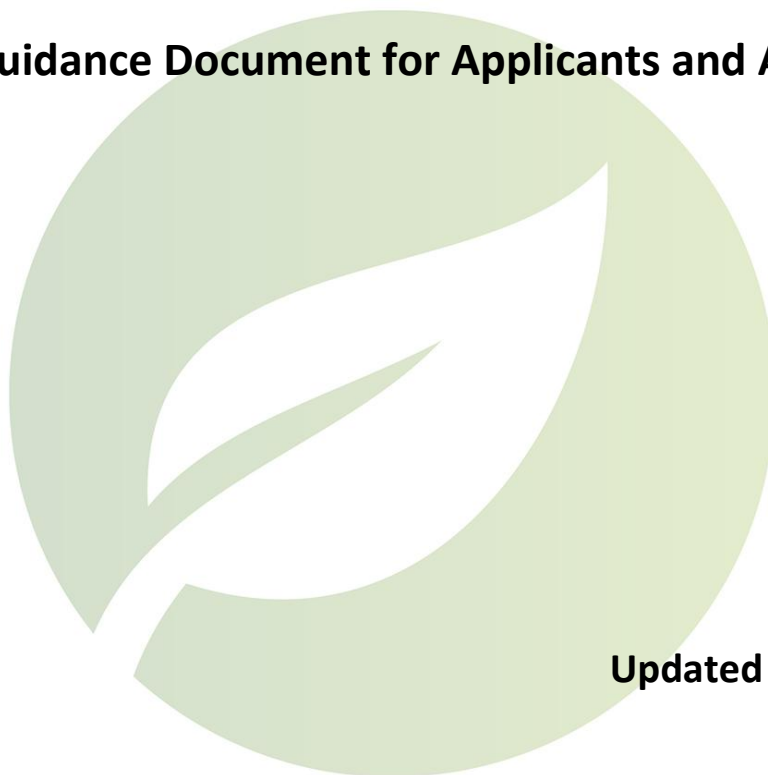




Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme

Guidance Document for Applicants and Assessors



Updated January 2026

**Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme
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Executive summary

As the lead industry association for biomass energy activities in New Zealand, the Bioenergy Association administers the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme (SBSAS). This scheme provides an accreditation service for retail and wholesale suppliers who meet recognised best practice standards for the production and supply of solid biofuel.

This Guidance Document sets out the information and evidence that prospective applicants must provide as part of their application for accreditation. Independent Assessors will review evidence and make recommendations to the Accreditation Administrator regarding approval. An appeals process is available for applicants whose accreditation is declined.

This document also serves as a reference guide for Assessors, outlining the requirements and evaluation criteria to be applied when assessing applications.

Applications are open to suppliers of all types of solid biomass fuel, including retail and wholesale suppliers of wood and herbaceous biomass chip, pellets or domestic firewood.

Specifically, this Guidance Document outlines:

- The evidence required from applicants to the SBSAS to demonstrate their capability to produce and supply solid biomass fuel and to show that appropriate quality assurance systems are in place to ensure products meet contracted specifications.
- The criteria for initial accreditation, and for the ongoing maintenance of accreditation; and
- The assessment process, a indicative timeframes for application processing, as well as the complaints and appeals procedures.

Appendix 1 provides a list of supporting documentation prepared to assist applicants in completing their application.

1. Introduction

Heat plant owners transitioning from coal or gas to biomass fuel expect comparable levels of assurance regarding fuel quality and consistency of supply to those traditionally associated with fossil fuels. Reliable and predictable fuel performance is essential to the efficient and safe operation of biomass-fired heat plants.

Certain types of biomass fuel can exhibit significant variability in quality and physical characteristics. As a result, heat plant owners seek confidence that such variability can be effectively managed by their fuel suppliers. The Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme address this need by providing an independently assessed framework that evaluates a supplier's capability to consistently deliver biomass fuel in accordance with contracted specifications.

The Scheme builds on a suite of Technical Guidance documents covering key aspects of biomass fuel production, handling and user that the biomass fuels supplied are of quality appropriate to the design and operational requirements of their heat plant.

This Guidance Document sets out the requirements for accreditation and provides direction to the Accreditation Administrator and Independent Assessors on the criteria to be applied during the assessment process. Applicants must demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this document in order to achieve accreditation.

2. The Scheme

For the purposes of the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme, the definition of *biomass fuel* is as set out in the *Bioenergy Association Technical Guide 1 – Solid Biofuel Classification Guidelines*. The biomass fuel types covered by the Scheme include:

- Biomass chips
- Hog fuel
- Wood pellets
- Urban biomass fuels
- Compressed firelogs and briquettes
- Torrefied biomass
- Herbaceous biomass fuels
- Firewood.

Biomass fuels may be derived from a wide range of sources, including but not limited to:

- Products from forestry and agriculture
- Wastes from forestry and agriculture
- Vegetable waste from food processing industries
- Biomass residues from wood processing
- Fibrous vegetable waste from pulp and paper operations
- Other biomass related materials.

2.1 Scope

The Accreditation Scheme accepts applications from biomass fuel suppliers based in New Zealand and Australia. Applications are open to suppliers of any type of biomass fuel, regardless of feedstock source or production process.

The Solid Biofuel Classification Guidelines define:

- Types of solid biofuel
- Classifications and grades within each fuel type; and
- Description parameters used to characterise fuels

These Guidelines are based on the relevant international technical standards for the sampling and testing of solid biofuels. While they do not replace those standards, they draw on applicable components and adapt them for use in Australasian heat markets.

The Solid Biofuel Classification Guidelines are supported by *the Bioenergy Association [Technical Guide 5 - Standard Methods for Verifying the Quality of Solid Biofuel](#)*, which specifies recommended and standard methods for verifying the characteristics and quality of solid biofuels supplied to New Zealand and Australian markets.

The exact fuel specification applicable to any supply arrangement is determined by the contractual agreement between the supplier and the customer and will be specific to the customer's heat plant and operational requirements. Accordingly, the Accreditation Scheme focuses on assessing the supplier's capability to consistently deliver biomass fuel that meets the agreed specification and complies with contractual requirements.

Quality assurance under the Scheme is based on documented testing regimes, testing frequency and verified results. These elements form a key component of the accreditation assessment process.

