GUIDE ON APPLICATION FOR
FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION
MC&I (SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT)

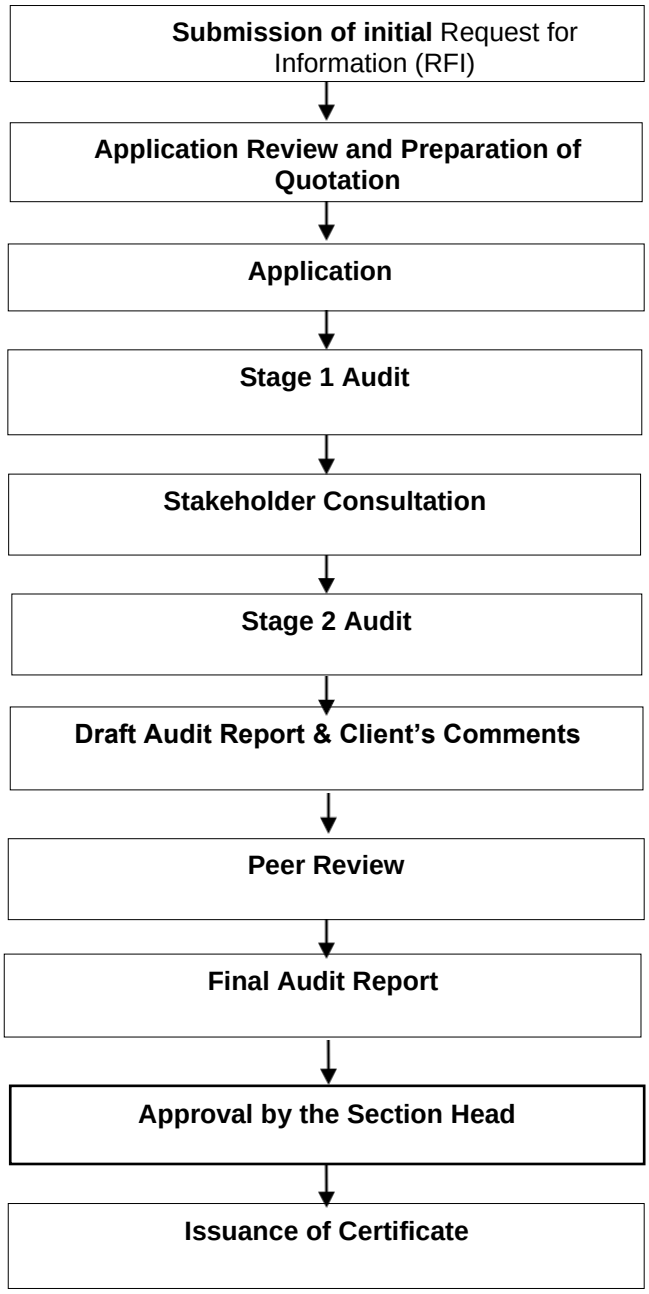
1. INTRODUCTION

This guideline has been prepared to provide guidance to organizations/companies that are interested in obtaining forest management certification (FMC) from SIRIM QAS International Sdn Bhd (SIRIM QAS International) to the requirements of the relevant Forest Management Standard ie *Malaysian Criteria and Indicators For Sustainable Forest Management (MC&I SFM)* under the MTCS PEFC Forest Management Certification.

This guideline is prepared in accordance with SIRIM QAS International documented procedures on forest management certification, ISO/IEC 17021 and other related normative documents issued by the Department of Standards Malaysia (Standards Malaysia). Please contact the Sales and Business Development Section of SIRIM QAS International if further clarification is needed with regard to the contents of this document.

2. CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The FMC is carried out in accordance to the policies and procedures established by SIRIM QAS International based on the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021, *MC&I (Sustainable Forest Management).* The detailed step by step processes are explained as follows:



2.1 Submission of Initial Request for Information (RFI)

The applicant completes and submits the Initial Request for Information (RFI) (SQAS/MSC/FOR/30-01) to SIRIM QAS International.

