

SECTION 6

GUIDANCE TO SFI 2015-2019 EXTENDED THROUGH DECEMBER 2021 STANDARDS AND RULES





GUIDANCE TO SFI 2015-2019 STANDARDS AND RULES

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1. INTRODUCTION

SFI Inc. completes a review of its standards and supporting documents every five years, which is consistent with international protocols for forest certification standard revision cycles. The fourth public review, conducted in 2013-2014, led to the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* and supporting documents.

This guidance document is intended to assist *SFI Program Participants* and certification bodies in interpreting and implementing new and existing provisions in the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules*.

This document provides additional information that may help *Program Participants* make management decisions to meet *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* requirements. *SFI Inc.* routinely researches ways to improve the functionality of the *SFI* program; thus this document may be updated over time.

2. APPLICATION OF THE SFI 2015-2019 FOREST MANAGEMENT AND SFI 2015-2019 FIBER SOURCING STANDARDS

The *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* apply to management of and sourcing from forests where management intensities are characterized by managed natural forests and plantation forestry, regardless of the forest products derived from management of such forests. The figure (Figure 1) below illustrates the spectrum of forest management systems. The *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standards* are intended to apply to forest management systems that are classified as natural forest systems, managed natural forests and plantation forests. Management operations that are classified as short rotation woody crops or agro-forestry are not within the scope of the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules*.

3. SFI 2015-2019 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD OBJECTIVE 1: LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE HARVEST LEVELS

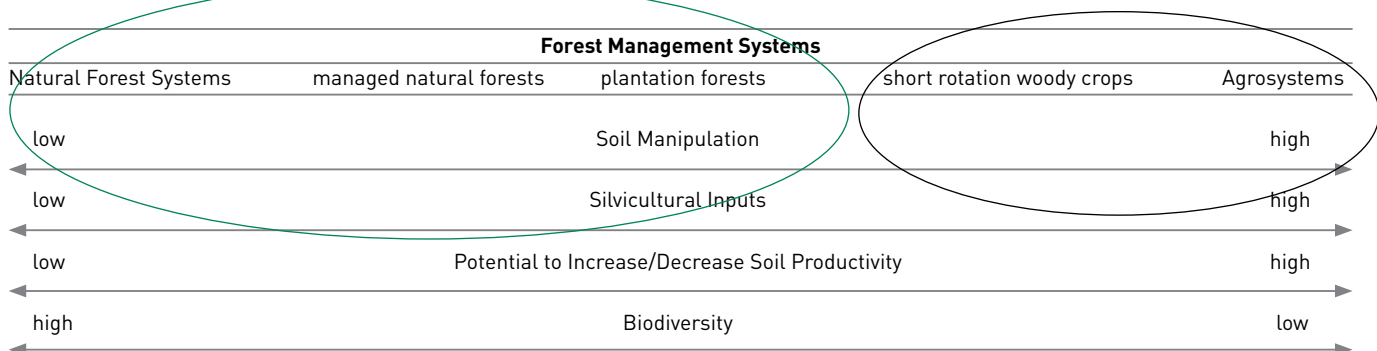
3.1 Determining the Most Appropriate Geographic Scale

The intent of Performance Measure 1.2 is to outline the limitations on conversion and the due diligence process to be followed when Objective 1 Performance Measure 1.1 requires long-term harvest levels that are sustainable and consistent with appropriate *growth and yield models*. Indicator 1.1.1 lists items required in forest management planning “at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation”, with 1.1.1(d) requiring that “*biodiversity* at the *landscape* scale” be factored into forest management planning decision-making. From these requirements it can be inferred that a *Program Participant* must base their *long-term* sustainable harvest level planning at a geographic scale that accurately reflects forest growth and yield and conservation of biodiversity. Likewise, the requirement that forest management planning shall ensure *long-term* (one rotation or greater) sustainable harvest levels requires planning to occur on forest types in similar biological, geological, and climatic areas.

3.2 Acquisitions and Sustainable Harvest Planning

An *SFI Program Participant* with a prolonged, accelerated harvest level in one operational region cannot “offset” a long term unsustainable level of harvests through land acquisition. This practice does not meet the spirit and intent of the *SFI* program and to allow this practice could result in an imbalance in forest age classes and species composition in certain portions of the *Program Participant*’s lands, which in turn could have significant negative impacts on the conservation of *biological diversity* contrary to Indicator 1.1.1 (d), which requires that forest management planning consider *biodiversity* at the *landscape* scale. Any acquired lands should be integrated into the organization’s forest management planning, and the organization should recalculate appropriate long-term harvest levels that are sustainable and consistent with accepted growth and yield models by operational region.

Figure 1. Spectrum of forest management systems (green circle) that qualify for certification to the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard and SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard (Adapted from Burger, 2002¹).



¹ Burger, J. A. 2002. Soil and Long-Term Site Productivity Values. In: Richardson, J.; Bjorheden, R.; Hakkila, P.; Lowe, A. T.; and Smith, C. T. *Bioenergy from Sustainable Forestry: Guiding Principles and Practice*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers: 165-189.

3.3 Temporal Scale

It is SFI's expectation that certification bodies shall audit sustainable harvest levels based on the criteria specified in Performance Measure 1.1, taking into account the maintenance of *landscape* level *biodiversity*, and confirming that any increases in planned harvest level(s) are consistent with the SFI Program Participant's forest management plan. Additionally, sustainable harvest levels or government regulated allowable annual harvest should not be exceeded for extended periods of time unless a substantive ecological rationale is developed to justify the elevation, examples of which could include a response to forest health emergencies such as beetle epidemics or sanitation logging of forests impacted by catastrophic wildfire, ice storm or wind damage. In instances where harvest levels are exceeded for extended periods, a documented plan must be in place to demonstrate how harvest planning will achieve a return to the long-term sustainable harvest levels over one rotation.

3.4 Record Retention

The requirements of Objective 1, Performance Measure 1.1 address the need to have a *long-term* resources analysis, *forest inventory*, *growth-and-yield modeling* capabilities, and recommended sustainable harvest levels for areas available for harvest. Likewise, Indicator 1.1.2 requires that "documented current harvest trends fall within *long-term* sustainable levels identified in the forest management plan" and Indicator 1.1.4 requires "periodic updates of *forest inventory* and recalculation of planned harvests to account for changes in growth due to *productivity* increases or decreases".

Forest management plans by their very nature are adjusted as needed to reflect changes in factors such as inventory, growth and yield modeling capabilities, growing stock, harvest levels and the cyclical nature of the forest products market. To ensure effective decision making regarding *long-term* sustainable harvest levels, an SFI Program Participant must be able to assess the accuracy of past planning inputs and decisions made through appropriate document retention. It is expected that an SFI Program Participant has the ability to look backwards over a sufficiently long time frame in order to inform its future forest management planning.

4. SFI 2015-2019 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

OBJECTIVE 1: CONVERSION

4.1 Conversion of One Forest Cover Type to Another Forest Cover Type

The intent of Performance Measure 1.2 is to outline the limitations on conversion and the due diligence process to be followed when converting to a different *forest cover type*. Limitations exist where the conversion is unlawful, threatens rare and ecologically significant *native* forest types, or where *long-term* adverse impacts are expected on species, *habitats* or *special sites* already protected by the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard.

In situations where a *Program Participant* intends to convert from one *forest cover type* to another *forest cover type*, the *Program Participant* is expected to demonstrate proficiency of assessment of the conditions outlined in Indicator 1.2.2.

The formality of the assessment has not been prescribed and therefore, *Program Participants* are able to structure the assessment in accordance with the scope and scale of their organization and scale of the intended conversion.

It is not the intent of Performance Measure 1.2 to limit activities that are of ecological benefit, such as returning a site to a historical *forest cover type*, responding to *forest health* concerns, or mitigating present or future environmental harm (e.g., *climate change*).

4.2 Conversion of Forest Land to Another Land Use

The intent of Performance Measure 1.3 is to ensure that forestland that is being converted to non-forestland uses is appropriately "scoped out" of SFI certificates. Two basic tenets establish the rationale for this Performance Measure. First, forestland that is being converted to non-forest land uses would not likely meet any of the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard requirements (prompt *reforestation*, *biodiversity*, etc.) and therefore could not be certified under the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard.

Second, fiber (roundwood and/or chips) from forestland being converted to non-forest land uses cannot be counted as *certified forest content* in any product bearing an SFI program label (see definition of *conversion sources*).

4.2.1 Scope of Certification

Notwithstanding the tenets listed in Section 3.2 of this guidance, the issue with conversion to non-forest land use is really a question of which lands are eligible to be within the scope of a *Program Participant's* SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard certificate. There is no limit on the percentage of land that can be scoped out of an SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard certificate. However, it is important to ensure that forestland within the scope of the *Program Participant's* SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard certificate continues to be managed as forestland consistent with the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard. In some circumstances, forestland designated for sale may not sell in the short term nor is there certainty that these forestlands will be converted to another land use by the purchaser. As such, the *Program Participant* should continue to manage these forestlands in conformance with the SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard until a sales contract has been executed. Once a sales contract is executed, the *Program Participant* should scope out the lands that will be sold.