2.2 Definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms are defined as follows:

Accreditation	Formal acknowledgement by the independent Accreditation Administrator that a biomass fuel supplier has the capability to source and supply specified types of biomass fuel reliably and consistently to a predetermined specification.
Professional Standards and Complaints Committee	An independent panel of three people appointed by the Bioenergy Association Annual General Meeting to consider appeals against decisions made by the Scheme Administrator.
Authorised testing body	A testing laboratory accredited by IANZ.
Certificate of Quality (CoQ)	A certificate which details the quality of a sample of biomass fuel by listing the test results and signed by an authorized testing body. A CoQ must include the description of the biomass fuel being tested, the

name of the specification it should meet, batch number and release date. Each specification property for the substance must be listed together with the test method, unit of measure, test result and ideally the specification limit for that property. All key properties in the specification must be included but the most recent frequency test result can be given for any minor properties provided this is indicated. Any tests carried out by another laboratory should be indicated.

Descriptive terms that identify the fuel should also include:

- The main type and form (chips, hog fuel etc)
- A grade within that type and form (i.e. grade 1 through to grade 8 biomass chips).
- Specific descriptions that are based on the properties of the biomass fuels.

The CoQ should include a statement that the batch meets the specification with the exception of any tests that have failed or have been omitted and be signed by an approved person.

Conforming

Meeting specification requirements.

Control document

A document forming part of a quality management system (QMS) marked by the following: title, issue number, release date, page numbers (page of pages) and a signature by the authorised approver.

Description parameters

The characteristics of solid biofuels with regard to Size (P), Moisture (M), Ash (A), Bulk density (BD), and Energy density (ED) are set out in the Solid Biofuel Classification Guidelines.

Definition of biomass fuel types

The biomass fuel types covered by accreditation are set out in the Solid Biofuel Classification Guidelines:

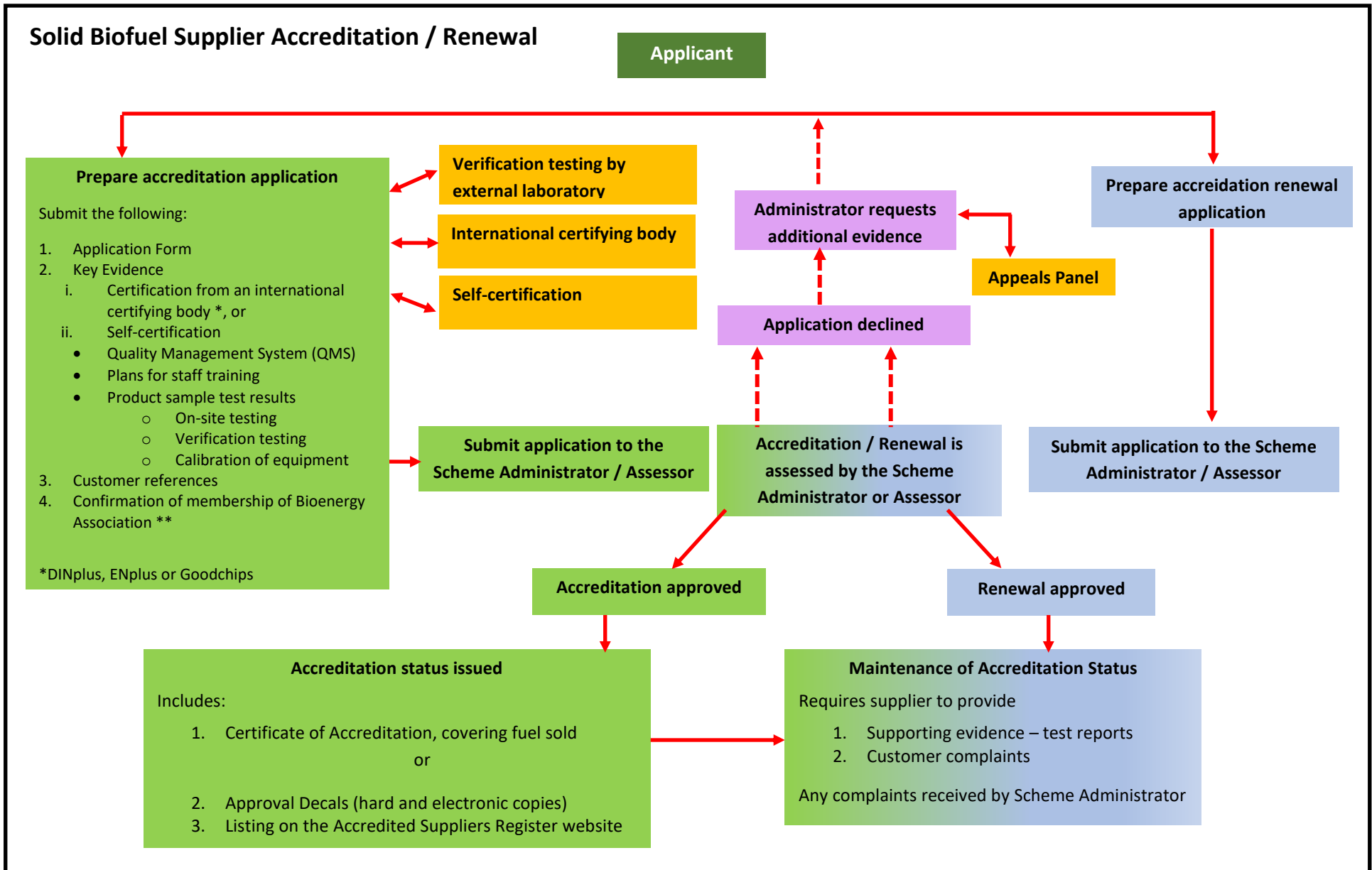
- biomass chips
- Hog Fuel
- Wood Pellets
- Urban biomass Fuels
- Compressed Firelogs and Briquettes
- Torrefied biomass
- Herbaceous biomass fuels
- Residential firewood

Quality control (QC)

Activity associated with testing to confirm quality including the setting of pass-fail criteria and quarantine of failed product. QC normally includes defined methods for taking and labelling samples, test selection, test method evaluation, ensuring test equipment integrity and maintaining product traceability.

