



Introduction to Chain of Custody Certification

Introduction

Chain of custody (COC) certification connects responsible forest management practices with consumers. It provides a consistent, international basis for claims about the sustainable sourcing of wood and fibre products.

Chain of custody certification is the unbroken path which products take from the forest to the consumer, including all stages of manufacturing, transportation and distribution.

Chain of custody certification is a requirement for companies which process, transform or trade certified forest products and who wish to label products with the PEFC and/or MTCS name, logo or label.

COC certification enables companies to:

- **Supply certified materials to customers who require or need them**
- **Demonstrate compliance with Government and private company procurement policies**
- **Supply to local authorities, schools, hospitals, etc.**
- **Develop a sustainable and environmental purchasing policy**

CATG are accredited for PEFC and MTCS.

What is PEFC?

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, or PEFC, is a framework for the recognition of forest certification schemes meeting internationally recognised requirements for sustainable forest management.

PEFC is endorsed by the UK Government's Central Point of Expertise on Timber.

To find out more about PEFC and their standards visit their website at www.pefc.org

What is MTCS?

The Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) is an independent organisation established to develop and operate a voluntary national timber certification scheme in Malaysia, in order to provide independent assessments of forest management practices as well as to meet the demand for certified timber products.

For chain-of-custody (COC) certification, since 1 July 2008, MTCC has been using the Technical Document Annex 4 of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC) and referring to their scheme as the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS).

The MTCS is operating under the present institutional arrangement, where MTCC continues to play the role of the National Governing Body (NGB) for the scheme, while the independent assessors become the Certification Bodies (CBs), who will receive and process the application for certification, conduct the assessment and make the decision to award the Certificate for Chain-of-Custody.

CATG is accredited to offer this scheme.

The MTCS has been endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC), the largest forest certification programme, representing more than 200 million ha of certified forests world-wide, with effect from 1 May 2009.

What do you need to do to get COC certified?

COC requirements are grouped into five main parts:

1. Quality system requirements

Companies need to:

- **Produce an environmental statement and policy**
- **Have one person/position responsible for the COC scheme for the company**
- **Ensure all key personnel (employees and contractors) are trained and understand their role in the COC scheme and identify, provide and document the necessary training for staff**
- **Have documented procedures for all elements of their COC scheme**
- **Keep records and reports accurate, complete and up-to-date**
- **Define and maintain an up-to-date list of all the product groups included in their COC scheme**

2. Wood sourcing requirements

When specifying materials, companies need to ensure the following:

- **Their suppliers have a valid COC certificate and they have checked that their supplier's certificates are valid on the PEFC and MTCS websites**
- **They clearly specify the type of material they are purchasing from suppliers**
- **That transport documents and invoices from suppliers quote their chain of custody certificate number and confirm the material is certified**
- **That all stored COC products are identifiable and traceable within their company and processes**

3. Production controls and record keeping requirements

Companies need to keep monthly records of their certified purchases and production including the:

- **Quantity (volume/weight) of materials received, stored, used and sold**
- **Batch numbers of products bought, stored and sold**
- **Average content of certified materials for each product group – 100%, 70% ,pure,mixed,etc.**
- **Claim period for calculating the average content of certified materials in a product group**
- **Outsourcing agreements with subcontractors carrying out work on their chain of custody products to ensure they maintain their certification**

4. Product and label requirements

PEFC and MTCS have has strict guidelines on the use of on-product and off-product labelling and promotion.

The organisations issues guidelines which must be approved by CATG before use.

5. Sales and shipping documentation requirements

Companies need to include the following information on their sales invoices and shipping/delivery documentation for PEFC and MTCS – certified material or products:

- **Their name and address**
- **The name and address of the buyer**
- **The date of issue of the invoice or delivery note**
- **Description of the products and their certified status**
- **The quantity of the products**
- **Their chain of custody certificate registration number**

How does CATG certify?

CATG are an approved body for the certification of PEFC and MTCS.

The range of services we offer includes:

Pre-assessments

A pre-assessment will prove an invaluable tool. An auditor will assess your proposed chain of custody scheme. It includes initial discussions with you, a meeting with your staff, a site visit and your document preparation.

The auditor will carry out the assessment using a chain of custody checklist.

The auditor will identify any parts of the standard which are or are not fully complied with. Our auditor will leave you with a copy of their findings.

Main assessments

The auditor will carry out the main evaluation using a chain of custody checklist. The auditor will identify any parts of the standard which are or are not fully complied with and will provide feedback on any conditions to certification with you.

The assessment will follow the pattern detailed below:

Opening meeting

The auditor will explain the audit process and confirm the scope of your chain of custody scheme. They will review your scheme documentation.

Audit process

For incoming materials the auditor will:

- **Visit the purchasing department**
- **Review your documentation and records**
- **Review the receipt, measurement and recording of incoming raw materials or products**
- **Review the storage of incoming raw materials, including location control for certified materials**
- **Evaluate the inputs to your chain of custody scheme**

For production processes and controls the auditor will:

- **Assess the risk of uncontrolled mixing of certified and non-certified materials/products**
- **Evaluate the control systems implemented**
- **Review the control and identification of certified products during processing, sorting and packing**

For outgoing materials or products the auditor will:

- **Review the segregation and/or identification of certified products in store or to be dispatched**
- **Review the labelling of products**
- **Review the sales department**

After the evaluation visit the auditor will submit a written report detailing all the observations made during the assessment, listing any identified non-compliances with the standards and describing any conditions that were discussed.

Certification decision

CATG will finalise our certification decision on the basis of the auditor's report and any comments you have made on it.

If there are no conditions we will issue a certificate immediately; if there are only minor conditions we will issue a certificate on the basis that you agree to take appropriate actions within a specified time frame. If there are pre-conditions we will not issue a certificate until after you have taken appropriate actions.

Once we have received your written agreement to take any necessary actions to close out conditions within the specified time and the certification fees have been paid, a Certificate of Registration will be issued, usually valid for five years conditional on successful annual monitoring.

At this stage you are able to apply the PEFC and MTCS trademark after CATG has checked your intended use of it.

CATG certification for PEFC and MTCS lasts for 5 years. After this period, a main assessment is required.

What happens after you are certified?

You can supply certified PEFC and MTCS products.

The first surveillance visit usually takes place 6 months after certification. Thereafter, surveillance visits will take place at least annually and are usually arranged well in advance.

Additional costs – PEFC

The Annual Accreditation Fee to PEFC is annual and obligatory. It serves as a registration fee charged by PEFC and is calculated relative to annual turnover. Fees range between £125 for companies with a turnover of less than £3 million pa, to £1250 for companies with a turnover of more than £100 million pa. This also entitles the customer to become a member of PEFC UK and also enter into a separate logo licence agreement, at no additional cost. PEFC costs will be subject to VAT.

Contact details

For any help please call Janice on 0044 (0)1524 597078 or email her on sales@catg.co.uk.