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**Central Point of Expertise on Timber**

# **UK Government Timber Procurement Policy**

**Framework for Evaluating  
Category B Evidence  
First Edition**

*June 2006*

# Introduction to the framework

## Purpose and development of the framework

The UK Government's procurement policy on timber and timber products was announced in July 2000<sup>1</sup>. This policy is a binding commitment on all Central Government departments, agencies and sponsored bodies and requires them to actively seek to buy timber products from legal and sustainable sources.

A definition of what 'legal' and 'sustainable' sources are for the purpose of UK Government procurement of timber and wood products is set out in *UK Government Timber Procurement Policy: Definition of Legal and Sustainable*.

A procedure for procuring timber including a contract condition to ensure supply of timber from legal sources and a variant specification for the option of supplying sustainable timber has been developed. *The Timber Procurement Advice Note (November 2005)* advises central departments of the procedure for purchasing legal and sustainable timber.

A key requirement of the contract and variant specification is that suppliers must be able to provide evidence to the Government that the timber or wood products they supply are from legal and, if promised by the supplier, sustainable sources.

The government recognises two types of evidence that the timber or wood products are from legal or sustainable sources:

- Category A evidence: claims based on certification under a certification scheme which delivers government requirements. Criteria for assessing schemes to establish whether they constitute Category A evidence are set out in *UK Government Timber Procurement Policy: Criteria for Evaluating Certification Schemes (Category A Evidence)*.
- Category B evidence: all other credible evidence that material is from forests which meet the requirements for legal and/or sustainable. The framework for evaluating Category B evidence is set out in this document.

## Assessment of Category B evidence

Category B evidence is all forms of credible evidence other than certification schemes. This type of evidence can vary greatly and needs to be judged on a case-by-case basis. This framework has been developed to provide support to both procurement staff and suppliers on the provision and assessment of Category B evidence.

The framework for assessing Category B evidence is in three parts, each of which is discussed below:

Part 1: Criteria for assessing evidence;

Part 2: Checklists for submission of information and evidence;

Part 3: Guidance annexes.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.press.dtlr.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn\\_id=2000\\_0516](http://www.press.dtlr.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2000_0516)

**The criteria** for assessing evidence are divided into two sections reflecting the main factors that determine the adequacy of category B evidence, namely:

- The requirements for information and evidence to demonstrate supply chain management which provides traceability from the forest source to the point of supply.
- The requirements for information and evidence to demonstrate that forest management meets UK government requirements for legality or sustainability.

Compliance with each criterion will be assessed as either 'adequate' or 'not adequate'. Existing programmes and *ad hoc* evidence must achieve adequate compliance with every criterion in order to be acceptable.

**Checklists** have been developed to assist suppliers in providing all the information required in a format which can be systematically and consistently assessed by procurement staff. Three checklists are provided

Checklist 1: Supply chain information

Checklist 2: Forest source information for legality

Checklist 3: Forest source information for sustainability

**Guidance annexes** are being developed and will be continually improved and updated to provide background information to help both suppliers and procurement officers. Six guidance annexes are provided

Annex 1: Guidance on provision of supply chain information

Annex 2: Guidance on supply chain control mechanisms

Annex 3: Guidance on provision of information on legality of forest source

Annex 4: Guidance on provision of information on sustainability of forest source

Annex 5: Guidance on verification of forest management and supply chain control

Annex 6: Programmes and initiatives providing supply chain control or evidence of legality or sustainability

## **Glossary of abbreviations**

ISO International Organisation for Standardisation

CITES Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

FMU Forest management unit

ISEAL International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance

## Part 1: Criteria for evaluating Category B evidence

### 1. Supply chain management (chain of custody)

Information on the supply chain should normally be supplied by completing *Checklist 1: Supply Chain Information* for each type of timber or wood product supplied. The criteria below relate to the information provided in the checklist.

Criteria	Guidance on interpretation
1.1 Is the supply chain clearly described and complete from point of supply back to the forest source(s)?	<p>Each stage in the supply chain from the forest source(s) through transport and processing needs to be included for each product being supplied.</p> <p>If the project includes a number of different products (eg flooring, window frames and construction timber) information is needed for each product.</p> <p>If the product is a composite (eg a cupboard mainly made of plywood with a solid timber door) the supply chain details must be provided for each component.</p> <p><i>See Annex 1: Guidance on provision of supply chain information</i></p>
1.2 Has an adequate mechanism for preventing uncontrolled mixing or substitution been described for each stage in the supply chain?	<p>For each stage in the chain, it needs to be clear what controls are in place to make sure that there is no mixing or substitution – accidental or intentional – with material from other sources. There are a range of different mechanisms which may be used.</p> <p>The approach taken to controlling the supply chain needs to be appropriate for the situation in which it is used. For example, a sawmill processing only logs from small, local suppliers, may not need to control mixing within the facility because all logs are from known legal sources, whereas a sawmill processing logs from a range of sources, both domestic and foreign, will need more robust systems.</p> <p><i>See Annex 2: Guidance on supply chain control mechanisms.</i></p>
1.3 Has information been provided on how the mechanisms in 1.2 are checked/verified and is the approach used adequate to confirm the mechanisms described are in place and functional?	<p>For each stage it must be clear how the information on control has been verified. This might include a range of different approaches such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statements from the organisation implementing the control (1<sup>st</sup> party checks)</li> <li>• Checks made by the supplier to government of their suppliers (2<sup>nd</sup> party verification)</li> <li>• Verification by an independent third party (3<sup>rd</sup> party audits)</li> <li>• Official documentation showing official checks that have been carried out</li> </ul>