2.2 Application Review and Preparation of Quotation

SIRIM QAS International will review the information given in the Initial RFI by the applicant and based on the information obtained, prepare a quotation on the total cost of certification. Overall certification costs are calculated based on the number of man-days required to conduct the audit.

The determination of auditor-days to conduct the on-site audit is guided by the document ACB-FMC entitled Audit Duration (Natural Forests) and/or Audit Duration (Forest Plantation) for Bodies Operating Forest Management Certification issued by Standards Malaysia. A quotation will be sent to the applicant for consideration. The quotation provides an estimation of the total cost for certification which includes the professional fees for stage 1 and 2 audits, report writing and other related incidental costs.

2.3 Application

Upon agreeing to the quotation, the applicant is required to submit an application form (SQAS/MSC/FOR/30-02) together with an application fee to SIRIM QAS International.

2.4 Stage 1 Audit

Upon receipt of the application form, SIRIM QAS International will appoint an Audit Team Leader, who will be responsible for the applicant's application. Stage 1 Audit is carried out on site to determine
(1) the adequacy of the applicant's documentation, (2) whether an internal audit and management review have been conducted and (3) the readiness of the applicant to proceed to Stage 2 Audit.

2.5 Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholder consultation shall be carried out not less than 30 days before the Stage 2 Audit is conducted.

2.6 Certification Agreement

The certification agreement shall be issued to the client before the planning of the Stage 2 audit. The certification agreement shall be signed and agreed by the client before the Stage 2 audit is conducted. The Stage 2 audit shall not move forward until this process is completed.

2.7 Stage 2 Audit

After the findings of the Stage 1 Audit have been responded and issues from stakeholders have been identified, the Applicant is required to inform the Audit Team Leader on the readiness to proceed to Stage 2 Audit. It is recommended that all proposed actions to address the issues of concerned identified during Stage 1 audit are submitted to the Audit Team Leader at least within two weeks before the conduct of Stage 2 Audit.

During Stage 2 Audit, the audit team will evaluate the implementation including the effectiveness of the applicant's FMU's forest management system and practices against the requirements of the *MC&I (Sustainable Forest Management).*

2.8 Summary Audit Report

The Audit Team Leader will prepare a Summary Audit Report for Forest Management Certification on the findings of the audit within seven (7) days from the last date of the Stage 2 Audit and the report is submitted to the Client for comments.

2.9 Draft Stage 2 Audit report

The Draft Stage 2 report shall be prepared within thirty days (30) from the last audit date if there are no findings and within thirty (30) days after the major non conformity(ies) have been closed out and the corrective action plans have been accepted for minor non conformity(ies).

2.10 Peer Review

The Stage 2 Audit Report will be reviewed by at least two independent peer reviewers to obtain a second opinion on the compliance of the FMU concerned with the certification requirements, the *MC&I (Sustainable Forest Management).* Peer reviewers are required to ensure that the audit report has the necessary content to act as the basis for the award of a *Certificate*.

2.11 Final Report

A final Stage 2 audit report will be prepared after taking into consideration the comments made during the peer review process.

2.12 Approval

The Section Head reviews and approves the final audit report prepared by the Audit Team Leader and approves the recommendation for certification.

2.13 Issuance of Certificate

A *Certificate* will be issued upon payment of all due and outstanding fees. The *Certificate* is valid for 5 years from the date the certification is approved.

2.14 Preparation of Public Summary

Upon approval by the Head of the Food, Agriculture and Forestry Section; the Audit Team Leader will prepare information on the FMU to be published on SIRIM QAS International's website for the general public to provide an overview of the audit process, management programmes and the result of the audit on the certified FMU.

2.15 Surveillance Audit/Recertification

All certified organizations/FMUs will be subjected to one annual surveillance audit. In exceptional cases, two surveillance audits will be carried out annually. The first surveillance audit will be conducted not more than 12 (twelve) months from the decision date. Recertification is carried out once every five years.

