



SECTION 13 OPTIONAL MODULES

October 7, 2021

SFI Inc. has developed a process for SFI to address emerging issues and new opportunities through modules. These include opportunities around small land certification, Indigenous land certification, community land certification, urban forestry certification, as well as modules for species at risk. Optional modules are developed by *SFI Inc.* and approved by the *SFI Inc.* Board of Directors. These modules will provide implementation assistance using case studies or optional certification requirements to address specific issues of benefit to SFI. Any modules developed prior to the next standard review process will be added in this section.

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SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module

PREAMBLE

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and American Forest Foundation (AFF) collaboratively developed a small lands module that is based on the foundation of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* and incorporates the AFF Standards of Sustainability for Forest Management under the American Tree Farm System ("AFF Standards"). Lands certified through this module in the United States will be certified under the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) with resultant "certified forest content" under the *SFI 2022 Chain-of-Custody Standard*. Lands certified in Canada to the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* will be "SFI certified" and the resultant fiber also "certified forest content" under the *SFI 2022 Chain-of-Custody Standard*.

Due to the interdependence of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*, AFF 2021 Standards, and this *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*, revision to any of these standards will trigger a collaborative review and potential revision to the module as needed to ensure consistency and continual improvement.

1. GENERAL

1.1 Scope

This module applies to *Certified Organizations* certified to the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

1.1.1 Maximum size of ownership eligible for certification under this Module

A non-industrial, small forest ownership, under the scope of this *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*, shall have no more than 20,000 acres or 8,000 hectares in aggregate across their entire ownership, regardless of whether it is managed by the *landowner* or a *landowner* agent. Those *landowners* with more than 20,000 acres or 8,000 hectares in aggregate across their entire ownership shall be certified to the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*. If the small forest or woodlot owner meets eligibility requirements, individual parcels of land that fall within the *wood and fiber supply area* are eligible for inclusion in the *certified area*.

1.1.2 What the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* Does

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* offers certification to a group of small family forest lands, under one certificate, that is managed by a *Certified Organization* that is certified to the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*. The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* allows *landowners* to sell and *Certified Organization* to procure fiber as certified forest content. Lands certified to this module in the United States are certified to ATFS via the AFF Standards. Lands certified to this module in Canada are *SFI* certified.

1.1.3 What the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* Covers

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* covers:

- requirements of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* that include measures to broaden the practice of conservation of biodiversity, use of forestry best management practices to protect water quality, provide outreach to *landowners*, and utilize the services of forest management and harvesting professionals and
- forest management requirements consistent with the 2021-2026 AFF Standards to promote the health and sustainability of America's family forests. These Standards are designed as a tool to help woodland owners be effective stewards of the land as they adaptively manage renewable resources; promote environmental, economic, and social benefits; and work to increase public understanding of sustainable forestry.
- additional requirements relating to the management of the *Group Certification Organization*¹ and additional requirements for sustainable forest management.

1.1.4 Geographic Application of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* applies to organizations (the *Certified Organization*, *landowners* and others involved in the fiber supply chain) in the United States and Canada.

1.1.5 Timing of Applicability

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* is dependent on the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* and the AFF 2021-2026 Standards of Sustainability as its foundation. Revision to either of these standards will trigger a collaborative review and potential revision to the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* to ensure consistency and continual improvement. If the module is not reviewed and approved by both the SFI Board of Directors and AFF Board of Trustees, it will expire with the earliest expiry of either the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* or AFF's 2021-2026 Standards. If either SFI or AFF wish to make changes to the module, both organizations must agree and will work to make changes through a collaborative process.

1.2 References

This *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* incorporates, by dated or undated reference, provisions from other publications. These normative and informative references are cited at the appropriate places in the text and the publications are listed hereafter. For dated and undated references, the latest edition of the application applies.

1.2.1 Normative references

- i. ISO/IEC 17021 — Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems,
- ii. ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 — Standardization and Related Activities – General Vocabulary
- iii. IAF MD 1:2007 - Certification of Multiple Sites Based on Sampling

¹ The requirements for the management of the Group Certification Organization are based on Appendix 2 of Section 10 of the *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules* and are consistent with AFF's Independently Managed Group requirements

- iv. *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules*:
 - Section 3 — *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*
 - Section 8 — *SFI Policies*
 - Section 10 — *SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualification and Accreditation*
 - Section 11 — *Communication and Public Reporting*
 - Section 13 — *Optional Modules*
 - Section 14 — *SFI Definitions*
- v. *Interpretations for the Requirements for the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules*

For the purposes of this Module, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 apply together with the definitions in the *SFI Definitions* (Section 14).

1.2.2 Informative References

- i. 2021-2026 — American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability for the American Tree Farm System
- ii. 2021-2026 American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability for the American Tree Farm System Guidance
- iii. 2021-2026 American Tree Farm System (ATFS) Independently Managed Group (IMG) Standards
- iv. American Tree Farm System (ATFS) Eligibility Requirements
- v. PEFC ST 1002:2018 — Group Forest Management Certification
- vi. PEFC ST 1003:2018 — Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements
- vii. Section 7 — Guidance to *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules*
- viii. Section 9 — *SFI Standards Development and Interpretations Process*
- ix. Section 12 — *Public Inquiries and Official Complaints*

1.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this module, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 apply together with the definitions in the *SFI Definitions* (Section 14) together with the following definitions.

- **certified area**

The forest area covered by a *group forest certificate* representing the sum of forest areas owned by *landowners* that are *Group Members*. Lands certified to this module in

the United States are certified to the American Tree Farm System (ATFS). Lands certified to this module in Canada are *SFI* certified.

- **group certification organization**

A specific type of multi-site organization where forest owners, forest owners' organizations, forest managers, forest products manufacturers or forest products distributors without a pre-existing legal or contractual link can form a group for the purposes of achieving certification and gaining eligibility for a sampling approach to certification audits against this module (Appendix 1 to Section 10).

- **group forest certificate**

A document confirming that the *group certification organization* complies with the requirements for certification to this module.

- **group manager**

An organization with overall responsibility for ensuring the conformity of forest management in the *certified area* of the *Group Certification Organization* to the certification requirements in this module.

The *Group Manager* must be a *Certified Organization, certified to the SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*, with a fiber sourcing program that acquires roundwood and/or field-manufactured residual chips.

- **group member**

Landowners who own land to be certified by the group forest certification or *landowner agents* covered by the *group forest certificate* who have the legal authority to implement the certification requirements within the *wood and fiber supply area*.

- **landowner**

Non-industrial entity or individual that holds title to the property.

- **landowner agent**

A *qualified resource professional, a qualified logging professional, a certified logging company, wood producer* or other individual or organization that has the legal authority to manage forestland and implement the certification requirements on certified lands at the direction of *landowner* members within the *wood and fiber supply area*.

2. SFI SMALL LANDS GROUP CERTIFICATION MODULE PRINCIPLES

SFI Certified Organizations believe that non-industrial forest *landowners* have an important stewardship responsibility and a commitment to society, and they recognize the importance of maintaining viable commercial, family forest and conservation forest land bases.

SFI Certified Organizations are aware that family forest ownership is made up of large numbers of small forest holdings. The limited revenues from forest management operations on the small properties of these *landowners*; periodicity of their management activities and revenues; as well as a limited financial ability to demonstrate their conformity with forest management certification system requirements, represent significant barriers to forest certification.

SFI-certified organizations shall have a written policy (or policies) to implement and achieve the principles defined in *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* together with the following principles in this module:

2.1 Voluntary Participation

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* is based on a respect for property rights and on the voluntary commitment and participation of both *landowners* and *landowner agents*. Participation in the *Group Certification Organization* shall not require or bind *landowners* to harvest and sell timber or to supply the *Certified Organization*; participation also shall not prohibit *landowners* from participating in another *Group Certification Organization* outside ATFS or supplying another customer. Any supply commitments shall be stated in separately negotiated contracts between *landowners* and customers, and not as part of the written agreement(s) required by the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*. SFI and *Certified Organizations* are committed to compliance with the competition laws of the United States and Canada, and the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* shall not be construed to conflict with those laws.

2.2 Shared Responsibility

The *Certified Organization*, as the *Group Manager* and the *Group Member* have shared responsibility for and commitment to sustainable forestry practices on the land they own, manage or from which they procure raw material.

2.3 Efficiency

The *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* uses a *wood and fiber supply area* (“supply area”) approach to achieving sustainable forest management (e.g., planning or monitoring of forest resources) where the supply area approach is more suitable and efficient due to the limited size and resources of individual *landowners*. The results of the *wood and fiber* supply area approach must be consistent with and inclusive of the forest management practices implemented by individual *landowners* and/or resource/logging professionals. Lands certified to this module in the United States are certified to ATFS. Lands certified to this module in Canada are SFI certified.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE GROUP

3.1 Responsibilities of the *Group Manager*²:

- 3.1.1** To ensure a commitment on behalf of the whole *Group Certification Organization* to establish and maintain practices and procedures in accordance with the requirements of this *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*.
- 3.1.2** To represent the whole *Group Certification Organization* in the certification process, including communications and relationships with the certification body, submission of an application for certification under this module and contractual relationship with the certification body.
- 3.1.3** To form a formal relationship with all *Group Members* based on a written agreement established directly between the *Group Manager* and each *Group Member* (every *landowner* and every *landowner agent*). The written agreement

² The requirements for the management of the group are based on eligibility criteria of chapter 4.1.1-4.1.4 of Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to Section 10. In cases where the requirements of this document differ from Appendix 1 to Section 10, the requirements of this document are definitive.

shall include³:

- The Group Manager's enumeration of the conditions of participation in the group and group forest certificate, including disclosure of Group Members ineligibility to participate in an ATFS State program or IMG;
- The *Group Manager's* right and responsibility to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the suspension of any *Group Member* from the scope of certification in the event of nonconformity with the requirements of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*.
- The *Group Member's* commitment to comply with the requirements of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*;
- The *Group Member's* agreement to participate and comply with the conditions of membership and forest management operations as recommended in the *wood and fiber supply area plan* (or their own conforming forest management, where applicable);
- The *Group Member's* agreement to be included under the scope of the Group Manager's *group forest certificate*.