Program Participants are not restricted in their decision making regarding the purchase of or sale of forestland or the movement of forestland (or the quantity) in or out of the scope of an *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* certificate. *Certification bodies* must ensure that lands within the scope of an *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* audit are being managed in conformance with the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* to protect the integrity of the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules*. Furthermore, *certification bodies* and *Program Participants* must ensure that there is absolute clarity on which forest lands — whether owned, managed or controlled (see 3.2.2 below) — are included in the scope of the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* certificate.

4.2.2 Control of Decision Making

The issue of control of decision making by the *Program Participant* is the central factor when determining which forestland should be scoped out of an *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* certificate. When a *Program Participant* knowingly intends to convert forestland to a non-forest land use and has control over the process, then the forestlands should be scoped out of the certificate when the decision is made to convert.

The example above where forestland is being sold or purposefully converted to non-forest land use is relatively straight-forward when it comes to identifying who has control of decision making. However, there are other examples where control of management practices is less clearly defined or where control over decisions regarding forestland use shifts to a different party after a fixed period of time. Examples of these more ambiguous circumstances include *long-term* leases and timber deeds.

Like in the forestland sale example, the decision whether to scope forestland in or out of an *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* certificate still rests with the organization that has control over decisions related to management of the forestland in conformance with the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*. More specifically, if a *Program Participant* has forest management authority over Objective 1 of the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*, then such lands can remain within the scope of the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* certificate until such time as control of forest management decisions is relinquished. Likewise, in the case of *long-term* leases or timber deeds; if a *Program Participant* has a reasonable expectation the lands will remain in a forested condition after their lease or deed expires, then such lands can remain within the scope of the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* certificate until such time as control of forest management decisions is relinquished.

Mining and drilling activities are other examples of where *Program Participants* may have control over forest management, but may not have control over the ultimate fate of the land use. In this example, so long as the *Program Participant* is not the party deciding to mine or drill or has not engaged into a contractual relationship with a third-party to do so, then lands being managed in accordance with the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* may remain within the scope of an *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* certificate until such time as forest management control is relinquished.

4.2.3 Accounting for Non-Certified Forest Content

Despite efforts to scope out forestlands intended to be converted to non-forest land uses, small parcels of land intended for conversion may remain in the scope of an *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* certificate (e.g., utility right-of-way, well drilling pad). Accounting for the *conversion sources* from such small “inclusions” within a larger *SFI* certified forest may be impracticable. In order to meet the spirit and intent of Performance Measure 1.3, *Program Participants* should make reasonable efforts to separate *conversion sources* from *certified forest content* where the volume of *conversion sources* is more than a minimal amount (e.g., 1 percent of the harvested volume).

5. SFI 2015-2019 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD OBJECTIVE 2: PROHIBITED CHEMICALS

The intent of Performance Measure 2.2 is to *minimize* the chemical use required to achieve management *objectives* while ensuring the protection of employees, the public and the environment, including *wildlife* and *aquatic habitats*. To ensure these results are achieved, the use of forest management pesticides must follow federal, state and local laws; follow the label instructions, and be implemented with proper equipment and training. Furthermore, pesticides, such as chlorinated hydrocarbons whose derivatives remain biologically active beyond their intended use, as well as pesticides banned by international agreement, are prohibited for use by *Program Participants*. This last requirement is addressed by Indicators 2.2.4 and 2.2.5.

Indicator 2.2.4:

The World Health Organization (WHO) type 1A and 1B pesticides shall be prohibited, except where no other viable alternative is available.

It is the responsibility of the *Program Participant* to ensure that any chemical use in forest management avoids the use of chemicals on the WHO type 1A and 1B list of prohibited chemicals. In the rare exception where a *Program Participant* believes a variance on the prohibition on the use of a WHO type 1A and 1B chemical is warranted, the *Program Participant* will submit their rationale to their *certification body* for approval. The *certification body* will then monitor the chemical usage approved under this variance, should this variance be approved.

The WHO type 1A and 1B list of prohibited chemicals is at: http://www.who.int/ipcs/publications/pesticides_hazard_2009.pdf.

Indicator 2.2.5:

Use of pesticides banned under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001) shall be prohibited.

It is the responsibility of the *Program Participant* to ensure that any chemical use in forest management complies with the ban on the use of chemicals under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001). There is no option of a variance for the use of chemicals banned under the Stockholm Convention (2001).

The list of chemicals banned under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is at: <http://chm.pops.int/TheConvention/ThePOPs/tabid/673/Default.aspx>.

6. SFI 2015-2019 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

OBJECTIVE 4: CONSERVATION OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

6.1 Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value

Objective 4 of the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* extends the *biodiversity* requirements to *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* (FECV).

Indicator 4.2.2:

Program to locate and protect known sites of flora and fauna associated with viable occurrences of *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities also known as *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*. Plans for *protection* may be developed independently or collaboratively, and may include *Program Participant* management, cooperation with other stakeholders, or use of easements, *conservation* land sales, exchanges, or other *conservation* strategies.

Definition of *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*: *critically imperiled* (G1) and *imperiled* (G2) species and ecological communities.

Critically imperiled: A plant or animal or community, often referred to as G1, that is globally extremely rare or, because of some factor(s), especially vulnerable to extinction. Typically, five or fewer occurrences or populations remain, or very few individuals (<1,000), acres (<2,000 acres or 809 hectares), or linear miles (<10 miles or 16 kilometers) exist.

Imperiled: A plant or animal or community, often referred to as G2, that is globally rare or, because of some factor(s), is very vulnerable to extinction or elimination. Typically, six to 20 occurrences, or few remaining individuals (1,000 to 3,000), or acres (2,000 to 10,000 acres or 809 to 4047 hectares), or linear miles (10 to 50 miles or 16 to 80.5 kilometers) exist.

In the United States and Canada, *SFI Program Participants* can use the NatureServe database to identify species and communities for *protection*. Learn more about NatureServe *Conservation Status Assessments* at <http://www.natureserve.org/biodiversity-science/publications>.

6.1.1 NatureServe Resources for Global and Occurrence Ranks

Identification and *protection* of *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities is a step-wise process. First, NatureServe determines the global rank, which reflects the rarity/imperilment of the species or community. Then it assesses the estimated viability, or probability of persistence, of particular occurrences of *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities. A viable species or community is one that is of sufficient quality to likely survive *long term*. Clearly, little conservation benefit is gained unless protected occurrences have a good likelihood of *long-term* survival. NatureServe inventory and *conservation* activities focus on locating, maintaining records on, and working with partners to conserve viable occurrences of *conservation* elements. NatureServe/Natural Heritage Programs rank viability of element occurrences (community or species) using standard methodologies to yield an element occurrence ranking. A standard set of Element Occurrence Rank Specifications is developed and maintained for each element, and then applied against individual occurrences of the element.

The basic element occurrence ranks are:

A:	Excellent estimated viability
B:	Good estimated viability
C:	Fair estimated viability
D:	Poor estimated viability
E:	Verified extant (viability not assessed)
H:	Historical
F:	Failed to find
X:	Extirpated

The *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* requires that *Program Participants* have “plans to locate and protect known sites associated with viable occurrences of *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities.”

Under the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*, occurrences of *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities ranked as A and B are to be protected. C-ranked occurrences should be reviewed and addressed on a case-by-case basis. If they have greater potential to be viable (C+), they should be protected. If there is less potential for viability (C-), they are to be managed at the *Program Participant's* discretion.

Element occurrences with poor estimated viability (D) would not be protected under the *SFI 2015-2015 Forest Management Standard*. A D rank might result because the acreage of a community or the population of a species is too small, the quality is very low, and/or the ecological processes required to maintain the occurrence are fundamentally altered and un-restorable. E-ranked occurrences (viability not assessed) should be presumed viable and protected until assessed and determined to be of C- or D quality. Occurrences ranked F are not covered under the *SFI 2015-2015 Forest Management Standard* since only known occurrences are included. Historical (H) and extirpated (X) occurrences are clearly nonviable, and no protection activity is warranted.

In determining the viability and potential to protect occurrences, *Program Participants* are encouraged to seek additional information on occurrence ranking from NatureServe (www.natureserve.org/biodiversity-science/publications) and/or to collaborate with qualified *conservation* experts.

6.2 Occurrence Quality

The following material provides additional information on the standards and methodologies employed by NatureServe in determining the quality or viability of occurrences.

For an ecological assessment, scientists and managers want to know if each occurrence is of sufficient quality, or feasibly restorable, before including it in management planning. With adequate information, ecologists evaluate and rate the quality of element occurrences using criteria grouped into three categories: size, condition, and *landscape* context.

Characterizing the quality of an occurrence provides the basis for assessing stresses — the degradation or impairment — of element occurrences at a given site. To assess the quality of element occurrences, ecologists must identify the key ecological factors (ecological processes, population abundance, disturbance regimes, composition and structure, etc.) that support them. Once these are identified, it is possible to describe their expected ranges of variation and assess whether the on-site factors are within those ranges or requires significant effort to be maintained or restored to its desired status.

