



**DEPARTMENT OF STANDARDS MALAYSIA  
SCHEME FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF CERTIFICATION BODIES  
(The ACB Scheme)**

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**REQUIREMENTS FOR STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION FOR  
FOREST AUDIT FOR BODIES OPERATING  
FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION  
(FOREST PLANTATIONS) UNDER THE  
MALAYSIAN TIMBER CERTIFICATION SCHEME**

**Authority To Issue**

**Director General  
Department of Standards Malaysia**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 One of the means of assessing compliance to the requirements stipulated in the standard for forest plantation management certification used under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) is for the certification body (CB) undertaking the audit of the Forest Plantation Management Unit (FPMU) to hold consultation with the relevant stakeholder groups to gauge the level of compliance of the FPMU against the requirements stipulated in the standard.
- 1.2 Stakeholder consultation is one of the means of verification of the requirements listed in the standard. Both national and local stakeholders can provide relevant information as to the FPMU's compliance with the requirements of the standard in terms of the environmental, social or economic aspects. These stakeholder groups may include national and local level government departments and agencies, and non-government organisations (NGOs) involved, or having interest, in forest plantation management, as well as representatives of indigenous and/or local communities directly affected by the management and operations in the FPMU that is being audited by the CB.
- 1.3 The CB is required to identify every relevant stakeholder group concerned prior to or during the auditing process, whilst this may not be entirely possible. This document is therefore aimed at ensuring that the CB carries out a level of stakeholder consultation that is sufficient to provide an assurance that the requirements of the standard have been complied with by the FPMU. The document also provides more clarity to the CBs and stakeholder groups as to the nature and extent of stakeholder consultation required during the audit of the FPMU.
- 1.4 This document shall be used for the purpose of accreditation of a CB operating a forest plantation management certification programme under the MTCS. All CBs accredited by the Department of Standards Malaysia (STANDARDS MALAYSIA) shall comply with the requirements of this document.

## **2. General Requirements**

- 2.1 The CB shall consult with a range of stakeholder groups which can provide relevant information as to an applicant's compliance with the environmental, social and economic requirements of the standard.
- 2.2 Relevant information may include examples of alleged non-compliance, as well as confirmation of compliance with legal, social, technical, economic and environmental requirements stipulated in the standard.
- 2.3 The CB shall develop and document its methodology for conducting stakeholder consultation.
- 2.4 The methodology shall ensure that:-
- a) a range of stakeholder groups is consulted, appropriate to the scale and range of impacts of the FPMU and the forest plantation management practices being audited;
  - b) stakeholder groups have the opportunity to present their points of view to the auditor(s) in confidence; and
  - c) information and opinions given by consulted stakeholder groups are evaluated and considered objectively and affect the certification decision only in so far as they provide evidence of compliance or non-compliance with the requirements of the standard.

## **3. Identification of, and information for, stakeholder groups prior to the audit of the FPMU**

- 3.1 The CB shall have proper procedures to identify the stakeholder groups that are likely to have information relevant to the audit of the FPMU for certification, and/or that may be able to put the CB in contact with other such stakeholder groups. The range and number of individuals and organisations (both government and non-government) to be contacted depends on the scale, intensity and complexity of the management system and its impacts.

- 3.2 The CB shall aim to ensure that any stakeholder group that has information relevant to the compliance of the FMU with the requirements of the standard has the opportunity to bring such information to the attention of the CB, prior to the finalisation of the certification decision. In order to meet this requirement, it is therefore necessary that the identified stakeholder groups are contacted and have the opportunity to respond in Bahasa Malaysia or any other appropriate local language, in addition to the English Language.
- 3.3 During the audit of the FPMU, the stakeholder groups to be contacted directly by the CB shall include, amongst others:-
- a) Relevant government departments and agencies that are involved with respect to land and forestry matters at the national, regional or FPMU level.
  - b) Statutory bodies with legal mandate over the FPMU under audit.
  - c) NGOs that are active in respect of social or environmental aspects of management in and around the vicinity of the forest plantation to be audited, as appropriate.
  - d) Representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities that are staying in and around the vicinity of the forest plantation to be audited, as appropriate.
  - e) Labour organisations and forest/plantation workers' unions.
  - f) Contractors who provide services to the forest plantation operations to be audited.
- 3.4 The CB shall contact stakeholder groups at the scale of organisation most likely to have information relevant for the audit of the FPMU concerned. In the case of large FPMUs, this is likely to include organisations which operate at the national level and/or sub-national level in the vicinity of the forest plantation to be evaluated. In the case of smaller FPMUs, this may include only local organisations, interest groups or individuals.
- 3.5 The CB shall make its own efforts to identify stakeholder groups for consultation. However, the CB is not obliged to contact all the stakeholder groups on its list, and nor should such a list be considered to be definitive.