Quality Management System (QMS)	<p>A process and systems designed to provide assurance that a product always reaches the end user meeting the intended specification and fit for the intended purpose.</p> <p>QMS activities include all the elements of QC but extend to the management and continuous improvement of the manufacturing process including management responsibilities, review of specifications, review of processes, packaging, labelling and delivery, incident investigation, analysis and rectification, managing changes to processes, customer support, internal review and external audit.</p>
Representative Sample	<p>A sample taken in a way that represents the average composition of the contents of a container. Sampling is defined in the Bioenergy Association Technical Guide 5.</p>
Accreditation Administrator	<p>The independent person appointed by the Bioenergy Association AGM to be an administrator of the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme.</p>
Fuel specification	<p>A schedule in a contract that sets out the properties the biomass fuels being purchased must meet.</p>
Test	<p>A laboratory process used to determine a given property of a sample of biomass fuel.</p>
biomass fuel supplier	<p>Any person or entity entering into contracts for the supply of biomass fuel to customers.</p>

3. Application process



4. Scheme design and operation

The Bioenergy Association Biomass Energy Interest Group (BEIG) represent the leading players in terms of the suppliers and end users of biomass fuel and those who provide biomass energy equipment (suppliers and installers of boilers and burners) in New Zealand. The BEIG Committee provides oversight of the accreditation scheme.

The key focus of the Scheme is delivering Quality Assurance and ensuring a system of checks and balances that in general work towards the delivery of high-quality biomass fuel consistent with contractual agreements. High quality and reliability will in turn increase the demand for biomass fuel from the market as customer confidence grows. The issue of quality is a key factor in a successful biomass fuel sector. The consistent delivery of high-quality fuel will provide the necessary assurance to potential customers that solid biofuel available from registered suppliers throughout Australasia is a quality product suited to the purpose intended by the end user. The Scheme covers the retail and wholesale supply of all types of biomass fuel, including residential firewood.

The Bioenergy Association is conscious of the need for the Accreditation Scheme to be credible but affordable. Sound quality assurance (QA) is a fundamental requirement for accreditation. While the Scheme cannot guarantee the quality of all biomass fuels produced, it does require that each registered supplier has standardised processes and procedures capable of delivering a specified product. Accreditation aims to establish a reputation for reliable quality and sustainably sourced feedstocks. The onus is also on customers to demand registered biomass fuel so reinforcing the importance of supplying high quality fuel to the market. However, the scheme criteria are not too onerous that unnecessary costs are incurred.

There are a number of international standards in relation to biomass fuel and these form the basis of the association's Technical Guides on fuel classification and biomass fuel testing. The Technical Guides are based on the international standards but take only the relevant parts which are applicable to New Zealand conditions.

- **Recognition of international certification**

Some biomass fuel suppliers have obtained international certification of their process for producing specific fuels. Where a supplier has a recognised certification scheme such as DinPlus, ENplus or Goodchips then that scheme may be recognised by the Accreditation Administrator who will advise the applicant what additional information is required in order to achieve accreditation under this scheme.

In general, because the international certifying bodies are recognized as providing a high level of quality assurance use of a recognised international certification will significantly reduce compliance costs with regard to this scheme.

Where a supplier has obtained international certification for their process and specific fuels then the Accreditation Administrator has no need to duplicate auditing of the supplier's manufacturing process as that will already have been done by the certifying body. However, the other requirements for accreditation such as reference checks and compliance with the complaints process will be required. Accreditation is more than just certifying the process as it provides a local oversight of the supplier's quality performance and access to complaints procedures.

International certification indicates to customers that the supplier's fuel is produced at the highest level of quality assurance.

- **Self-certification**

Under the Accreditation Scheme suppliers can self-certify their quality assurance and have the Accreditation Administrator and any assessors review the documentation and examine submitted test reports. The Administrator can undertake unannounced inspections if there is any concern over fuel quality. The self-certification approach is backed by the complaints process, which is a primary trigger for alerting the supplier that there is a quality assurance problem.

- **Who can apply for accreditation?**

Any person or entity can seek accreditation as a Solid Biofuel Supplier.

- **Requirements for accreditation**

To gain accreditation, self-certifying suppliers of biomass fuel are required to demonstrate an active Quality Management System covering procedures, methods and training etc. and to also supply details of tests conducted on samples of their fuel. In addition, they will be required to demonstrate that they have been able to consistently provide fuel to a specification as required through a contract with a customer. The Bioenergy Association understands that this specification varies according to the needs of each specific customer. The key issue is the ability of the supplier to consistently meet those needs.

To avoid imposing unnecessary costs on suppliers, applicants may put forward their existing QA schemes for consideration. Suppliers who have their manufacturing processes internationally certified need to meet the same requirements as for self-certification. The supplier is responsible for ensuring that the international certification meets the requirements for accreditation.

- **Monitoring and oversight of a supplier's accreditation**

In order that the Accredited Supplier can be monitored and held accountable for best practice performance by the Bioenergy Association Professional Standards and Complaints Committee the supplier must always be a financially paid-up member of the Bioenergy Association. As a member the supplier must abide by the Association Member's [Code of Conduct](#).

- **Recognition of accreditation**

The Scheme has a recognised label which suppliers may use to demonstrate that they meet a set of predetermined best practice quality criteria. The accreditation will be endorsed with regard to the types of fuel that the supplier has shown they can deliver.

5. Making an initial application

This section sets out the requirements for an initial application for accreditation under the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme. For all sections, applicants should provide as much information as possible.

[Form SBSAS 02 – Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme Application Form](#) should be used to make an initial application for accreditation.

All information received from the Applicant by the Scheme Administrator and the Assessors will be held in strict confidence and no information will be shared with any other party

5.1 About you and what you do

The following information is required:

- **Your contact details** – Provide contact details for the main contact person and a second person who can be contacted in their absence about the organisation seeking accreditation.
- **Brief overview description of biomass fuel supply business** – This section is intended to provide the Accreditation Administrator and the Assessors with an overview about the applicant's operations. Applicants should clearly indicate under which fuel types they are applying for accreditation. This should include the sources of feedstock, processing methods, how fuel is stored, if it is sold retail or wholesale, and the nature of the supply contracts. This is a scene setting description and should not go into detail that is better covered elsewhere.

5.2 Information required for accreditation

The information requested in this section will be evidence to support the application being made. It's important that as much information and explanations as possible are presented for assessment.

The following information (or evidence of it) is required as part of an application for accreditation:

- Quality Management System (QMS),
 - Plans for staff training,
 - Product Sample Test Results
 - Onsite testing
 - Verification testing,
 - Equipment Calibration

Or

Certificate from an International certifying body

- Customer References.
- Evidence of paid-up membership of the Bioenergy Association (Ensures coverage by the Association's complaints process).