Key ecological factors vary by element type, but all are grouped into three categories of size, condition and *landscape* context. Each of these three categories is reviewed and ranked for each occurrence as A (excellent), B (good), C (fair) and D (poor). The break between C and D establishes a minimum quality threshold for occurrences. Occurrences ranked D are typically presumed to be beyond practical consideration for ecological restoration. In subsequent management planning, these ranks and underlying criteria aid in focusing *conservation* activities and measure progress toward local *conservation* objectives.

Definitions of these categories are:

Size is a measure of the area or abundance of the *conservation* element's occurrence. It may simply be a measure of the occurrence's patch size or geographic coverage, and it may also include an estimate of sub-population size or density. Minimum dynamic area, one aspect of size, is the area needed to ensure survival or re-establishment of a population or community after natural disturbance.

Condition is an integrated measure of the composition, structure and biotic interactions that characterize the occurrence. This includes factors such as reproduction, age structure, biological composition (e.g., presence of *native* versus *invasive exotic plants and animals*; presence of characteristic patch types), physical and spatial structure (e.g., canopy, understory and groundcover; spatial distribution and juxtaposition of patch types or seral stages in an ecological system), and biotic interactions that directly involve the element (e.g., competition and disease).

Landscape context measures two factors: the dominant environmental regimes and processes that establish and maintain the element occurrence, and connectivity. Dominant environmental regimes include hydrologic and water chemistry regimes (surface and groundwater), geomorphic processes, climatic regimes (temperature and precipitation), fire regimes, and natural disturbances. Connectivity includes such factors as species elements having access to *habitats* and resources needed for lifecycle completion, fragmentation of ecological communities and systems, and the ability of any element to respond to environmental change through dispersal, migration, or re-colonization. Criteria for ranking ecological communities vary by type. In many instances, criteria are developed for ecological systems, then modified (mostly with size attributes) for application to occurrences of individual rare plant associations that may occur among the more broadly defined ecological system.

6.3 Guidance on Incorporation of Ecosystems in the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*

In the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*, the term "ecosystem" or "ecosystems" is referenced in several different *objectives* and *indicators*, yet guidance on how the concept of ecosystems should be integrated into *sustainable forestry* is lacking. Ecosystems represent the integration of biotic (e.g., plants, animals) and abiotic (e.g., soils, water) elements of the environment. In the context of *sustainable forestry* key components of ecosystems include: 1) forest composition; 2) forest structure; 3) connectivity across *landscapes*; and 4) how ecological processes like competition, nutrient cycling, or herbivory influence the sustainability of forest ecosystems.

Sustainable forestry is based on applying management at multiple scales with most *SFI Program Participants* operating at *stand* to *landscape* scales. The guidance provided is not a template for

ecosystem management. Rather, currently accepted *SFI* definitions and approved elements of the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* are relied on to demonstrate how ecosystems are an integral component of sustainable forest management. The guidance is consistent with the four aforementioned components of ecosystems: 1) forest composition, 2) forest structure, 3) connectivity, and 4) ecological processes.

Integrating the Biotic and Abiotic Elements of the Environment

The combination of *forest cover type* and soils maps, supplemented by non-timber information like *non-forested wetlands* and *Forests with Exception Conservation Values (FECV)*, provide the foundation for *landscape* scale mapping and planning that incorporates ecosystems into sustainable forest management for *Program Participants*. *Program Participants* are required to have a *land classification* system (Indicator 1.1.1c), soils inventory and maps, where available (Indicator 1.1.1e, Performance Measure 2.3), up-to-date maps or a *geographic information system* (Indicator 1.1.1g), and information on non-timber resources (Indicators 1.1.1i, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 4.1.6, 4.2.2, 4.2.3) as part of their forest planning processes. *Program Participants* also are required to integrate biotic and abiotic elements in forest conversion decisions (Indicator 1.2.2b), forest regeneration (Performance Measure 2.1), and during implementation of forest *protection* activities (Performance Measure 2.4). Additionally, the *conservation of biological diversity* inherently integrates the biotic and abiotic elements of the environment through the accounting of *wildlife habitats* (Indicators 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.5), ecological community types (Indicators 4.1.1, 4.2.2, Performance Measure 4.3), *native biological diversity* (Indicator 4.1.1), and *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* (Indicator 4.2.2, Performance Measure 4.4).

Forest Composition

Forest composition is closely linked to abiotic factors like soil, microclimate, and moisture availability. Forest managers tend to think of composition at three levels: 1) *forest health and productivity* (e.g., high growth rates, drought resistant, disease resistance) of planting or regeneration stock (the “genetic” level”); 2) *stand* level considerations including tree species composition, management of competing vegetation, and structural retention practices (Indicator 4.1.2); and 3) *landscape* scale considerations (across ownerships or across multiple ownerships — Indicators 4.1.3, 4.1.4) in terms of *forest cover types* or other land cover classes.

Forest Structure

Within forest *stands*, structure refers to a number of characteristics, including the physical arrangement of trees, snags, and down woody debris. Within a *stand* and depending on the situation, *Program Participants* have criteria for the desired forest composition (Performance Measure 2.1), tree stocking (Indicator 2.1.2), size distributions (Indicator 1.1.1a, 1.1.1h), retention of *habitat* elements (Indicator 4.1.2), and *protection of special sites* (Indicators 4.1.5, 4.1.6, Performance Measure 4.3, Objective 6). At larger scales, like multiple forest *stands*, forest structure is often based on differences in size/density or stand age (in even-aged management systems), as

portrayed by a *land classification* system (Indicator 4.1.3). This *land classification* system often includes information on *riparian zones* and the locations of *special sites* and *wetlands* (Indicators 3.2.2, 3.2.3). At even larger scales (e.g., *landscapes*), forest managers tend to portray the diversity of size, density, or age classes in management blocks, across entire ownerships, or in some instances across multiple ownerships (Indicator 4.1.3).

Connectivity

Integration of connectivity into sustainable forest management occurs through protection of *riparian zones* (Performance Measure 3.2), provision of diverse *forest cover types* and structures (Indicators 4.1.2, 4.1.3), and *protection* of other ecologically important sites (Indicators 4.1.5, 4.1.6; Performance Measure 4.3; Objective 6). Connectivity can be assessed at multiple scales and can be thought of as structural or functional. As the labels imply, structural connectivity refers to *forest cover types* or habitats physically touching, providing the ability of genes and species to move through the managed forest *landscape*. Functional connectivity refers to *forest cover types* or *habitats* that are not physically touching but are arranged in a *landscape* such that genes and species can move. The *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* contains *indicators* that both directly and indirectly influence connectivity via requirements for prompt forest *reforestation* (Performance Measure 2.1), limitations on clearcut harvest area sizes (Indicator 5.2.1), limitations on forest *conversion* (Performance Measures 1.2, 1.3), the *protection of riparian zones* (Performance Measure 3.2), non-forested areas, and other ecological sites (Indicators 4.1.5; 4.1.6; Performance Measure 4.3), and through aesthetic considerations (Objective 5). In certain situations, some *Program Participants* may explicitly identify species of *conservation* concern that warrant direct assessments of connectivity (Performance Measure 4.2).

Ecological Processes

Ecological processes help sustain forest composition, structure, and connectivity. The *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* explicitly recognizes numerous ecological processes that are important to *sustainable forestry*, including forest *reforestation* (Performance Measure 2.1), *forest health* (Performance Measure 2.4), hydrological function (Objective 3), and consideration of the role of natural disturbances (Indicator 4.1.8). In many certified forest *landscapes*, the ecological processes that sustain composition and structure are influenced by active or passive management activities including harvesting, *reforestation*, and maintenance or enhancement of *biological diversity* and *wildlife habitat*.

7. SFI 2015-2019 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD - OBJECTIVE 4: WILDLIFE HABITAT DIVERSITY, SIGNIFICANT SPECIES OF CONCERN, AND INVASIVE EXOTIC PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Objective 4 in the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* includes *performance measures* and *indicators* for *conservation of biological diversity*. Additional information is provided here for *wildlife habitat* diversity, significant species of concern and *invasive exotic plants and animals*.

7.1 Wildlife Habitat Diversity

Performance Measure 4.1 in the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* includes programs to incorporate *conservation of biological diversity* and to recognize the value of a diversity of *habitats* to support fish and *wildlife habitats*. Early successional forest stages, for example, are particularly lacking in certain regions of the U.S. and Canada, and managing for them can aid in preventing the decline of species dependent on them (e.g., ruffed grouse). Historically, fires and other natural disturbances created forest openings and the types of *habitat* needed by these early succession forest dependent species. As forests across the *landscape* mature, this type of *habitat* declines in abundance. However, it can easily be created by proper selection of harvesting methods including clearcutting and the use of prescribed fire.

7.2 Significant Species of Concern

Indicator 4.1.5 requires a *program* to address *conservation* of known sites with viable occurrences of significant species of concern.

The intent of Indicator 4.1.5 is for *Program Participants* to [1] evaluate *conservation* of species or communities that are not state, provincially or federally threatened or endangered or ranked G1 or G2; [2] select appropriate species of concern that are significant; and [3] incorporate *conservation* actions for the selected species into management.

