



**DEPARTMENT OF STANDARDS MALAYSIA
SCHEME FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF CERTIFICATION BODIES
(The ACB Scheme)**

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**PEER REVIEW PROCESS REQUIREMENTS
FOR
CERTIFICATION BODIES OPERATING
OIL PALM MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION
UNDER THE
MALAYSIAN SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL (MSPO)
CERTIFICATION SCHEME**

Authority to Issue

Director General
Department of Standards Malaysia

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This document shall be used for the purpose of accreditation of Certification Bodies (CBs) operating oil palm management certification programme under the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) Certification Scheme. All CBs accredited by the Department of Standards Malaysia (Standards Malaysia) in accordance with specific criteria, procedures and requirements to operate, on a continuing basis, as a CB shall comply with the requirements in this document.
- 1.2. This document provides requirements for the peer reviewer that is necessary for evaluating audit reports (for stage 2 and recertification audit) prepared in conjunction with the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) Certification Scheme.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This document outlines the competency, role and responsibilities of peer reviewers, the best practices of peer reviewing and documents the tasks and activities in conformance with best practices. The best practices in peer review processes seek to promote a measure of coherence and effectiveness to create integrity and mutual trust in the implementation of the national certification scheme for the palm oil industry.
- 2.2 The aim of a peer review process by an independent expert of the CB's audit report is to obtain a second opinion on the level of compliance of the management unit concerned against the requirements of the agreed standards for oil palm management certification. The appointed peer reviewers shall be independent of the CBs (Refer to clause 5.2.3 of ISO/IEC 17021-1 on documentation of risk of relationships).
- 2.3 Peer reviewer(s) will be involved in the audit and will be appointed by the CB, based on the issues associated with the management unit being audited.
- 2.4 The CB shall evaluate peer reviewer's competency and impartiality prior to his/her engagement and the record shall be maintained. The CB must provide annual harmonization training including analysis on issues and comments and scheme requirements update with the appointed peer reviewers.

3. NORMATIVE REFERENCE

3.1 The following referenced document is indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

- ISO/IEC 17021-1 – Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements.

4. ROLE OF PEER REVIEWER(S)

4.1 The role of the peer reviewer(s) is to ensure that the audit report has the necessary content to act as the foundation for the award of a certificate and to confirm that:

- i. the audit team has carried out an objective and professional audit of the management unit for certification against the requirements of the applicable Malaysian Standard on Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) MS 2530 series and related scheme documents;
- ii. the audit team has investigated adequate and relevant data sources and evidences;
- iii. the audit team has arrived at an appropriate conclusion and recommendation based on the evidences presented to it; and
- iv. the audit team has prepared a concise and comprehensive report to the requirements of the standards.

4.2 The peer reviewer(s) shall submit the following in a report to the CB:

- i. indicate disagreement and supporting reasons regarding any finding and/or Corrective Action Request (CAR) by the audit team has been addressed appropriately;
- ii. indicate areas where the reviewer feels more information or clarification is necessary;
- iii. state whether the reviewer agrees or disagrees with the certification recommendation of the auditors; and
- iv. suggest actions for improvement that should be taken, or issues that should be considered relevant to the scope of the audit.

Peer Review Process Requirements for Certification Bodies Operating Oil Palm Management Certification under Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) Certification Scheme

4.3 The CB shall ensure that all comments by the peer reviewers are resolved prior to finalisation of the final report and be made available to the client by the CB.

5. COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS AND SELECTION

5.1 The CB must ensure that the appointed peer reviewers meet the following criteria:

- i. have a minimum of ten (10) years of experience in oil palm management or expertise related to various aspects of oil palm management such as but not limited to business management, social compliance, environmental management, OHS management, and agricultural management.
- ii. have the necessary knowledge and work experience to assess the adequacy of the audit reports submitted by the auditors. In-depth knowledge on applicable local rules and regulations, and the condition of the oil palm plantation areas audited including the oil palm management system being implemented would be an advantage;
- iii. have a good understanding of the certification standards for oil palm management under the MSPO Certification Scheme and the applicable MS 2530 series used and its related auditing procedures;
- iv. have undergone the required training by the Scheme Owner on the requirements of the MSPO Certification Scheme;
- v. have an understanding on the CB's MSPO certification process.
- vi. individuals to be considered as peer reviewers by the CB shall not have provided consultancy or similar services to the management unit concerned in the three years prior to the audit for this purpose to avoid any conflict of interest. The peer reviewer shall declare their impartiality of the report reviewed; and
- vii. have no financial, trade or business interest in the outcome of the certification decision in any management unit being audited or likely to be audited by the CB.

*** End of document ***

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