5.2.1 Quality Management System for self-certifying suppliers

A Quality Management System (QMS) shows how an organisation operates. The QMS includes the organisation's policies and procedures, and supporting attachments, such as forms, templates, flowcharts and training manuals. The policies and procedures should be complete, applied, understandable and consistent with actual practice. A well-developed QMS describes how policies and procedures are:

- developed
- documented
- approved
- implemented
- regularly re-assessed through self-review.

Application Tip 1: QMS can be simple

The information requested in this documentation may appear onerous but simple processes may be as effective as complex ones. As an example, to effective processes – Is the tyre flat – looking at the tyre to see if it needs air, can be as effective as measuring the pressure. Assessors will want to be assured that you have a good process not a complex or costly process.

Applicants should look at the principles of what is sought and not assume that there needs to be lots of documentation. Photos and video evidence showing equipment in operation can be very effective and provide indisputable evidence.

- **QMS Documentation**

While there is no required format for a QMS, the Accreditation Administrator needs to see evidence of a structured approach to how the applicant manages their day-to-day operations. Ideally, their QMS should include the following general features:

- It should be appropriate to the size, nature, complexity of the processes and the organisation.
- It should document all relevant aspects of any required standards and legislation that is being used.
- It should describe in detail the processes used, and how these processes are regularly reviewed, corrected and improved.
- It should explain how quality is monitored and documented.
- All changes made to the processes should be subject to a *management of change* review to ensure that all the effects of the change are addressed.
- All key documents should be controlled documents.
- The QMS should also outline how:
 - staff are trained
 - safety and good manufacturing practice are maintained
 - all details of receipts, fuel processing, deliveries and samples are recorded.
 - nonconforming product is dealt with; and
 - how problems are managed.

Application Tip 2: A Quality Management System

The Accreditation Administrator needs to see that there is a structured approach to the management and delivery of a product that meets the customer's specification. The QMS is the document that anyone should be able to reference for information on procedures and it must be usable and accessible either electronically or physically. A small organisation might have one copy of the QMS in circulation – it could be amended manually and updated as appropriate. A large organisation may decide to review its full QMS at regular intervals. Some parts may be reviewed more frequently and in more depth. New procedures may have a shorter review cycle initially to ensure any teething problems can be rectified.

Application Tip 3: What to do if you don't have a QMS

The Accreditation Administrator accepts that some small but growing businesses may not yet have a formalised QMS and is willing to work with the supplier to get the documentation up to the required level of best practice.

Depending on the nature of the applicant's specific activities, it is expected that their QMS (or alternative) will also cover a number of specific elements. Provide details as follows:

- **Processes**

- a) Person accountable for or appointed to manage the quality system
- b) Product specifications for biomass fuel supplied
- c) Product Certificate of Quality provided to customers
- d) Fuel handling and storage including moisture and contaminants exclusion and protection
- e) Nature and frequency of sampling and testing
- f) Test methods and equipment
 - i. Maintenance and calibration
 - ii. Participation in correlation schemes
 - iii. Tests performed in house
 - iv. Use of external test laboratories
 - v. Laboratory or test room accreditation status and QC tester qualifications/experience
- g) What approach is used for working with customers on quality related issues including for example to customers - the provision of information, advice, and management of complaints etc; to contractors – any contractual agreements for services.
- h) What processes are there in place to manage non-conforming fuel.
 - i) Labelling and signage
 - j) Transportation – Policy and Practice
 - k) Promotional material and activities
 - l) Contract management
 - m) Handling of information requests and complaints – how is this done?

- **QMS Internal review**

Having a QMS in place is a significant step towards operating in a quality focused way. This is a key first step but over time it's highly likely that operations change or develop and more effective ways of doing things are identified. It's important therefore that the QMS is kept up to date and address all changes or developments in onsite activities and processes. An internal review is somewhat like a process of checks and balances in order to ensure that the QMS is effective. It's important that the responsibility for managing, reviewing and implementing the QMS is allocated and that it is regularly monitored.

The Accreditation Administrator would like information on how the QMS is reviewed and as a result of any specific findings leads to the amendment of internal policies, processes and procedures as part of the management of the business in its delivery of a quality product or service.

- **QMS external audit**

Having a QMS in place is a significant step towards operating in a quality focused way. Internal reviews are a first step in managing the effectiveness of the QMS but external audits can be the best way to assess the true

effectiveness of the QMS. Quality audits are essential to verify the existence of objective evidence showing conformance to required processes, to assess how successfully processes have been implemented, for judging the effectiveness of achieving any defined target levels, providing evidence concerning reduction and elimination of problem areas and are a hands-on management tool for achieving continual improvement in an organisation.

To benefit the organisation, quality auditing should not only report non-conformances and corrective actions but also highlight areas of good practice and provide evidence of conformance. In this way, staff may share information and amend their working practices as a result, also enhancing continual improvement.

The Accreditation Administrator is interested in whether the QMS has been externally audited, what the findings were and how they have been addressed. If it has not been externally audited, is one planned? Having had an external audit by an auditor acceptable to the Accreditation Administrator can minimise the necessity for the Accreditation Administrator to make such in-depth enquiries. Similarly, if the QMS has been reviewed by another certifying party a report from that party may avoid such information having to be provided for demonstration of compliance under this scheme.

Application Tip 4: Market benefit of having had independent external audit

The supplier can obtain significant market benefit from having had an independent audit of the QMS and use the information when bidding for supply contracts. Customers are keen to know that you have been independently looked at.

5.2.2 Staff training

Staff training is a key component of running a quality process. The Accreditation Administrator is seeking details of the applicant's commitment to training and details of how training is structured and assessed within the organisation with regard to quality fuel supply.

Applicants should outline the training procedures and initiatives that they have in place noting the frequency of training, training topics and how many staff members are trained. Reference the QMS as appropriate.

5.2.3 Ensuring product quality (quality control procedures)

Ensuring that fuel quality is maintained from the point of production to the point at which it is delivered to the customer is essential. This focus on the maintenance of quality in both practical and contractual terms is of fundamental interest to the Accreditation Administrator. This is achieved by good control of all processes involved and confirmed using an appropriate level of sampling and testing along the whole supply chain.

