



Draft 2010-2014 SFI Standard

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Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Standard

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Introduction

Sustainably managed forests provide many benefits to society. Managed forests make a vital contribution to the world by providing economic, environmental, and social benefits indispensable to the quality of life. A commitment to provide these social benefits extends to promoting human health and safety; providing employee training and education; protecting water quality, soil, and *wildlife*; protecting unique resources; and communicating the benefits of the practice of *sustainable forestry* to the general public. The *SFI Standard* reflects this commitment to social responsibility through its *principles, objectives, performance measures, and indicators*.

The SFI program was launched in 1994 as one of forest sector's contributions to the vision of sustainable development established by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). It was developed with multi-stakeholder input including Environmental Non-Government Organizations (ENGOS), industry, scientists, academics, government agencies and professional organizations. The SFI program is based on the premise that responsible environmental behavior and sound business decisions can co-exist to the benefit of communities, landowners, manufacturers, shareholders, customers, the environment, and future generations.

Following UNCED, many nations began to consider how they would measure and track their progress toward the goal of sustainability. In 1993, a United Nations committee convened an international seminar in Montréal, Canada on the sustainable development of temperate and boreal forest. This conference led to the formation of the Working Group on Criteria and Indicators for the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forest. This working group soon became known as the "Montréal Process" and both the Canadian and US governments are signatories to the Montréal process. Other signatories include Argentina, Australia, Chile, China, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand and Russia. These 12 countries represent 90 percent of the world's temperate and boreal forests (60 percent of the world's total forests). By endorsing and working with the Montréal Process criteria and indicators, participating countries have made a national commitment to work towards the sustainable management of their forests. Although the Montréal Process criteria and indicators are intended to track progress at a national level and provide an international reference for policy-makers, many of the criteria and indicators can be reinforced and supported at a local level and are therefore reflected in the *SFI Standard's principles, objectives, performance measures, and indicators*. The Montréal Process criteria are:

1. Conservation of biological diversity.
2. Maintenance of productive capacity of forest ecosystems.
3. Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality.
4. Conservation and maintenance of soil and water resources.
5. Maintenance of forest contribution to global carbon cycles.
6. Maintenance and enhancement of long-term multiple socio-economic benefits.
7. Legal, institutional and economic framework for forest conservation and sustainable management.

Global Recognition

The SFI Program has progressed steadily into a globally recognized North American standard composed of *principles, objectives, performance measures* and *indicators*. The *SFI Standard* is recognized by governments, corporations and social and environmental groups across North America and globally.

In December of 2005, the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC) announced it endorsed the SFI Standard and appointed the Sustainable Forestry Board to be the PEFC-US governing body. PEFC sets minimum benchmarks for national forest certification systems worldwide and endorsement schemes that meet or exceed those requirements. PEFC endorsement of the *SFI Standard* brings greater recognition to the SFI internationally and enhanced marketing opportunities for SFI *Program Participants* in numerous countries in Europe and Asia and throughout the world (www.pefc.org).

The *SFI Standard* is applied to larger forest operations, and SFI Inc. recognizes the American Tree Farm System[®] (www.treefarmssystem.org) as the non-industrial landowner certification program in the U.S., encompassing thousands of family forest owners. The American Tree Farm System has also been endorsed by the PEFC.

SFI Governance and Stakeholder Involvement

The SFI program is operated by SFI Inc. which is a fully independent non-profit charitable 501(c)(3) organization. SFI Inc. is governed by its 18-member board of directors made up of three chambers with equal representation: environmental, social and economic. The diversity of the board members reflects the variety of interests in the forestry community. This multi-stakeholder Board of Directors is the sole governing body over the *SFI Standard* and all aspects of the SFI program, including the *SFI Standard*, chain of custody, labeling and claims as well as marketing and promotion.

The SFI External Review Panel, comprised of environmental, conservation and forestry experts, annually reviews the program's progress, and releases their report publicly. In 1997, the Panel adopted an independent charter under which it selects its own membership and develops its own agenda to represent the public interest as an outside observer of the SFI program.

Thirty-seven *SFI Implementation Committees (SICs)* across North America operate at the regional, state, and provincial level to help promote the *SFI Standard* through targeted local actions. They involve public agencies, universities, local forestry associations, landowners, loggers, partnerships with conservation groups, and other community-based organizations. As part of the SFI program, *SICs* promote logger training programs to reach the thousands of independent contractors that are the key to the quality of forest harvesting operations.