3.1.4 To establish procedures for inclusion of new *Group Members* within the *Group Certification Organization* including an internal assessment of conformity with the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*, implementation of corrective and relevant preventive measures.

3.1.5 To establish procedures for expulsion of *Group Members* from the *Group Forest Certificate*, in cases of unresolved nonconformity, ownership transition or other circumstances, as appropriate, including documentation and timely reporting of decertification.

3.1.6 To maintain and achieve compliance with all requirements of the *SFI 2022 SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard* that outline relationship between the *Certified Organization*, *landowners*, and resource/logging professionals; and management review and continuous improvement (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10 and 11).

3.1.7 To establish written procedures for the management of the *Group Certification Organization* and clearly define and assign responsibilities for sustainable forest management and compliance with the certification requirements of this module.

³ While the written agreement is established directly between the *Group Manager* and each *Group Member*, trained *landowner agents* may facilitate and transmit written agreements between *Group Manager* and *landowner* members.

3.1.8 To provide all *Group Members* with information and guidance needed for effective implementation and maintenance of practices and procedures in accordance with the requirements of this *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*⁴.

3.1.9 To ensure all *Group Managers* and *Landowner Agents* have been trained to implement the requirements of the module specific to AFF's Standards of Sustainability for Certification and section 4.3 Forest Management Practices. *Group Managers* and *Landowner Agents* shall attend an ATFS inspector training at least once during every Standards eligibility period. Training in accordance with 4.3 Forest Management Practices may be accomplished through *SFI* Implementation Committees or other means.

3.1.10 To keep records on:

- A. the *Certified Organizations'* and the *Group Members'* conformity with the relevant certification requirements as spelled out by this Small Lands Module.
- B. all *Group Members*, including their contact details and, for *landowner* members, identification of their property and its/their sizes.
- C. the *certified area*.
- D. a record of operations carried out on the forest lands owned by the *Group Members* to support the internal monitoring *program*.
- E. the implementation of an internal monitoring *program*, its review and any preventive and/or corrective measures.
- F. the *wood and fiber supply area* plan as defined in 4.1, and the individualized goals and strategies for *landowners*, and/or the individual landowner management plan as defined in 4.2, as applicable.
- G. In the US, *Group Managers* share records of items A, B, C and E at least annually with AFF for documentation in the ATFS database to enable verification of the certified status of the *certified area*. In Canada, *Group Managers* share records of items A, B, C and E at least annually with *SFI*.

3.1.11 To maintain an annual internal audit or monitoring *program* sufficient to ensure conformance with the requirements of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*⁵ by the organization and individual *Group Members*. The *Group Certification Organization* must implement an annual monitoring protocol in accordance with the following:

- i. The sample size should be calculated based on the number of Group Members.

⁴ The *Group Manager* should within the framework of Objective 3 (Use of Qualified Resource Professionals, Qualified Logging Professional and Certified Logging Companies), Objective 6 (Training and Education) and Objective 7 (Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach) of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* provide *Group Members* with information and guidance on the requirements of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* that are relevant to them and management operations on their land.

⁵ The internal audit/monitoring *program* should accommodate various verification and monitoring mechanisms required by the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

ii. The size of the sample should generally be the square root of the number of Group Members, rounded up to the upper whole number.

iii. Twenty-five percent of the sample should be selected at random.

iv. The size of the sample may be adapted up or down by a standard taking into account the following:

- results of a risk assessment
- results of internal monitoring or independent audits
- quality/level of confidence of internal annual monitoring
- use of technologies allowing gathering of information for specific requirements
- based on other means of gathering information about activities on the ground

3.1.12 To operate a review of the conformity of *Group Members* based on results of internal audit and/or monitoring data sufficient to assess performance of the *Group Certification Organization* as a whole rather than at the individual *Group Member's* level⁶.

3.1.13 To establish corrective and preventive measures if required and evaluate the effectiveness of corrective actions taken.

3.1.14 To communicate to the relevant *Certification Body* those *Group Members* with serious and continuing non-conformities that have not been resolved and that resulted in the *Group Member's* expulsion from the *group certification organization* based on the results of internal audits and/or the monitoring *program*.

3.1.15 To consider within its internal audit/monitoring *program* information from the *Group Member* on continuing non-conformities that have been found if the *Group Member* is part of another *group certification organization*.

3.1.16 For landowners in the United States, to maintain and update the members of the group organization and report to AFF or update the ATFS database to reflect entries and departures of *Group Members* from the *Group Organization*.

3.2 Responsibilities of the *Group Members*:

3.2.1 To commit through a written agreement with the *Group Manager* to implement and maintain the relevant requirements⁷ of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module*;

⁶ The review of the conformity and the corrective and preventive measures should be performed within the framework of Objective 10 of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* (Management Review and Continuous Improvement).

⁷ The *Group Manager* should within the framework of Objective 3 (Use of Qualified Resource Professionals, Qualified Logging Professional and Certified Logging Companies), Objective 6 (Training and Education) and Objective 7 (Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach) of the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* provide *Group Members* with a specific list and guidance on the requirements of the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* that are relevant to them and management operations on their land.

- 3.2.2** To respond effectively to all requests from the *Group Manager* or a certification body for relevant data, documentation or other information whether in connection with formal audits or reviews or other requirements;
- 3.2.3** To provide full co-operation and assistance in respect of the satisfactory completion of audits, reviews, monitoring, relevant routine inquiries or corrective actions;
- 3.2.4** To implement relevant corrective and preventive actions required by the *Group Manager*, and
- 3.2.5** To inform the *Group Manager* of any continuing non-conformities if the *Group Member* is part of another *group certification organization*.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The *Group Manager* shall ensure compliance of the *Group Certification Organization* with the requirements outlined in *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*⁸ and the following additional requirements outlined in 4.1 the *Wood and Fiber Supply Area Plan* and 4.3 Forest Management Practices on *Certified Area*.

4.1 Wood and Fiber Supply Area Plan

The *Group Manager* shall develop and update a *wood and fiber supply area plan* that adequately covers the fiber procurement area by the *Group Certification Organization*. The plan shall:

- 4.1.1** Be based on a long-term resource analysis including periodic or ongoing forest inventory, mapping and monitoring of forest resources; and include or be based on analysis of social, environmental and economic impacts of forest operations on forest resources;
- 4.1.2** Promote the maintenance and enhancement of the quantity of forest resources. Promote afforestation of agricultural and treeless land into forests. Identify risks of conversion of forests to non-forest uses and measures to mitigate this risk.
- 4.1.3** Be consistent with applicable legislation and land-use plans;
- 4.1.4** Include a description of forest resources, their different uses and functions, and objectives for their management;
- 4.1.5** Include analysis and determination of long-term sustainable harvest levels by monitoring *growth and drain* trends across the *wood and fiber supply area*. The monitoring system shall identify trends and develop forest management activities, on the *certified area*, to promote sustainable harvesting levels on the *wood and fiber supply area*.
- 4.1.6** Include a review of non-timber activities and opportunities (e.g., conservation of soil, air and water quality, carbon, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitats, recreation and aesthetics); and sustainable management and use of those non-timber forest products that are affected by forest management practices;

⁸ This list and guidance also includes Interpretations for the Requirements for the *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules* relevant to the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard* or to the additional requirements.

- 4.1.7** Review results of monitoring of harmful agents, such as environmentally or economically undesirable wildfire, pests, diseases, invasive exotic plants and animals and list or provide information on measures to protect forests from those agents to maintain and improve long-term forest health, productivity and economic viability;
- 4.1.8** Include identification and mapping of sensitive sites and areas with high biodiversity values on the *certified area* and the *wood and fiber supply area*;
- 4.1.9** Include identification and mapping of areas with specific water and soil protection functions, including steps to ensure their protection, maintenance and enhancement of their protective functions;
- 4.1.10** Include description of appropriate silviculture and regeneration methods to achieve forest management objectives identified in 4.1 and 4.3;
- 4.1.11** Be made available to the relevant *landowners* and/or *landowner agents* and provide the basis for the *Certified Organization's* verification, internal audit or monitoring *program*⁹;
- 4.1.12** Be made publicly available, except confidential business and personal information and other information made confidential by legislation or for the protection of cultural sites or sensitive natural resources; and
- 4.1.13** Identify *landowner* goals and strategies and silviculture for achieving those goals to be applied to each individual *landowner* appropriate to the size, scale and intensity of small lands certified via the module.

4.2. Group Member's Management Plan

In the event that a landowner, or landowner agent, opts to have and implement a written forest management plan for an individual group member, it shall be consistent with the size of the ownership and the scale and intensity of the forest activities.

- 4.2.1** Management plan shall be active, adaptive and embody the *landowner's* current objectives, remain appropriate for the land certified and reflect the current state of knowledge about natural resources and sustainable forest management.
- 4.2.2** Management plan shall:
 - a. Describe current forest conditions, *landowner's* objectives, management activities aimed at achieving *landowner's* objectives, document a feasible strategy for activity implementation and include a map accurately depicting significant forest-related resources.
 - b. Demonstrate consideration of the following resource elements: forest health, soil, water, wood and fiber production, threatened or endangered species, special sites, invasive species and Forests of Recognized

⁹ The Objective 3 (Use of Qualified Resource Professionals, Qualified Logging Professional and Certified Logging Companies), Objective 6 (Training and Education) and Objective 7 (Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach) of the *SFI 2022Fiber Sourcing Standard* provides a framework for communicating the content of the forest management plan or its relevant parts to *landowners*, resource and logging professionals and for its on-the-ground implementation.