Information on the expected best practices for product quality verification is set out in the *Bioenergy Association [Technical Guide 5 - Standard Methods for Verifying the Quality of Solid Biofuel](#)*.

The tests and other processes applied at each stage of manufacture and distribution should be appropriate to the applicant's own circumstances. The recommendations below are advisory only and are not intended to cover all circumstances or actions that may be required. Details as follows:

- Sampling
- Product Testing
- Transportation methods
- Equipment Calibration

- **Sampling**

Sampling must be carried out appropriately and with sufficient frequency to represent a credible picture of the applicant's activities. Applicants should refer to the Bioenergy Association Technical Guide 5, which sets out recommended sampling procedures and frequencies against which accreditation will be assessed.

- **Product testing**

It is important that product tests of properties related to biomass fuel type and quality are carried out periodically. For accreditation the frequency of sample testing is set out in Bioenergy Association Technical Guide 5.

It is important to appreciate that these tests not only give a customer confidence but also signal to potential customers the supplier's commitment to quality and performance. These tests and the performance are what help to set some suppliers apart from others.

Bioenergy Association approved testing bodies are set out in www.usewoodfuel.org.nz/biomass-fuel-testing.

- **Fuel transportation methods**

Applicants should demonstrate that their fuel transportation methods are appropriate for maintaining product quality during transport eg are biomass pellets transported in covered trucks.

- **Equipment calibration**

Equipment used to test samples should be calibrated regularly to ensure accuracy and consistency of results. Applicants should advise on calibration testing results. An ideal calibration regime is set out in Bioenergy Association Technical Guide 5. **Form SBSRS 13 – Testing equipment** may assist.

Equipment description	
Serial No. / or ID	
Manufacturer	
Relevant to which fuel type	
Is calibration necessary to ensure product quality	Y / N if yes, state required frequency of calibration
Is training critical to product quality?	Y / N if yes, ensure all users have training recorded on C8

- **Information requirement**

Information required for demonstrating product quality includes:

- An outline of the sampling and testing carried out under the applicable headings above. (Please note, there is no requirement to follow the recommendations above but the Accreditation Administrator would like to understand your reasons /justification for departing widely from them in cases where you apply a lower level of testing.)
- An outline of how retail samples are selected (e.g. site and season) and sampling frequency.

- c) An outline of your testing facilities; tests you can carry out on your production site and independent laboratories you use for non-urgent tests.
- d) Ability to investigate changes to your processes by laboratory trials.
- e) Participation in any QA audits, e.g. ISO 9001 and the areas they cover or other quality assurance activities associated with sampling and testing.
- f) Information on retained samples and records kept.
- g) Any recent examples of products failing to meet specifications but detected and able to be rectified before leaving your production facility. Any examples of the need to rectify products and lessons learned.
- h) Information on your ability to quarantine and reprocess or dispose of faulty product.
- i) Any examples of incidents you may have experienced in the last year such as product released to the marketplace which was later found to be outside specification, the reasons for this and the actions you took to identify and rectify the problem.
- j) A representative sample of sets of results for the biomass fuel products you have retailed in the past year. All results should be recorded as part of the QC process. How the results compare against contracted deliverables should be presented with the results submitted for accreditation.
- k) Details of how and when to calibrate testing equipment and the reporting of actions/corrections taken.
- l) Facilities for dealing with customer complaints and claims relating to quality.

Note to parties seeking accreditation:

List the Equipment you hold onsite for the purposes of quality testing. For each item listed, please note which fuel types the equipment is relevant to. If you replace the equipment, please advise the Accreditation Administrator at your accreditation renewal.

- **Managing biomass fuel quality contractually**

The Accreditation Administrator is interested in understanding how the issue of biomass fuel quality is addressed contractually. Applicants to the Accreditation Scheme should indicate the typical nature of contractual requirements between parties. Further, it should also be noted what the agreed steps are to remedy any contractual failures.

- **Provision of full and clear Information**

The Assessor's judgment has to be made, to a large extent, on the information provided to them. It's in the applicant's interest to provide as much information as possible.

Note – All information submitted to the Scheme Administrator in support of an application for accreditation is confidential to the Bioenergy Association and held securely. It will not be disclosed to any third party.

5.2.4 Referee statements

The success of the biomass fuel industry in New Zealand will be built and secured on the development of a reputation for fuel quality, availability of fuel and the maintenance of good customer relationships. The Scheme Administrator is interested in feedback from customers. This applies whether the customer is the fuel's end-user or a buyer on-selling to others.

In supplying the details of five referees (customer details) applicants are giving their approval for the Scheme Administrator (or an Application Assessor under the Scheme) to contact up to two of these person(s).

6. Information for accreditation listing

Assuming that an application for accreditation has been made successfully, the information provided to the Scheme Administrator for the purposes of promoting the applicants accreditation status will be used in the listing on the accreditation page www.usewoodfuel.org.nz/solid-biofuel-suppliers. All other information provided to the Scheme Administrator is done so in confidence and remains confidential.

For listing purposes applicants should supply 200 words of text promoting their operations and services. In addition, a high-resolution jpeg file of their company logo should be supplied to executive@bioenergy.org.nz

A successful application will lead to the award of ACCREDITATION under the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme as

'Solid Biofuel Accredited Supplier'. The accreditation will be endorsed for specific fuel types.

The Scheme Administrator will make it clear in the website listing what fuels the registered party supplies and has been registered for.

Accredited suppliers who also have international product certification may also associate that certification with any reference to accreditation.

7. Maintaining accredited status

Accredited status is maintained by the supplier continuing as a member of the Bioenergy Association and the annual provision to the Scheme Administrator of a required set of details to keep the accredited status current.

Form **SBSAS 10 – Annual Accreditation Renewal** – should be used to submit the information required to maintain registered status.

The following information is required annually to maintain registered status:

Form of certification	The supplier should indicate if accreditation is being maintained by way of international certification or self-certification. If the supplier is internationally certified they should provide a copy of the current certificate.
QMS update	Self-certifying suppliers must provide an update of their QMS including improvements, reviews, audits etc. and activities to keep it current.
Sample test data	(Per biomass fuel type) Submission of one full specification set of tests, two sets

	of release tests including frequency tests and a representative sample of batch release tests. The Scheme Administrator requires evidence annually of quality fuel production and its delivery to the market. It is suggested that test results for 1 in 50 deliveries be provided.
Ongoing quality management / customer service	Provide updated details of the success of customer service plus details of complaints or disputes with customers and how they have or are being resolved.
A brief update on staff training	Detail any changes in the training being provided and provide a summary of activities since original accreditation.
Significant changes to operations	Provide a brief report on any significant changes to the information in the original accreditation application.
Customer reference	All suppliers must provide one new reference.