Criteria	Guidance on interpretation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External programmes providing supply chain management</li> </ul> <p>It is important that the approach used to verify information is appropriate. The higher the risk that adequate control is not in place, the more formal and robust the verification mechanism should be.</p> <p><i>Annex 5: Guidance on verification of supply chain control</i></p> <p><i>Annex 6: Programmes and initiatives providing evidence of supply chain control</i></p>
<p>1.4 Is the evidence provided or available adequate to confirm the information provided is accurate?</p>	<p>Suppliers can either supply copies of evidence, or describe where it is available.</p> <p>Evidence provided might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of official documentation.</li> <li>• Supplier declarations</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> party verification reports</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> party audit reports</li> <li>• Information on the location of important documents and how long they are kept.</li> </ul> <p>All documents must be in English or with an English translation of relevant parts.</p> <p>If there is any concern about the adequacy, robustness or veracity of the evidence provided then independent verification of the evidence will be required. Independent verification must be undertaken by an individual or body whose organisation, systems and procedures conform to ISO Guide 65 or equivalent and who is accredited to audit against timber production standards by a national or international body whose organisation, systems and procedures conform to ISO 17011 or equivalent.</p> <p><i>Annex 5: Guidance on verification of supply chain control</i></p> <p><i>Annex 6: Programmes and initiatives providing evidence of supply chain control</i></p>

## 2. Forest management requirements

Criteria	Guidance on interpretation
<p>2.1 Is the information provided on the location of the forest source adequate?</p>	<p>The information provided about the supply chain should include the location of the forest or forests where the timber originated. The adequacy of the evidence provided should be assessed as part of the supply chain evaluation. This section deals with the level of detail.</p> <p>For claims of sustainable sourcing, the information provided must be the forest management unit or units from which the timber was sourced.</p> <p>For claims of legality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For timber originating from forests in countries where legal use rights are clear, forest governance is robust and there are functioning mechanisms for monitoring of compliance and public reporting of non-compliance it may be sufficient to provide information on the country or region (where there are significant differences in forestry or forest type within a country) from which the timber was sourced.</li> <li>• For timber originating from forests in countries where legal use rights are unclear, forest governance is weak or mechanisms for monitoring and public reporting of compliance are absent or not functioning, the information provided must be the forest management unit or units from which the timber was sourced.</li> </ul>
<p>2.2 Has information on compliance been provided for each criterion in the relevant checklist?</p>	<p>For claims of legality, Checklist 2 must be completed for each forest source.</p> <p>For claims of sustainability, Checklist 3 must be completed for each forest source.</p>
<p>2.3 Has information been provided on how compliance is checked/verified and is the approach used adequate to confirm the criteria are being met?</p>	<p>Mechanisms might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> party checks</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> party verification</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> party audits</li> <li>• External programmes providing supply chain management</li> </ul> <p><i>Annex 5: Guidance on verification of forest management and supply chain control</i></p> <p><i>Annex 6: Programmes and initiatives providing supply chain control or evidence of legality or sustainability</i></p>

Criteria	Guidance on interpretation
<p>2.4 Is evidence supplied or available to support the information provided and is it adequate?</p>	<p>This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official documentation such as permits, or company documentation.</li> <li>• Supplier declarations</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> party verification reports</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> party audit reports</li> </ul> <p>All documents must be in English or with an English translation of relevant parts.</p> <p><i>Annex 3: Guidance on provision of information on legality of forest source</i></p> <p><i>Annex 4: Guidance on provision of information on sustainability of forest source</i></p> <p>The type of evidence required will depend on whether the supply is a ‘one-off’ or will involve ongoing supply over a period of time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-off supply: evidence showing the specific sustainability of the source(s) for the material being supplied will be adequate.</li> <li>• Ongoing supply: evidence on the systems in place to control the sustainability of the source(s) will be needed to show that the forest is being adequately managed over time.</li> </ul> <p>If there is any concern about the adequacy, robustness or veracity of the evidence provided then independent verification of the evidence will be required. Independent verification must be undertaken by an individual or body whose organisation, systems and procedures conform to ISO Guide 65 or equivalent and who is accredited to audit against timber production standards by a national or international body whose organisation, systems and procedures conform to ISO 17011 or equivalent.</p>