Importance¹⁰ (in the United States) or *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* (in Canada). Where present and relevant to the property, the plan shall describe management activities related to these resource elements.

- c. Where present, relevant to the property and consistent with *landowner's* objectives, the plan preparer should consider, describe and evaluate the following resource elements: fire, wetlands, desired species, recreation, forest aesthetics, biomass and carbon.

4.2.3 The *Landowner* or *landowner agent* should monitor for changes that could interfere with the management objectives as stated in management plan. When problems are found, reasonable actions are taken.

4.3 Forest Management Practices on *Certified Area*

The *Group Manager* shall ensure through a *verifiable monitoring system* that:

4.3.1 *Landowner* shall comply with all relevant federal, state, provincial, county, and municipal laws, regulations and ordinances governing forest management activities.

4.3.1.1 *Landowner* shall comply with all relevant laws, regulations and ordinances and will correct conditions that led to adverse regulatory actions, if any.

4.3.1.2 *Landowner* should obtain advice from appropriate qualified natural resource professionals or qualified contractors who are trained in, and familiar with, relevant laws, regulations, and ordinances.

4.3.2 Reforestation or afforestation shall be achieved by a suitable process that ensures adequate stocking levels.

4.3.2.1 Reforestation or afforestation shall achieve adequate stocking of desired species reflecting the *landowner's* objectives, within five years after regeneration harvest, or an appropriate time frame for local conditions, or within a time interval as specified by applicable regulation.

4.3.3 *Landowner* shall meet or exceed practices prescribed by state or provincial forestry best management practices that are applicable to the property.

4.3.3.1 *Landowner* shall implement specific state or provincial forestry best management practices that are applicable to the property.

4.3.3.2 *Landowner* shall minimize road construction and other disturbances within riparian zones and wetlands.

4.3.4 *Landowner* shall consider a range of forest management activities to control pests, pathogens, and unwanted vegetation.

4.3.4.1 *Landowner* should evaluate alternatives to pesticides for the prevention or control of pests, pathogens, and unwanted vegetation to achieve specific management objectives.

4.3.4.2 Pesticides used shall be approved by the Environmental Protection Agency

¹⁰ Globally, regionally and nationally significant large forest landscape areas of exceptional ecological, social, cultural or biological values. These forests are evaluated at the landscape level, rather than the stand level, and are recognized for a combination of unique values, rather than a single attribute.

(EPA) in the United States or the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) of Health Canada, and applied, stored, and disposed of in accordance with EPA or PMRA approved labels and by persons appropriately trained, licensed, and supervised.

- 4.3.5** When used, prescribed fire shall conform with *landowner's* objectives and all applicable rules, laws, and regulations.
- 4.3.6** Prescribed burns shall conform with the landowner's objectives and state and local laws and regulations. Forest management activities shall protect habitats and communities occupied by threatened or endangered species as required by law.
- 4.3.6.1 *Landowner* shall confer with natural resource agencies, state or provincial natural resource heritage programs (i.e., NatureServe databases), qualified natural resource professionals or other current sources of information to determine occurrences of threatened or endangered species on the property and their habitat requirements.
- 4.3.6.2 Forest management activities shall incorporate measures to protect identified threatened or endangered species on the property.
- 4.3.7** *Landowner* should address the desired species and/or desired forest communities when conducting forest management activities, if consistent with *landowner's* objectives.
- 4.3.7.1 *Landowner* should consult available and accessible information on management of the forest for desired species and/or forest communities and integrate it into forest management.
- 4.3.8** *Landowner* should make practical efforts to promote forest health.
- 4.3.8.1 *Landowner* should make practical efforts to promote forest health, including prevention, control or response to disturbances such as wildland fire, invasive species and other pests, pathogens or unwanted vegetation, to achieve specific management objectives.
- 4.3.9** Where present, forest management activities should maintain or enhance Forests of Recognized Importance (in the United States) or *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* (in Canada).
- 4.3.9.1 Appropriate to the scale and intensity of the situation, forest management activities should incorporate measures to contribute to the conservation of identified Forests of Recognized Importance (in the United States) or *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* (in Canada).
- 4.3.10** *Landowner* should manage the visual impacts of forest management activities consistent with the size of the forest, the scale and intensity of forest management activities and the location of the property.
- 4.3.10.1 Forest management activities should apply visual quality measures compatible with appropriate silvicultural practices.
- 4.3.11** Forest management activities shall consider and maintain any special sites relevant on the property.
- 4.3.11.1 *Landowner* shall make a reasonable effort to locate and protect special

sites appropriate for the size of the forest and the scale and intensity of forest management activities.

4.3.12 *Landowner* should use qualified natural resource professionals and qualified contractors when contracting for services.

4.3.12.1 *Landowner* should seek qualified natural resource professionals and qualified contractors.

4.3.12.2 *Landowner* should engage qualified contractors who carry appropriate insurance and comply with appropriate federal, state, provincial and local safety and fair labor rules, regulations, and standard practices.

4.3.12.3 *Landowners* should retain appropriate contracts or records for forest product harvests and other management activities to demonstrate conformance to the standards.

4.3.12.4 *Landowner* or designated representative shall monitor forest product harvests and other management activities to ensure they conform to their objectives. Harvest, utilization, removal, and other management activities shall be conducted in compliance with the *landowner's* objectives and to maintain the potential of the property to produce forest products and other benefits sustainably.

SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families

1. GENERAL

Scope

The *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* (the module) applies to individual *small-scale forest properties or forest licenses* and to groups of small-scale forests co-operating for the purposes of obtaining *sustainable forest management* certification.

The module offers the managers of small-scale public forests, including those within the jurisdiction of Indigenous governments, and owners of small-scale private forests the opportunity to participate individually or within a *group certification organization*, to benefit from the economies of scale afforded by working with a group of small-scale forest owners and managers of forest licenses.

1.2 Eligibility for certification under the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*

Any *small-scale forest property or forest license* managed or owned by Indigenous peoples, families, communities, or joint ventures where the total area in timber production does not exceed 20,000 hectares is eligible for certification to the module. The total area certified to the module may exceed 20,000 hectares when the non-timber producing areas and areas managed for *conservation* or recreation purposes are included.

Small-scale forest properties and forest licenses between 5,000 and 20,000 hectares must be under the management of a *qualified resource professional* or an individual that meets the legal requirements for planning and supervising forest management practices for the jurisdiction.

Small-scale forest properties and forest license include but are not limited to:

- Small forest properties or woodlots;
- British Columbia Woodlot Licences;
- Forestlands owned or managed by First Nations or Métis peoples, families, communities, or joint ventures (e.g., First Nations Woodland Licences — British Columbia; County Forests — Ontario); and
- Crown forest licensed to communities (e.g., Community Forest Agreement — British Columbia; Lots Intramunicipaux — Quebec; Community Forests - Nova Scotia).

Forests with more than 20,000 hectares of land managed for timber production shall certify to the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.

Land used for purposes other than *sustainable forest management* are not within the scope of this module. Forestland converted from forest to non-forest uses shall not be certified to this *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*. This does not apply to forestlands used for forest management infrastructure such as forest roads, log processing areas, recreation trails or hunting.

1.3 What the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* does

Private forest ownership in Canada consists of more than 450,000 forestland owners. In addition, there are many small-scale forests under the management of communities, Indigenous peoples, or the federal government on behalf of Indigenous peoples. The limited revenues from forest management operations on small-scale forests, their periodic management activities, as well as a limited financial ability to demonstrate their conformity to the requirements of a forest management certification system, may present significant barriers to certification.

The module offers a pathway to certification for individual forests or for a group of forests operating as a *group certification organization* under a single certificate. The module allows *members* to sell fiber as *certified forest content* and satisfies the requirements for the use of *SFI 2022 Chain-of-Custody Standard*.

The *certified organization* as defined in this module can also provide the management structure to address the forest management requirements associated with carbon-offset protocols.

1.4 What the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* covers:

- requirements of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* applicable to small-scale managed forests that seek to enhance forest management *practices* to address the

conservation of biodiversity, protection of water quality and quantity, soil health and productivity, reforestation, and the use of qualified resource professionals and qualified logging professionals where available;

- additional requirements for *sustainable forest management* that are applicable to small-scale managed forests; and
- requirements relating to the management of the *group certification organization* (see Part 4).

1.5 Geographic Application of the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*

The module applies to individually owned forests or managed public forests and *group certification organizations* in Canada.

REFERENCES

This module incorporates, by dated or undated reference, provisions from other publications. These normative and informative references are cited at the appropriate places in the text and the publications are listed in 2.1. For dated and undated references, the latest edition of the application applies.

2.1 Normative references

- i. ISO/IEC 17021-1 — Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ii. ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 — Standardization and Related Activities – General Vocabulary
- iii. *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules:*
 - Section 2 — *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*
 - Section 8 — SFI Policies
 - Section 10 — SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualification and Accreditation
 - Section 11 — Communication and Public Reporting
 - Section 13 — Optional Modules
 - Section 14 — SFI Definitions
- iv. Interpretations for the Requirements for the SFI 2022 Standards and Rules

For the purposes of this module, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 apply together with the definitions in the SFI Definitions (Section 14).