Conservation Support

SFI has the support of conservation groups who recognize that SFI certification helps to protect wildlife habitat, biological diversity and other important forest values. Many of these conservation groups partner with SFI Inc. and SFI *Program Participants* on research to advance understanding of forestry-specific issues, achieving mutual conservation goals and providing tangible, on-the-ground benefits for forests in North America.

Public Involvement

Public involvement, communication and public reporting in the SFI program is welcomed and reflected in the *SFI Standard* under *Objectives 17, 18 and 19*. *Program participants* are required to support and promote mechanisms for public outreach, education and involvement related to forest management. In addition, on public lands, *program participants* are required to participate in public land planning and management processes with appropriate governments and the public. On these public lands, *program participants* are also required to confer with affected indigenous peoples.

The SFI program also requires a *SFI Certified Program Participant* to provide a report prepared by the *certification body* to SFI Inc. after the successful completion of a certification, recertification or surveillance audit to the 2010-2014 *SFI Standard*. These reports are publicly available on the SFI Inc. website (www.sfiprogram.org)

The public also has avenues to voice and have any concerns addressed related to the SFI program and its participants through SFI's open and transparent complaint process.

Requirements for Program Participants

SFI Program Participants must comply with all portions of the *SFI Standard* relevant to their operations, taking into account their local conditions and circumstances and the scope and scale of their operations. In addition, the *SFI Standard* requires *Program Participants* to take their commitment to responsible stewardship beyond the bounds of their own lands and operations by encouraging others to adopt the *principles and objectives* of the *SFI Standard*. *Program Participants* are required to work with their suppliers to make sure they are meeting *program goals for best management practices (BMPs)*. And *Program Participants* are required to invest in research to enhance the practice of *sustainable forestry*, add to scientific knowledge, improve *forestry practices*, and increase the overall *productivity* of forests.

SFI: the North American Standard with a Global Reach

SFI is the only single North American standard and is one of the largest and fastest growing certification standards in the world, with hundreds of *program participants*

across North America. *Program participants* include private landowners, public landowners and managers, as well as conservation groups and universities.

The *SFI Standard* applies to the United States and Canada, where *Program Participants* must comply with numerous federal, provincial, state, and local laws that protect the environment, their workers, and those who live in the communities in which they operate. Such laws include hundreds of thousands of rules that cover a broad range of issues. Just some of the applicable federal, state, provincial, or local forestry-related environmental laws and regulations found in the United States and Canada include the *Clean Water Act*, *Endangered Species Act*, *Species at Risk Act*, and state or provincial forest practice laws. The social laws of the United States and Canada cover civil rights, equal employment opportunities, antidiscrimination and anti-harassment measures, workers' compensation, measures to protect indigenous peoples' rights, workers' and communities' right to know, wages and working hours, and occupational health and safety. Antitrust, business competition and other laws in the United States and Canada outline business procedures that must be followed.

Given the comprehensiveness of the laws already in place in North America, the SFI Program does not try to duplicate *sustainable forestry* processes that are already mandatory in the United States and Canada. Both countries have mature legal systems that consistently discourage and punish illegal behavior. Given the wide range of due process and compliance mechanisms that ensure conformance with applicable laws, the *SFI Standard* purposefully focuses on continual improvement of the practice of *sustainable forestry*, forest *productivity*, environmental performance processes and community outreach that complements the existing legal framework.

When a *SFI Program Participant* procures wood off-shore (beyond North America), the *SFI Standard* stipulates the need to avoid controversial sources of supply, including *illegal logging* of fiber from countries without effective social laws.

Responsible Fiber Sourcing

Through SFI's fiber sourcing requirements, the SFI program stands apart from other forest certification programs by supporting and promoting responsible forest management on these lands.

Today, 10 percent of the world's forests are certified and in North America, while large tracts of public and industrial forest lands are certified, less than 1 percent of family forest land is certified. While SFI Inc. encourages certification of lands owned by small family forest owners, it is also a fact that many family forest owners do not have the resources, nor do they perceive the need to incur the annual cost associated with maintaining a certified forest – particularly in the case of those who own small acreages. In the United States, more than 10 million family forest owners account for 60 percent of the forestland and more than 50 percent of the raw material used by *SFI Program Participants*. In Canada, family forest owners in many regions provide a significant share

of the raw materials used by *SFI Program Participants*. Yet, the lack of certification does not mean these forests are not well-managed.