7.1 Quality Management System (QMS) – Update for self-certifying suppliers

Initial accreditation under the Scheme requires applicants to have an operational Quality Management System to support their quality driven activities. For self-certifying suppliers the Scheme Administrator would like to see a clear demonstration annually of how the QMS is implemented, amended, updated and general evidence of how it is used in day to day activities to ensure that the business produces a quality product or delivers a quality driven service of relevance to the Scheme (e.g., transportation or retail sale).

Applicants should highlight recent activities including amendments/updates, audits or internal reviews of the QMS and QC procedures. If operational activities have been audited internally or externally the Scheme Administrator would like to see a summary of the findings from this Audit.

7.2 Ensuring product quality

To maintain accreditation the Scheme Administrator requires evidence annually of the supplier's quality fuel production and its delivery to the market. For renewal the supplier must complete the summary table (Table 2 [SBSAS 02](#)) providing (per biomass fuel type) one full specification set of tests, two sets of release tests including frequency tests and a representative sample of your batch release tests. It is suggested that one in five to one in 10 batches.

The Scheme Administrator is interested in seeing details of any non-compliances issued and what steps have been taken to address the issues highlighted.

NOTE – except those for promotional use (i.e., listing on the Scheme Register) all details supplied are confidential to the Scheme Administrator and the Independent Assessors contracted under the Scheme.

7.3 Production volumes, volumes delivered and volumes sold

The disclosure of a supplier's biomass fuel sales data is not a requirement of accreditation. However, the Scheme Administrator is interested in sales of product to help establish the scale and make-up of the sector in New Zealand in terms of the key sales areas/regions and key biomass fuels sold. Any supplier's information provided will be held confidential to the administrator and the data will only be aggregated with other supplier's data to show total growth in the market. A benefit of accreditation is that by participation

the supplier will be able to assess their market share in each region and nationally by comparing their own data with the aggregated data. The Scheme Administrator is keen to understand if there is growth in the biomass Fuel market and in sales (retail and wholesale) and where generic market promotion should be focused.

Applicants should provide data according to the type of biomass fuels that they produce or sell. Collection of data will be undertaken by the Scheme Administrator separate from the accreditation process.

7.4 Ongoing quality management / customer service

A strong future for the biomass fuel sector in New Zealand relies on the ability of those key players in the sector to produce or deliver quality biomass fuel to the customer time and time again. Part and parcel of this is the maintenance of a positive relationship with customers. In this sense, a 'customer' may be anyone in the chain from the point of biomass fuel production to the point of its sale (retail or wholesale).

The Scheme Administrator is interested in brief synopsis of issues relating to quality that applicants have had to address and manage in the past year. The disclosure of confidential information is not expected but applicants are encouraged to provide as much information as possible to reinforce that they are providing a competent service and to assist with the identification of future learning opportunities. The Scheme Administrator will aim to use details from applicant's experiences to illustrate in training activities under the Scheme.

7.5 Staff training

The Scheme Administrator requires evidence of ongoing staff training within the organisation seeking to maintain accreditation. Training can be webinars, site visits or presentations. Please provide details of the topics that have been the focus of internal training activities. Self-certifying applicants should attach information as appropriate to their application details. Form **SBSAS 03 – Staff training records** and Information Sheet **SBSAS 04 - Staff training hints and tips** – may assist.

7.6 Significant changes to operations

Providing information as part of maintaining accredited status is an opportunity to highlight any significant changes to operations.

Applicants should outline any specific but reasonably substantial changes to the operations as they were described in the original application for accreditation.

7.7 Customer reference

An important component of the Scheme is customer satisfaction. Maintenance of accredited status requires the all applicants for renewal must provide the details of at least one new customer from which a reference will be sought.

8. Ethical conduct requirement

As a registered solid biofuel supplier (producer and/or retailer) under the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme all parties are expected to conduct their activities according to ethical standards generally accepted

in New Zealand business and set out in the Bioenergy Association member's code of conduct. Further, this conduct should be such that the aims and objectives of the Scheme and the reputation of the industry sector generally are not jeopardised as it works towards establishing sector recognition for quality biomass fuel.

Accreditation may be suspended by the Scheme Administrator if the Scheme Administrator considers that the accredited party's behaviour has not met Scheme standards or that the supplier has not renewed its annual membership of the Bioenergy Association.

The Scheme Administrator requires accredited parties to disclose any problems raised by customers or issues as part of the accreditation process and to seek assistance from the Scheme Administrator in the resolution of any such issues where biomass fuel quality is a concern.

The Scheme Administrator endeavours to support and work with registered parties in the attainment of their accreditation and its maintenance. It is in the best interest of the wider sector for all suppliers to work towards the delivery of the highest quality biomass fuel at all times.

9. Assessment process – how an application is assessed

This section sets out as a rough guide how an application for accreditation will be processed.

When the application is received, the Scheme Administrator will check firstly if all the required information has been provided. The Administrator may wish to refer the application to one of the Scheme's Panel of Independent Industry Assessors. The Administrator will discuss with the applicant possible Assessors and agree one acceptable to the Applicant who is not in business competition with the applicant.

The Scheme Administrator or the Assessor will review the application supporting material and may contact the applicant to discuss aspects of their application.

The Scheme Administrator, on the basis of the advice from the Assessor or otherwise, will make an overall decision on whether an application for accreditation passes or fails. The Scheme does not have a scoring system as such. In the situation where an applicant fails in their attempt to become registered, the Assessor will outline to them why this decision was made and what they need to do in order to improve things. Equally so, if an applicant is successful but the Assessor feels there are some aspects that warrant attention over the year ahead, these issues will be highlighted to the newly registered party.

When the process is complete the Scheme Administrator will contact the applicant with the outcome of their application. Assuming a positive outcome, applicants will be issued with an Accreditation Certificate, a unique accreditation number and their details (as provided by the applicant) will be listed on the Scheme website. In addition, successful applicants will be issued with the Scheme logo in hard and soft copy forms.

