

Edition 2, March 2008

1. Background

The UK government requires all timber and wood derived products to come from legal or sustainable sources, and that suppliers can provide assurance that this requirement has been met. One way of providing such assurance is by supplying products which are certified under an acceptable timber certification scheme. This is referred to as Category A evidence. In order to establish which timber certification schemes are acceptable, a set of criteria has been developed which schemes can be assessed against.

Once assessed, schemes will be reviewed regularly. This methodology sets out how reviews will be carried out.

The results of the reviews will be used to update guidance for UK government procurement in terms of which certification schemes provide assurance of legality and sustainability.

Further information on the UK government policy, a copy of the Category A criteria and copies of timber certification scheme assessment reports are all available from the CPET website at www.proforest.net/cpet.

2. Methodology

2.1 Scope of reviews

2.1.1 Reviews of certification schemes are undertaken on the basis of the scheme requirements, as set out in the publicly available documentation for each scheme. The implementation of these documented scheme requirements may also be checked (see section 2.1.3 below). No assessments of the actual outcome of certification in the forest will be made.

2.1.2 The scope of each review consists of all documented scheme requirements, with particular attention to those that have changed since the previous review.

2.1.3 The reviews will also consider any objective verifiable evidence relating to non-compliance with the documented scheme requirements after October 2004 that is submitted by stakeholders during the consultation period (see 2.2).

2.2 Stakeholder consultation

2.2.1 CPET will announce the scheme reviews, including the scope of the reviews (section 2.1 above), on the CPET website. Comments from interested parties on the schemes to be reviewed will be invited. All schemes to be reviewed will be specifically notified. These announcements and notifications will take place at least 30 days prior to commencement of the reviews.

2.2.2 Comments may be submitted at any time, but will only be considered during a review process.

2.2.3 All stakeholder comments received before or during the notification period will be included in the review. Comments received after this period will be considered at the next review.

2.2.4 Comments must be relevant to specific criteria and relate to the documented scheme requirements or system implementation. *Comments referring to the actual outcome of certification in the forest cannot be considered.* In order to be used in the review process, comments must be supported by objective verifiable evidence. If further information or clarification is required, the party that submitted the comment may be contacted, particularly where there are discrepancies between information received from stakeholders and from schemes.

2.2.5 All comments received and the response to the comments will be documented and discussed with the CPET Reference Board. A summary of comments received (un-attributed) and the response from CPET will be included both in the draft report that is submitted to the schemes for comment, and in the final public report. A copy will be sent to each individual or organisation which submitted comments.

2.3 Review process

2.3.1 For each of the relevant schemes, information relevant to compliance with each CPET criterion (as set out in the current version of '*Criteria for assessing certification schemes (Category A evidence)*') will be identified and collated. This will include information from scheme documentation together with relevant input received from the stakeholder consultation process. Where a scheme is assessed for the first time, information will be collected for each criterion. For reviews the main emphasis will be on any changes from previous reviews or comments challenging previous findings.

2.3.2 The draft results will be sent to the respective scheme with an invitation to review the information collected and, wherever appropriate, to provide further information or comment. If necessary, discussions will be held with scheme personnel to discuss and clarify particular issues.

2.3.3 A technical review panel of 4 experts will be convened. The technical review panel members will be selected on the basis of their certification expertise and experience, independence from individual certification schemes, and in order to provide international input to the CPET findings. The selection of the technical review panel members and the decision-making rules for the physical meeting will be discussed with the CPET Reference Board. Defra will make the final decision.

2.3.4 Each member of the panel will be provided with the information collected for all schemes being reviewed. Based on the information provided each member of the technical review panel will be asked to judge whether it constitutes inadequate, partial or full compliance with the criterion. The scoring methodology set out in the current version of the UK timber procurement policy document '*Criteria for assessing certification schemes (Category A evidence)*' will be used.

2.3.5 CPET will then convene and facilitate a three day physical meeting of the technical review panel to finalise the results of the reviews for each scheme. The meeting will consider the draft results from each panel member, comments from schemes, and stakeholder comments. The panel will seek to reach consensus but, where this is not possible, the range of views will be reported.

2.3.6 Final results from the technical review panel will be discussed with the CPET Reference Board. Any recommended changes to scores, and their implications for assurance of legality and sustainability, will be specifically discussed.

2.3.7 The outcome of this discussion will be reviewed by Defra who will make a final decision on the results.

2.4 Results and subsequent actions

2.4.1 The final results will be notified to the schemes and made publicly available on the CPET website.

2.4.2 If the results change the scheme's status, in terms of delivering assurance of compliance with the government's requirements for legality or sustainability, CPET will take appropriate action to amend purchasing guidance and notify public sector buyers. Any changes to procurement guidance will then take effect within 3 months.

3. Frequency of reviews

3.1 Routine reviews

Schemes currently accepted as providing evidence of legality/sustainability will be reviewed biennially, to ensure that they continue to merit their current scores.

3.2 Additional reviews

Additional reviews may be undertaken at other times at the request of a scheme or stakeholder on the basis of information about substantial changes to scheme requirements or system implementation.

3.3 Reviews of additional schemes

CPET will consider undertaking assessments of additional schemes, in response to requests from stakeholders, as and when they become operational in the UK wood supply chain.