2.2 Informative References

- i. PEFC ST 1002:2018 — Group Forest Management Certification
- ii. PEFC ST 1003:2018 — Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements

- iii. Section 4 — *SFI 2022 Chain-of-Custody Standard*
- iv. Section 6 — *Rules for Use of SFI On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks*
- v. Section 7 — *Guidance to SFI 2022 Standards and Rules*
- vi. Section 9 — *SFI Standards Development and Interpretations Process*
- vii. Section 12 — *Public Inquiries and Official Complaints*

Definitions

All italicized terms in the SFI *Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* are defined in Appendix 1.

2. PRINCIPLES

The principles underlying this module are based on a belief that small-scale forest landowners and land managers have an important stewardship responsibility and commitment to society, and that they recognize the importance of managing forests for *conservation* and traditional values, in addition to commercial benefits. Landowners, managers and *members of group certification organizations* understand the need to keep forestland as forest and protected from conversion to non-forest use.

Individual forest landowners, land managers and *group certification organizations* certified to the module shall have written procedures to implement and achieve the requirements included in the module, that are consistent with and advance the following principles:

1. *Sustainable Forestry*

To practice *sustainable forestry* means meeting the needs of the present while promoting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates *reforestation* and the managing, growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees for useful products, and for the provision of *ecosystem services* such as the *conservation* of soil, air and water quality and quantity, *climate change adaptation and mitigation*, *biological diversity*, *wildlife* and *aquatic habitats*, recreation and aesthetics.

2. *Forest Productivity and Health*

To provide for regeneration after harvest, maintain the health and productive capacity of the forest land base, and to *protect* and maintain *long-term* soil health and *productivity*. In addition, to *protect* forests from economically, environmentally or socially undesirable impacts of wildfire, pests, diseases, *invasive species* and other damaging agents and thus maintain and improve *long-term forest health* and *productivity*.

3. *Protection of Water Resources*

To *protect* and maintain the water quality and quantity of water bodies and *riparian areas*, and to conform with forestry *best management practices* to *protect* water quality, to meet the needs of both human communities and ecological systems.

4. *Protection of Biological Diversity*

To manage forests in ways that *protect* and promote *biological diversity*, including animal and plant species, *wildlife habitats*, *ecologically and culturally important* species, threatened

and endangered species (i.e., *Forest with Exceptional Conservation Values*) and native *forest cover types* at multiple scales.

5. Aesthetics and Recreation

To manage the visual impacts of forest operations, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public.

6. *Protection of Special Sites*

To manage lands that are geologically or *culturally important* in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

7. Legal Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local *forestry* and related environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.

8. Research

To support advances in sustainable forest management through research, science, and technology.

9. Training and Education

To improve the practice of *sustainable forestry* through training and education *programs*.

10. Community Involvement and Social Responsibility, and Respect for Indigenous Rights

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* on all lands through community involvement, socially responsible practices, and through recognition and respect of *Indigenous Peoples'* rights and *traditional forest-related knowledge*.

11. Transparency

To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*. by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.

12. Continual Improvement

To continually improve the practice of forest management, and to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to *sustainable forestry*.

13. Responsible *Fiber Sourcing*

To use and promote sustainable forestry across a diversity of ownership and management types in the United States and Canada that is both scientifically credible and socially, environmentally, and economically responsible and to avoid sourcing from *controversial sources* both domestically and internationally.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF A GROUP CERTIFICATION ORGANIZATION

The requirements of Part 4 apply only to the manager and members of a *group certification organization*. Part 4 does not apply to individual *land managers* or landowners.

4.1 Responsibilities of the *group certification organization* manager¹¹:

- 4.1.1 Provide a commitment¹² on behalf of the *group certification organization* to establish and maintain *practices* and procedures in accordance with the requirements of this module.
- 4.1.2 Represent the *group certification organization* in the certification process, including communications and relationships with the *certification body*, submission of an application for a certification audit and the contractual relationship with the *certification body*.
- 4.1.3 Establish a formal relationship with each *member* based on a written agreement that shall include the *member's* commitment to participate in the *group certification organization* and comply with the conditions of membership, the requirements of the module and have their lands or tenures included in the *forest certificate*. The written agreement shall:
 - i. cover general information on the size and location of the area covered by the forest certificate and the management goals,
 - ii. give the manager access to the *member's* forest management plan, and
 - iii. give the manager the authority to identify and require any corrective or preventive measures and to initiate the suspension of any *member* from the *forest certificate* in the event of continuing nonconformity with the requirements of the module.
- 4.1.4 Establish procedures for inclusion of new *members* within the *group certification organization* including an internal assessment of conformity with the module as well as identification and implementation of corrective and preventive measures. The procedures will include receiving and reviewing applications from potential *members*, management plans and a field inspection of the managed forest to identify conditions that may require corrective action.
- 4.1.5 Maintain and achieve conformance with all requirements of the module.
- 4.1.6 Establish written procedures for the management of the *group certification organization* and clearly define and assign responsibilities for *sustainable forest management* and conformance with the requirements for certification to the module.
- 4.1.7 Provide all *members* with information and guidance needed for effective implementation and maintenance of *practices* and procedures in accordance with the requirements of this module. This includes:
 - i. information sessions on various aspects of *sustainable forest management* including *best management practices* and *practices for protection of wildlife and soil health*.

¹¹ The requirements for the management of the group are based on eligibility criteria in Appendix 3 of this Module.

¹² The requirement for *member* commitment is consistent with a requirement for a policy (or policies) to maintain and achieve principles of the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples, Families and Communities* and the principles of the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*.

- ii. information on *threatened and endangered species*, as well as species at risk, found in the region including their habitat and requirements for protection.
- iii. information on provincial and local regulations applicable to forest management.

4.1.8 Keep records on:

- i. all *members*, including their contact details, identification of their tenure or property and the *certified area*;
- ii. the total area covered by the group *forest certificate*;
- iii. *commercial harvesting operations* carried out on the forests owned/managed by the group *members*;
- iv. the internal monitoring *program* and audits;
- v. the *members'* conformity with the certification requirements of the module and
- vi. forest management Objectives as defined in Part 5.

4.1.9 Maintain an annual monitoring *program* sufficient to ensure conformance with the requirements of the module by the *group certification organization* and individual *members*. The monitoring *program* shall be based on *members'* reports of *commercial harvesting operations* and a sampling of *members'* properties provided:

- i. it is based on an appropriate risk management methodology considering:
 - a. the scale and type of *members'* activities (*commercial harvesting operations*, road/trail construction, pesticide use, reforestation, silviculture);
 - b. geographic distribution of *members* within the area covered by the *group certification organization*;
 - c. categories of forestland ownership or tenure and size; and,
 - d. previous non-conformities;
- ii. the number of sites sampled equals at least the square root of the total number of participating *members* who have reported management activities in accordance with Part 5 during the interval between the annual monitoring *programs*.

4.1.10 Establish and maintain a system to monitor the conformity of *members* based on results of the monitoring data sufficient to assess performance of the *group certification organization*. This shall include a system for collecting, reviewing, and reporting information to the manager regarding progress in achieving conformity with the module.

4.1.11 Establish corrective and preventive measures as required and evaluate the effectiveness of corrective actions taken by *members* of the *group certification organization*.

4.1.12 Based on the results of the monitoring *program*, communicate to the relevant *certification body* those *members* with serious and continuing non-conformities that have not been resolved and that resulted in the *member's* removal from the *group certification organization*.

4.1.13 Prepare an annual summary report detailing:

- i. evaluation of achievement of the forest management Objectives as defined in Part 5;
- ii. the *members* in the *group certification organization*;
- iii. the total *certified area*;
- iv. the area covered by forest management activities;
- v. the types of forest management activities used by *members* (*commercial harvesting operations*, road/trail construction and maintenance, reforestation *silviculture*);
- vi. a list of known *special sites*;
- vii. the volumes of products harvested; and
- viii. the progress of conformance with the module including the implementation of an internal monitoring *program* and measures to address preventative and/or corrective actions.

4.1.14 Establish a *program(s)* to:

- i. support and promote mechanisms for public outreach, including other forest owners and managers and
- ii. engage at the local or provincial level on issues related to *sustainable forest management*.

4.1.15 Establish a *program* to respond annually to the SFI annual progress report surveys.

4.2 Responsibilities of the *member*:

- 4.2.1 To commit, through a written agreement with the *group certification organization manager*, to implement and maintain the relevant requirements of the module as listed in Part 5.
- 4.2.2 To present a forest management plan that is appropriate to the size of the forest property or tenure, the *member's* management goals, the scale and intensity of management as determined by a *qualified resource professional* or other qualified individual..
- 4.2.3 To respond effectively to all requests from the manager or a *certification body* for relevant data, documentation, or other information whether in connection with third-party audits, internal monitoring, annual reports on forest management operations, reviews, or other requirements.

4.2.4 To implement relevant corrective and preventive actions required by the manager.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR *SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT*

The individual forest landowner, *land manager* or *group certification organization* manager shall ensure conformance with the requirements in Part 5 for implementing forest management Objectives 1-9 and forest management *practices* on the *certified area*. Where the term *member* is used, the individual forest landowner or land manager shall understand these requirements to apply to him/her.

Examples of forest management goals are:

- i. improve age class distribution;
- ii. promote *long-term* sustainable harvest levels;
- iii. increase hardwood component;
- iv. increase amount of saw-timber;
- v. promotion of *non-timber forest products* (e.g., maple syrup);
- vi. encourage *afforestation* of marginal/sub-marginal lands no longer suitable for agriculture;
- vii. support of *programs* for *conservation* of *old growth forests*, *biological diversity*, and water quality and quantity;
- viii. promotion of *integrated pest management practices*; and
- ix. promotion of opportunities for recreation.
- x. additional goals as determined by the *landowner* and *land manager*.