In North America, *SFI Program Participants* who source fiber from uncertified lands, must engage in private landowner outreach and logger training and require their suppliers to use the services of qualified professionals and trained loggers, and adhere to *best management practices* that protect water quality on those uncertified lands. In addition, the fiber sourcing requirements promote the identification and protection of important habitat elements for wildlife, including critically imperiled and imperiled species and communities; and foster prompt reforestation of harvested sites. For *SFI certified Program Participants*, these fiber sourcing requirements are audited by a third party independent accredited *certification body* which includes sampling for evidence of logger training, landowner outreach, reforestation, conformance with applicable laws and adherence to *BMPs* on uncertified lands as well as the other requirements set out in the SFI fiber sourcing objectives.

Fiber sourcing labels do not make claims about certified forest content but they do make claims about certified fiber sourcing practices for procured wood fiber. Supporting fiber sourcing is supporting family forest owners and their efforts to keep forests as forests while at the same time providing the market place with forest products from well-managed forests.

From the Forests to the Market

Forest certification is often complemented with a chain-of-custody certification, which is a mechanism used to track wood from a certified forest, providing a link between the certified forest and the certified product. SFI offers a suite of product and promotional labels that allow appropriately certified organizations to make claims to the content in the product they sell that comes from certified forests. So whether it is a paper, packaging, or construction materials a claim can be made regarding the certified forest content, similar to recycled content claims and labels seen on products. This helps customers and consumers of forest products identify and give preference to products from well managed forests. In this age of increased corporate social responsibility and consumer awareness we believe SFI provides the market with a valuable tool to buy responsibly. The SFI program provides a label for certified content as well as a label for fiber sourcing, see Annexes 1 and 2 respectively.

Third Party Independent Certification

The *SFI Standard* requires third party independent certification audits by competent and accredited certification bodies. This 3rd party certification is necessary for both the forest land certification, fiber sourcing certification and chain-of-custody certification. All certification bodies must be accredited by one of the North American members of the International Accreditation Forum, i.e. ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB), American National Standards Institute (ANSI), or the Standards Council of Canada (SCC).

Emerging Themes: Bioenergy and Carbon

The *SFI Standard* is a research and science-based standard that also takes careful consideration of social, economic and environmental issues related to forest management as well as the interests in the marketplace. Through SFI's continual improvement process it often builds new requirements into its standard that reflect new information and science as it becomes available. In the SFI 2010-1014 Standard, there is new language to address the issues of climate change, carbon management and *bioenergy feedstock* harvesting.

The *SFI Standard* applies to management of forests throughout North America, regardless of the forest products derived from management of such forests. High intensity, agro-forestry operations, while they may serve a role in the production of *bioenergy feedstock* production, are beyond the scope of the *SFI Standard*. *Bioenergy feedstocks* are not new products from managed forests, however, there is growing interest in such products given government policies and positions to promote renewable energy. The *SFI Standard* provides the same assurances regardless of the final product, whether it is solid wood building products, paper products, or feedstocks for bioenergy. In addition, the requirements for forest management and fiber sourcing are the same regardless of whether the end-user is a traditional forest or paper product company or emerging bioenergy production company.

Additionally, *sustainable forestry* makes an important contribution to mitigating climate change and adapting to changing ecosystems. Notwithstanding the fact that policy solutions have not been solidified regarding the role of managed forests in a regulatory framework, the process of carbon sequestration is a natural by-product of tree growth and therefore an important component of carbon management. As a result, *Program Participants* have an opportunity to monitor information generated from regional climate models and consider how well-managed forests contribute to resilient ecosystems as an adaptation to a changing climate.

Principles for Sustainable forestry

Program Participants both support *sustainable forestry* practices on forestland they manage and promote it on other lands. Moreover, *Program Participants* support efforts to protect private property rights and the ability of all private landowners to manage their forestland sustainably. This support stems from *Program Participants'* belief that 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* forestland bases. In keeping with this responsibility, *Program Participants* shall have a written *policy* (or *policies*) to implement and achieve the following *principles*:

1. Sustainable Forestry

To practice *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 with the *conservation* of soil, air and water quality, carbon, *biological diversity*, *wildlife* and *aquatic habitat*, recreation, and aesthetics.

2. Forest Productivity and Health

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

3. Protection of Water Resources

To protect water bodies and *riparian* zones and to conform with *best management practices* to protect water quality.

4. Protection of Biological Diversity

To manage forests in ways that protects and promotes the diversity of *wildlife habitats*, forest types and ecological or natural community types.

5. Aesthetics and Recreation

To manage the visual impact of harvesting and to provide recreation opportunities for communities.

6. Protection of Special Sites

To manage forests and lands of special significance (biologically, geologically, historically or *culturally important*) in a manner that *protects* their integrity and takes into account their unique qualities.

