

F. No. 3-6/2001-SU (Vol. II)  
Government of India  
Ministry of Environment & Forests  
(SU Division)

Paryavaran Bhawan,  
C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road,  
New Delhi -110003.

Dated: 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2008

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

In pursuance of the decision taken in the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Committee of 'Accreditation Criteria & Process' towards 'Forest Certification for Timber, Non-Timber Forest Products' held on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2007 in the Ministry under the Chairmanship of Shri Maharaj Muthoo, President, Roman Forum, Italy, it has been decided to merge the three committees i.e. (i) Committee of Certification Criteria (ii) Committee for Certification Process (iii) Committee for Accreditation Criteria & Process into a single committee namely '**National Forest Certification Committee**' for the development of Certification Criteria, Certification Process and Accreditation Criteria & Process towards Forest Certification of timber, Non-timber Forest Products. The above Committee will consist of the following:-

1.	Prof. Maharaj Muthoo, Ex-Executive Director, FSC	<b>Chairman</b>
2.	Dr. Feezialah, Chairman, Malaysia Timber Certification Council	Member
3.	Representative from PEFC	Member
4.	Sh. A. K. Mukherjee, Ex-IG (Forests)	Member
5.	Dr. Ram Prasad, Ex-PCCF, Madhya Pradesh	Member
6.	The PCCF or his representative, Govt. of Tamil Nadu	Member
7.	The PCCF or his representative, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh	Member
8.	The PCCF or his representative, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh	Member
9.	Director, FRI, Dehradun	Member
10.	Dr. Bipin Behari, IFS	Member
11.	Director, IPRITI, Bangalore	Member
12.	Sh. G. A. Kinhal, JD, FRLHT, Bangalore	Member
13.	Prof. P. C. Kotwal, IIFM, Bhopal	Member
14.	Sh. Mudit Kumar, CCF, JFM Policy and Analysis, Chhattisgarh	Member
15.	Dr. Manmohan Yadav, IIFM, Bhopal	Member
16.	Secretary General, Quality Council of India or his representative	Member
17.	Addl. Development Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles, New Delhi	Member
18.	Representative of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)	Member
19.	Representative from APEDA, Ministry of Commerce, GoI	Member
20.	Mr. A. Rastogi, Organic Certification Programme, FAO (India)	Member
21.	Sh. Ranjit Puranik from ADMA or representative from ADMA	Member
22.	Dr. Kulkarni, DGM, Plantation, ITC Bhadrachalam	Member
23.	Chairman, National Timber Association	Member
24.	Sh. Sajjan Bhajanka, Chairman, FIPPI	Member
25.	Dr. Manish Pande, Program Manager, SGS India	Member
26.	Representative of World Wildlife Fund (WWF), India	Member
27.	Representative from FICCI	Member

28.	Representative from CII (EMS Division)	Member
29.	Representative of Director General, The Energy Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi	Member
30.	Director, KFRI, Peechi or his representative	Member
31.	DIG (SU), MoEF, New Delhi	Member Secretary

The **Terms of Reference** of the above Committee will be as follows:-

**Certification Criteria:-**

- (i) The committee shall study the various International Certification Schemes and the processes of Sustainable Forest Management such as ITTO initiative on C & I, African Timber Organization, Program for Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes-PEFC, Montreal Process, TaraPoto Proposal, Dry-Zone Africa Process, Near East Process, Lepaterique Processes – Central America, Regional Initiative for Dry Forests in Asia – Bhopal India Process. In addition to the International Certification schemes namely FSC (Forest Steward Council), PEFC (Program for Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes) and ITTO's phased approaches of forest certification & cost benefit analysis etc, the committee will also study the National Certification schemes like MTCC (Malaysian Timber Certification Council), LEI (Lembaga Eco-Level Indonesia) etc.
- (ii) The committee will also study the implementation of C&I developed under Bhopal India Process at 8 FMUs in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh under ITTO-IIFM Project to understand the applicability /problems of implementation of the 8 Criteria and 43 indicators developed under this process and to accordingly formulate the certification criteria so as to meet the requirements of international processes and the local situation in the country. The committee will also study any certification projects undertaken so far in the country.
- (iii) The committee shall also study the certification projects undertaken in NTFP certification including MAP certification such as in Brazil and the Pilot project in Nepal.
- (iv) The committee after studying all above, shall then recommend a set of Principles, Criteria, Indicators and Verifiers for Forest Certification in India which may be acceptable internationally but at the same time based on the conditions and situations in the country with respect to the management of forests and the inter-dependency of forest and the local communities.
- (v) The committee will recommend the **Certification Standards** for **Timber Certification** and for **NTFP Certification** separately i.e. principles, criteria, indicators and verifiers for each separately.
- (vi) The committee will also explain / define each term used in the certification standard such as principle, criteria, indicator, verifiers, FMU, timber certification, NTFP certification, forest communities, auditor etc. as implied in the certification standard and applicable for forest certification in India.