It is recognized that lists of “special concern species,” “rare species,” “species of greatest *conservation* need,” or similarly described lists have been published by state/provincial or federal agencies or others. It is not the intent of this indicator to imply that any particular species on such lists become a requirement under this indicator, rather that such lists may serve as a source of information on potential significant species of concern.

When determining whether or not a species is significant, a *Program Participant* may consider rarity, regional importance, and sensitivity to, or reliance upon, forest management activities. Resources for determining rarity may include NatureServe G or S ranks, International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List and federal, provincial or state lists. Resources for determining regional importance may include The Nature Conservancy Eco-regional Plans, State Wildlife Action Plans or other credible *conservation* plans.

The intent is for *conservation* to occur on *Program Participants’* lands. *Program Participants* are not required to survey to determine known sites. Occurrence information can be drawn from NatureServe, state/provincial natural resource agencies, Conservation Data Centre and other eco-regional mapping efforts.

7.3 Invasive Exotic Plants and Animals

Indicator 4.1.7 addresses *invasive exotic plants and animals*.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, *invasive exotic plants and animals* are “any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that

ecosystem, whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” Examples would include the gypsy moth and kudzu, but not the barred owl.

SFI Program Participants should become knowledgeable about *invasive exotic plants and animals* within their area of operation. The expectation is that they will participate in cooperative efforts by others (e.g., government agencies or non-government environmental organizations) and work proactively within their own programs (e.g., erosion control or seed selection for *wildlife* plots) to limit the introduction, impact, and spread of *invasive exotic plants and animals*. Indicator 4.1.7 does not require *SFI Program Participants* to eliminate *invasive exotic plants and animals* on their land. In some places *invasive exotic plants and animals* are well established and eradication by the *SFI Program Participants* is unrealistic.

Experts in this area believe the most effective means of addressing *invasive exotic plants and animals* include:

- awareness building;
- monitoring;
- preventing new introductions; and
- eliminating new occurrences.

SFI Program Participants should emphasize these as priorities in their programs. Forest practices that reduce the abundance of *invasive exotic plants and animals* are preferred if they can be addressed within the context of the *SFI Program Participant’s* overall management objectives.

8. SFI 2015-2019 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD – OBJECTIVE 8: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ RIGHTS

8.1 Aboriginal Title

SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard Performance Measure 8.1 requires that *Program Participants* recognize and respect *Indigenous Peoples’* rights. Additionally, Objective 9 requires *Program Participants* to comply with all applicable federal, provincial/state laws and regulations.

On June 26, 2014 the Supreme Court of Canada provided a significant ruling on the occurrence of Aboriginal title in Canada (*Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia*, 2014 SCC 44). The *Tsilhqot’in* decision is significant as it recognizes “Aboriginal title” over 1,900 km² of *Tsilhqot’in* territory establishing what is a new form of land tenure in Canada. This decision will have implications for Canadian *Program Participants* as First Nations legally establish “Aboriginal title” on territories that are currently non-treaty lands.

With this legal precedent in place, *Program Participants* must ensure they are in compliance with all applicable laws including recent court decisions that bear on forest management and land tenure. Certified *Program Participants* operating in non-treaty areas of Canada over which “Aboriginal title” claims are made should be aware of the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision (*Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia*, 2014 SCC 44) and the tests for and content of “Aboriginal title” to land.

9. SFI 2015-2019 FIBER SOURCING STANDARD - OBJECTIVE 2: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Objective 2 of the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* calls for adherence to *best management practices*: “To monitor the use of *best management practices* to protect water quality.”

The use of *best management practices* to protect water quality is a critical component of sustainable forest management and is emphasized in the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* with requirements for on-the-ground management, monitoring, training and research. The *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* strengthened requirements for *best management practices* application with a new indicator:

“2.1.2 Use of written agreements for the purchase of raw material sourced directly from the forest is required and must include provisions requiring the use of *best management practices*.”

While it is not practical to have auditing requirements that go beyond reviewing *Program Participants*’ contracts for purchasing raw material from their suppliers to ensure they do require the use of *best management practices*, this new indicator will further highlight the importance of *best management practices* and their use by all suppliers throughout the supply stream.

10. SFI 2015-2019 FIBER SOURCING STANDARD - OBJECTIVE 11: BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS AND HIGH-BIODIVERSITY WILDERNESS AREAS

Objective 11 of the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* calls for *fiber sourcing policies* that promote *conservation* of forests and *biodiversity* in areas outside of the United States and Canada identified as *biodiversity hotspots* and *high-biodiversity wilderness areas*.

Objective 11. To promote the *conservation* of *biological diversity*, *biodiversity hotspots* and *high-biodiversity wilderness areas* in *fiber sourcing programs*.

Performance Measure 11.1. *Program Participants* shall ensure that their *fiber sourcing programs* support the *principles of sustainable forestry*, including efforts to promote *conservation of biological diversity*.

Indicator:

1. *Fiber sourcing* from areas outside the United States and Canada promotes *conservation of biological diversity*, utilizing information from the following sources:
 - a. *biodiversity hotspots* and *high-biodiversity wilderness areas* as identified by Conservation International; and
 - b. rare species and *habitat* information derived from organizations such as the World Resources Institute, *Alliance for Zero Extinction*, World Wildlife Fund, International Union for Conservation of Nature, and NatureServe.

This document provides additional information drawn from the World Resources Institute, Conservation International, *Alliance for Zero*

Extinction, World Wildlife Fund, International Union for Conservation of Nature and NatureServe to aid *SFI Program Participants* in implementing these requirements.

Areas identified by any of these organizations may be wholly or partially within the United States and Canada. For the purposes of the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*, these areas are addressed by NatureServe or equivalent processes to identify *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities in North America [see earlier section regarding Objective 4 in the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard: Conservation of Biological Diversity*].

Compliance with the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* does not mean that that *Program Participants* must cease all raw material or procurement activities from all forests within these areas. Rather, the emphasis is on seeking assurance that fiber and logs are secured from areas harvested legally, and avoiding actions that serve to cause or encourage further destruction of remaining original primary vegetation. To this end, *Program Participants* procuring fiber from within identified areas of high *biodiversity* should be aware of the designation and work to avoid actions that may detrimentally affect those *habitats*. Working to increasingly meet fiber and wood production needs from plantations and managed forests enhances efforts to protect remaining biologically diverse *habitats*. *Program Participants* can work with *conservation* organizations, government entities and others to provide additional guidance on aligning business and *conservation* objectives within these regions.

10.1 Biodiversity Hotspots and High-Biodiversity Wilderness Areas

Since 2002, the *SFI program* has relied on Conservation International’s definitions of *biodiversity hotspots* and *high-biodiversity wilderness areas* (formerly major tropical wilderness areas) to identify areas of potential concern for *Program Participants* who source fiber from overseas. Conservation International (www.conservation.org) seeks to empower societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature for the well-being of humanity through a strong foundation of science, partnership and field demonstration. Conservation International maintains a list of global priority areas with exceptional biological value, and works to protect them.

10.1.1 Biodiversity Hotspots

The *biodiversity hotspots* hold especially high numbers of endemic species, yet their combined area of remaining *habitat* covers only 2.3 percent of the Earth’s land surface. Each hotspot faces extreme threats and has already lost at least 70 percent of its original natural vegetation. Over 50 percent of the world’s plant species and 42 percent of all terrestrial vertebrate species are endemic to the 34 *biodiversity hotspots*.

Africa and Madagascar

CAPE FLORISTIC REGION

Evergreen fire-dependent shrublands characterize the *landscape* of the Cape Floristic Region.

COASTAL FORESTS OF EASTERN AFRICA

Though tiny and fragmented, the forest remnants that make up the Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa contain remarkable levels of *biodiversity*.

EASTERN AFROMONTANE

The mountains of the Eastern Afromontane hotspot are scattered along the eastern edge of Africa, from Saudi Arabia in the north to Zimbabwe in the south.

GUINEAN FORESTS OF WESTERN AFRICA

The lowland forests of West Africa are home to more than a quarter of Africa's mammals, including more than 20 species of primates.

HORN OF AFRICA

The arid Horn of Africa has been a renowned source of biological resources for thousands of years.

MADAGASCAR & THE INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS

Madagascar and its neighboring island groups have an astounding total of eight plant families, four bird families, and five primate families that live nowhere else on Earth.

MAPUTALAND-PONDOLAND-ALBANY

Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany, which stretches along the east coast of southern Africa below the Great Escarpment, is an important center of plant endemism.

SUCCULENT KAROO

The Succulent Karoo of South Africa and Namibia boasts the richest succulent flora on earth, as well as remarkable endemism in plants.

Asia-Pacific

EAST MELANESIAN ISLANDS

Once largely intact, the 1,600 East Melanesian Islands are now a hotspot due, sadly, to accelerating levels of *habitat* loss.

HIMALAYA

The Himalaya Hotspot is home to the world's highest mountains, including Mount Everest.

INDO-BURMA

Encompassing more than two million square kilometers of tropical Asia, Indo-Burma is still revealing its biological treasures.