7. Responsible Procurement Practices in North America

To use and promote among other forest landowners *sustainable forestry* practices that are both scientifically credible and economically, environmentally, and socially responsible.

8. Avoidance of *Controversial Sources* including *Illegal Logging* in Off-Shore Procurement

To avoid wood fiber from illegally logged forests when procuring fiber outside of North America and to avoid sourcing fiber from countries without effective social laws.

9. Legal Compliance

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

10. Research

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

11. Training and Education

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

12. Public Involvement

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry on public lands through community involvement.

13. Transparency

To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the *SFI Standard* by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.

14. Continual Improvement

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

These *SFI Principles* are further refined in *Objectives 1 – 20*.

Objectives for Sustainable Forestry

Some *Program Participants* own forestland, others own forestland and manufacturing facilities, and still others own manufacturing facilities only. As such,

SFI Standard land management *objectives* 1–7 provide measures for evaluating *Program Participants*' compliance with the *SFI Standard* on forestlands they own or control through long-term leases. Through these objectives, addressed in forest management plans, *Program Participants* are implementing *sustainable forestry* principles by employing an array of economically, environmentally and socially sound practices in the conservation of forests-including appropriate *protection*, growth, harvest and use of those forests-using the *best scientific information available*.

SFI Standard fiber sourcing *objectives* 8-13 provides measures for evaluating *Program Participants*' compliance with the *SFI Standard* through their *procurement programs*.

SFI Standard land management and fiber sourcing *objectives* 14-20 provide measures for evaluating all *Program Participants*' compliance with the *SFI Standard* for research, training, legal compliance, public and landowner involvement, management review, and continual improvement.

A summary of *SFI Standard Objectives* follows:

Objective 1. Forest Management Planning

To broaden the implementation of *sustainable forestry* by ensuring long-term forest productivity and yield based on the use of the *best scientific information* available.

Objective 2. Forest Productivity

To ensure long-term forest *productivity*, carbon management, and *conservation* of forest resources through prompt *reforestation*, *soil conservation*, *afforestation*, and other measures.

Objective 3. Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources

To protect water quality in streams, lakes, and other water bodies.

Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity including Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value

To manage the quality and distribution of *wildlife habitats* and contribute to the *conservation* of *biological diversity* by developing and implementing *stand-* and *landscape-level* measures that promote *habitat* diversity and the *conservation* of forest plants and animals, including *aquatic fauna*.

Objective 5. Maintenance of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits.

To manage the visual impact of harvesting and other forest operations.

Objective 6. Protection of Special Sites.

To manage *Program Participant* lands that are ecologically, geologically, historically, or *culturally important* in a manner that recognizes their special qualities.

Objective 7. Efficient Use of Forest Resources.

To promote the efficient use of forest resources.

Objective 8. Landowner Outreach. To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by forest landowners through *procurement programs*.

Objective 9. Use of Forest Management and Harvesting Professionals.

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by encouraging forest landowners to utilize the services of forest management and harvesting professionals.

Objective 10. Adherence to Best Management Practices.

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* through *the use of Best Management Practices* to protect water quality.

Objective 11. Promote Conservation of Biological Diversity, Biodiversity Hotspots and Major Tropical Wilderness Areas.

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by conserving biological diversity, *biodiversity hotspots* and *major tropical wilderness areas*.

Objective 12. Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Illegal Logging.

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by avoidance of *illegal logging*.

Objective 13. Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Fiber Sourced from Areas without Effective Social Laws.

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by avoiding *controversial sources*.

Objective 14. Legal and Regulatory Compliance. Compliance with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local laws and regulations.

Objective 15. Forestry Research, Science, and Technology.

To improve forestry research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.

Objective 16. Training and Education.

To improve the practice of sustainable forest management by resource professionals, *wood producers*, and contractors through appropriate training and education *programs*.

Objective 17. Community Involvement in the Practice of Sustainable Forestry.

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by encouraging the public and *forestry* community to participate in the commitment to *sustainable forestry* and publicly report progress.

Objective 18: Public Land Management Responsibilities.

To improve the practice of sustainable forest management on public lands.

Objective 19. Communications and Public Reporting.

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by documenting progress and opportunities for improvement.

Objective 20. Management Review and Continual Improvement.

To promote continual improvement in the practice of *sustainable forestry* and monitor, measure, and report performance in achieving the commitment to *sustainable forestry*.

SFI Standard Objectives 1-7 for Land Management

Objective 1. Forest Management Planning. To broaden the implementation of *sustainable forestry* by ensuring long-term forest productivity and yield based on the use of the *best scientific information* available.