(Note: Guidance text appears throughout this section inside boxes. This guidance is meant to inform the forest landowner, land managers and *group certification organization* managers about the intent of the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* and how it may be applied on-the-ground. Guidance text is not considered normative language. Where the term *member* is used, the individual forest landowner, land manager may consider this guidance as being appropriate to him/her.)

Objective 1 — Forest Management Planning: To ensure forest management plans include *long-term* sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid conversion to non-forest use.

(Note: *Members* may consider adopting some of the forest management goals in the Guidance box above to improve *forest health* and *productivity*, promote *biodiversity* and protect water quality and quantity on the *certified area*.)

Using *members* and/or land managers information sessions, an on-going monitoring system, and individual outreach to *members*, the manager shall ensure that the following aspects of forest management are implemented in conformance with the requirements of the module.

The management plan shall:

- i. be appropriate to the size of the managed forest, the *member's* or land manager's forest management goals , and the scale and intensity of management.
- ii. describe present forest conditions and forest conditions to be achieved;
- iii. make all practical efforts to promote *forest health*, including prevention, control, or response to disturbances such as wildfire, *invasive species* and other pests, pathogens, or unwanted vegetation, to achieve specific forest management goals;
- iv. address species at risk and their *habitat* requirements as well as measures to conserve these species and their *habitats* within the area of management;
- v. include measures to address known *special sites* and
- vi. provide information on other local, provincial, and federal regulations applicable to forest management and *threatened and endangered* species including species at risk.

Forests from 10 hectares to 20,000 hectares in area are eligible for certification under the module. The management plans will reflect the management goals, size of the forest and the scale of management operations. Larger forests will require an inventory upon which to base an assessment of the *long-term* sustainable harvest level and to permit planning and scheduling of harvest operations. Smaller forests require a simpler management plan.

Small-scale forest properties and forest licenses between 5,000 and 20,000 hectares must be under the management of a *qualified resource professional* or an individual that meets the legal requirements for conducting forest management for the jurisdiction.

The forest management plan is based on sound forest management science and embodies the *members* or *land manager's* current management goals. It describes the present forest conditions and provides a practical schedule of *silvicultural* treatments to achieve the management goals. It includes: a map showing significant features of the forest and includes considerations of *forest health*, *conservation* of soil *productivity*, and water quality; timber production; protection of *threatened and endangered* species including species at risk; and *special sites*, *traditional forest-related knowledge*, and *ecologically important* sites. Forest management operations such as road construction, *commercial harvesting operations* and *reforestation* should be covered by an operating plan or comply with *best management practices*. See Appendix 2 for additional information regarding forest management plans.

Objective 2 — Forest Health and Productivity: To ensure *long-term* forest *productivity*, carbon storage and *conservation* of forest resources through prompt *reforestation*, *afforestation*, *minimized* chemical use, soil *conservation*, and *protecting* forests from damaging agents.

- i. An operating plan shall be prepared for each harvest activity (other than cutting volumes for *personal use* or cultural use) to document appropriate *silviculture* and regeneration methods and other forest management *practices*;
- ii. All harvested areas shall be promptly regenerated through *planting* or direct seeding within two years or two *planting* seasons, or by planned natural regeneration

- methods within five years. Desirable advanced natural regeneration shall be protected during harvest;
- iii. Plantings of *native* or non-*invasive* naturalized tree species are preferred. In exceptional circumstances where *exotic tree species* are planted, they should not increase the risk to *native* ecosystems;
 - iv. The use of fire is allowed as a *silvicultural* or forest management technique for achievement of defined forest management goals (e.g., enhancing the growth of *non-timber forest products*, enhancement of *wildlife* forage, hazard abatement near communities, etc.);
 - v. The use of *integrated pest management* is preferred. When pesticides are used, they shall be the *least-toxic and narrowest-spectrum pesticides* necessary to achieve forest management goals. The use of pesticides shall be controlled and minimized with preference for the use of *integrated pest management* methods;
 - vi. Use of pesticides registered for the intended use and applied in accordance with label requirements; and
 - vii. The use of WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides¹³, chlorinated hydrocarbons and any pesticides banned by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is prohibited.

The *member* ensures adequate stocking with desirable and site-adapted species throughout the harvested area by prompt tree planting or natural regeneration within five years of harvesting. Tending of young trees may be required to achieve free-to-grow status. Use of prescribed burning, when it is utilized, complies with all local and provincial regulations.

Afforestation, where it is practiced, should consider potential ecological impacts of the selection and *planting* of tree species in non-forested landscapes avoiding conversion of native grasslands and *wetlands* to forests.. *Afforestation* should be considered for soils that are marginal or sub-marginal for agricultural use (stony soils, steep topography, etc.). *Afforestation* can increase habitat for forest-dependent *wildlife*, moderate stream flow and contribute to the rural economy.

Although pesticides can be an effective *silvicultural* tool, *members* should first consider *integrated pest management* techniques. Pesticides are be used by trained and licensed applicators.

Objective 3 — Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources: To *protect* the water quality and quantity of rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands*, and other water bodies through meeting or exceeding *best management practices*.

- i. *Members* shall implement federal and provincial water quality *best management practices* and *practices* to *protect* water quantity during all phases of management activities.

¹³ Exemptions are allowed where no other viable alternative exists.

- ii. Contract provisions shall specify conformance to *best management practices*.
- iii. Harvest and road building activities shall be conducted during weather conditions that *minimize* impacts on residual trees, *biodiversity*, water quality and quantity and soil resources.
- iv. *Member* shall have measures for the *protection* of rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands*, other water bodies and *riparian areas* during all phases of management, including the layout and construction of roads and *skid trails* to maintain water quality and quantity.
- v. Use *qualified logging or qualified resource professionals* where they are available if the *member* is not conducting the work him/herself.
- vi. Harvesting and log transportation operations shall be conducted in conformity with the requirements of this module.

Carry out forest management and road construction operations during weather conditions that *minimize* site disturbance. The *member* applies provincial regulations and *best management practices* to mitigate impacts of forestry operations on water resources. *Members* should have written agreements with contractors that have completed training *programs* and are recognized as *qualified logging or resource professionals* where they are available. *Members* should keep records of harvests and ensure the efficient utilization of all felled trees.

Road construction and other operations likely to cause soil disturbance are *minimized* in *riparian areas* and near *wetlands*. Drainage structures of sufficient size are installed to maintain natural drainage patterns and do not impede the passage of fish.

Objective 4 — Conservation of Biological Diversity: To maintain or advance *conservation of biological diversity* at the *stand-* and *landscape-*level and across a diversity of *forest cover types*, vegetation cover types and successional stages, including the *conservation* of forest plants and animals, including *aquatic species*, *as well as threatened and endangered species*, *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*, *old-growth forests*, and *ecologically important sites*.

- i. Implementation of *practices*, as guided by regionally based *best scientific information*, or *traditional forest-related knowledge* to retain *stand-level wildlife habitat* elements such as snags (where safe to do so), stumps, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees and nest trees.
- ii. Identification and *protection* of *non-forested wetlands*, including bogs, fens and marshes, and *vernal pools* that are *ecologically important*.
- iii. Maintain *habitat* for *threatened and endangered species* including species at risk by providing age class diversity wherever feasible and appropriately considering other *conservation* and ecological factors or *culturally important species*.

- iv. The *member* shall have access to information on the occurrence, *habitat*, and requirements for *protection of threatened and endangered* species including species at risk found in the *certified area* covered by the *forest certificate*.

The *member* is aware of the presence and location of *ecologically important sites* such as *vernal pools, riparian areas, wetlands*, stick nests and den trees. The *member* has received and has used information on local occurrence of *threatened and endangered* species including species at risk and requirements for *habitat protection*. Use of *qualified logging* or *resource professionals* where available should be considered for planning and conducting forest management activities.

Objective 5 — Management of *Visual Quality* and *Recreational Benefits*: To manage the visual impact of forest operations and provide recreational opportunities for the public.

- i. When considering harvest opening size the *member* shall take into account:
 - a. relevant regulations applicable to tree harvesting;
 - b. management plan goals and current *stand* conditions;
 - c. topography and viewpoints; and
 - d. local values and *practices* regarding harvest opening size.
- ii. Average size of clearcut harvest areas does not exceed 50 hectares (120 acres), except when necessary to meet regulatory requirements, achieve positive ecological outcomes or to respond to forest health emergencies or other natural catastrophes.
- iii. Trees in clearcut harvest areas are at least 3 years old or 1.5 meters high at the desired level of stocking before adjacent areas are clearcut, or as appropriate to address operational and economic considerations, alternative methods to reach the intent of the Objective are utilized by the *member*.
- iv. On public forests, provide recreational opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management goals.

The *member* applies the appropriate management *practices* to determine the cut block size and shape in order to mitigate impacts on aesthetics.

Objective 6 — *Protection of Special Sites* To manage lands that are geologically or *culturally important* in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

- i. Using information such as existing natural heritage data, *traditional forest-related knowledge*, or expert advice, *members* shall be aware of heritage and cultural sites on their properties or tenures and will consider local values when conducting operations to *minimize* impacts on these sites.

Heritage sites such as stone walls, old foundations, or other sites of geological or *cultural importance*, including sites of cultural importance for *Indigenous Peoples*, are identified before a forest management operation takes place. The *member* or *land manager* uses good judgement based on local values to decide on protection.

Objective 7 — Recognize and Respect *Indigenous Peoples’* Rights: To recognize and respect *Indigenous Peoples’* rights and traditional knowledge.