JAPAN

The islands that make up the Japanese Archipelago stretch from the humid subtropics in the south to the boreal zone in the north, resulting in a wide variety of climates and ecosystems.

MOUNTAINS OF SOUTHWEST CHINA

With dramatic variations in climate and topography, the Mountains of Southwest China support a wide array of *habitats* including the most endemic-rich temperate flora in the world.

NEW CALEDONIA

An island the size of New Jersey in the South Pacific Ocean, New Caledonia is the home of no less than five endemic plant families.

NEW ZEALAND

A mountainous archipelago once dominated by temperate rainforests, New Zealand harbors extraordinary levels of endemic species.

PHILIPPINES

More than 7,100 islands fall within the borders of the Philippines hotspot, identified as one of the world's biologically richest countries.

POLYNESIA-MICRONESIA

Comprising 4,500 islands stretched across the southern Pacific Ocean, the Polynesia-Micronesia hotspot is the epicenter of the current global extinction crisis.

SOUTHWEST AUSTRALIA

The forest, woodlands, shrublands and heath of Southwest Australia are characterized by high endemism among plants and reptiles.

SUNDALAND

The spectacular flora and fauna of the Sundaland Hotspot are succumbing to the explosive growth of industrial *forestry* in these islands.

WALLACEA

The flora and fauna of Wallacea are so varied that every island in this hotspot needs secure protected areas to preserve the region's *biodiversity*.

WESTERN GHATS & SRI LANKA

Faced with tremendous population pressure, the forests of the Western Ghats and Sri Lanka have been dramatically impacted by the demands for timber and agricultural land.

Europe and Central Asia

CAUCASUS

The deserts, savannas, arid woodlands and forests that comprise the Caucasus hotspot contain a large number of endemic plant species.

IRANO-ANATOLIAN

Forming a natural barrier between the Mediterranean Basin and the dry plateaus of Western Asia, the mountains and basins that make up the Irano-Anatolian Hotspot contain many centers of local endemism.

MEDITERRANEAN BASIN

The flora of the Mediterranean Basin is dramatic. Its 22,500 endemic vascular plant species are more than four times the number found in all the rest of Europe.

MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL ASIA

Comprising two of Asia's major mountain ranges, the Mountains of Central Asia were known to early Persians as the "roof of the world."

North and Central America

CALIFORNIA FLORISTIC PROVINCE

The California Floristic Province is a zone of Mediterranean-type climate and has the high levels of plant endemism characteristic of these regions.

CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

The Caribbean Islands support exceptionally diverse ecosystems, ranging from montane cloud forests to cactus scrublands, which have been devastated by deforestation and encroachment.

MADREAN PINE-OAK WOODLANDS

Encompassing Mexico's main mountain chains, and isolated mountaintop islands in Baja California and the southern United States, the Madrean Pine-Oak Woodlands is an area of rugged mountainous terrain, high relief and deep canyons.

MESOAMERICA

The Mesoamerican forests are the third largest among the world's hotspots. Their spectacular endemic species include quetzals, howler monkeys and 17,000 plant species.

South America

ATLANTIC FOREST

The Atlantic Forest of tropical South America boasts 20,000 plant species, 40 percent of which are endemic.

CERRADO

The Cerrado region of Brazil, comprising 21 percent of the country, is the most extensive woodland-savanna in South America.

CHILEAN WINTER RAINFALL-VALDIVIAN FOREST

A virtual continental island bounded by the Pacific Ocean,

the Andes Mountains and the Atacama Desert, the Chilean Winter Rainfall-Valdivian Forest harbors richly endemic flora and fauna.

TROPICAL ANDES

The richest and most diverse region on Earth, the Tropical Andes region contains about a sixth of all plant life in less than one percent of the world's land area.

TUMBES-CHOCÓ-MAGDALENA

Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena is bordered by two other hotspots: Mesoamerica to the north and the Tropical Andes to the east.

10.1.2 High-Biodiversity Wilderness Areas

High-biodiversity wilderness areas are areas where the vegetation is still over 70 percent intact.

Amazonia

Spanning nine South American countries, the Amazonia wilderness is unlike any other, supporting more than 40,000 species of plants, with three-quarters of them found nowhere else.

Congo Basin

Seven African nations share the second-largest expanse of tropical wilderness in the world. Unlike other *landscapes* in the region, a great portion of the remote Congo Basin forests have remained intact.

New Guinea

The world's biggest tropical island and its outlying islands contain the largest remaining wilderness in the entire Asia-Pacific. New Guinea and its neighbors are home to thousands of species known to science, and possibly many yet to be discovered.

North American Deserts

This arid, mostly desert region covering northern Mexico and the southwestern United States contains more unique species than any other desert on the planet, including the majority of all known cactus species.

Miombo-Mopane Woodlands and Savannas of Southern Africa

Quite possibly the single largest block of dry woodlands in the world, this wilderness region stretches across 10 countries, supporting large numbers of *wildlife* and people who depend on its natural resources.

10.2 Resources for the Conservation of Biological Diversity

The following table provides information on each organization referenced in Indicator 11.1.1.b in the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*. This information is intended to provide background information on each resource and internet links are provided for further details.

The following table provides information on each organization referenced in Indicator 11.1.1.b in the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*. This information is intended to provide background information on each resource and internet links are provided for further details.

Organization and website	Overview of organization and goals	How sites are classified	For more information
<p>Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) (http://www.zeroextinction.org)</p>	<p>AZE is a joint global initiative of 52 <i>biodiversity conservation</i> organizations, aimed to prevent extinctions by identifying and safeguarding key sites where species are in imminent danger of disappearing. Its goal is to create a front line of defense against extinction by eliminating threats and restoring <i>habitat</i> to allow species populations to rebound. The purpose of the Alliance is to identify sites in most urgent need of <i>conservation</i>, and to act together to prevent species extinctions.</p>	<p>AZE has identified the last remaining sites for the world's most highly threatened species, 93 percent of which are threatened primarily by <i>habitat</i> destruction.</p> <p>The data gathering process was performed over a period of many months with input from regional experts, as well as experts in the five AZE taxa (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and conifers) from around the world. The data was verified using existing databases such as the IUCN Red List, BirdLife International's global database, and the Global Amphibian Assessment. AZE scientists, working in collaboration with an international network of experts, have so far identified 595 such sites that must be effectively protected to prevent the extinction of 794 of the world's most threatened species including mammals, birds, some reptiles (crocodilians, iguanas, turtles and tortoises), amphibians and conifers (many sites have more than one AZE "trigger species" confined to them). Additionally, AZE uses the following criteria to identify priority sites (a site must meet all three to qualify): Endangerment, Irreplaceability, and Discreteness.</p>	<p>The <i>Alliance for Zero Extinction</i> has released an updated set of sites, coinciding with the 2010 meeting of the parties on the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, Japan</p>

Organization and website	Overview of organization and goals	How sites are classified	For more information
<p>International Union for the Conservation of Biodiversity (IUCN)</p> <p>(http://www.iucn.org/what/biodiversity/)</p>	<p>IUCN's work on <i>biodiversity</i> includes comprehensive research on the status of <i>biodiversity</i> and thousands of individual animal and plant species; action to protect specific species; managing and restoring natural areas, national parks and other protected areas; and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. IUCN also provides the knowledge, standards and tools for <i>biodiversity conservation</i> for governments, community organizations, the United Nations and business. The IUCN Species Programme, working with the IUCN Species Survival Commission, has for more than four decades been assessing the <i>conservation</i> status of species, subspecies, varieties and even selected subpopulations on a global scale in order to highlight taxa threatened with extinction, and therefore promote their <i>conservation</i>.</p>	<p>The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ provides taxonomic, <i>conservation</i> status and distribution information on plants and animals that have been globally evaluated using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. The main purpose of the IUCN Red List is to catalog and highlight those plants and animals that are facing a higher risk of global extinction (i.e., those listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable). The IUCN Red List also includes information on plants and animals that are categorized as Extinct or Extinct in the Wild; on taxa that cannot be evaluated because of insufficient information (i.e., are Data Deficient); and on plants and animals that are either close to meeting the threatened thresholds or that would be threatened were it not for an ongoing taxon-specific <i>conservation</i> programme (i.e., are Near Threatened).</p>	<p>Access the <i>conservation</i> status of species here:</p> <p>http://www.iucnredlist.org/</p> <p>A how-to guide to the IUCN Red List:</p> <p>http://www.iucnredlist.org/documents/redlist_website_users_guide.pdf</p>

