

Internal audits of Participating Sites

Code	INT-STD-40-003_05
Requirement(s)	FSC-STD-40-003 V2-1 Clause 5.3.5
Publication date	20 March 2020, updated 04 May 2021 Effective from the date of publication until 31 December 2021, or until invalidated prior to that date. This interpretation will be updated as necessary.
<p>Clause 5.3.5 offers the option that Central Offices may conduct internal audits of Participating Sites as desk audits (remote audits) under certain circumstances. Would the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, that places travel restrictions on many areas of the world, also be considered a circumstance in which desk audits (remote audits) would be justifiable?</p> <p>Yes, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic does justify applying the option of desk audits (remote audits) as per Clause 5.3.5 for all types of participating sites, provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the Participating Site is in an area with a health risk (demonstrated through verifiable public sources, e.g. official travel warnings or restrictions) due to coronavirus, or b. Central Office auditors are prevented from conducting an on-site audit due to travel restrictions imposed by organizational (certificate holder/Central Office) health and safety policies or public authorities. <p>2. In addition to the option of conducting the internal audit as desk audits (remote audits), the Central Office may also consider postponing the internal audit, but not beyond the end of 2020.</p> <p>3. For new applicant sites, the initial internal audit may be replaced by desk (remote) audits in cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the new applicant sites are already meeting the existing requirements of Clause 5.3.5, or b. the Central Office and the applicant sites meet the requirements specified in FSC-DER-2020-005 then the initial internal audit may be replaced by desk (remote) audits. <p>4. The Central Office shall retain documented evidence for each case where this interpretation has been applied.</p> <p>5. As soon as travel restrictions have been lifted, internal audits shall be conducted as per regular audit procedures.</p>	