9.1 Accreditation assessors – the panel of assessors

Where the Scheme Administrator considers it necessary the Administrator will engage the services of independent sector experts (a 'Panel of Assessors') to assess all applications. A single assessor from the panel will be appointed to each application. The assessor will be under contract with the Bioenergy Association and will be bound by confidentiality clauses in the contract. The Assessor will not be a person in a similar line of business to the applicant and may be the Scheme Administrator.

All details provided in an application are confidential to the Scheme Administrator and the Assessor. In practice, it is the appointed Assessor who will consider the information provided in detail. On receipt of an application the Scheme Administrator will advise applicants on possible Assessor and agree one.

9.2 What the assessor is looking for in the submitted evidence

In line with the information that has been submitted for self-certifying applicants, Table 1, following, sets out a brief check sheet of what the Assessor is looking for. This is intended only to be a basic guide to help applicants understand the essential features of the information that must be provided to ensure a successful application.

At all times applicants should focus on providing as much information as possible and preferably offer some response for each question rather than leave them blank.

NOTE – applicants are advised that if they are in doubt about their ability to provide some elements of the information required for accreditation, it may be advisable to contact the Scheme Administrator in advance to discuss whether it's appropriate that an application is made at all at this time.

The QMS for self-certifying applicants	<p>While there is no hard and fast requirement for what the QMS should look like. The Guidance Document clearly sets out what the Assessor will be looking for in terms of the topics it covers.</p> <p>The Assessor will want to see evidence of how applicants ensure the QMS is central to operations.</p> <p>In the absence of a formal QMS, the Assessor will consider alternative current documentation which focuses on the delivery of a quality process. Applicants should provide a clear account of how this collection of documents ensures that quality driven processes are in place.</p>
Staff Training Activity/Plans	<p>The Assessor will be keen to identify that applicants have a strong commitment to staff training and are able to demonstrate a good understanding of the role that staff training has in the operation of a quality driven process. Training should also cover health and safety and emergency procedures.</p>
Ensuring Product Quality	<p>The Assessor's interest is in how an applicant addresses quality in the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sampling • Product frequency testing • Transportation – policy and practice • Information required for accreditation (retailers) • Managing biomass Fuel Quality Contractually. <p>The Assessor needs to be satisfied that the applicant has ready access to sound testing facilities and that the tests you apply at various points of the supply chain are pertinent to your process and are carried out at an appropriate frequency. Also that samples are correctly taken and managed, and records are properly kept.</p> <p>The Assessor will want to see how an applicant addresses a 'fail' test result in terms of the remedial activity they pursue and future avoidance. The Scheme Administrator will want to see examples of actual test results and other information about the supplier's testing history, issues in terms of parameters that have failed and how the applicant has attempted to address them.</p>
Referees Statements	<p>The Assessor is interested in talking with the referees that applicants have identified to get a sense of the service that has been provided to them. As this Guidance Document advises, the quality of the service provided is important for individual businesses and in securing the future of the industry in general.</p>

Table 1: A brief guide to what an Assessor is looking for in an Application

10. Timetable of applications

The Scheme Assessors will endeavour to complete each initial assessment within 3 weeks from the date of receipt of a complete and accurate set of application documents by the Scheme Administrator.

The Scheme Administrator accepts no responsibility for any effects:

- from any delay in the completion of an assessment of an application; or
- of an applicant not being granted Full Accreditation by the Scheme Assessor(s).

For annual accreditation renewals, the Scheme Administrator will be able to confirm that applicants have maintained their registered status (or if there are additional details required) within 2 weeks of the receipt of a completed application form.

11. Issuing accreditation certificates

Successful applicants will be issued with a Certificate of Accreditation and an Accreditation Number.

The Certificate will confirm that the applicant is accredited under the Scheme. The Certificate will be numbered and entered in the Register which will be maintained by the Scheme Administrator and published on www.usewoodfuel.org.nz/solid-biofuel-suppliers. The Certificate will record the biomass fuel types under which the applicant has been accredited. New fuel types can be added on request and on the provision of suitable evidence.

11.1 Display of accreditation logo – terms and conditions of use

Appendix 2 presents the Scheme logo. The logo is available as a hard and soft copy and will be provided to the successful applicant on their accreditation.

The Scheme logo presents the following information:

- The logo is a clear sign that the holder is accredited under the Scheme
 - Endorsements as to the types of fuel accreditation may be appended to the logo

The logo can only be used by parties registered under the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme. On successful application for accreditation the Applicant will be permitted to use the logo as set out in the Terms and Conditions of Use as follows:

Terms & Conditions for the use of the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme logo

The use of the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme logo once awarded is subject to applicants agreeing to the following terms and conditions:

1. The Bioenergy Association through its Scheme Administrator (the Accreditation Administrator) is the sole owner of the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme logo ('the logo'). Use of the logo acknowledges the Bioenergy Association as the owner of the logo.
2. The Scheme Administrator reserves the right to take action against any use of the logo that does not conform to any of the conditions herein, or that infringes any intellectual property or other rights of the Scheme. All use of or goodwill associated with the logo will convey to the benefit of the Scheme.

3. Use of the logo by registered parties is evidence that their activities/operations have been independently assessed against the Scheme criteria and found to be acceptable.
4. Use of the logo does not guarantee the quality or suitability or otherwise of a product or service and the Scheme is not liable for any issues arising from the improper use of the logo.
5. Use of the logo is solely at the risk of the user.
6. As a successful applicant for accreditation under the Scheme, the Scheme Administrator hereby grants permission to use the logo, provided that there is agreement to the following:
 - The logo can be used on a supplier's website for the purpose of linking to the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme webpage.
 - The link will always be an active link.
 - The logo will always stand alone and will not be combined with any other graphical elements.
 - The logo will not be altered in any manner including its size, proportions, font, design, arrangement, colors or elements or animated, morphed or otherwise distorted in perspective or appearance.
 - The logo will not appear more prominently than the personal, company, product or service web-site name on the applicant.
 - The logo will be displayed in a positive manner and will not be used in any way that adversely affects the Scheme.
 - Registered parties will not transfer, assign, sell, reproduce, distribute or otherwise exploit their link to the Scheme or their use of the Scheme logo.
 - The logo will appear as provided by the Scheme Administrator in an electronic form.
 - The Scheme Administrator will issue registered parties with a set number of hard copy logo's specific to their registered status (i.e., the categories under which accreditation was sought and awarded).
 - Accredited parties will remove the logo from their website and/or operational activities in the event that their accreditation has not been renewed or has been suspended for more than 3 months.
 - Registered parties will direct current and potential customers to information on the Accreditation Scheme on the Scheme webpage

Accredited parties will not transfer any of the logos provided for their use to a third party.

