



ECCO-QP-14

Procedures for Granting or Refusing,
Suspension or Restoring, Withdrawal or
Renewal, Reduction or Expansion of Scope
of Certification

By ECCO CERTIFIED SDN BHD
JULY 2024
REVISION: 05

**MALAYSIAN SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL
(MSPO) CERTIFICATION SCHEME**

1. OBJECTIVES

To ensure effectiveness of implementation of the certificate scope granting or refusal, suspension or restoring, withdrawal or renewal and reduction or expansion of ECCO's accredited certificate and product.

To provide procedure and guidance to ECCO's certification delivery personnel and management.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Management System certification including Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil conducted by ECCO.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

The Management Representative is responsible to ensure:

- i. Executing the certificate scope extension, reduction of scope, suspension, restoration, renewal, and withdrawal of ECCO CERTIFIED SDN. BHD.'s accredited certificate.

Certifier will be responsible for:

- i. Review the audit reports provided by the Audit Team for its action taken by the client;
- ii. To enclose Certification Decision Form [ECCO-FM-11] for certified entity;
- iii. Review the certificate information; and
- iv. Certificate issuance to client.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1. Granting or Refusing Certification

Once ECCO's Lead Auditor recommends certification for a client, ECCO's Certifiers shall conduct a review with the responsible Lead Auditor as per Certification Decision [ECCO-FM-11].

Certifiers shall grant certification in cases when, for example:

- i. The information provided by the audit team is sufficient with respect to the certification requirements and the scope for certification.
- ii. For any major nonconformities, Certifiers has reviewed, accepted, and verified the correction and corrective actions.
- iii. For any minor nonconformities Certifiers has reviewed and accepted the client's plan for correction and corrective action.

In the cases where, client fails to meet any of the above, Certifiers shall refuse the granting of certificate until such requirements have been fulfilled.

Upon granting of certification, ECCO shall notify the client of the decision in writing. ECCO will issue a conformance certificate as evidence to show that the management system of the client was assessed and found to be in conformance with the requirements of the management system, specific standard/ scheme, and relevant regulatory requirements.

Additionally, ECCO issues authorizations for the use of certification marks for both the certificate and the applicable products to the client.

In cases where certification is refused, the client is promptly notified with a detailed explanation of the reasons for refusal, and no certification documents or marks for either the certificate or the products are issued.

A legally enforceable certification contract exists to serve as an agreement for the provision of certification service to the certified client. The contract confirms the entities covered by the scope of certification and stipulates the responsibilities and obligations of both ECCO and the Client. This ensures clarity and transparency in the certification process, maintaining the integrity and trustworthiness of ECCO.

4.2. Review and Certification Decision on Suspension, Reduction and Withdrawal of certification.

When a non-conformity with certification requirements is substantiated, either as a result of surveillance or otherwise, ECCO will consider and decide upon appropriate action include:

- a. Suspension of certification
- b. Reduction in the scope of certification
- c. Withdrawal of the certification

ECCO will assign certifier(s) to review all information and findings related to the audit. The review will be carried out by certifier(s) who have not been involved in the audit process. Recommendations for a certification decision will be documented in Certification Decision Form [ECCO-FM-11].

ECCO's certifier will also be responsible for decisions relating to certification. ECCO will notify the client of the certification decision and in case of not granting certification, ECCO will provide reasons for the decision.

4.3. Suspension or Restoring Certification

ECCO shall suspend certification in cases when, for example:

- i. The client's certified management system has persistently or seriously failed to meet certification requirements, including requirements for the effectiveness of the management system. Examples under this case will be major nonconformities not closed, repeated failures to comply with the 'Conditions to be met by certified Organization' in the Terms and Conditions and Serious customer complaints.
- ii. The certified client does not allow surveillance/re-certification audit to be conducted at the required frequencies.
- iii. The certified client has voluntarily requested for suspension.
- iv. Failure to complete audit fee charges within the time frame stated in the agreement.