- (vii) The forest certification standards shall reflect a balance approach between Ecological Social and Economic aspects of Sustainable Forest Management.
- (viii) National Forest Working Plan code shall be strengthened to include various Criteria & Indicators (C&I) to facilitate the certification process.
- (ix) The Committee shall prepare a Draft National Forest Certification Policy in conformity with National Forest Policy focusing on natural forests and also the forest produce coming from agro-forestry, plantation-forestry etc., irrespective of their ownership.

**Certification Process:-**

- (i) The committee shall study the certification processes adopted by International Certification Agencies such as PEFC, FSC, MTCC, LEI and BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards), Quality Council of India, International Standards Organisation (ISO – 14000) etc.
- (ii) The committee will recommend the certification processes and the detailed procedure to be followed by the certification bodies for carrying out the assignment / audit of a forest management unit (application) in India.
- (iii) The committee will specifically recommend as to how each principle and indicators / criteria / verifiers within each principle are to be assessed by the auditor / audit teams. The process and procedure of certification should also specify the field verification methodology with respect to indicators to be verified, method of verification, instruments used for verification. Method of analysis. The certification process shall also include the stakeholders participation and consultation on major sustainability aspects i.e. Ecological, Social, Cultural and Economic aspects.
- (iv) The committee will also explain / define each term used in the certification process as implied in the certification standard and applicable for forest certification in India.
- (v) The committee should arrive at a workable framework for certification processes so as to develop a synergy leading towards mutual recognition from International Forest Certification Schemes.

**Accreditation Criteria & Process:-**


- (i) The committee shall study the accreditation criteria and processes followed by the International and National Certification Schemes such as FSC, PEFC, MTCC, LEI, BIS, APEDA, MoCI for organic Certification, QCI (Quality Control of India), ISO-14000, Brazilian Certification Scheme etc.

- (ii) After studying all above, the committee will recommend the setting of an accreditation body for forest certification in India. Such an accreditation body may be an autonomous body so as to be a representative of various stakeholders and to be viewed as an independent and neutral body. Such a third party approach is supposed to have more credibility for being impartial.
- (iii) The committee shall specifically recommend the criteria for selection of a certification body for accreditation with respect to its competence, legal and financial status and the organization structure including the competence of experts available with the certification body.
- (iv) The committee shall recommend the criteria for selection/ empanelment of experts as auditor / assessors who will undertake the assessment of a forest management unit (applicant) on behalf of the certification body and as per the certification standard of the National Certification Scheme (India). The criteria for evaluating the competence of expert should include the educational qualification and the practical experience in this field.
- (v) The committee shall also explain / define each term used in the accreditation criteria and processes such as accreditation body, certification body, assessors / auditors, implied in the accreditation criteria and processes and applicable for forest certification in India.
- (vi) The committee shall also recommend a suitable logo to be used for the National Certification Scheme.
- (vii) The committee should arrive at a workable framework for Accreditation Criteria and processes so as to develop a synergy for Indian Forest Certification Scheme leading towards mutual recognition from International Forest Certification Schemes.

The Committee will take the necessary action as per the above Terms of Reference.

It is responsibility of the Member Secretary to arrange and facilitate deliberation of the Committee.

This issues with the approval of Minister of State (Forests & Wildlife), Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India, New Delhi.



**(Dr. Bipin Behari)**  
Deputy Inspector General of Forests

Copy to:

1. All the members of Committee.
2. PPS to Secretary (E&F)
3. PPS to DGF&SS
4. PPS to ADG (FC)
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