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Third edition, October 2014

1. Purpose

This document sets out the approach that will be taken by CPET in the forest certification scheme review.

2. Scope

Assessment procedures focus on the scheme systems and processes based on scheme standards and documentation in consultation with a panel of technical experts. It is important to note that the review does not consider compliance of certified products under the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR). This is therefore a fundamentally different approach to monitoring undertaken by the National Measurement Office (NMO) which focuses on specific products, using a risk-based approach. It is also substantively different from the benchmarking exercise Ofgem intends to undertake of biomass certification schemes against the Timber Standard.

3. Background

The UK government requires that only timber and wood-derived products originating from an independently verifiable Legal and Sustainable source (which can include from a licensed Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) partner) will be demanded for use on the government estate – appropriate documentation will be required to prove it. 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 against¹. Schemes have been reviewed regularly.

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's Timber Procurement Policy, the Category A criteria and the timber certification scheme assessment reports are all available from the [CPET website](#).

4. Methodology

¹ Criteria for Evaluating Forest Certification Schemes (Category A Evidence) Fourth Edition

The 2014 methodology builds upon previous methodologies, however takes account of the views of the CPET Reference Board (a group of stakeholders that oversees CPET) which proposed a greater emphasis on incorporating an assessment of the implementation of certification schemes and the potential risk of exposure of Government to unsustainable timber. Phases 1, 2, 3 and 5 are undertaken by CPET, whilst Phase 4 is undertaken by the independent CPET Technical Review Panel. Phase 1 and 2 will run in parallel.

4.1. Phase 1

4.1.1. A desk-based review of the existing issues is undertaken regarding the elements of the certifications schemes which could be considered as high risk to government's implementation of the TPP. This desk based approach uses trade and market information to identify important issues, and draws upon publications in the public domain from NGOs, academic institutions, research centres and other bodies.

4.1.2. Based on the findings of 4.1.1 a limited number of targeted stakeholder interviews are undertaken (including Certification Bodies, NGOs, and other identified key stakeholders) on the issues identified from the review. The interviews seek to gain a fuller understanding of the issues identified in 4.1.1.

4.1.3. A rapid assessment of the issues is correlated against the results of the previous review of certification schemes, with particular attention given to the criteria that were only partially met.

4.1.4. The findings of steps 4.1.1-3 are summarised in a short note for internal use only, in Phase 3.

4.2. Phase 2 (certification scheme stakeholder consultation) – in parallel with phase 1 above

4.2.1. CPET will announce the scheme reviews, including the scope of the reviews (section 2 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.

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

4.2.3. 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.

4.2.4. 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.

- 4.2.5. 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.

4.3. Phase 3 (Scope of reviews)

- 4.3.1. Light-touch reviews of certification schemes are undertaken on the basis of the scheme requirements, as set out in the publicly available documentation for each scheme, drawing on the outputs from Phase 1 and 2. The implementation of these documented scheme requirements may also be checked (see section 3.3.3 below). No assessments of the actual outcome of certification in the forest will be made.

- 4.3.2. Whilst the scope of each review consists of all documented scheme requirements, particular attention will be paid to those that have changed since the previous review and also where issues identified in Phase 1 relate.

The light-touch reviews will also consider any objective verifiable evidence relating to current non-compliance with the documented scheme requirements that is submitted by stakeholders during the consultation period (see 3.2).

- 4.3.3. 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.. Where a scheme is assessed for the first time, information will be collected for each criterion.
- 4.3.4. 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.

4.4. Phase 4

- 4.4.1. 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.
- 4.4.2. Each member of the panel will be provided with the information developed from Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3 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.
- 4.4.3. 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.
- 4.4.4. The outcome of this discussion will be reviewed by Defra who will make a final decision on the results.
- 4.5. Phase 5**
- 4.5.1. The final results will be notified to the schemes and made publicly available on the CPET website.
- 4.5.2. If the results change the scheme's status, in terms of delivering assurance of compliance with the government's requirements for legality or sustainability under the TPP, 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.

4.6.

5. Frequency of reviews

5.1. Routine reviews

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

5.2. 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.

5.3. 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.

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