



# MALAYSIAN TIMBER CERTIFICATION COUNCIL

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## MTCC'S POSITION ON ACCOUNTABLE REPORTING BY NGOs

19 May 2026

The Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) is fully aware of the reports titled "Tainted Timber: Malaysian Certification Failures and UK Imports," commissioned and published by Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FOE EWNI), and "The Trouble with Timber: Scrutinizing the Effectiveness of Sustainable Certification in Peninsular Malaysia," published by Rimba Watch Sdn. Bhd. on FOE EWNI's commission, funded by players of the People's Postcode Lottery, United Kingdom as stated in the Tainted Timber report.

MTCC responded formally to FOE EWNI through their right-of-reply process on 13 March 2026, prior to the publication of the abovementioned reports, to address inaccuracies and provide needful information on the MTCS, justice to which was not done in the published reports. This response that was not previously made public is attached in full as in **Appendix** to this statement. FOE EWNI has not responded to MTCC's reply to date.

Any report that disassociates itself from accuracy with this statement "*The authors do not guarantee that all information is complete: readers are responsible for assessing the relevance and accuracy of the content of this publication*", as the Trouble with Timber report does, should not ignore the validated reply given by MTCC. FOE EWNI would be well-advised not to rush into publishing questionable and agitational reports, making baseless demands and recommendations.

As you are well aware, MTCC maintains established procedures for the submission and handling of complaints and disputes relating to the operation of the MTCS, as set out in *MTCS GD 3003*. No formal complaint was received which would have allowed verifiable evidences to be processed and investigated. Instead of using the proper mechanism, FOE EWNI published a report that shifts accountability away from the authors to the readers. This casts doubts on their intention to responsibly seek solutions. Therefore, MTCC questions the motivation behind this action, and calls for those reading the report to demand accuracy and evidence from FOE EWNI.

**MTCC Asks for Accurate Information:** MTCC encourages all parties, including non-governmental organisations, to make sure the information they share is accurate and reflects the current situation. Reporting responsibly helps everyone to efficiently address the issues based on the established institutional arrangement of the MTCS.

All other parties seeking clarification or accurate, verified details regarding MTCS are encouraged to contact MTCC directly or access our website at [www.mtcc.com.my](http://www.mtcc.com.my).

**End**

### CLARIFICATION STATEMENT FROM MTCC: RIGHT TO REPLY

The Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) refers to the email received on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and appreciates the chance to reply to the reports commissioned by Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FoE).

While we value civil society's role in promoting sustainable forest management, we question the credibility of the *Trouble with Timber* report as it disclaims its own accuracy, yet FoE uses it as a primary basis for discrediting MTCS and recommendations to several parties, including to the Government of UK.

MTCC maintains that such discourse must remain grounded in accurate, verifiable data. An assessment of certification requires the use of current standards. We note the following discrepancies in the reports:

- **Obsolete Standards and Guidance:** The reports rely on superseded documents, such as the 2014 Guidance and outdated PEFC benchmark standards. Assessments must be conducted against the current **MTCS ST 1002:2021 (MC&I SFM)**.
- **Conversion Cut-off Dates:** The report incorrectly references a 2012 cut-off date; the MTCS strictly maintains **31 December 2010** as the applicable cut-off for forest conversion based on the MTCS ST 1002:2021 Malaysian Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management
- **Data Verification:** Conclusions drawn from satellite imagery or open-source maps often fail to distinguish between production forest, land use conversion and natural disturbances. Authoritative boundaries are managed by State Forestry Departments and must be verified against official management plans. The links provided in the report are images and cannot connect to the source website (broken links).
- **Misleading information:** In the Executive Summary, 1b, this statement, "...such as claiming that Indigenous people in the Pahang FMU no longer have traditional ecological knowledge" is entirely false, and you will be well advised to refer to the audit summary posted publicly here, [https://www.sirim-qas.com.my/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Public-Summary-FMC-of-Pahang-Forest-Management-Unit-4th-Surveillance-4th-Cycle\\_202269.pdf](https://www.sirim-qas.com.my/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Public-Summary-FMC-of-Pahang-Forest-Management-Unit-4th-Surveillance-4th-Cycle_202269.pdf), where the auditor statement is different. The reference to Rudge A is to an article on the weaving of mats and baskets, far removed from 'tainted timber'.

The *Tainted Timber* report attempts to link specific UK imports to certification failures using shipment records. Whilst shipment and trade flow data can provide useful insights into commercial movements, such data alone may not establish the origin of timber, its compliance with certification requirements, or a direct link to the concerns raised. A quick overview of the report found the following errors:

- **Correlation vs. Origin:** Trade flow data alone does not establish the specific forest origin or the certification status of a timber product.
- **Inconsistent Reporting Periods:** The datasets used cover different timeframes (e.g., Dec 2024–Nov 2025 vs. Jan–Dec 2025), which may lead to misinterpreted findings.
- **Need for Evidence:** Claims linking specific companies to certification failures must be supported by **case-specific evidence** verified against official certification records.
- **Non-certified Companies:** From the list, 2 companies listed are not MTCS/ PEFC certified companies.

The above examples are not exhaustive, and MTCC requests that a more responsible factual editing and fact-based approach be applied to the report.

The MTCS is a national voluntary scheme endorsed by the **Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)** since 2009. It operates under a strict "third-party" model to ensure impartiality where assessments are conducted by independent Certification Bodies (CBs). CBs must be accredited by the **Department of Standards Malaysia** under **ISO/IEC 17021-1**. As a standardising body, MTCC does not perform its own certifications or accreditations, ensuring a transparent check-and-balance system.

MTCC maintains established procedures for investigating concerns via the **MTCS GD 3003 Complaint Handling and Dispute Resolution Procedure**. We encourage stakeholders to submit specific, verifiable, and actionable evidence to [info@mtcc.com.my](mailto:info@mtcc.com.my) or via our online system on the MTCC website. While the accreditation body and the CBs also have their own complaints mechanisms, MTCC can redirect those submitted via our complaint's mechanism to them. MTCC urges FoE to utilise these existing mechanisms to ensure a transparent and aligned process.

We note that the *Trouble with Timber* report includes a disclaimer stating that "*readers are responsible for assessing the relevance and accuracy of the content*". To protect the rights of readers and users to factual accuracy, MTCC suggests that this disclaimer—which effectively shifts accountability away from the authors—be highlighted prominently.

MTCC, 13 March 2026