Organization and website	Overview of organization and goals	How sites are classified	For more information
<p>NatureServe (http://www.natureserve.org)</p>	<p>NatureServe is a non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to provide the scientific basis for effective conservation action. NatureServe and its network of natural heritage programs and conservation data centers are the leading source for information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems.</p> <p>2012-2016 Goals</p> <p>Biodiversity conservation is guided by increasingly high-quality and up-to-date scientific knowledge.</p> <p>Network effectiveness for building biodiversity knowledge is enhanced.</p> <p>NatureServe analyses and syntheses inform key societal challenges.</p> <p>Clients use NatureServe data, tools, and expertise to address their specific needs.</p>	<p>The data centers that make up the NatureServe network utilize the core methodology to answer three key questions: What species and ecosystems exist in a region? How are they doing (their condition and status), and which are priorities for conservation? Where precisely are they found? These questions are answered through a sequence of iterative steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a list of the elements of biodiversity in a given jurisdiction, focusing on macroscopic species groups and ecological communities. • Assess the relative risk of extirpation or extinction of the elements to determine conservation status and set initial priorities for detailed inventory and protection. • Gather information from all available sources on priority elements and their known and possible locations, ecology, and management requirements. • Conduct field inventories for these elements and collect data about their location, condition, and conservation needs. • Process and manage the data collected, making use of standardized procedures. • Analyze the data with a view toward refining previous conclusions about element abundance or rarity, location, management needs, and other issues. • Provide information to interested parties so that it can be used to guide conservation, management planning, and other environmental decision-making. 	<p>Nature Serve Explorer Tool</p> <p>http://www.natureserve.org/conservation-tools/data-maps-tools/natureserve-explorer</p> <p>Nature Serve Methodology</p> <p>http://www.natureserve.org/conservation-tools/standards-methods/natureserve-core-methodology</p>

Organization and website	Overview of organization and goals	How sites are classified	For more information
<p>World Resources Institute (WRI) Intact Forest Landscapes</p> <p>(http://www.intactforests.org/)</p>	<p>An Intact Forest Landscape (IFL) is an unbroken expanse of natural ecosystems within the zone of current forest extent, showing no signs of significant human activity, and large enough that all <i>native biodiversity</i>, including viable populations of wide-ranging species, could be maintained. The IFL concept and its technical definition were introduced to help create, implement and monitor <i>policies</i> concerning the human impact on forest <i>landscapes</i> at the regional or country levels. The essence of the approach is to use high spatial resolution satellite information to establish the boundaries of large undeveloped forest areas, and use these boundaries as a baseline for monitoring. Developed by a group of non-governmental environmental organizations (Greenpeace, World Resources Institute, Global Forest Watch, Biodiversity Conservation Center, International Socio-Ecological Union, and Transparent World), the IFL concept, mapping and monitoring algorithms have been used both in regional and global forest monitoring projects and in scientific research.</p>	<p>An IFL is an unbroken expanse of natural ecosystems within the zone of current forest extent, showing no signs of significant human activity and large enough that all <i>native biodiversity</i>, including viable populations of wide-ranging species, could be maintained. Although all IFL are within the forest zone, some may contain extensive naturally tree-less areas, including grasslands, <i>wetlands</i>, lakes, alpine areas and ice. This definition builds on the definition of Frontier Forest developed by WRI (Bryant et al., 1997).</p> <p>Technically, an IFL is defined as a territory within today's global extent of forest cover which contains forest and non-forest ecosystems minimally influenced by human economic activity, with an area of at least 500 km² (50,000 ha) and a minimal width of 10 km (measured as the diameter of a circle that is entirely inscribed within the boundaries of the territory).</p> <p>Areas with evidence of certain types of human influence are considered disturbed, and consequently not eligible for inclusion, e.g., settlements, transportation infrastructure such as roads, railways, pipeline and power transmission lines; agriculture and timber production; industrial activities during the last 30 to 70 years, such as logging, mining, oil and gas exploration and extraction and peat extraction.</p>	<p>The global IFL map can be found here:</p> <p>http://www.intactforests.org/world.map.html</p>

Organization and website	Overview of organization and goals	How sites are classified	For more information
<p>World Wildlife Fund (WWF)</p> <p>(http://www.worldwildlife.org/science/ecoregions/global200.html)</p>	<p>WWF uses the best available scientific knowledge to preserve the diversity and abundance of life on Earth and the health of ecological systems, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting natural areas and wild populations of plants and animals, including endangered species; • promoting sustainable approaches to the use of renewable natural resources; and • promoting more efficient use of resources and energy and the maximum reduction of pollution <p>WWF's Global 200 attempts to identify a set of ecoregions whose <i>conservation</i> would achieve the goal of saving a broad diversity of the Earth's ecosystems.</p> <p>These ecoregions include those with exceptional levels of <i>biodiversity</i>, such as high species richness or endemism, or those with unusual ecological or evolutionary phenomena.</p> <p>WWF, in collaboration with the National Geographic Society developed an interactive map and descriptions of the Global 200 available through a Wild World website.</p>	<p>WWF researchers analyzed global patterns of <i>biodiversity</i> to identify a set of the Earth's terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecoregions that harbor exceptional <i>biodiversity</i> and are representative of its ecosystems. They placed each of the Earth's ecoregions within a system of 30 biomes and biogeographic realms to facilitate a representation analysis.</p> <p><i>Biodiversity</i> features were compared among ecoregions to assess their irreplaceability or distinctiveness. These features included species richness, endemic species, unusual higher taxa, unusual ecological or evolutionary phenomena, and the global rarity of <i>habitats</i>. This process yielded 238 ecoregions – the Global 200 – comprising 142 terrestrial, 53 freshwater and 43 marine priority ecoregions. Ecoregions were also assigned a <i>conservation</i> status, with those most at-risk assigned "critical" or "endangered."</p>	<p>Global 200 maps can be found at</p> <p>(http://www.nationalgeographic.com/wildworld/)</p> <p>Descriptions of each Global 200 ecoregion:</p> <p>http://www.nationalgeographic.com/wildworld/profiles/g200_index.html</p> <p>WWF Wildfinder Tool:</p> <p>http://worldwildlife.org/science/wildfinder/</p>

11. USE OF QUALIFIED LOGGING PROFESSIONALS AND CERTIFIED LOGGING PROFESSIONALS

11.1 Use of Qualified Logging Professionals

Logger training is a very effective tool in promoting sustainable forest management, and has been a key component of the *SFI program* since its inception. The *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* strengthens requirements for logger training with revisions to *Indicators*, 11.1.5, 11.2.1 and 11.2.2 and the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* does the same with *Indicators* 3.1.1, 6.1.5, 6.2.1 and 6.2.2.

“*SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* indicator 3.1.1. *Program* to promote the use of *qualified logging professionals*, *certified logging professionals* [where available] and *qualified resource professionals*.”

“*SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* indicator 11.1.5 and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* indicator 6.1.5 - *Program Participants* shall have written agreements for the use of *qualified logging professionals* and/or *certified logging professionals* [where available] and/or *wood producers* that have completed training programs and are recognized as *qualified logging professionals*.”

“*SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* indicator 11.2.1 and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* indicator 6.2.1 - Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria and identify delivery mechanisms for *wood producer* training courses and periodic continuing education that address:

- a. awareness of *sustainable forestry principles* and the *SFI program*;
- b. *best management practices*, including streamside management and road construction, maintenance and retirement;
- c. *reforestation*, *invasive exotic plants and animals*, forest resource conservation, aesthetics and *special sites*;
- d. awareness of responsibilities under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the Canadian Species at Risk Act, and other measures to protect *wildlife habitat* (e.g., *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*);
- e. awareness of rare forested natural communities as identified by provincial or state agencies, or by credible organizations such as NatureServe, The Nature Conservancy, etc.
- f. logging safety;
- g. U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) regulations, wage and hour rules, and other provincial, state and local employment laws;
- h. transportation issues;
- i. business management;
- j. public *policy* and outreach; and
- k. awareness of emerging technologies.

“*SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* indicator 11.2.2 and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* indicator 6.2.2 - The *SIC*-approved *wood producers* training programs shall have a continuing education component with coursework that supports the current logger training programs, safety and the *principles of sustainable forestry*.”

Program is defined in the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* as an organized system, process or set of activities to achieve an *objective* or *performance measure*.

SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard Indicator 11.1.5 and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* Indicators 3.1.1 require *Program Participants* to develop a *program* for the purchase of their raw material from logging professionals who have completed training *programs*. The *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* indicator 6.1.5 says that *Program Participants* will use written agreements requiring the use of *qualified logging professionals*. They should strive to achieve 100 percent of their raw material deliveries from *qualified logging professionals*, or loggers in the process of completing a *SIC*-approved logger training *program*, with allowances for turnover in the logging workforce, availability, timing and length of training *programs*, *other wood suppliers* [defined as a person who or organization that infrequently supplies wood fiber on a small scale, such as farmers and small-scale land-clearing operators], and availability of *qualified logging professionals* locally. This goal for deliveries by *qualified logging professionals* also needs to recognize that catastrophic events (e.g., severe storms, wildfire, beetle epidemics) can result in large-scale salvage efforts over comparatively short periods of time, which can result in increased deliveries by untrained loggers. Where the *Program Participant* identifies a region where the availability of *qualified logging professionals* is not sufficient to meet the expectations of *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* indicator 11.1.5 and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* indicator 6.1.5, the *Program Participant* will develop a *program*, individually or collaboratively, to address this shortage.

11.2 Certified Logging Professionals

SFI Inc. recognizes the potential and value in promoting the use of *certified logging professionals*, and the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* Performance Measure 11.1 and the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* Performance Measures 3.1 and 6.1 encourages their use

“*SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* indicator 6.1.2 - List of *qualified logging professionals* and *certified logging professionals* and maintained by *Program Participant*, state or provincial agency, loggers’ association or other organization.”

