

## 1. Background

The UK Government, under the timber procurement policy, is committed to a biennial review of its assessment of Category A evidence (certification schemes). In the past, the Central Point of Expertise in Timber Procurement (CPET) has conducted the assessments of the certification schemes against the Government criteria for legal and sustainable timber making recommendations to Defra who then make the final decision. However, in recognition of both the technical difficulty and the wider implications of the review, since the findings are likely to have an influence well beyond government, Defra in consultation with the Reference Board decided to establish a Technical Panel made up of recognised forestry experts, to conduct the final scoring on the Category A 2008 assessments. In the future it may also be necessary to seek advice from the Technical Panel on Category B evidence put forward by suppliers to demonstrate compliance with the government policy.

### 1.1 *Category A Re-assessments*

The assessments and reviews of certification schemes will be conducted following the “*Methodology for reviews of timber certification schemes (Category A evidence)*” and the scoring undertaken as set out in the UK timber procurement policy document “*Criteria for assessing certification schemes (Category A evidence)*”. All documents and previous assessments can be found at [www.proforest.net/cpet](http://www.proforest.net/cpet).

### 1.2 *Category B Assessments*

The UK Government is obliged to allow suppliers to demonstrate sustainability through Category B evidence as an alternative to certification. Category B evidence is any acceptable evidence other than certification and varies widely from suppliers’ documentation to independent audits. It is envisaged that occasionally, particularly after the policy changes in 2009, there may be occasions where evidence may be provided where, for example, a state or region’s forestry practices have been assessed for sustainability and this is provided as evidence. In these cases the views and advice from the Technical Panel may be sought.

## 2. Terms of Reference

### 2.1 *Assessment and review process*

2.1.1 The methodology for undertaking assessments and reviews of certification schemes is set out in the CPET document ‘*Methodology for reviews of timber certification schemes (Category A evidence)*’. In summary, CPET will collect information for each scheme being assessed based on documentation and other information in the public domain. For reviews the focus will be on those areas where changes have been made. This information will be sent to the certification schemes for comment and revised. The revised versions will be sent to the Technical Review Panel members who will be

asked to decide, based on the information provided together with any stakeholder comments, whether there is full, partial or inadequate compliance with each criterion. The Panel will then be convened for a 3-day workshop to discuss and, where possible, agree findings. The final output (including any areas where there was no agreement) will then be communicated to Defra who will use the information to make a final decision on the status of each scheme.

- 2.1.2 The total time required preparation and attendance at the meeting is not expected to exceed six days for Category A assessments.
- 2.1.3 If Category B evidence is required to be assessed by the Technical Panel; CPET will consider with panel members and Defra whether a meeting is necessary. If it is required, then this shall be no longer than one day.
- 2.1.4 If a member is unable to attend a meeting the CPET Manager must be informed immediately. In consultation with other panel members, a decision will be made about whether the meeting should go ahead or be rescheduled.

## ***2.2 Duties of members***

- 2.2.1 The role of the Technical Panel is to score the CPET assessment against each of the criterion for Category A (certification schemes) and where necessary, assess Category B evidence for sustainability using the CPET methodology. The panel is established in purely an advisory capacity, all final decisions are made by Defra.
- 2.2.2 Prior to the Category A assessment meeting members of the Technical Panel will be provided with all relevant information including:
  - The methodology for reviews of timber certification schemes (Category A evidence)
  - The criteria for assessing certification schemes (Category A evidence)
  - Relevant information for each certification scheme for each criterion with changes highlighted
  - Stakeholder comments received relative to each scheme
- 2.2.3 For the Category B assessments; either the information will be assessed at a meeting or forwarded electronically or by post:
  - Methodology for review of Category B evidence
  - Category B Checklists completed and other background or supporting information on the case submitted to CPET
  - CPET assessment of the evidence with comments
- 2.2.4 The members of the Technical Panel will be expected to review the information and recommend an appropriate score for each revised criterion and, if necessary, a revised score for criteria where the information has not been revised.
- 2.2.5 The members of the Technical Panel will provide a short written report normally during or immediately after the meeting (within a maximum of 7 days) setting out the

panel's findings on the Category A or Category B assessments and any other issues the panel considers relevant may also be included.

- A copy of the finalised scoring for Category A assessments will be provided to CPET and Defra highlighting recommendations and any criteria where consensus was not reached.
- A copy of the finalised assessment of the Category B evidence for demonstrating sustainability will be provided to CPET and Defra with observations and recommendations.

## **2.3 Remuneration**

- 2.3.1 The Technical Panel members will be issued a contract by ProForest, the company that runs the CPET service.
- 2.3.2 Each member of the Technical Panel will be paid fees at a rate of GBP450 per day. This includes preparation, travel time, attendance at the meeting and any follow-up required.
- 2.3.3 All reasonable costs associated to attend the meetings within the UK will be reimbursed. This includes travel, accommodation and subsistence at economy rates.
- 2.3.4 If meetings or discussions are held by phone, the cost of the phone call will be reimbursed.

## **2.4 Confidentiality**

- 2.4.1 There may be occasions when members of the Technical Panel will be given access to confidential information (for example, the identity of a stakeholder wishing to be anonymous). If this is the case, the members will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement as set out in Appendix 1 before being given access to the confidential information.

## **2.5 Conflict of interest**

- 2.5.1 All panel members will be asked to indicate any potential conflicts of interest by filling out a ProForest conflict of interest declaration (Appendix 2). Any substantial conflict will be reviewed by the CPET Oversight Committee.
- 2.5.2 If any additional conflict arises, the panel member must inform ProForest of the change before undertaking any further work. .

## **2.6 Replacement of members**

- 2.6.1 Should a member of the Technical Panel resign, a replacement will be selected based on discussions between the Technical Panel, CPET and the Reference Board. The final decision will be made by Defra. The person should be chosen, as far as possible, to maintain the areas of expertise and experience provided by the person resigning.
- 2.6.2 The replacement will be proposed to ProForest, who may object only if there is a material reason for doing so.

2.6.3. Once a replacement has been agreed, the new member will be contacted by CPET and asked to join the Technical Panel.