



Fair Trade USA Procedure on Recognition of Equivalency

Fair Trade USA

Version 1.0.0

Purpose

This procedure clarifies and regulates the process by which Fair Trade USA assesses the equivalency of other standards to FTUSA Standards and the process by which a certification in accordance with that standard is recognized, either partially or in full, as equivalent. These related processes inform any relevant guidance so that applicants, Certificate Holders, Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs), and auditors understand their roles, responsibilities, and any potential implications to audit scope and planning.

Scope

This document is applicable to any FTUSA Standard. If further steps are required to recognize an applicant or Certificate Holder's certification with another scheme for a specific program – Agriculture, Apparel & Homes Goods, Seafood or Trade – those requirements would be detailed further in the relevant program assurance manual.

1. Standards Benchmark

1.1. Benchmark of Compliance Criteria and Binding Guidance

1.1.1. A review of the other scheme or body's compliance criteria and binding interpretation and guidance documents is conducted to assess which FTUSA compliance criteria are met by the other standard in principle and intent.

1.1.2. The review is conducted using a standardized template for Standards benchmarks (specific to relevant FTUSA Standard) and tracked in the Standards team Benchmark register.

1.1.3. The review is conducted by the Standards team or an individual trained by the Standards team, and the head of Standards gives final approval of the benchmark.

1.1.4. The scope of overlap and equivalence of requirements is then used to determine a recommendation to the Certification team regarding potential scope of recognition, pending outcomes of the assurance benchmark.

2. Assurance Recognition

2.1. Applicable Compliance Criteria

2.1.1. The determination of equivalence of another standard, either partially or in full, defines the relevant compliance criteria for a specific FTUSA Standard that are met in principle and intent.



2.1.2. Compliance criteria determined as equivalent may be waived during an assessment, or audit, to the relevant FTUSA Standard.

2.1.3. Any other compliance criteria not considered as equivalent for the purpose of the particular benchmark and/or partnership will be retained and assessed as normal by the compliance assessment process.

2.2. Benchmark of Certification Procedures

2.2.1. A review of the other scheme or body's certification procedures is conducted to ensure compatibility with a FTUSA compliance assessment and may determine if additional activities are required to have confidence in the results of the other scheme.

2.2.2. The critical elements of review of the other scheme's procedures or policies relate to:

- The scope of a certificate, or certification unit; and
- The requirements for issuance of a certificate.

2.2.3. Additional elements may include, but are not limited to, geographic limitation, audit types and cadence, sampling methodology, scoring system, sanctions, complaints, risk management, and quality oversight.

2.2.4. The review is conducted by a staff member of the Certification team, or consultant, working within the relevant program.

2.2.5. Pilot audits are often conducted in limited supply chains to test the assumptions of equivalency and identify any operational implications in guidance to applicants, Certificate Holders, CABs, and auditors.

2.3. Conditions to Recognition

2.3.1. The unit of certification for the FTUSA applicant or Certificate Holder is within unit of certification certified by the other scheme.

2.3.2. The applicant or Certificate Holder holds a valid certificate with the other scheme or body.

2.3.3. If not provided by other scheme or body directly to FTUSA, applicant or Certificate Holder will provide a copy of the current certificate and most recent completed audit report to FTUSA and CAB.

2.3.4. If not provided by other scheme or body directly to FTUSA, applicant or Certificate Holder will provide all other additional data required by FTUSA of program participants such as workforce demographics or monitoring and evaluation data points collected through the application form and during the audit.

2.4. Communication of Recognition

2.4.1. FTUSA will document any decisions made to recognize existing standards as equivalent, partially or full.

2.4.2. Decisions will include any waived compliance criteria and conditions specific to that scheme.

2.4.3. Any decisions will be communicated to all relevant CABs for that program.