“*SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* indicator 11.1.5 and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* Indicator 3.1.1 require *Program Participants* to develop a *program* for the purchase of their raw material from logging professionals who have completed training *programs*. The *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* indicator 6.1.5 says that *Program Participants* will use written agreements requiring the use of *qualified logging professionals*.”

Certified logging professional programs are not in widespread use. The *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* recognizes these limitations while encouraging their use by *Program Participants* where they are available and after consideration of other factors involved in developing contractual relationships. *Certified logging professionals* are those professionals who have completed *SFI Implementation Committee* approved training *programs* and who have also successfully completed and are members in good standing of a credible *certified logging professional program* recognized by the *SFI Implementation Committee*.

SFI Implementation Committees will review, when requested, *certified logging professional programs* to determine if they meet the criteria in *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* indicator 11.2.3 and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* indicator 6.2.3. This process is identical to the one currently in use by *SFI Implementation Committees* for evaluating credible logger training *programs*.

Indicator 11.2.3 and Indicator 6.2.3. Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria for recognition of logger certification *programs*, where they exist, that include:

- a. completion of *SFI Implementation Committee* recognized logger training *programs* and meeting continuing education requirements of the training *program*;
- b. independent in-the-forest verification of conformance with the logger certification *program* standards;
- c. compliance with all applicable laws and regulations including responsibilities under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the Canadian Species at Risk Act and other measures to protect *wildlife habitat*;
- d. use of *best management practices* to protect of water quality;
- e. logging safety;
- f. compliance with acceptable *silviculture* and utilization standards;
- g. aesthetic management techniques employed where applicable; and
- h. adherence to a management or harvest plan that is site specific and agreed to by the forest landowner.

12. ILLEGAL LOGGING

The *SFI program* has strong existing measures in the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* to avoid sourcing fiber from *illegal logging*. These measures are reinforced by the *SFI Policy on Illegal Logging* (September 2008). These measures address the issue of *illegal logging* from sources within the United States and Canada and off-shore.

The United States Lacey Act, as amended May 22, 2008, makes it unlawful to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce any plant, with some limited exceptions, taken, possessed, transported or sold in violation of the laws of the United States, a State, an Indian tribe, or any foreign law that protects plants from removal or that regulates the removal of plants and products made from illegally removed plants. The European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR), applied since March 3, 2013, prohibits illegally harvested timber, or products derived from such timber, to be brought into the EU and creates due diligence obligations for operators who place timber and timber products on the EU market.

SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard Objective 12 has the requirements for avoidance of *controversial sources* including *Illegal Logging* when sourcing from regions outside of the United States and Canada.

Performance Measure 12.1. *Program Participants* shall ensure that their *fiber sourcing programs* support the *principles of sustainable forestry*, including efforts to reduce the risk of *illegal logging*.

Indicator 12.1.1. Process to assess the risk that the *Program Participant's fiber sourcing program* could acquire material from *illegal logging* such as consulting information from the World Resources Institute Forest Legality Risk Tool, the World Bank Legal Rights Index, or Transparency International.

SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard Objective 9 and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* Objective 4 requires legal and regulatory compliance with applicable federal, provincial, state and local laws and regulations.

SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard **Performance Measure 9.1** and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* **Performance Measure 4.1.**

Program Participants shall comply with applicable federal, provincial, state and local *forestry* and related social and environmental laws and regulations and take appropriate steps to avoid *illegal logging*.

***SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* Indicator 4.1.4:** *Program* to assess the risk that the *Program Participants fiber sourcing program* could acquire material from *illegal logging* by considering some of the following:

- a. communications with suppliers;
- b. independent research;
- c. contract documentation; and
- d. maintain records.

The definition of *illegal logging* is intended to cover intentional violations, such as timber theft from areas that are precluded from logging, falsification of official documents, avoidance of harvest payments and duties, and deliberate removal of trees from the land without the legal right to do so. The definition is not intended to cover isolated occurrences of legal infractions such as unintentional trespass over a property line (for private ownership) or unit boundaries (for public ownership), violation of roadway laws, or minor contract disputes. As stated in *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* Objective 9 and *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* Objective 4, *Program Participants* are required to comply with applicable federal, provincial, state and local laws and regulations.

13. ILO CORE CONVENTIONS

SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard Performance Measure 9.2 addresses differences in U.S. labor law and the ILO core conventions. Additional guidance is provided here for application of Performance Measure 9.2 for independent contractors and for *Program Participants*.

Application of *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* Performance Measure 9.2 for independent contractors operating on lands owned or controlled by *Program Participants*:

- *Certification bodies* at the time of the audit will collect and review information the *Program Participant* has received from outside stakeholders with regards to concerns or conformance pertaining to independent contractor actions related to ILO Core Conventions 87, 98 and 111.
- Any information collected by the *certification bodies* during normal auditing times will be promptly submitted without contractor identifying information to the *Program Participant*, *SFI Inc.* and the *SFI ILO* Task Force. Information received will be reviewed every six months by the *SFI ILO* Task Force, which will develop recommendations to the *SFI Inc.* Board of Directors for resolution of any significant problems identified.
- *Indicator 9.2* shall only apply to the core conventions not fully covered by existing U.S. or Canadian law.
 - Right to Organise [No. 87]
 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining [No. 98]
 - Discrimination [111].

Application of *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard* Performance Measure 9.2 for *Program Participants* with respect to their employees operating on lands owned or controlled by *Program Participants*:

- *Certification bodies* at the time of the audit will collect and review information the *Program Participant* has received from outside stakeholders with regards to concerns or conformance pertaining to their employee relations with regards to ILO Core conventions 87, 98 and 111.
- Stakeholders may raise issues regarding conformance to indicator 9.2.2 through the inconsistent practices procedures outlined in the *SFI* Public Inquiries and Official Complaints [Section 11] requirements, part 3.
- All information collected through the inconsistent practices process will be reviewed every six months by the *SFI ILO* Task Force, which will develop recommendations to the *SFI Inc.* Board of Directors for resolution of any significant problems identified.
- *Indicator 9.2.2* shall only apply to the core conventions not fully covered by existing U.S. or Canadian law.
 - Right to Organise [No. 87]
 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining [No. 98]
 - Discrimination [111].
- In addition, any *ILO* related issue that is being addressed through a formal grievance process or before any of the agencies established by the U.S. National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), the appropriate provincial labour code or act, or the courts until those processes are completed, will not be subject to review, consideration or recommendations by the *SFI ILO* Task Force nor by the *SFI Inc.* Board of Directors.

Public forest landowners in states (Alabama, North Carolina and Virginia) that currently have laws prohibiting bargaining with their public employees shall be “grandfathered in” as meeting the requirements in indicator 9.2.2 but must still participate in the information gathering process with their *certification bodies* (for independent contractors) and the inconsistent practices process in part 8.4 of the Public Inquiries and Official Complaints [Section 11] requirements to aid in the resolution of any issues that may be identified.

14. SFI 2015-2019 CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY STANDARD AND SFI ON-PRODUCT LABEL USE

14.1 Defining the *Product Group*

SFI 2015-2019 Chain-of-Custody Standard at Part 3.2.1 and Appendix 1 allows an organization to define the *product group(s)* for which the certification percentage is calculated. The *product group* should be identified for specific products or groups of products. The organization should include in one *product group* only products that consist of the same raw material. For example, a printer could identify as a *product group* the paper usage for all inserts, order-forms, offset body, gravure body, and cover products being bound or stitched together into the final product of a magazine or catalog.

14.2 Exemption from Surveillance Audits

An *SFI* chain-of-custody certificate holder, can upon receiving approval from their certificate body, waive a surveillance audit if they have not sold any certified material since their last audit. The chain-of-custody certificate holder must sign a declaration for their *certification body* stating that no material has been sold as *SFI* certified since the last audit. The declaration must also include a commitment by the chain-of-custody certificate holder to contact the *certification body* as soon as they wish to sell *SFI* certified material. Certification bodies shall not waive more than two consecutive audits.

14.3 Exemption from *SFI* Chain of Custody

An organization (such as a warehouse or distribution center) that passes on *SFI* certified material/product does not need an *SFI* chain-of-custody system provided the *SFI* certified material/product is in its original packaging and the material/product is identified with an *SFI* chain-of-custody on-product label.

14.4 Eligibility of Credits – Volume Credit Method

An organization using the Volume Credit method can start counting all eligible credit after the completion of a successful internal audit of the chain-of-custody system and completion of a management review of the chain-of-custody system performance. Eligible credits can be accumulated up to 365 days prior to the initial registration audit. Accumulated credits can be utilized for the sale of products only after successful completion of the registration audit and receipt of the chain-of-custody certificate from their *certification body*.

14.5 *Controversial Sources* and *De Minimis* Amounts

Organizations wishing to utilize *de minimis* amounts of materials sourced from outside of the United States and Canada in their product(s) must conform to the requirements of the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*, Appendix 1: Part 6 - Due Diligence System

to Avoid *Controversial Sources* or the *SFI 2015-2019 Chain-of-Custody Standard Part 4 - Due Diligence System to Avoid Controversial Sources*.

