cultures. Examples are, oak, cherry trees and wild apple in Lothar areas. Larch with final spacing on an area of 0.3 ha with regeneration problems and between these, natural regeneration and bushes are coming slowly.

The Jura Mountain forests are known for the rich species sites. No new areas were sighted, on which non-site-adapted tree species were regenerated, including observations of slopes on the opposite side of the valley. On some locations, slide areas were observed, which were left to natural dynamics.

Woodpecker trees are left standing purposely and some are permanently marked with metal plates. The involvement of certain employees in this type of work is remarkable. The question of safety in the area of dead trees was discussed on-site with a Swiss Accident Insurance Institute expert. The assessors share the opinion that the safety of the employees during harvesting is to be given added emphasis. Accordingly, it is correct if forest wardens can make decisions on their own during felling whether a dead tree is to be felled or not.

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The cantonal concept for nature protection in the forest foresees a goal of 1100 ha for total reserves and old forest islands. Both types are assured with contracts for 25 years. This is almost six percent of the forests of Basel Country. An additional 2600 ha (14%) is to be designated as special forest reserves and staged forest edges. The concept is to be approved shortly by the government council and will then be presented to the federal government for approval. The areas have not been defined yet.

In some cases, the forestry enterprises are exceeding the canton goals, where communal protection areas exist. In one case, old forest islands with an area greater than 10 ha were designated. No opposition on the part of the managers to the intentions of the canton was found.

The question of the limitation or definition of a total reserve and old forest islands requires clarification. There is a certain mistrust on the part of the cantonal nature protection organizations (see chapter on stakeholder consultation) that the five percent of total reserve as required by the national standards has not been achieved. The WbB should also declare the communal protection areas of group members, which have entered into long-term contracts, in the list Overview of Nature Protection Zones.

Driving on the forest soil with forestry machines is considered to be a particular impairment of the environment. In one case, the assessors found that on flat terrain timber was not systematically skidded on the system of skidding tracks. Another weak point is that skidding vehicles are parked, possibly unintentionally, in water protection zones because not all machine operators are aware of these zones. There was also no emergency kit available in the form of an oil binder and a pan on the vehicles or in the team vehicle.

Corrective action request (CAR) 02 was formulated based on these weaknesses. See below.

The use of wood protecting chemicals is only done to a very modest degree. Some stacks of storm-damaged and beetle infested timber were sprayed. The treatment is done directly by someone with a Swiss technical authorization identification according to the substance regulation or under his supervision. The protective equipment is available and is used. The chemicals are mixed in the work facility according to the printed instructions for use. Empty drums are disposed of according to the regulations. The use of fertilizers and chemicals in the forest itself is, with the exception of chemicals to protect against game damage, forbidden.

Waste materials are disposed of in the work facilities. Recyclable materials are separated from normal waste materials in an exemplary manner. Waste materials, which are occasionally deposited illegally along the roads in the forest, are disposed of by the forestry enterprises at their own costs or in cooperation with the residents' community.

If needed, pheromone traps for bark beetles can be used as a biological control agent. However, these are seldom used and serve more for the monitoring of the beetle population than as a control agent. No danger to the environment is known.

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No planting of exotics or establishment of plantations was found.

7.2.7 Management plan

The planning in the forest consists, as required by law, of a three-stage model:

1. A forest development plan encompasses, as a rule, one forest district, but larger units can be set. It contains all basic maps and the results of the forest inventory (control samples 100 x 100 m). Its main purpose is the assignment of the forest functions and the higher level forest planning, which is to consider as many interests as possible and to eliminate conflicts or make them transparent. Because of this, the plan is developed with the participation of the general public. The law also requires coordination with regional planning. The planning process is supervised by the county forester. The forest development plan is to be revised after 15 years and it is binding for agencies.
2. The management plan contains the strategic planning for each forest owner. A joint plan for each district can also be developed. The management plan uses the basic data and instructions from the forest development plan and connects these with the silvicultural planning. The management plan formulates long-term goals and also includes the definition of the annual allowable cut. The management plan is also revised at least every 15 years. According to the law, the management plan is only to be revised when the forest development plan is finished. It is to be submitted for approval by the canton no later than two years after the completion of the forest development plan. The management plan is binding for the owner and can be reviewed by anyone upon request.
3. The annual program is concerned with operational planning. It provides a general outline concerning what work is to be done at what time and at which location. The annual program also includes the components of personnel capacities. It is coordinated with the budget limitations.

