SUSTAINABLE
FORESTRY
INITIATIVE

SFI-00001

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SFI 2015-2021 Certificate Extension – Alternative Methodology

SFI Inc. is providing an alternative methodology for maintaining SFI 2015-2021 certification for certified organizations with certificates expiring in the remainder of 2021 or the first quarter of 2022.

Background

Changes to the PEFC endorsement requirements required SFI to extend the term of the SFI 2015-2019 Standards to the end of 2021. For certified organizations with certificates expiring in 2021 or the first quarter of 2022, this has resulted in a one-time scenario where they would be faced with consecutive, full system audits: one to maintain certification to the 2015-2021 Standards and the next audit to transition to the SFI 2022 Standard(s). This scenario has the potential to impact effected certified organizations resulting in additional audit expense as well as disruption to the certified organization's operations or facilities. SFI has investigated this scenario and working with accreditation bodies, developed an alternative methodology to avoid additional cost to the certified organization and impact to their operations from consecutive full-system audits.

Pre-requisite: To be eligible for this alternative methodology a certified organization must have a valid SFI 2015-2021 Standard certificate with an expiration date in the remainder of 2021 or the first quarter of 2022 (March 31, 2022).

Alternative Methodology for Maintenance of SFI 2015-2021 Certification

Certified organizations meeting the pre-requisite may submit a request to their certification body to extend the 5-year certification cycle to 6 years. This will result in the required SFI 2015-2021 recertification audit being converted to a surveillance audit.

If a certified organization does opt to utilize this alternative methodology, it must understand the risk: the full system audit and transition to SFI 2022 must occur before the revised expiration date i.e., one year from the current certificate(s) expiration date. Failure to transition before this date will result in the expiration of the certificate(s) without further options for extension.

The certified organization is required to submit a formal request for certificate extension to their certification body for consideration. Based on its review, the certification body must be able to agree with the extension request retaining the rationale and evidence to support the alternative methodology. A certification body is not obliged to allow the extension and the additional surveillance audit. Based on its review, the certification body may decide the request for use of the alternative methodology for certificate maintenance and extension cannot be supported.

It should also be recognized that if a certified organization has multiple SFI standards certified, it is possible that an extension for all SFI certifications may not be supported.

Certification Body Requirements

The certification body must utilize their defined process for making a certification decision to extend the SFI certificate(s). The decision to extend the certificate must be justified and documented and retained for review by their accreditation body.

If the alternative methodology (i.e., a surveillance audit instead of a recertification audit) is to be used, the decision to extend certification must be completed prior to conducting the surveillance audit.

The certification body decision shall be based on an analysis of the prior performance of the certified organization's management system and ability to implement the requirements of the certification program over the current certification cycle. The analysis must result in a conclusion by the certification body that the confidence and integrity of the certification can be maintained for an additional year.

Additionally, the certification body shall consider the following factors when conducting their analysis to determine whether to allow a certified organization to extend the certification cycle for their SFI Standard(s):

- Overall history of the management system, implementation of the requirements standard(s), and implementation of the certification program requirements.
- Certified organizations support of the certification process (e.g., responsiveness, cooperation and support of audits scheduling and conduct)
- Audit results over the current audit cycle.
- Effectiveness of the certified organization's internal audit or internal monitoring system.
- Review of previous nonconformities, the certified organization's implementation, and review of effectiveness of corrective action.
- Other factors the certification body considers relevant.

Accreditation Body Requirements

If the alternative methodology is utilized by a certification body, the accreditation body will verify implementation of this methodology during accreditation assessment activities. The accreditation bodies will notify SFI Inc. in the event that a certification body is found to be in major/systemic nonconformity with this methodology.