14.6 Scoping Suppliers into a Chain of Custody

A *Program Participant* that sources from *primary producers* can include these organizations in the scope of their *SFI 2015-2019 Chain-of-Custody Standard* certificate. The *Program Participant* will be responsible for all *objectives* and *performance measures* of those organizations they scope into their own procedures. Those organizations are subject to sample audits. *Certification bodies* shall follow guidelines in Section 9 - *SFI 2015-2019 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation* - Appendix 1, for “multi-site organizations.” If the *Program Participant* scopes in *primary producers*, the *Program Participant* is also responsible for all *SIC* related activity for that company.

15. SFI IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEES

SFI Program Participants established state *SFI Implementation Committees* in 1995 and the first provincial *SFI Implementation Committee* in 2001. *SFI Implementation Committees* provide a strong foundation for the *SFI program* and make important contributions in assuring *SFI Standard* conformance and *SFI program* recognition. The state, provincial and regional *SFI Implementation Committees* are semi-autonomous committees reflecting significant geographic and organizational diversity. This flexible, grassroots infrastructure is a fundamental strength of the *SFI program* and its goal to promote responsible *forestry* across all forest ownerships.

The definition of *SFI Implementation Committee (SIC)* in Section 13 of the *SFI 2015-2019: Standards and Rules* is “A state, provincial, or regional committee organized by *SFI Program Participants* to facilitate or manage the *programs* and alliances that support the growth of the *SFI program*, including sustainable forest management.”

The *SFI Implementation Committee* governance document was reviewed for relevance to the current *SFI program*, and to ensure consistency with the *SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules*. The *SFI Implementation Committee* governance document will be updated in conjunction with future *SFI Standard* revisions, and may also be reviewed between scheduled revisions if there are significant *SFI program* changes.

Some key elements from the governance document and how they relate to the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards* are included here.

Vision Statement

SFI Implementation Committees (SICs) are an integral part of the *SFI program* and play a vital role in promoting training and landowner outreach, maintaining integrity of the *SFI program*, and supporting and promoting responsible *forestry* and the *SFI program* at local levels.

Mission Statement

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) defines the *SIC* Mission, ensuring *SIC* goals and priorities are based on recommendations from the *SIC* Governance Review Ad-hoc Committee. The MOU clarifies

both the *SIC* mission and supports obligations for the *SFI Program Participants* as follows:

- I. Overall *SIC* Mission – Effectively facilitate or manage at a state, provincial or regional level the programs and alliances that support the growth of sustainable forest management through the *SFI program*.
- II. Core *SIC* Mission – Priorities for all *SICs*:
 - a. Training & Education – Establish criteria and identify delivery mechanisms for *qualified logging professional*, *qualified resource professional* and *wood producer* training, and defining what it means to be “*SFI trained*.”² Establish criteria for recognition of *certified logging professional programs*, where they exist.³
 - b. Inconsistent Practices – Establish protocols for addressing, investigating, and responding to *SFI Standard* nonconformity allegations and inconsistent practices, and allegations regarding non-*Program Participant* forest management practices.⁴
 - c. Landowner Outreach – Focus landowner outreach efforts on education and technical assistance.⁵
 - d. Informational Resources – Focus informational resource efforts on increasing *SFI program* recognition, awareness and support with groups, such as local opinion leaders and *forestry* resource professionals.⁶
 - e. Annual Reporting – Submit the *SIC* annual progress report to *SFI Inc.*
 - f. *SFI Program Integrity*⁷ – Protect the integrity of the *SFI program* by:
 - ensuring proper *SIC* service mark usage;
 - alerting *SFI Inc.* when improper communications or misleading claims are observed;
 - avoiding the appearance of participation or compliance by non-*SFI Program Participants*; and
 - avoiding the appearance of *third-party certification* by non-certified *SFI Program Participants*.
- III. Secondary *SIC* Mission – Below are priorities that may be determined by each *SIC*; however, individual participants may choose not to participate or support these *objectives*.
 - a. Training and Education – Provide delivery mechanisms for *qualified logging professional*, and *qualified resource professional*, and *wood producer* training to address *SFI program* needs not adequately provided by other *programs*.
 - b. Market Outreach – Sponsor active market outreach efforts in local communities that may include paid advertising.
 - c. Recruitment – Encourage large landowners and all forest products facilities to enroll as *SFI Program Participants*; encourage family forest owners to participate in the *American Tree Farm System* or similar programs recognized by the *SFI*

² *SFI 2015-2019 Standard* Indicator 11.2.1 (FM) and 6.2.1 (FS).

³ *SFI 2015-2019 Standard* Indicator 11.2.3 (FM) and 6.2.3 (FS).

⁴ *SFI 2015-2019 Standard* Performance Measure 12.3 (FM) and 7.3 (FS).

⁵ *SFI 2015-2019 Standard* Indicators 12.1.1 and 12.2.1 (FM) and 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 (FS).

⁶ *SFI 2015-2019 Standard* Performance Measure 12.2 (FM) and 7.2 (FS).

⁷ *SFI 2015-2019 Standard* Indicators 12.3.1 and 12.3.2 (FM) and 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 (FS).

⁸ *SFI 2015-2019 Standard* Performance Measure 10.2 (FM) and 8.1 (FS).

⁹ *SFI 2015-2019 Standard* Objective 10 (FM) and 5 (FS).

program, as appropriate.

- d. Forest Management Statistics – Encourage government agencies to provide accessible timely, accurate harvest and regeneration statistics, in support of a *Program Participant's sustainable forestry programs*.⁸
- e. Research – Promote forestry research, science and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.⁹

SIC Organization

SICs are semi-autonomous committees reflecting significant geographic and organizational diversity. This flexible, grassroots infrastructure is a fundamental strength of the *SFI* program and our goal to promote *sustainable forestry* across all ownerships. The following is intended to clarify support expectations and provide guidance to ensure consistency, while still maintaining *SIC* flexibility.

SIC Participation

All *SFI* program participants owning and/or operating forest product facilities, owning and/or managing forestland, or procuring fiber within the state or province are expected to participate in the *SFI* Implementation Committees (SICs). *SFI* Program Participants are required to participate in the SIC where significant operations exist, i.e. majority of forestland owned and/or fiber procured. The expectation is that *Program Participants* with facilities within the scope of an *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* certificate will support all the *SICs* in the regions, states or provinces where they procure fiber. However, there may be regions, states or provinces where a *Program Participant* sources a de minimis amount of fiber for a given facility. In these situations it is possible for a *Program Participant* to meet the requirements of Performance Measure 6.2 of the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* in the regions where the majority of the *Program Participant's* procurement occurs.

16. TRANSITION TO THE *SFI 2015-2019 STANDARDS AND RULES*

Changes adopted by the *SFI Inc.* Board of Directors to the *SFI Standards* must be incorporated into a *Program Participant's policies*, plans, and management activities within one year of adoption and publication. Similarly, changes to *certification procedures* and qualifications for certification bodies must be accomplished within one year of adoption and publication.

It is the *Program Participant's* responsibility to work with the *certification body* to establish a surveillance audit schedule that meets the requirements outlined in Section 9 *SFI 2015-2019 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditations*. Additional guidance regarding the transition is included below:

- The *SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules* replace the *SFI 2010-2014 Standard*, which is the current standard implemented by organizations within their forest operations in the United States and Canada.
- *SFI Inc.* developed the *SFI 2015-2019 Standard and Rules*, but does not conduct auditing and certification. All certification, recertification and surveillance audits to the *SFI 2015-2019*

Standards and Rules shall be conducted by *certification bodies* accredited by the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB), American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) to conduct *certification to SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules*.

- Accredited *certification bodies* are required to maintain audit processes consistent with the requirements of International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17021:2011 conformity assessment – requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems; and conduct audits in accordance with the principles of auditing contained in the ISO 19011:2002 Guidelines for Quality and/or Environmental Management Systems Auditing.
- ANAB-, ANSI- and SCC-accredited certification to the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* shall not be granted until they are published as standards.
- *SFI Program Participants* have one year from the time the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* take effect on January 1, 2015 to implement all new and revised requirements, and *Program Participants* must demonstrate conformance to the new requirements at their first surveillance audit following the implementation period. Earlier adoption is encouraged.
- Initial certification audits in 2015 must be conducted against the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules*.
- After March 31, 2015, all re-certifications must be conducted against the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules*. For re-certifications against the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules nonconformities* against changes made in the revised *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* shall be reported but will not adversely affect re-certification until after December 31, 2015.
- Surveillance audits through December 31, 2015 may be conducted against either the *SFI 2010-2014 Standard* and/or the *2010-2014 SFI Chain-of-Custody Standard* or the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* at the *Program Participant's* choice. For surveillance audits after March 31, 2015, *nonconformities* against changes made in the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* shall be reported but will not adversely affect certification status until December 31, 2015; these audits shall also include an assessment of action plans to fully transition to the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules* by December 31, 2015.
- After December 31, 2015, all surveillance audits must be conducted against the *SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules*.