In those enterprises, which were visited, there is still no approved forest development plan. The completion is foreseen at the end of 2002 for two locations. As an interim result, path use concepts were presented, which reflect the participation of the general public. The participation of third parties was described as very active. The Basel City forest development plan can be viewed on the Internet at www.wep-basel.ch. Both Basel are to be covered area-wide with a forest development plan by 2010.

Most management plans come from the eighties or the nineties and are still called economic plans, since they are almost solely concerned with wood production. The period of validity has already expired in some cases or will expire in the near future. However, based on the transitional provision in the forest law, the validity – regardless of the currency – is extended until the forest development plan is in effect and the two-year time limit is running. From the viewpoint of the assessors, if the old forest development plan is extended to 20 years, then the planning gaps, which develop, are too big in some cases. The changes in the operational structures are too

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big and also with respect to the stakeholder groups. In such cases, the manager is to develop a mid-term plan. This plan is to contain updated maps and deal with the current goals of the enterprise. See corrective action request (CAR) 01.

Certain managers only prepare a quarterly program instead of an annual program in order to be able to adjust in a more flexible manner to the market. This practice is tolerated by the forestry office and from the view of the assessors is also useful.

Questions concerning employee management such as training, advanced training, job descriptions and discussions with employees etc. were discussed in detail in chapter 7.2.4.

7.2.8 Monitoring and assessment

Most of the monitoring instruments have been discussed in the previous chapters. A summary of these includes:

- Measurement lists and invoices, plant accounting, bills of delivery and contractor invoices for the monitoring of felling and the FSC chain of custody.
- Cost accounting and financial accounting
- Detailed annual report, tabular, which is submitted to the Both Basel Forestry Office
- Safety inspections by the forester or foreman and by the work safety specialist from the Swiss Accident Insurance Institute
- Acceptance of the fellings of the contractors, mostly verbally
- Swiss forest statistics, separated according to public and private forest owners
- State forest inventory, which is conducted by the Swiss Research Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape in Birmensdorf
- Sampling inventory under the supervision of the Both Basel Forestry Office
- Forest damage, long-term monitoring plots of the Institute for Applied Plant Sociology in Schönenbuch
- Field inspections with the nature protection representatives of the canton

The data are collected and evaluated by the forest ranger, specialists commissioned by the canton or scientists. They are analyzed and considered for plan revisions.

Evaluations by the canton and the federal government are available to the public. The operational data can be reviewed upon request as long as they are not subject to data protection.

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7.2.9 High Conservation Value Forests

Forests with a high conservation value with respect to nature protection, protection against natural dangers or cultural distinctness are recorded in the forest development plan. Such forest have a special object sheet, where their distinctness, the goal and measures are described.

In the area of nature protection, the cantonal concept for nature protection in the forest provides a general outline of how these forests are to be managed in the future. Various cantonal and communal protection areas are set in detail, for which individual government council resolutions or concepts exist for each. It was found that there is close cooperation with the corresponding cantonal technical offices and the local nature and bird protection clubs. An indicator system is being developed at cantonal level for systematic annual observation. In special areas with an experimental character, scientists from the Swiss Research Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape are employed for monitoring. Such activities are recognized positively by the stakeholders from the nature protection area.

Forests with a special protective function with respect to the natural dangers are designated as subsidized silviculture projects. These are mainly forests above important traffic routes and towns. They protect against falling rocks, erosion and slides. These projects are prepared and monitored according to the Swiss guidelines.

7.2.10 Plantation

Plantations, in the sense of monocultures of highly productive tree species planted in areas, were not found at the enterprises visited. For normal silvicultural measures, planting has become very rare and serves to restock areas with regeneration problems.

Christmas tree cultures are planted in a few cases. Spruce and Caucasian fir grow there. The area used represents less than one percent of the forest area. Often, these are areas, which have an easement for the maintenance of a low tree height.

About one-third of the Lothar storm areas have been artificially restocked. The assessors found areas, on which oak or cherry trees were planted. Smaller parts were planted with larch, wild apple or pear.

The origin of the planted trees can be determined based on the supplier's invoices.

Chemicals may only be used to provide protection against game damage. Most foresters protect their trees individually with plastic sleeves, which can be recycled, or with fences around the area. Forest rides, which are to be kept free, are designated according to county instructions from the forestry directorate.