12. Post assessment processes

12.1 Suspension of registered status

Parties registered under the Scheme are expected to carry out their operations in a manner consistent with normal business ethics as outlined in Section 8 – Ethical Conduct Requirement.

Should a situation arise in which an registered party brings himself or the Scheme into disrepute, the Scheme Administrator will advise the applicable registered party that their registered status is to be suspended.

Parties will be advised in writing and where appropriate will be granted an opportunity to explain the details of an identified situation as appropriate.

12.2 Process for complaints from applicants

If applicants are unhappy with any aspect of the administration of the Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme they can make a complaint. Complaints should be directed to the Scheme Administrator in the first instance. In all cases, complaints are to be made in writing.

All complaints are made in confidence. Decisions on complaints will be made by the Scheme Administrator and complainants will be kept informed on the status of their complaint by the Scheme Administrator.

Where the complaint is about the performance or conduct of the Scheme Administrator, or the complainant is not satisfied with the response of the Administrator to a complaint, the Complainant may refer the complaint to the Bioenergy Association Professional Standards and Complaints Committee.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, complainants (and any other parties identified may be contacted by the Scheme Administrator. All communications between the complainant and the Scheme Administrator and the Bioenergy Association Professional Standards and Complaints Committee will be held on file. Details of the steps in dealing with complaints are available on request.

If applicants are unhappy about the outcome of their complaint, they may appeal the decision to the board of the Bioenergy Association.

12.3 Appeals process

An appeals process has been established to manage cases where unsuccessful applications for accreditation are disputed by applicants who may complain and then appeal the Scheme Administrator's decision.

An appeal against the decision made by the Scheme Administrator must be made in writing to the Bioenergy Association Professional Standards and Complaints Committee, within one month of being notified of the Scheme's decision.

All appeals are made in confidence. The appeal will be tabled at a special meeting of the Professional Standards and Complaints Committee, which will make the appeal decision based on the papers received.

Appellants will be kept informed about the status of their appeal and may be contacted by the Professional Standards and Complaints Committee. All communication between the appellant and the Scheme Administrator and the Professional Standards and Complaints Committee will be held on file. Details of the steps in the appeal process are available on request.

13. Communications

The Scheme Administrator takes the lead on communications on or about the Scheme.

No other person or persons have the authority to speak on behalf of the Scheme or its activities unless written permission has been granted by the Scheme Administrator.

Any queries should be addressed to executive@bioenergy.org.nz

14. Application fees

Application fees are set out in Table 2 below:

Details	Details	Fees (\$) (ex-GST)
Full Application	<p>The Full Application Fee includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Application processing costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administration ○ Assessor fees ○ Assessor Site Audit ● Maintenance of the Registered Producer Register ● General Record Maintenance ● Promotion of the registered suppliers details on the website 	<p>\$700 for self-certifying applicants</p> <p>\$500 for applicants who are internationally certified.</p>
Annual Renewal	<p>The Annual Renewal Fee includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Application processing costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administration ○ Assessor fees ○ Assessor Site Audit ● Maintenance of the Registered Producer Register ● General Record Maintenance ● Promotion of the registered suppliers details on the website 	\$400
Other Fees		
Scheme Administrator Advice / Consultancy	The Accreditation Scheme Administrator can assist interested parties with requests for assistance.	\$100 /hr
Annual Training Sessions	The Scheme Administrator will organise at least one training session annually or meet individually with accredited suppliers to discuss accreditation.	Cost tbc

Table 2: Solid Biofuel Supplier Accreditation Scheme Rates and Fees

Parties seeking accreditation are expected to hold at least Bronze level membership of the Bioenergy Association.

Appendix 1: Documentation

Appendix 1.1 BANZ Technical Guidance Documents – biomass Fuel

Guide Number	Title
Technical Guide 1	Solid Biofuel Classification Guidelines
Technical Guide 2	Guidelines for the Conversion of Solid Fuel Boilers from Coal to biomass Pellet Firing
Technical Guide 3	Guidance for the Safe Operation of Small Scale biomass Fuelled Heat Plant
Technical Guide 4	Tender Guidelines for the Specification, Supply and Installation of Biomass Energy Plant
Technical Guide 5	Standard Methods for Verifying the Quality of Solid Biofuels
Technical Guide 6	Contracting to Deliver Quality biomass Fuel to Customers

Appendix 1.2 Scheme Documentation

A number of documents have been developed as part of the process to assist applicants in their preparation of an application for accreditation. A Guidance document outlines what the process is and how the evidence submitted will be assessed.

Resource	Description
SBSAS 01 SBSSS Scheme Guidance Document	A Guide to completing the Application Form, Fees and General Procedures. This document offers supporting information to Applicants as they complete their forms for the initial application and maintenance of accreditation and also provides a brief Guide to Assessors as they consider the information submitted for assessment.
SBSSS 02 SBSSS application form	This form is used to apply for initial accreditation under the Scheme.
SBSSS 03 Staff training record	Form to use supporting staff training
SBSSS 04 Staff training hints and tips	Info sheet providing independent advice on how inclusion of staff training in a QMS can ensure best practice compliance.
SBSSS 05 Product sample test reporting hints and tips	Info sheet providing guidance on best practice sample test reporting.
SBSSS 06 Referee request form	Form sent by the Scheme Administrator to referees seeking a reference
SBSSS 07 Assessors check sheet	This form is used by an assessor to record their findings and observations on the application submitted for accreditation.
SBSSS 09 Now you are registered	Information sheet on promotion protocols and Accredited Supplier responsibilities
SBSSS 10 Annual accreditation renewal	Form used by registered parties to maintain their registered status.
SBSSS 11 Scheme Governance and Administration Document	A description about how the Scheme operates, including roles and responsibilities and how applications, complaints and appeals are processed.
SBSSS 12 Sample test audit	Form for recording results of site audit by the SBSAS Assessor
SBSSS 13 Testing equipment	Form for recording the details on test equipment including records of calibration and any modification.

Appendix 2 Solid Biofuel Accredited Supplier Logo