## ***Part 2: Checklists for submitting Category B evidence***

Three checklists are provided

Checklist 1: Supply chain information

Checklist 2: Forest source information for legality

Checklist 3: Forest source information for sustainability

## UK Government Timber Procurement Policy Category B Checklist 1: Supply chain information

Product			
Name of supplier		Government dept	
Contact person		Contract number	
Contact Details		Date	

Supply chain stage	Supply chain description		Mechanism for preventing mixing or substitution	Mechanism for verification	Evidence available or provided
	Description	Location			
Forest					
Stage 1					
Stage 2					
Stage 3					
Stage 4					
Stage 5					
Stage 6					
Stage 7					

## UK Government Timber Procurement Policy Category B

### Checklist 2: Forest source information for legality

Criteria	Does the forest source comply	Mechanism for verification	Evidence provided or available
L1 The forest owner/manager holds legal use rights to the forest			
L2 There is compliance by both the forest management organisation and any contractors with local and national laws including those relevant to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest management</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Labour and welfare</li> <li>• Health &amp; safety</li> <li>• Other parties' tenure and use rights</li> </ul>			
L3 All relevant royalties and taxes are paid			
L4 There is compliance with the requirements of CITES.			

## UK Government Timber Procurement Policy Category B Checklist 3: Forest source information for sustainability

### *Definition of sustainability*

Criteria	Does the forest source comply	Mechanism for verification	Evidence provided or available
S1 There must be a definition of sustainable based on a widely accepted set of international principles and criteria defining sustainable or responsible forest management at the forest management unit level.			
S2 The definition of sustainable must be performance-based and cover all the issues set out in S5 – S8.			
S3 The process of defining ‘sustainable’ must seek to ensure balanced representation and input from the economic, environmental and social interest categories.			
S4 The process of defining ‘sustainable’ must seek to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No single interest can dominate the process;</li> <li>• No decision can be made in the absence of agreement from the majority of an interest category.</li> </ul>			

### **Implementation**

Criteria	Does the forest source comply	Mechanism for verification	Evidence provided or available
<p>S5 Management of the forest must ensure that harm to ecosystems is minimised. In order to achieve this there must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Appropriate assessment of impacts and planning to minimise impacts;</li> <li>b. Protection of soil, water and biodiversity;</li> <li>c. Controlled and appropriate use of chemicals and use of Integrated Pest Management wherever possible.</li> <li>d. Proper disposal of wastes to minimise any negative impacts.</li> </ul>			
<p>S6 Management of the forest must seek to ensure that productivity of the forest is maintained. In order to achieve this the definition of sustainable must include requirements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Management planning and implementation of management activities to avoid significant negative impacts on forest productivity.</li> <li>b. Monitoring which is adequate to check compliance with all requirements, together with review and feedback into planning.</li> <li>c. Operations and</li> </ul>			

Criteria	Does the forest source comply	Mechanism for verification	Evidence provided or available
<p>operational procedures which minimise impacts on the range of forest resources and services.</p> <p>d. Adequate training of all personnel, both employees and contractors.</p> <p>e. Harvest levels that do not exceed the long-term production capacity of the forest, based on adequate inventory and growth and yield data.</p>			
<p>S7 Management of the forest must seek to ensure that forest ecosystem health and vitality is maintained. In order to achieve this the definition of sustainable must include requirements for:</p> <p>a. Management planning which aims to maintain or increase the health and vitality of forest ecosystems</p> <p>b. Management of natural processes, fires, pests and diseases.</p> <p>c. Adequate protection of the forest from unauthorised activities such as illegal logging, mining and encroachment.</p>			
<p>S8 Management of the forest must seek to ensure that biodiversity is maintained to achieve this the definition of sustainable must include requirements for:</p>			

Criteria	Does the forest source comply	Mechanism for verification	Evidence provided or available
<p>a. Implementation of safeguards to protect rare, threatened and endangered species.</p> <p>b. The conservation/set-aside of key ecosystems or habitats in their natural state.</p> <p>c. The protection of features and species of outstanding or exceptional value.</p>			

## ***Part 3: Guidance annexes***

The Guidance Annexes are currently under development. In the interest of moving the policy implementation ahead, the criteria, guidance and checklists are being released ahead of the Annexes, as it is recognised that they will serve as a valuable stand-alone tool, which the Annexes will serve to enhance.

In the interim, queries regarding the above documentation can be addressed to CPET on 01865 243 766 or via email [cpet@proforest.net](mailto:cpet@proforest.net).

The Annexes currently under development are:

Annex 1: Guidance on provision of supply chain information

Annex 2: Guidance on supply chain control mechanisms

Annex 3: Guidance on provision of information on legality of forest source

Annex 4: Guidance on provision of information on sustainability of forest source

Annex 5: Guidance on verification of forest management and supply chain control

Annex 6: Programmes and initiatives providing supply chain control or evidence of legality or sustainability