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7.3. Issues raised by Stakeholders

During the course of the consultations with the various stakeholders, the following concerns were presented. The results of discussions about these concerns during the assessment or further actions will be presented. These topics will be examined during the first surveillance visit.

Issue Raised	Response
1. Standard 4 of the national standards. The natural regeneration is still given too little attention. The state council resolution for the elimination of the Lothar damage provides over a half of a million francs for new plantings. The national standards, however, only foresee plantings in justified and relatively narrowly defined exceptional cases. Double naming of this concern.	On-site, the assessors found no violation of national standard 4 including observations of forests on the opposite side of the valley. Natural regeneration is the rule and planting is the exception. The tree species planted were certainly site-adapted and can even be described as enrichment. The special valuable broad-leaved trees are relatively expensive to purchase. A reduction of the state council credit could prove to be contraproductive.
2. Standard 11 of the national standards. In the concept, nature protection in the forest, the share of natural priority areas is 17%. Of this, 5% is to be designated as total reserves including old forest islands. The areas for old forest islands are only between 0.5 and 5 ha. The national standards (11b) foresee a total stoppage of harvesting on 5%. The minimum size is 20 ha. Thus, the area goals of the national standards are not fulfilled (double naming of this concern). In addition, in relation to the planned tending, there is too little money available to insure meeting the reserve goals.	The assessors have evaluated the concept mentioned according to the national standard 11a because this is to be approved by the government council and the federal government in the near future. A transitional time period is foreseen for the implementation. Areas smaller than 20 ha per owner can be included if they meet the criteria when counted together with a neighboring area. In an internal list of the WbB, the participating enterprises show 396 ha of forest, which is excluded from harvesting. This corresponds to 7% of the forest area from the first certified section. As is known, "doing nothing" is easier than expensive actions for special nature protection goals.
3. Consideration of game corridors and other inventories for planning.	All relevant inventories are considered in the forest development plan.
4. The construction of roads and	The access concept is a part of the

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the expansion produces more disturbances in the forest.	forest development plan. The construction of roads is subject to approval by the communities. Stakeholders can raise objections.
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The remaining input was too inexact to allow the drawing of concrete conclusions. Stakeholder consultations were also somewhat short in time. The inputting organizations will be contacted again before the first surveillance visit.

7.4. Issues Raised By Peer Reviewers

The three experts for the peer review have made a critical examination of the assessment checklist and the report and provided their comments in a report form. The experts agree that the certificate can be issued. A summary of their comments follows:

Issue Raised	Response
The registration checklists for private forest owners should also contain questions and obligations concerning safety and health protection to be provided by the private forest managers.	Private forest owners register by means of a subagreement with the appropriate forest ranger. The agreement contains the statement: "The representative of the member enterprise is responsible for insuring that the forest owner, who has made an agreement with him, fulfills all requirements, for which this representative is responsible due to the agreement with the Forestry Association Both Basel (WbB)." The forester must allow access to these documents and explain to the forest owner what this means for daily work. The forest owner must participate in the information and training events of the WbB.
The legal status of the "subcontractors" is to be clarified in a binding manner.	In those enterprises, which were visited, these subcontractors were piece workers considered as temporary employees and were part of the Branch Solution of the forestry enterprises. In order to clarify the situation of the contractors, an issue was also formulated.
The possible soil compaction, which can result from driving on the	The problem was recognized based on an individual observation and

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<p>forest soil with heavy vehicles, leads to damage, which is difficult to eliminate and has effects on the root penetration depth and the fertility of the soil. Those soils in the certification area, which are sensitive to compaction, are to be generally identified based on the available site information.</p>	<p>was the reason for minor correction action request (CAR) 02. The WbB is responsible for the determination of the measures to be taken. The assessors are of the opinion that in terrain, which is accessible to tractors, a clearly discernible skidding track system must be available and must be used and that this is independent of the exact soil characteristics.</p>
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8. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

8.1. Strengths

The strengths of the Association, as the group representative, are found in the broad structure, which allows all public and a large portion of the private forest owners in the canton to be reached.

The certification committee has examined, accepted and adjusted the management system of the FSC certified neighboring association in Aargau. The system is described in the handbook Forest Management. The certification committee has shown a great deal of involvement in adjusting this group certification to the local conditions.

The gaps or problems identified in the preassessment were treated in the certification committee and corresponding measures were introduced. The communications with the foresters have proven themselves based on the internal general rehearsal in one forestry enterprise.