- i. *Members* managing forestland that is wholly or partially on public lands shall recognize and respect *Indigenous Peoples’* rights. This requires a *program* for conferring with affected *Indigenous Peoples* to enable *members* to:
 - a. understand and respect *traditional forest-related knowledge*;
 - b. identify and protect spiritually, historically, or *culturally important* sites;
 - c. address the use of *non-timber forest products* of value to *Indigenous Peoples* in areas where *members* have management responsibilities on public lands; and
 - d. respond to *Indigenous Peoples’* inquiries and concerns received.
- ii. Where Crown government agencies responsible for consultation with affected *Indigenous Peoples* regarding forest management operations on forestland exist, these agencies shall be the primary means of communicating with *Indigenous Peoples* whose rights may be affected by the *member’s* management *practices*, unless explicitly delegated to the *member* by said agency through written direction or regulation.

Consultation is required only when the forestland under management is wholly or partially on public land. In all cases Certified Organizations shall respect the processes, laws, and direction received from relevant government agencies derived through nation-to-nation relationships where the certification takes place. Where appropriate, Certified Organizations should consider consultation regarding traditional forest-related knowledge.

Objective 8 — Legal and Regulatory Compliance: To comply with applicable federal, provincial, and *local* laws and regulations.

- i. The *member* shall either a) hold legal title to the property and shall ensure that property boundaries are clearly defined, or b) demonstrate legal tenure for public forestlands and ensure that tenure boundaries are clearly defined;
- ii. There is a *program* to ensure legal and regulatory compliance. The *program* shall ensure that *members*:
 - a. are aware of applicable federal, provincial, and *local* environmental laws and regulations, including those specific to *sustainable forest management* and the recognition of *Indigenous Peoples’* rights;
 - b. have a system to achieve compliance with applicable federal, provincial, or *local* laws and regulations; and

- c. have access to information on *threatened and endangered* species including species at risk in the *certified area*.

The manager of a *group certification organization* should provide all *members* a copy of all applicable laws and regulations. These regulations can be provided in digital format. *Members* should use this information to ensure compliance. Use of *qualified logging* or *resource professionals* where available should be considered for conducting forest management activities.

Objective 9 – Community Involvement and Outreach: To broaden the *practice of sustainable forestry* through public outreach, education, and involvement and to support the efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.

- i. *Members and managers of group certification organizations* shall engage with their provincial or regional *SFI Implementation Committee*.
- ii. *Members and managers of group certified organizations* promote certification among the forest owners and managers community.
- iii. When requested by the *members*, the manager of the *group certification organization* shall organize an annual meeting to review the activities, accomplishments and problems encountered during the year, as well as future plans for the *group certification organization*.

Having the *group certification organization* manager represent their *members* on the *SFI Implementation Committee* will assist with representing *members* within the provincial or regional SFI community. This will allow *members* to stay informed about developments with the SFI program.

Annual meetings of the *group certification organization* are an effective means of sharing group accomplishments, discussing developments in forest management and learning of updates to provincial programs supporting small-scale private forest *members* or small-scale public forest tenures.

Appendix 1. Definitions (normative)

The following definitions apply to *italicized* words in the SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families.

acceptable forest management standards: These standards are all endorsed in the United States and Canada by the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC).

- *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*
- Canadian Standards Association (CAN/CSA-Z809)
- SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families

afforestation: Establishment of forest through planting and/or deliberate seeding on land that, until then, was under a different land use, implies a transformation of land use from non-forest to forest (source: FAO 2018).

aquatic species: Animals that live on or within water during some stage of their development.

best management practices (BMPs): A practice or combination of practices for *protection* of water quality that is determined by a federal, provincial, state, or *local* government or other responsible entity, after problem assessment, examination of alternative practices, and appropriate public participation, to be the most effective and practicable (including technological, economic, and institutional considerations) means of conducting a forest management operation while addressing any environmental considerations.

best scientific information: Available factual information that is generally accepted by the broad scientific community. It includes but is not limited to peer-reviewed scientific information obtainable from any source, including government and non-governmental sources, that have been verified by field testing to the maximum extent feasible.

biological diversity, biodiversity: The variety and abundance of life forms, processes, functions, and structures of plants, animals, and other living organisms, including the relative complexity of species, communities, gene pools and ecosystems at spatial scales that range from local to regional to global.

certification body: An independent third party that is accredited by:

- ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) as being competent to conduct certifications to the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard, SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard, SFI Chain-of-Custody Standard or SFI Certified Sourcing Standard, SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module, or SFI Small Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families.
- Standards Council of Canada (SCC) as being competent to conduct certifications to the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard, SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard, SFI Chain-of-Custody Standard or SFI Certified Sourcing Standard, SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module, or SFI Small Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families.

certified area: The forest area covered by a *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* or *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* certificate. In the group certification context, the certified area is the sum of forest areas of the participants and covered by a group forest certificate.

certified forest content: Raw material from lands third-party certified to *acceptable forest management standards*.

certified organization: An organization certified by an accredited *certification body* to be in conformance with the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard*, *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*, *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*, *SFI 2022 Chain of Custody Standard* and/or the *SFI 2022 Certified Sourcing Standard*.

commercial harvesting operations: Wood harvested for sale or trade.

conservation: 1. *Protection* of plant and animal *habitat*. 2. The management of a renewable natural resource with the objective of sustaining its *productivity* in perpetuity while providing for human use compatible with sustainability of the resource.

culturally important: Having significance for or being representative of human activities or beliefs (e.g., documented areas such as cemeteries, sacred sites).

ecologically important: Ecologically important can be defined as applying to *natural communities*, biological, ecological, or physical features which, either by themselves or in a network, contribute significantly to an ecosystem's productivity, *biodiversity*, and resilience. Ecologically important areas may be so identified by the inclusion of viable occurrences of species or *natural communities* that are integral to the identity or function of an ecosystem, but which may be relatively uncommon on the landscape, including species or ecological communities with a high "S-Rank" or "G-Rank" from NatureServe, subject to the discretion of the *Certified Organization*.

ecosystem services: Components of nature, directly enjoyed, consumed, or used to yield human well-being.

exotic tree species: A tree species introduced from outside its natural range. This does not include species that have become naturalized in an area and have a naturally reproducing population. (Note: Hybrids of *native* species or *native* plants that have been derived from genetic tree improvement and biotechnology *programs* are not considered exotic species.)

forest certificate: A document confirming that an individual small-scale forest or *members* of a *group certification organization* conform to the requirements for certification to the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*.

forest cover type: Classification of a forest *stand* by the dominant tree species or combination of tree species present. Unless required to use a regulatory system of *forest cover type* classification the *Certified Organization* shall use the Society of American Foresters Forest Cover Types of the United States and Canada (Eyre, 1980).

forest health: The perceived condition of a forest derived from concerns about such factors as its age, structure, composition, function, vigor, presence of unusual levels of insects or disease, and resilience to disturbance.

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 (Further information can be found under *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* in Section 7 of the *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules*).

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 4,047 hectares), or linear miles (10 to 50 miles or 16 to 80.5 kilometers) exist. (Further information can be found under *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* in Section 7 of the *SFI 2022 Standards and Rules*.)

group certification organization: A specific type of multi-site organization where forest owners, forest owners' organizations, forest managers, forest products manufacturers or forest products distributors without a pre-existing legal or contractual link can form a group for the purposes of achieving certification and gaining eligibility for a sampling approach to certification audits.

habitat: 1. A unit area of environment. 2. The place, natural or otherwise (including climate, food, cover and water) where an individual or population of animals or plants naturally or normally lives and develops.

Indigenous Peoples: Inclusive of all *Indigenous Peoples* residing in Canada. More specifically, *Indigenous Peoples* includes peoples that are recognized by section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

In Canada, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada provides a list of the 619 recognized First Nations by province. Rights-holding Métis communities in Canada, as per S. 35(2) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, include but are not limited to governing members of the Métis National Council as well as the Métis Settlements General Council.

integrated pest management: The careful consideration of all available pest control techniques and subsequent integration of appropriate measures that discourage the development of pest populations and keep pesticides and other interventions to levels that are economically justified and reduce or minimize risks to human health and the environment (source: FAO 2018).

invasive species(invasive): Species introduced from another country or geographic region outside its natural range that may have fewer natural population controls in the new environment, becoming a pest or nuisance species.

land manager: An individual or organization authorized by the *member*/license holder to manage their forestland within the *certified area* and has the ability and management authority to implement the certification requirements of the SFI *Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*.

landscape: 1. A spatial mosaic of multiple ecosystems, landforms, and plant communities across a defined area irrespective of ownership or other artificial boundaries and repeated in similar form throughout. 2. An area of land characterized by:

- similar biogeoclimatic conditions that influence site potential;
- similar historical disturbance regimes that influence vegetation structure and species composition; and
- sufficient size to provide the range of *habitat* conditions for naturally occurring communities (except for a few megafauna with large spatial needs, e.g., wolves).

least-toxic and narrowest-spectrum pesticide: A chemical preparation used to control site-specific pests that *minimizes* impact to non-target organisms and causes the least impact to while meeting management objectives. The management objectives should consider the target pest, the degree of control needed, and other issues, such as season and timing of application, rates and methods, terrain, forest conditions, and the presence or absence of water bodies.

local (when used in Objective 11 Forest Management Standard, Objective 4 Fiber Sourcing Standard and the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*): a level of government below federal, state or province such as county, district, city, township, municipality, town, or parish.

long-term: Extending over a relatively long time period — for the *SFI 2022 Standards*, this means the length of one forest management rotation or longer.

member: A *land manager* or landowner who has agreed to join the *group certification organization* and conform with the requirements of the SFI *Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*.

minimize: To do only that which is necessary and appropriate to accomplish the task or Objective described.