- 3.6 The CB shall inform the stakeholder groups identified in para 3.3 above at least one month before the start of the field visit during the audit (for stage 2, surveillance or recertification):-
- a) that an audit for forest plantation management certification is due to take place,
  - b) the start date of the audit;
  - c) the name and location of the FPMU, and the total forest plantation area, to be audited;
  - d) how to acquire a copy of the certification standard;
  - e) that the CB is seeking the views and opinions of the stakeholder groups with regard to any forest plantation management issue related to the FPMU so as to determine the level of compliance of the FPMU with the requirements of the standard;
  - f) how the stakeholder groups may contact the CB in confidence to let the CB know of their views and opinions;
  - g) that the CB's audit team will make arrangements to enable the stakeholder groups to meet with the team during the audit of the FPMU concerned, if necessary;
  - h) of the existence of the CB's mechanisms for the resolution of complaints or disputes; and
  - i) that the source of any information provided will be confidential to the CB carrying out the audit of the FPMU concerned. Any disclosure of the information provided shall be carried out with prior consent of the stakeholder group concerned.
- 3.7 The CB may employ various means to inform the stakeholder groups of the information as specified in para 3.6 above, appropriate to the group or organisation being contacted. Such means may include the following:-
- a) direct contacts by e-mail or letter in the English Language or Bahasa Malaysia or the language of the recipients.
  - b) personal contacts by phone.
  - c) notice published in the national, regional and/or local press where the audit of the FPMU concerned is due to take place.

- d) local radio announcements.
- e) signage posted on notice boards for issues of public interest in and around the FPMU in the English Language or Bahasa Malaysia or any other appropriate local language.
- f) announcements in village shops or places of worship or local community halls.
- g) announcement by the manager of the FPMU concerned using existing and ongoing mechanisms for consultation between the FPMU manager and local stakeholder groups.

#### **4. Consultation during the audit**

- 4.1 Consultation should be designed to solicit direct and factual feedback/observations with regard to the compliance of the FPMU concerned with the requirements of the standard. The CB shall carry out such consultation as part of the audit of the FPMU concerned. The consultation shall include a sufficient variety and number of people affected by or involved in the management of the FPMU concerned to evaluate the range of situations relevant to the standard. The stakeholder groups that need to be consulted are determined by the specific requirements of the standard. As guidance, the audit may require consultation with the stakeholder groups as listed in **Appendix I**.
- 4.2 Consultation with the stakeholder groups shall be carried out in confidence if requested. Consultation can therefore be carried out without the presence of the manager and/or representatives of the FPMU concerned.
- 4.3 The consultation techniques employed shall be culturally appropriate to the stakeholder groups with whom consultation takes place. Some of these techniques may include:-
- (i) direct arrangements for individual or group meetings at the time of the audit.
  - (ii) individual or group meetings arranged through the help of a local interest group or organisation.
  - (iii) *ad-hoc* interviews with managers, employees, contractors, local communities and indigenous peoples during the field audits in the FPMU concerned.

- (iv) structured interview by telephone at the time of the audit.
- (v) contact by mail or e-mail with a request for written views and comments to a predetermined set of specific questions.

## **5. Evaluating the information and feedback received from consultation**

- 5.1 Information/feedback provided by the stakeholder groups shall wherever possible be independently corroborated from a second source or be confirmed by the CB's auditors in the field during the audit process.
- 5.2 In all cases, information provided by the stakeholder groups shall be evaluated objectively to determine whether it constitutes evidence of a non-compliance with any requirement of the standard.

