

<i>Normative Document</i>		
<b>Interpretation of Criterion 6.10 of the MC&amp;I(2002)</b>	16 February 2011	<b>MC&amp;I 2/2011</b>

## **INTERPRETATION OF CRITERION 6.10 OF THE MC&I(2002)**

### **1. Objective**

The objective of this Normative Document is to ensure a clear interpretation of Criterion 6.10 in the *Malaysian Criteria and Indicators for Forest Management Certification [MC&I(2002)]*, the forest management standard for natural forests used under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS).

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Under Criterion 6.10 in the *MC&I(2002)*, restrictions are imposed on the extent to which the permanent reserved forests (PRFs) in a Forest Management Unit (FMU) can be converted to forest plantations or non-forest land uses. Criterion 6.10 stipulates that:

*“Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur, except in circumstances where conversion:-*

- a) entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit; and*
- b) does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and*
- c) will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation benefits across the forest management unit.”*

- 2.2 To address the concern that the allowable threshold for conversion of PRFs to forest plantations and non-forest land uses stipulated in Criterion 6.10, entailing “*a very limited portion of the FMU*” is currently not quantified, this document is adopted for the interpretation of Criterion 6.10, pending the conclusion of the ongoing review of the *MC&I(2002)*.

### **3. Interpretation of Criterion 6.10**

The interpretation of Criterion 6.10 by the accredited Certification Bodies (CBs) under the MTCS when conducting forest management audits of FMUs shall be as follows:

- 3.1 The scope of certification against the requirements of the *MC&I(2002)* shall be confined to **only** the natural forests located in the PRFs of the FMU and shall **exclude** any forest plantations and any planned conversion in the PRFs. The external boundaries of the natural forests located in the PRFs will be redrawn on relevant maps, prior to certification.

- 3.2 In situations where forest plantations are established in the PRFs, during the audit under the *MC&I(2002)*:
- a) the forest manager shall be required to provide information and statistics with regard to the extent of the forest plantations as well as any planned conversion in the PRFs to forest plantations and/or non-forest land uses. Such information and statistics provided by the forest manager shall be included in the audit report; and
  - b) the FMU shall be assessed for compliance in relation to Criterion 6.10(b) which requires that the conversion *does not occur on high conservation value forest areas*; and Criterion 6.10(c) which requires that the conversion *will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long-term conservation benefits across the forest management unit*.
- 3.3 Such established forest plantations and areas planned for conversion in the PRFs should be managed in a responsible manner and undergo forest management certification against the *MC&I(Forest Plantations)* under the MTCS.
- 3.4 Logs harvested from areas in the PRFs converted to forest plantations and/or non-forest land uses shall not be claimed as certified logs under the MTCS.
- 3.5 In addition, the forest manager shall not make any claims associating such converted areas with the MTCS-certified FMU.
- 3.6 If during the subsequent surveillance audit, the CB finds that in addition to the areas that have been reported earlier under paragraph 3.2(a) above, there are new areas of the natural forest in the certified FMU which have been converted or planned for conversion since the last audit, a major non-compliance will be issued by the CB which could result in the suspension and subsequent withdrawal of the MTCS certificate.
- 3.7 All CBs shall ensure that the forest manager of the FMU undergoing the audit is assessed for compliance with the above requirements, and that the audit findings are reflected in the audit report and related public summary.

#### **4. Effective Date**

This Normative Document shall apply with **immediate effect** for the audits of the FMUs under the MTCS.