native: Species of ecological communities occurring naturally in an ecological region, as neither a direct or indirect consequence of recent human activity. (Ecological Regions of North America: Levels I-II)

natural community: Natural communities are combinations of *native* plants and animals that are regularly found together in particular settings. Human-caused disturbances have been minimal, consistent with historical disturbance regimes (e.g., prescribed fire), or the natural community has recovered from that disturbance, or the human-caused disturbance falls within the range of natural disturbance. (Adapted from NatureServe).

non-forested wetland: A transitional area between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems that does not support tree cover and is inundated or saturated for periods long enough to produce hydric soils and support hydrophytic vegetation.

non-timber forest products (NTFPs): Products derived from forests other than round wood or wood chips. Examples include, but are not limited to, seeds, fruits, nuts, honey, maple syrup, and mushrooms.

old-growth forests: A forested ecosystem distinguished by old trees and related structural attributes, such as tree size, down woody debris, canopy levels, and species composition. *Certified Organizations* should utilize a definition specific to their region and particular forest types.

personal use: Firewood or logs cut for personal use, not for sale or trade, limited to 50 cubic metres per year.

planting: The establishment of a group or *stand* of young trees created by direct seeding or by *planting* seedlings or plantlets.

policy: A written statement of commitment to meet an *objective* or to implement a defined *program* or plan to achieve an *objective* or outcome.

practice(s): The actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it.

productivity: The inherent capacity of a particular site or ecosystem to produce a crop or tree *stand*, often measured in volume or height.

principle: The vision and direction for sustainable forest management as embodied in the *principles* of the *SFI 2022 Standards*.

program: An organized system, process or set of activities to achieve an Objective.

protection (or protect): Maintenance of the status or integrity, over the *long term*, of identified attributes or values including management where appropriate and considering historical disturbance patterns, fire risk and *forest health* when determining appropriate *conservation* strategies.

qualified logging professional: A person with specialized skills in timber harvesting who has successfully completed *wood producer* training *programs* and continued education requirements recognized by *SFI Implementation Committees* as meeting the spirit and intent of performance measures under Objective 13 in the *SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard* or Objective 6 in the *SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

- a. Each crew must include a *qualified logging professional* who (1) has completed the *SFI Implementation Committee* approved *wood producer* training *program*; (2) is an owner of, employee of, or contracted by the *wood producer*; (3) has direct responsibility and is on-site regularly to consistently carry out the roles and responsibilities of the *qualified logging professional* under the *SFI 2022 Standard(s)* (e.g., safety, *protection* of soils, streams, and other water bodies).
- b. To be considered a *qualified logging professional*, an individual must complete the required training appropriate to their level of responsibility (e.g., owner, supervisor, employee) within the specified time period required by their *SFI Implementation*

Committee. SFI Implementation Committees have the flexibility to require different training requirements for owners of logging businesses versus training requirements for other employees (e.g., supervisors). Once classified as a *qualified logging professional*, the individual must complete the required *SFI Implementation Committee* maintenance training within the prescribed time period to retain their status as a *qualified logging professional*.

qualified resource professional: A person who by training and experience can make forest management recommendations. Examples include foresters, soil scientists, hydrologists, forest engineers, forest ecologists, fishery and *wildlife* biologists or technically trained specialists in such fields.

reforestation: The reestablishment of forest cover either naturally or by seeding or *planting* of seedlings.

riparian area: Transition zone characterized by vegetation or geomorphology adjacent to rivers, streams, lakes, *wetlands*, and other water bodies.

SFI Implementation Committee: A state, provincial, or regional committee organized by *Certified Organizations* to facilitate or manage the *programs* and alliances that support the growth of SFI certification, including sustainable forest management.

SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families: The *principles, policies*, and requirements that detail specific small-scale forest management requirements for *Certified Organizations*.

SFI Section 10 - 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation: The *principles* and guidelines that detail specific requirements to *Certified Organizations* and *certification bodies* for conducting audits to the *SFI 2022 Forest Management, Fiber Sourcing, Chain-of-Custody* and *Certified Sourcing Standards* and the *SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module* and the *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families*.

SFI 2022 Chain-of-Custody Standard: The requirements that detail processes for tracking fiber content from *certified forest content, recycled content, and certified sourcing*.

SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard: The *principles, policies, objectives, performance measures* and *indicators* that detail specific forest management requirements for *Certified Organizations*.

silviculture: The art and science of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health, and quality of forests and woodlands to meet the diverse needs and values of *land managers* and society on a sustainable basis.

skid trail: A temporary path through the woods to transport felled trees or logs to a collection area for further transportation.

small-scale forest property or forest license: Forests on public, title, treaty, reserve/reservation, fee-simple, or private land, that are owned or managed by an individual, group of investors or a municipality or county, that meet the size requirements in clause 1.1.2, are eligible to participate in an *SFI Small-Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* certification module.

soil health: The continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. (USDA)

special sites: Sites that include geologically unique or *culturally important* features.

stand: A contiguous group of trees sufficiently uniform in age, composition, and structure, and growing on a site of sufficiently uniform quality, to be a distinguishable unit.

sustainable forestry: To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs by practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates *reforestation* and the managing, growing, nurturing, and harvesting of trees for useful products and *ecosystem services* such as the *conservation* of soil, air and water quality, carbon, *biological diversity*, *wildlife* and *aquatic habitats*, recreation, and aesthetics.

sustainable forest management: The management of forests and forestland in a way and at a rate that maintains their *biodiversity*, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality, and potential to fulfil ecological, economic, and social functions.

Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc. (SFI): *SFI Inc.* is a 501c (3) non-profit charitable organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. *SFI Inc.* directs all elements of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative including the *SFI Standard(s)*, including forest management, *fiber sourcing*, and chain-of-custody certifications, *and* labeling and marketing. *SFI Inc.* is overseen by a three-chamber board of directors representing social, environmental, and economic sectors.

threatened and endangered: Listed under The U.S. Endangered Species Act or The Canadian Species at Risk Act and listed under applicable state or provincial laws requiring *protection*.

traditional forest-related knowledge: Forest-related knowledge owned and maintained by *Indigenous Peoples* as a result of their traditional use of or tenure on forestland.

vernal pool: A seasonal *wetland* with sufficient water present during amphibian breeding season, absence of fish, and presence of *wetland* obligate fauna.

visual quality: The seen aspects of both the land and the activities that occur upon it.

wetland: (1) seasonally or permanently water-logged areas characterized by vegetation adapted for life in saturated /flooded conditions; (2) *wetlands* can be forested, shrubby or open and include bogs, fens, swamps, marshes, shallow open water areas or *non-forested wetlands*; (3) *wetlands* may be stagnant systems (e.g., bogs, *vernal pools*), slow flowing (e.g., fens, swamps) or have fluctuating water levels (e.g., marshes, shallow open water).

wildlife: Aquatic (marine and freshwater) and terrestrial fauna.

wood producer: A person or organization, including loggers and wood dealers, involved in harvesting, or regularly supplying wood fiber directly from the forest for commercial purposes.

Appendix 2. Forest Management Plan (informative)

In some jurisdictions, small-scale forest landowners and managers of small-scale public forests are required to use a government approved forest management plan template. For those jurisdictions where this is not a requirement, this Appendix details the elements that should be considered when preparing a forest management plan. An illustrative table of contents is included to assist with preparation.

The forest management plan should document the following information:

- a. names and contact information of the registered landowner(s) or tenure holder(s) (i.e., the *group certification organization's members*)
- b. forest location (e.g., lot, concession, township, county) or tenure document
- c. the size of the managed forest
- d. a map (or aerial photo) showing:
 - i. property boundaries
 - ii. existing infrastructure (roads, trails, etc.)
 - iii. location of watercourses and wetlands
 - iv. area under management for timber production
 - v. area managed for *conservation/recreation* purposes
 - vi. known forest values (e.g., *special sites*), etc.
- e. description of forest *stands*
- f. prioritization of the management goals for the next 10-year period (e.g., timber production, recreation, *conservation*, maple syrup production, etc.)
- g. professional recommendations to achieve the management goals
- h. schedule of management operations including the timing of the next harvest, *silvicultural* activity, or construction of access roads/trails
- i. a brief history of the property (length of ownership, past management activities, etc.)
- j. a basic inventory of the forest under the plan. At a minimum, this inventory should consist of the species composition, basal area, and level of stocking

Where the *land manager* or *member* has access to some or all of the above information in digital format, it may be possible to represent the location and schedule of forest management operations using GIS or similar tools.

A list of legislation and policies (federal, provincial, *local*) that may affect forest management activities on the forest will be available to all *group certification organization members*.

A forest operations prescription/operating plan should be required for all road construction, *silvicultural* treatments, and *commercial harvest operations*. A municipal permit may also be required.

Example Table of Contents for a Forest Management Plan

- 1: Property Owner or Tenure Holder Information
 - 1.1 Registered Property Owner(s) / Tenure Holder
 - 1.2 Plan Author Information
- 2: Property or Tenure Location Information.....
 - 2.1 Property / Tenure Location
 - 2.2 Federal, Provincial and Local Policies and Regulations
- 3: Property / Tenure History
- 3.1 History.....
- 3.2 Species at Risk
- 3.3 Local Natural Heritage Features
- 4: Property / Tenure Map & Surrounding Area.....
- 5: Member Forest Management Goals
- 5.1 General Management Goals
- 5.2 Detailed Property / Tenure management outcomes
- 5.3 Strategies to Meet Property / Tenure Goals
- 6: Detailed Property / Tenure Map
- 7: Managed Forest Compartment Descriptions.....
 - 7.1 Forest Inventory Techniques.....
 - 7.2 Forest Compartment Summary by Land Parcel
 - 7.3 General Forest Soil & Drainage Description
 - 7.4 Wildlife Habitat Inventory
- 8: Ten-Year Activity Summary 202X–202X
- 9: Report of Activities 202X–202X.....
- 10: Access Trails.....
 - 10.1 Access Trail Goals
 - 10.2 Basic Trail Design Concepts
 - 10.3 Trail Construction Best Management Practices.....
- 11: Wildlife & Cavity Trees.....
- 12: Coarse Woody Debris & Fine Woody Debris
- 13: Buffer Zones Around Water & Open Wetlands.....