In case where the client is not producing, certification may not be suspended, but visits may be postponed if the company has nothing to demonstrate and a visit would be of no value. Scheme Manager shall contact the client on the scheduled visit dates and formally record the status and intentions of the client. The situation may continue until the end of the current certification cycle at which time the certificate must be withdrawn.

Upon suspension, all aspects of handling suspended certifications will be managed by Scheme

Manager, as required by clause 6.1 of ISO-17065. Scheme Manager are responsible for formulating and communicating the actions needed to end the suspension and restore certification for the product(s) in accordance with the certification scheme.

Scheme Manager also to communicate any additional actions required by the scheme owner and others related or relevant certification scheme documents to the client to ensure that the client receives clear guidance on resolving the issues that led to the suspension and understands the steps necessary to reinstate their certification or product certification, thereby maintaining the integrity and compliance of the certification process.

Under suspension status, the client's management system is temporarily invalid. During the suspension period, ECCO shall ensure necessary modifications to all relevant certification documents and public information to reflect the suspended status.

The authorization for the use of certification marks, both for the certificate and the applicable products, is suspended. This ensures that there is no indication that the product or certificate continues to be certified during the suspension period.

If within the 6 months of suspension however the Client manages to resolve the issues that have resulted in the suspension, ECCO shall restore the suspended certification.

Upon successful verification, ECCO updates and make necessary modifications to all relevant certification documents and public information to reflect the restored certification status and reinstates the authorization for the use of certification marks, both for the certificate and the certified products. This comprehensive approach ensures accurate communication of the certification status and allows the client to resume using the certification marks, thereby maintaining the integrity and credibility of the certification process.

However, if failure to resolve issues that have resulted in the suspension within 6 months from the date of suspension issued, ECCO shall withdraw the certification.

Following expiration of certification, ECCO shall restore certification within 6 months provided that the outstanding recertification activities are completed, otherwise at least a stage 2 shall be conducted. The effective date on the certificate shall be on or after the recertification decision and the expiry date shall be based on prior certification cycle.

4.4. Withdrawal or Renewal of Certification

Imposed withdrawal through major nonconformity, repeated failure to comply with Terms and Conditions or serious customer complaints must go through the review process by the Scheme Manager to ensure impartiality of the decision. Once the decision has been validated the withdrawal can proceed.

For voluntary withdrawal of certification, the process is similar except the Scheme Manager signature and authority is sufficient.

ECCO will write officially to the company and the certificate will be withdrawn and the directory of certified companies will be amended accordingly. MPOCC is notified accordingly.

Company will also be informed to return relevant ECCO's Certificate and to cease using the Certificate Symbol/ Accreditation Mark.

If the client agrees, the auditor will proceed to put up the report to the Scheme Manager for withdrawal of the certificate.

Upon Scheme's Manager reviewing and validating the recommendation for withdrawal of certificate, the company will be asked to return the certificate and to cease the use of the Certification Symbol/ Accreditation Mark. The authorization for the use of certification marks, both for the certificate and the applicable products, is withdrawn to ensure there is no indication that the product or certificate remains certified. The directory of certified companies will be amended accordingly.

ECCO shall make decisions on renewing certification based on the results of the recertification audit, as well as the results of the review of the system over the period of certification and complaints received from users of certification.

Renewal shall be granted if

- i. The information provided by the audit team is sufficient with respect to the certification requirements and the scope for certification.
- ii. For any major nonconformities, Certifiers has reviewed, accepted, and verified the correction and corrective actions.
- iii. For any minor nonconformities Certifiers has reviewed and accepted the client's plan for correction and corrective action.

Upon successful completion of the re-evaluation process, ECCO updates all relevant certification documents and public information to reflect the renewed certification status.

The authorization for the use of certification marks, both for the certificate and the applicable products, is continued to ensure that the certification status is accurately maintained and communicated, allowing the client to continue using the certification marks.