The forestry enterprises have an excellent potential in their well-trained employees. In most cases, they are very competent with respect to questions about nature protection and contribute, with their own observations, much to integrated forest management.

The group forests, to the degree that they were examined during on-site visits, are managed according to the principles of near-natural silviculture. No non-site-adapted softwood stands were identified. Nature protection concepts are available and have formed an integral part of the forest work for some time.

The forest development plan, as a new planning instrument, allows the early inclusion of stakeholders in the planning process. It is already obvious that the participative process make many discussions about conflicts of interest unnecessary.

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8.2. Weaknesses

8.2.1 Corrective Action Requests

A total of three Minor Corrective Action Requests (CARs) are required. All non-compliances were classified as "minor." They are described below. In the following table the requirement number refers to the indicator used in the QUALIFOR Program to test each criteria from the FSC P&C or to requirements of the QUALIFOR Group Certification Program.

CAR No.	QUALIFOR requirement (FSC P&C)	Description
01	7.2.5 Minor	<p>The old economic plans have expired in some cases or will expire soon. The law requires that the management plans not be updated before the preparation of a forest development plan. But, on the other hand, the new management plans are to be submitted for approval no later than two years after the completion of the forest development plan.</p> <p>Planning gaps develop, which are in conformance with the law, but do not meet the requirements of the FSC P&C. Solutions are to be sought in the direction of mid-term valid and simplified transitional planning.</p>
02	6.5.1 Minor	<p>In one case, it was observed that timber was not systematically skidded on the skidding track network on flat terrain. In addition, the driver was not aware of the location of any water protection zones, so that he could avoid parking the vehicle there overnight. There was not any oil binder or a pan for emergencies on the skidding vehicle.</p>
03	1.6.1 Minor	<p>In the group management handbook there are draft memorandums (Aargau version) on topics such as contractor contracts, storage of fuel etc. In the forestry enterprises, it was found that it is just these points where the foresters are very uncertain. It is urgent that editing, publication and implementation take place.</p>

The first surveillance visit was agreed upon as the time limit for the corrective action requests.

8.2.2 Issues from the assessors

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During the closing meeting, a number of issues were raised, which presently require no corrective action requests. However, the assessors will examine these points again during further assessments.

- The WbB should document the evaluation of the registration checklists, which contain an overview of the problems and measures and the registration status for each forest owner. The correct handling of the registration procedures from A to Z must be checked again later in detail.
- The WbB is to clarify, along with the Both Basel Forestry Office, with the appropriate agency if a more objective solution to the estimation of the roe deer population can be found for the long-term.
- The WbB is to supplement its list of the nature protection objects in the certified enterprises with long-term communal nature protection areas.
- The question of the differentiation between old forest islands and total reserves is to be discussed with the Both Basel Forestry Office. The goal for the future is the clean declaration of the area of total reserves.
- The WbB is to work with the Both Basel Forestry Office so that a limit can be established as to when the expansion of a machine path requires a building permit and that this be done in a uniform manner.
- The WbB must maintain a consolidated list of the accident reports of its certified members. The same applies to the use of chemicals. The lists from other organizations can also be used, if the group members are easily identified in these lists. Special attention is to be given to insure that information about the certified private forests is also available.
- The use of the logo in the draft memorandum does not correspond to the newest FSC guidelines. The memorandum must be approved by the SGS (Oxford) before publication.
- The unique marking and the uninterrupted tracing of the FSC timber (CoC) were not checked.
- Where the formation of the district has not been finished yet, the operational management authority of the forester must effectively exist. Changes in the composition of the district require an adjustment of the registration documents.
- The advance training of the employees is to be used in a more conscious manner as a management tool. The needs are to be analyzed and the courses and modules to be taken are to be planned jointly. Temporary employees are to be included as well.

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9. CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

There being no open Major Corrective Action Requests, the assessment team of the QUALIFOR Program management recommends certification of the

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- for the management of the forests of the participating owners according to the current list - according to the Forest Stewardship Council's Principles and Criteria.

The outstanding Minor Corrective Action Requests do not preclude certification, but the Forestry Association Both Basel is required to take the agreed actions to close out CARs within the time frame, which was agreed upon. The actions taken will be verified by SGS QUALIFOR at the next surveillance visit. If satisfactory actions have been taken the CARs will be closed out, otherwise Minor CARs will be raised to Major CARs.