Appendix 3 – Requirements for Group Certification Organizations (normative)

(taken from SFI Section 10 – SFI 2022 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation: Appendix 2, Group Certification Organizations)

1. Scope

Audits of group certification organizations to assess conformance with the SFI Small Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families.

2. References

IAF Mandatory Document for The Certification of Multiple Sites Based on Sampling Issue 2, Clause 6.1: Methodologies for Auditing of a Multi-site Organization Using Site Sampling (IAF MD1: 2018)

IAF Mandatory Document for Duration of Quality, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (IAF MD 5: 2019) — (Informative).

3. Group Certification Organizations

3.1 *Group certification organizations* formed to achieve *SFI Small Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* certification shall meet the requirements in this Appendix.

Group certification organizations formed to achieve *SFI Small Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families* certification, shall submit all the forest area under management within the area for the group certificate. All *members* in the *group certification organization* shall be subject to the internal monitoring and the internal audit *program*.

3.2 Commitment and policy

3.2.1 The *group certification organization* shall require a commitment:

- a. to comply with module requirements and other applicable requirements of the certification system;
- b. to integrate the *group certification organization* requirements in the group management system;
- c. to continuously improve the group management system;
- d. to continuously support the improvement of the sustainable forest management by *members* of the module *group certification organization*.

The commitment may be part of a group management *policy* and shall be publicly available upon request.

- 3.2.2 *Members* in the *group certification organization* shall provide a commitment
 - a. to follow the requirements of the management system;
 - b. to implement the requirements of the module in their operations.
 - 3.2.3 Where a *group certification organization* plans any changes in the group management system, these changes shall be included in a group management plan.
 - 3.2.4 Where a *group certification organization* decides to fulfil requirements of the module, these requirements shall be considered in a group management plan.
 - 3.2.5 The *group certification organization* shall determine and maintain the resources needed for the establishment, implementation, maintenance, and continual improvement of the group management system.
 - 3.2.6 The group certification organization shall define the necessary competence of persons doing work in the group management system.
 - 3.2.7 The *group certification organization* shall have communication processes in place to raise the awareness of group *members* concerning:
 - a. the group management *policy*;
 - b. the requirements of the module;
 - c. their contribution to the effectiveness of the group management system, including the benefits of improved group performance;
 - d. the implications of not conforming with the group management system requirements, and
 - e. the *group certification organization* shall determine the processes required for internal and external communications.
- 3.3 Organizational roles, responsibilities, and authorities for the *Group Certification Organization*

3.3.1 Functions and responsibilities of the Group Manager

The following functions and responsibilities of the group manager shall be specified:

- a. implement and maintain an effective management system covering all group *members*;
- b. represent the *group certification organization* in the certification process, including in communications and relationships with the *certification body*, submission of an application for certification, and contractual relationship with the *certification body*;
- c. establish written procedures for the management of the *group certification organization*;
- d. establish written procedures for the acceptance of new *members* of the *group certification organization*. These acceptance procedures

- shall cover at least the verification of the applicant's information about contact details, clear identification of their forest property and its/their size(s);
- e. establish written procedures for the suspension and exclusion of *members* who do not correct/close nonconformities. *Members* excluded from any *group certification organizations* based on nonconformities cannot be accepted within 12 months after exclusion;
 - f. keep documented information of:
 - i. the group manager and *members'* conformity with the requirements of the module,
 - ii. all *members*, including their contact details, identification of their forest property and its/ their size(s),
 - iii. the *certified area*,
 - iv. identification of affected *stakeholders* (for forest management *group certification organizations*),
 - v. the implementation of an internal monitoring *program*, its review and any preventive and/or corrective actions taken;
 - g. documented information relevant to the group management system and the conformance with the requirements of the module shall be up to date and adequately protected against loss of confidentiality, improper use, or loss of integrity.
 - h. establish connections with all *members* based on a binding written agreement which shall include the *members* commitment to comply with the module. The group manager shall have a written contract or other written agreement with all *members* covering the right of the group manager to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the exclusion of any *member* from the scope of certification in the event of nonconformity with the module;
 - i. provide all *members* with a document confirming participation in the *group certification organization*.
 - j. provide all *members* with information and guidance required for the effective implementation and maintenance of the module;
 - k. address nonconformities reported from *members* which were identified under other certifications than the particular *group certification organization* and to ensure implementation with all *members*;
 - l. operate an internal monitoring *program* that provides for the evaluation of the group certification organization's conformity with the module requirements;
 - m. operate an annual internal audit *program* covering both *members* and group manager;
 - n. operate a management review of the *group certification organization* and act on the results from the review;

- o. provide full co-operation and assistance in responding effectively to all requests from the *certification body*, accreditation body for relevant data, documentation or other information; allowing access to the forest area covered by the *group certification organization*;
- p. maintain appropriate mechanisms for resolving complaints and disputes relating to group management and the module requirements.

3.3.2 Function and responsibilities of Members

The following functions and responsibilities of the *members* shall be specified:

- a. to provide the group manager with a binding written agreement, including a commitment on conformity with the module requirements and other applicable requirements of the certification system; *members* excluded from any certification group cannot apply for group membership within 12 months after exclusion;
- b. to provide the group manager with information about previous *group certification organization* participation;
- c. to comply with the module and other applicable requirements of the certification system as well as with the requirements of the management system;
- d. to provide full co-operation and assistance in responding effectively to all requests from the group manager, or *certification body* for relevant data, documentation or other information; allowing access to the forest;
- e. to inform the group manager about nonconformities identified under other certifications than the particular *group certification organization*;
- f. to implement relevant corrective and preventive actions established by the group manager.

4. Evaluating the Group Certification Organization Performance

4.1 Monitoring of *Group Certification Organization* Performance

4.1.1 The *group certification organization* shall maintain an internal monitoring *program* that provides confidence in the conformity of the group organization with the module requirements. The *program* shall determine:

- a. what shall be monitored and measured;
- b. the methods for monitoring, measurement, analysis and evaluation, as applicable, to ensure valid results;
- c. when the monitoring and measuring shall be performed;
- d. when the results from monitoring and measurement shall be analysed and evaluated;
- e. what documented information shall be available as evidence of the results.

4.1.2 The *group certification organization* shall evaluate the group management performance and the effectiveness of the group management system concerning the implementation of the module requirements.

4.2 Internal Audit¹⁴

- 4.2.1 The annual internal audit *program* shall provide information on whether the *group certification organization's* management system:
- conforms to the *group certification organization's* own requirements for its group management system and the requirements of the module;
 - ensures the implementation of the module requirements at the *member* level;
 - is effectively implemented and maintained.
- 4.2.2 The internal audit *program* shall cover the group manager and all *members*. The group manager shall be audited annually. The *members* may be selected on a sample basis.
- 4.2.3 The internal audit *program* which shall cover at least:
- the audit planning process;
 - the audit criteria and scope;
 - the competence and impartiality of the auditors;
 - reporting the audit result to the *group certification organization* management;
 - retaining of evidence of the implementation of the audit *program* and the audit results.
- 4.2.4 The internal audit *program* shall include procedures for¹⁵:
- determination of the sample size;
 - determination of sample categories;
 - distribution of the sample to the categories;
 - selection of the *members*.

4.2.5 At least 25% of the audit sample should be selected at random with the remaining sites selected on the basis of a risk assessment.

4.3 Nonconformity, corrective and preventative action

- 4.3.1 When a nonconformity occurs, the group manager shall implement corrective action and mitigate the impacts to the extent possible;
- 4.3.2 The group manager shall evaluate the need for preventative action to eliminate the causes of the nonconformity by:
- reviewing the nonconformity;
 - determining the causes of the nonconformity;
 - determining if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur;
 - implement any action needed;
 - review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken;
 - make changes to the group management system, if necessary.

¹⁴ When designing and implementing a *program* to evaluate conformance with the *SFI Small Scale Forest Management Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families, Certified Organizations* should reference ISO 19011 Guidelines for auditing management systems.

¹⁵ *Group certification organizations* should reference IAF MD-1 for further information regarding audit sample selection.

4.3.3 The group manager shall retain documented information as evidence of:

- a. the nature of the nonconformities and any subsequent actions taken;
- b. the results of any corrective action.

4.3.4 A *member* who was excluded from a *group certification organization* shall be internally audited by the group manager before they are allowed to re-enter the *group certification organization*. The internal audit shall not take place sooner than 12 months after the exclusion.

4.4 Management review and Continual Improvement

4.4.1 An annual management review shall at least include:

- a. the status of actions from previous management reviews;
- b. changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the *group certification organization's* management system;
- c. the status of conformity with the module, that includes reviewing the results of the internal monitoring *program* the internal audit and the *certification body's* evaluations and surveillance;
- d. information on the *group certification organization's* performance, including trends in:
 - i. nonconformities and corrective actions;
 - ii. monitoring and measurement results;
 - iii. audit results;
- e. opportunities for continual improvement.

4.4.2 The outputs of the management review shall include decisions related to continual improvement opportunities and any need for changes to the *group certification organization's* management system.

4.4.3 The *group certification organization* shall retain documented information as evidence of the results of management reviews.