

## **Guidance Document on Pilot Testing of NCCF's Draft Safeboards Certification Standards**

### **Introduction**

The pilot test is an interactive field study to ascertain the practicability and relevance of the NCCF's Draft Certification Standards in the field prior to their formal acceptance and endorsement by the NCCF.

### **Scope of Safeboards Standards**

Safeboards Standards are applicable to diverse range of products of plywood, MDF, particleboard, oriented strand board, laminated veneer lumber, flush board and engineered bamboo.

### **Objectives of the Pilot Testing**

The Standards Development Group (SDG) has prepared these Draft Safeboards Certification Standards (Version 0) through an extensive consultative process, online as well as through sector specific sensitization webinars and the updated Version 0.3 will be put to pilot testing in collaboration with some industries before these Standards are finalized and launched for use by the certification bodies.

Broad objectives of pilot testing of these Draft Safeboards Certification Standards are:

- To check the suitability, relevance and adaptability of these Standards in a multitude of conditions and identifying the areas of non-applicability of Standards in diverse conditions.
- To engage with the directly affected stakeholders and the disadvantaged stakeholders in the standards development process and solicit their views on the draft Standards and find out the areas for improvement.
- Role of technology and possible technological interventions in reducing formaldehyde emissions from the composite wood products.
- Provide exposure to the potential auditors and Standards implementers to enhance their familiarity with the Standards.
- Identifying the major sections getting non-conformance during the test audit of the industry but for whom conformance can be achieved after specific intervals and changes in the practices and thus provide for a graded approach to certification.

This is to clarify that pilot testing is essentially to get feedback on these draft Standards through test audit of composite wood boards industry.

## Outputs

- The results have to be processed and incorporated into a test audit report, which has to be provided to the Technical Working Group (TWG) and the Standards Development Group (SDG).
- The results will make observations for each of the requirements regarding their:
  - a. Extent and degree of implementation
  - b. Likely impacts on the certificate holders
  - c. Likely impacts on the end users/workers, and
  - d. Stakeholders' feedback

## Activities

NCCF deploys auditors who are qualified assessors with expertise in environment sciences, natural resource management and wood science and technology having background of Chemistry and allied subjects and in other relevant fields to pilot test the Draft Safeboards Standards V 0.3. When there are more than one auditors in an audit team, team members may review parts of these Standards based on their background and expertise. On the day of evaluation, audit team convenes to deliberate the findings of the assessment jointly. This involves an analysis of all the relevant field observations, stakeholder comments and records.

The pilot testing can be broadly divided into the following phases:

### 1. Opening Meeting

An initial meeting at the office to initiate the on-site portion of the audit. The lead auditor will present the assessment protocol to the personnel, and the subsequent queries will be resolved. The main purpose of the meeting is to provide information on the management policy and operations.

Additionally, audit planning will be conducted in collaboration with client/organisation to identify an appropriate cross-section of product types and management activities for the sample-based manufacturers and products for assessment.

### 2. On-site Visits

The preliminary assessment will be done by an auditor/audit team spending one day (depending upon the intensity of the operations, number of production/processing sites) at the industry/multiplier's site (excluding travel) and include a ground-based assessment of the operations. This will include face-to-face interviews, meetings, and discussions with workers/employees/stakeholders.

### 3. Report

The auditor will submit a draft preliminary assessment report containing preliminary findings and observations.

Major activities to be included and given emphasis on before and at the time of pilot test of these Standards are:

#### a. Stakeholder Consultation

- ✓ Stakeholder is a person, group or an organization with an interest or concern in something. Stakeholder Groups involved in the process according to UN Agenda 21 are:
  1. Institutions
  2. Manufacturers
  3. Government agencies/other Standards developers-QCI/BIS
  4. Consultants, architects, hospitality and builders
  5. Service providers
  6. Associations and NGOs
  7. Drivers/corporates-end consumer of certified products
- ✓ Through stakeholder consultation process primary objectives which will be met are:
  - To have an open and transparent standards development process
  - To cover all three aspects of triple bottom-line criteria i.e. social, economic and environmental
  - To build and develop awareness among people for Safeboards certification
  - To cover the stakeholders who for some reasons could not participate in the process

The interested stakeholders can approach and consult the pilot testing team for any queries regarding the draft Standards and formaldehyde emissions of composite wood certification in general. The audit team shall make detailed notes of their comments and note the same in their report to be submitted to the TWG and SDG.

#### b. Meeting the Disadvantaged Stakeholders

The pilot testing team will try and reach out to the disadvantaged stakeholders, stakeholders who might be financially or otherwise disadvantaged in participating in the Standards setting work, for their views and concerns regarding the Standards. The team will interact with them and assess the parts of these Standards applicable to these stakeholders based on the relevant inputs provided by them and reflect the same in their report as recommendations to the TWG and SDG.

### **c. Assessment Parameters**

Using the NCCF-Safeboards Certification Standards Draft version 0.3, the pilot testing will be as under:

- On-site visits to the activity areas including procurement of raw material, chemical treatments, manufacturing, layering, finishing and testing facility.
- Interaction with the employees/managers/quality compliance in-charge/workers or other stakeholders at the production site.
- Documents/evidences
  - Regarding legal set up of the industry
  - 'No objection certificate' in respect of compliance to the rules and regulations issued by the CPCB/SPCB
  - Procurement records of raw materials
  - Job order to workers/sub-contractors
  - Stock records
  - Outsourcing job records
  - Test reports regarding formaldehyde emissions levels
  - Any other documents related to wood sourcing and chain of custody

### **d. Submission**

#### **A. Report**

Detailed report consisting of the following will be submitted by the audit team:

##### 1.1. Checklist

Draft NCCF Safeboards Certification Standards will be converted into a form of checklist, to be used by the team to note down their observations during the audit.

##### 1.2. Summary report

The summary report will reflect all the relevant details of the areas where the pilot testing has taken place.

#### **B. Recommendations for improvement**

The pilot testing team will be interacting with multiple stakeholders during the whole process and solicit their views and concerns pertaining to the product testing, test method, occupational health and safety of workers, emission levels and ranking aspects of these Standards. Based on the observations, the team is expected to provide the TWG and SDG with its recommendations for improvement in these Standards, if any.

NCCF is undertaking multiple pilot tests of these draft Standards at various locations in the country. The result of the pilot tests and the reports generated against the same would be of help

to the TWG and Standards Development Group in further refining these Standards. Based on the observations, the TWG and SDG will undertake a further revision of these Standards, with a view to adapt, adopt or drop any section of requirements or add a new one, as considered appropriate.