## **6. Records**

- 6.1 The CB shall keep the following records for each audit carried out in the FPMU concerned:-
  - a) names and contact details of all the individuals or organisations consulted on the FPMU's compliance with the requirements of the standard;
  - b) notes about all information received orally;
  - c) copies of all correspondence and written comments received;
  - d) notes or other information showing how information received was tested or corroborated; and
  - e) an explanation of the way in which the CB interpreted or took account of these comments in coming to a decision as to the FPMU's compliance or non-compliance with the requirements of the standard.

## **7. Reporting**

- 7.1 The audit report for forest plantation management certification of the FPMU concerned shall include a comprehensive record of any evidence of compliance or non-compliance with the requirements of the standard.

- 7.2 The CB shall not identify individual stakeholders or stakeholder groups in the audit report without their prior informed consent.
- 7.3 The CB shall include in the audit report the information and comments received from, and concerns raised by, the individual stakeholders or stakeholder groups, together with the CB's response.
- 7.4 After six (6) months of the completion of the field audit of the FPMU concerned, the CB shall make available to the stakeholder groups information on whether a *Certificate for Forest Management (Forest Plantation)* was issued or not by the CB. In the event of a certificate being issued, the CB shall inform the consulted stakeholder groups on how the concerns they had raised were addressed.

**8. Consultation during surveillance audit and recertification audit of a certified FPMU**

- 8.1 During the surveillance audit of the certified FPMU, the CB shall carry out stakeholder consultation as deemed necessary to ensure continued compliance with the requirements of the standard.
- 8.2 During the recertification audit of the certified FPMU, the CB shall carry out stakeholder consultation to ensure compliance with the requirements of the standard.
- 8.3 The above consultations shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements as specified in this document.



**EXAMPLES OF STAKEHOLDER GROUPS**

The following list provides examples of some of the stakeholder groups that may need to be consulted to evaluate compliance with specific aspects of the standard for forest plantation management certification used under the MTCS.

This is not a complete list, nor is the CB required to consult with all the stakeholder groups listed here if this is not required to verify the applicable requirements.

| Principle   | Stakeholder groups typically consulted to evaluate compliance  |
|-------------|--|
| Principle 1 | State forestry department, statutory bodies, and other government departments and agencies with legal mandate over the FPMU under audit.   |
| Principle 2 | State forestry department, forest plantation manager/owner, other relevant government departments and agencies, representatives and members of local communities and indigenous peoples who have tenure and/or use rights in the FPMU concerned.   |
| Principle 3 | Representatives and members of indigenous peoples who have tenure and/or use rights in the FPMU concerned.   |
| Principle 4 | Employees, contractors and subcontractors and their representatives, labour organisations or unions of forestry sector/plantation workers; representatives of local communities directly affected by the management and harvesting operations in the FPMU concerned.   |
| Principle 5 | State forestry department, forest plantation manager/owner, users and processors of forest plantation products (timber processing industry), representatives and members of local communities and indigenous peoples directly affected by the management and harvesting operations in the FPMU concerned.  |
| Principle 6 | NGOs that are involved or have an interest in respect of environmental aspects of management in the FPMU concerned. Government departments and agencies dealing with social and environmental aspects of management in the FPMU concerned. Representatives of local communities directly affected by the management and harvesting operations in the FPMU concerned. |
| Principle 7 | Manager/owner and employees of the FPMU and its contractors. NGOs that are involved or have an interest in respect of environmental aspects of management in the FPMU concerned.   |
| Principle 8 | Manager/owner and employees of the FPMU and representatives of the supervising forestry/forest plantation authority, as appropriate.   |

**Requirements for Stakeholder Consultation for Forest Audit for Bodies operating Forest Management Certification (Forest Plantations) under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme**

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| Principle 9  | NGOs that are involved or have an interest in respect of social or environmental aspects of management in the FPMU concerned. Representatives and members of local communities and indigenous peoples directly affected by the management and harvesting operations in the FPMU concerned. |
| Principle 10 | Manager/owner and employees of the FPMU and its contractors, state forestry department, statutory bodies, and other government departments and agencies dealing with matters pertaining to the management in the FPMU concerned.   |