3 FEE PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The schedule for payment of fees over the five-year certification cycle is as follows:

No	Stage	Fee Due
1.	Upon acceptance of quotation and submission of application form	Application fee
2.	Upon completion of Stage 1 Audit	Stage 1 audit fee
3.	Upon completion of main assessment Stage 2 Audit	Stage 2 audit fee
4.	Upon approval of certification but prior to issuance of Certificate	Annual fee
5.	Upon completion of surveillance audit (year 1 to 4)	Surveillance audit and annual fee
6.	Upon completion of recertification audit (year 5)	Recertification audit and annual fee

4 CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Site of Audit

The applicant shall identify the name and geographic location (longitude and latitude) of the FMU or FPMU, name of forest district, size, type, composition and site condition of the FMU/FPMU to be covered under the scope of certification.

4.2 Scope of certification

The applicant shall clearly define and ensure that it does not omit elements of its operation from the scope of certification. The scope of certification should clearly specify the type of forest either natural or plantation forest including the major species composition.

4.3 Audit Criteria

In order to be certified, the applicant has to demonstrate that the FMU/ FPMU and the relevant forest management system are properly implemented to fulfill the *MC&I (Sustainable Forest Management)* and other normative certification documents. In practice, this means that the FMU/ FPMU has been operational and able to demonstrate adequately its effective implementation and that an internal audit and management review have been conducted before the Stage 1 Audit.

5 APPEALS PROCEDURE

The applicant may file an appeal to the Appeal Committee when the applicant does not agree with the decision of the SIRIM QAS International Sdn. Bhd. The appeal shall be made in writing to the General Manager of the Management System Department within 2 (two) weeks of notification of the decision.

The letter of appeal shall be forwarded to the Appeals Panel appointed by the Certification Advisory Committee. The appellant shall be notified of the composition of the Appeals Panel and the date of its proposed meeting. The appellant shall have the right to object to the composition of the Appeals Panel and the date of its proposed hearing and shall have the right to appear before the panel to present his/her case.

The decisions made by the Appeals Panel including the grounds of their decision shall be recorded and the appellant be notified in writing.

6 COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Any complaint on SIRIM QAS International's certification services or on certified organizations/companies shall be directed to the Head, Quality and OSHE (QOSHE) Section.

Complaints may be made verbally or in writing. All complaints received will be verified and validated by the QOSHE Manager. The complainant shall be informed of the receipt of the complaint and will be provided progress report on the outcome of the investigation.

7 WITHDRAWAL/SUSPENSION/REVOCATION/TERMINATION

(i) Withdrawal

Certified organization/company that wishes to withdraw from the forest management certification scheme is required to:

(a) write to the Head of the FAF Section informing of its intention
(b) ensure within a reasonable time frame that all advertising matters that contain any reference to the *Certificate* are discontinued; and
(c) return the *Certificate* to the Head of the FAF Section.

(ii) Suspension/Revocation/Termination

SIRIM QAS International has the right to suspend/revoke/terminate the certification of an organization/company under the following circumstances:

(a) the certified organisation's/ company's forest management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet the certification requirements as per stated in the Forest Management Procedure – SQAS/MSCD/PRO/30

(b) the certified organisation/company does not allow surveillance or re-certification audits to be conducted at the required frequencies;

(c) the certified organisation/company has voluntarily requested suspension of its certification;

(d) the certified organization/company failed to take corrective actions on non-conformity (ies) raised within the specified timeframe;

(e) the certified organization/company failed to implement the corrective action on the non conformity(ies) effectively and the NCRs cannot be closed.

(f) the certified organization/company has incorrectly making reference to its certification status or misleading use of *Certificate*, marks or audit reports; and

(g) the certified organization/company infringed the requirements of the certification contract.

The certified organization/company under suspension is required to take the necessary corrective actions within the suspension period. Failure to take corrective actions may result in the withdrawal of the *Certificate*.

The information related to the certification status of organization/company will be made publicly accessible. An organization/company dissatisfied with the decision on suspension /revocation/ termination has the right to file a written appeal with the Appeal Committee.

8 CHANGES TO THE INFORMATION IN THE CERTIFICATE

A certified organization/company is required to inform SIRIM QAS International of any changes on the name, address, scope of certification or other details on the Certificate. Any request for such changes shall be made in writing.