4.5. Reduction or Extension of Certification Scope

For reduction of scope, the auditor will assess and indicate in the audit report if the integrity of a referenced activity on its management system certification will be affected and the consequence that the reduction in scope might lead to a total withdrawal of certificate.

It should be clear from the documentation provided which elements of the scope are being removed.

For cases where the integrity of the certification is not affected by the reduction in scope, the Audit Team Leader will submit the Audit Report to the Scheme Manager.

Upon Scheme's Manager reviewing and validating the recommendation for reduction of scope, all future annual surveillance audit will only cover areas under the reduced scope.

The auditor should consider whether the audit duration was reduced as a result of the scope removal and provide justification of reduction in duration, if applicable. Where this is necessary, details of such should be provided with the information submitted for review.

If the decision to reduce the scope of certification is made as a condition of reinstatement, ECCO ensures necessary modifications that all relevant certification documents, public information, and authorizations for the use of marks are promptly modified to accurately reflect the reduced scope. This will be clearly communicated to client.

This includes updating all certification documents and public information to clearly describe the reduced scope and adjusting the authorization for the use of certification marks, both for the certificate and the applicable products.

By doing so, ECCO ensures transparency and clarity regarding the certification status and scope, preventing any misrepresentation and maintaining the integrity and credibility of the certification process.

For extension of scope, the Scheme Manager will normally liaise with the client concerning the Application of Registration/ Audit. Unless considered urgent to the company, the extension of scope will be requested to be audited during the next surveillance audit.

The audit is then planned with the client. An Additional visit is created on the system.

The client will be requested to submit the revised Management System Manual and related Procedures and to highlight the area of extension of scope.

Where the client advises of the need to extend the scope of certification, the following must be ensured:

- i. The wording of the scope to be applied.
- ii. The size of the new activity (number of people involved).
- iii. Detail of the new activity.
- iv. the audit duration of the extension to scope.
- v. That the activities are covered by the existing registered Management System.

Where the extension to scope involved an audit of more than 1 day, it must be passed to the Scheme Manager for a formal quote to be issued. Scheme Manager will follow their normal process including contract review and confirming the auditor allocation.

Where the extension to scope is for a new location of a multi-sited client where all the activities are the same as other locations, it may be possible to extend the scope without an additional visit. The new location must be added to the sampling plan and visited during the cycle.

If the extension of scope audit is to be conducted at the same time as planned annual surveillance audit, the duration of the visit should be extended unless written justification is provided as to the reason(s) for not having additional man-days.

The audit is conducted generally in accordance with the requirements of initial audit. ECCO Auditor can conduct extension to scope except where it involves a team, in which case an ECCO Lead Auditor must be present.

All aspects of the applicable Oil Palm Management Standard shall be assessed. Where it is not considered appropriate to assess certain clauses (or sub clauses) of the standard, then written justification shall be given for this within the report.

The report must also cover:

- i. An indication of the size of the organization covered by the entire scope (this will allow for verification of the man-days allocated to the audit cycle).
- ii. Any new or revised competency requirements for auditors.

If a non-conformity is identified during the visit, procedure for closure will be as per Initial

Audit Stage 2.

Upon Scheme's Manager reviewing and validating the recommendation for extension of scope, all future surveillance audit will include the areas covered under the extended scope.

The new activities, which are being added to the scope of registration, should be clearly noted in a manner, which would allow a Scheme Manager to ascertain what is new without reference to the old scope.

Upon successful completion of evaluation of additional products, services or activities, all relevant certification documents and public information are updated to reflect the expanded scope.

The authorization for the use of certification marks, both for the certificate and the applicable products, is adjusted to include the expanded scope to ensures that the certification status is accurately communicated, allowing the client to use the certification marks for the expanded range of certified products, services or activities.

5. RECORDS

- i. Audit report for extension of scope.
- ii. Letter of suspension/ withdrawal.



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