

1 July 2013
(Publication date)

COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR BODIES OPERATING FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION (NATURAL FOREST) UNDER THE MALAYSIAN TIMBER CERTIFICATION SCHEME



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Document Properties	
File Name	ACB-FMC 1-1 (Issue 2) : Competency Requirements for Bodies Operating Forest Management Certification (Natural Forest) Under The Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme
Web File Name	ACB-FMC 1-1 (Issue 2) : Competency Requirements for Bodies Operating Forest Management Certification (Natural Forest) Under The Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme
Document title	Competency Requirements for Bodies Operating Forest Management Certification (Natural Forest) Under The Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme
Standard Code	ACB-FMC 1-1 (Issue 2)
Document Status	Active (Transfer of ownership from Department of Standards Malaysia to MTCC)
Date of First Version	1 July 2013
Approved By	n/a
Effective Date	1 July 2013
Version	Issues 2
File Format Master	Word
File Format Published	PDF
Publication Authorisation	Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC)
Document Replaced	Not applicable
Company	Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC)
Author(s)	Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC)
Primary Contact Details: Email	fm@mtcc.com.my
File Included on MTCC Web Documents	

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BACKGROUND

This document specifies competency requirements for bodies operating forest management certification (natural forest) under The Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS).

The ACB-FMC Documents were previously under the custodianship of the Department of Standards Malaysia (DSM). During the 2nd MTCC Coordination Committee (MCC) Meeting held on 12 December 2024, members agreed that ownership of the documents should be transferred to MTCC as the scheme owner to address overlaps and enable proper evaluation of their continued use. Following this decision, DSM formally transferred the ACB-FMC Documents to MTCC, thereby placing the documents under MTCC's governance for further review, alignment, and future management in line with MTCS requirements.

This document should form part of MTCS auditor training and is applicable to varying scopes and scales of audits, conducted by single auditors and large audit teams.

This document can be used as a criteria document for accreditation, peer assessment or other audit related processes.

In this document, the following verbal forms are used:

“auditor” includes “auditors”;

“shall” indicates a requirement;

“should” indicates a recommendation;

“may” indicates a permission;

“can” indicates a possibility or a capability.

“must” indicates an external constraint or obligations that is not stated as a provision in this document, e.g. legal requirements.

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1** This document specifies the competency requirements for lead auditors, auditors and technical experts for certification of natural forest management, and shall be used for the purpose of accreditation of a certification body (CB) operating a natural forest management certification programme under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS).
- 1.2** All CBs accredited by the Department of Standards Malaysia (STANDARDS MALAYSIA) shall comply with the requirements of this document.

Section 2: Competency of Forest Management Certification Audit

Team

- 2.1** All lead auditors and auditors shall have the knowledge and understanding of the following:
 - a) general concepts of management systems, especially the environmental, and occupational safety and health management system;
 - b) sustainable forest management (SFM) practices;
 - c) certification standard for natural forest management used under the MTCS;
 - d) key components of the forest management plan;
 - e) forest management planning, implementation, monitoring and control processes;
 - f) and auditing principles, methods and techniques used to evaluate the effectiveness of the forest management planning, implementation, monitoring and control processes.
- 2.2** All lead auditors and auditors shall be aware of the contentious issues highlighted by the mass media and stakeholders, and areas of environmental and social significance in the forest area undergoing audit, and their impact on the Forest Management Unit (FMU); and
- 2.3** All lead auditors and auditors shall have the ability to assess the application of laws, codes of practice, procedures and guidelines related to management of natural forest.

Section 3: Academic Qualification for Lead Auditors, Auditors and Technical Experts

- 3.1** Lead auditors, auditors and technical experts shall have, as a minimum, a degree in forestry or in fields related to forest management, such as environmental sciences, ecology, botany, zoology, sociology, forest engineering and forest economics.

Section 4: Training for Lead Auditors, Auditors and Technical Experts

4.1 Lead Auditors and Auditors

- 4.1.1 Lead auditors and auditors shall have undergone a course on the standard for natural forest management conducted by Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC); **AND**
- 4.1.2 Lead auditors and auditors shall have successfully completed 40 hours of lead auditor course in ISO 14001 conducted by certified trainer(s).

4.2 Technical Experts

- 4.2.1 Technical experts shall have undergone a course on the standard for natural forest management conducted by MTCC; **OR**
- 4.2.2 Technical experts shall provide objective evidence demonstrating that a satisfactory level of knowledge relevant to forest management, or related fields, has been achieved.

Section 5: Work Experience for Lead Auditors, Auditors and Technical Experts

5.1 Lead Auditors and Auditors

- 5.1.1 Lead auditors and auditors shall have a minimum of 5 years work experience in forestry or in the fields related to forest management, such as environmental sciences, ecology, botany, zoology, sociology, forest engineering and forest economics.

5.2 Technical Experts

- 5.2.1 Technical experts shall have a minimum of 10 years work experience in forestry or in the fields related to forest management, such as environmental sciences, ecology, botany, zoology, sociology, agriculture, forest/agriculture engineering and forest/agriculture economics.

Section 6: Auditing Experience for Lead Auditors and Auditors

- 6.1 Lead auditors shall have the ability to lead a team and manage the audit processes, and shall have participated as a trainee lead auditor in at least three audits, including one complete audit [either initial audit (stage 2 audit) or recertification audit] for certification of natural forest management under the direction and guidance of a qualified lead auditor.
- 6.2 Auditors shall have first participated as an observer in one audit and as a trainee auditor in two subsequent audits for certification of natural forest management covering

planning, auditing and reporting under the direction and guidance of a qualified lead auditor.

Section 7: Auditing Experience for Lead Auditors and Auditors

- 7.1** The CB shall conduct an initial competence evaluation of the trainee lead auditors and trainee auditors in accordance with its documented processes.
- 7.2** For maintaining the competence of the lead auditors and auditors, the CB shall ensure that the auditors have performed a minimum of one audit per year of certification of natural forest management
- 7.3** The CB shall periodically evaluate the performance of the lead auditors and auditors on-site. The frequency of the on-site evaluation shall be based on the need determined from all the monitoring information available. An evaluation will have to be conducted at least once in an audit cycle (3 years).
- 7.4** The CB shall demonstrate that its evaluation methods are effective. The output from these processes shall be to confirm that the lead auditors and auditors have demonstrated the level of competence required for the different functions of the audit and certification processes.