Performance Measure 1.1. *Program Participants* shall ensure that forest management plans include long-term harvest levels that are sustainable and consistent with appropriate *growth-and-yield models*.

Indicators:

1. forest management planning at a level appropriate to the size and scale of the operation, including
 - a. a long term resources analysis
 - b. a periodic or ongoing forest *inventory*;
 - c. a *land classification* system;
 - d. soils *inventory* and maps, where available;
 - e. access to *growth-and-yield modeling* capabilities;
 - f. up-to-date maps or a *geographic information system (GIS)*;
 - g. recommended sustainable harvest levels for conventional, and where applicable, *bioenergy feedstock* harvesting; and
 - h. a review of nontimber issues (e.g., pilot projects and economic incentive programs to promote water *protection*, carbon storage, climate induced ecosystem change, *bioenergy feedstock* production, or *biological diversity conservation*).
2. Documentation of annual harvest trends in relation to the sustainable forest management plan.
3. A forest *inventory* system and a method to calculate growth and yield.
4. Periodic updates of *inventory* and recalculation of planned harvests to account for changes in growth due to *productivity* increases or decreases (e.g. improved data, long-term drought, fertilization, climate change, etc.).
5. Documentation of forest practices (e.g., planting, fertilization, and thinning) consistent with assumptions in harvest plans.

Objective 2. Forest Productivity. To ensure long-term forest *productivity*, carbon management, and *conservation* of forest resources through prompt *reforestation*, soil *conservation*, *afforestation*, and other measures.

Performance Measure 2.1. *Program Participants* shall reforest after final harvest, unless delayed for site-specific environmental or *forest health* considerations, through *artificial regeneration* within two years or two planting seasons, or by planned *natural regeneration* methods within five years.

Indicators:

1. Designation of all management units for either natural or *artificial regeneration*.
2. Clear criteria to judge adequate regeneration and appropriate actions to correct understocked areas and achieve acceptable species composition and stocking rates for both *artificial* and *natural regeneration*.
3. *Minimized* plantings of *exotic tree species* and research documentation that *exotic tree species*, planted operationally, pose minimal risk.
4. *Protection* of desirable or planned advanced *natural regeneration* during harvest.
5. *Artificial reforestation programs* that consider potential ecological impacts of a different species or species mix from that which was harvested.

Performance Measure 2.2. *Program Participants* shall *minimize* chemical use required to achieve management *objectives* while protecting employees, neighbors, the public, and the forest environment.

Indicators:

1. *Minimized* chemical use required to achieve management objectives.
2. Use of *least-toxic and narrowest-spectrum pesticides* necessary to achieve management objectives.
3. Use of pesticides registered for the intended use and applied in accordance with label requirements.
4. Use of *integrated pest management* where feasible.
5. Supervision of forest chemical applications by state- or provincial-trained or certified applicators.
6. Use of *best management practices (BMPs)* appropriate to the situation; for example,
 - a. Notification of adjoining landowners or nearby residents concerning applications and chemicals used;
 - b. appropriate multilingual signs or oral warnings;
 - c. control of public road access during and immediately after applications;
 - d. designation of streamside and other needed buffer strips;
 - e. use of positive shutoff and minimal-drift spray valves;
 - f. aerial application of forest chemicals parallel to buffer zones to *minimize* drift;
 - g. monitoring of water quality or safeguards to ensure proper equipment use and *protection* of streams, lakes, and other water bodies;
 - h. appropriate storage of chemicals;
 - i. filing of required state or provincial reports; or

j. use of methods to ensure *protection of threatened and endangered* species.

Performance Measure 2.3. *Program Participants* shall implement management practices to protect and maintain forest and soil *productivity*.

Indicators:

1. Use of soils maps where available.
2. Process to identify soils vulnerable to compaction and use of appropriate methods to avoid excessive soil disturbance.
3. Use of erosion control measures to *minimize* the loss of soil and site *productivity*.
4. Post-harvest conditions conducive to maintaining site *productivity* (e.g., limited rutting, retained down woody debris, *minimized skid trails*).
5. Retention of vigorous trees during partial harvesting, consistent with silvicultural norms for the area.
6. Criteria that address conventional and, where applicable, *bioenergy feedstock* harvesting and site preparation to protect soil *productivity*.
7. *Minimize* road construction to meet management objectives efficiently.

Performance Measure 2.4. *Program Participants* shall manage so as to protect forests from damaging agents, such as environmentally or economically undesirable wildfire, pests, and diseases, to maintain and improve long-term *forest health, productivity* and *economic viability*.

Indicators:

1. *Program* to protect forests from damaging agents.
2. Management to promote healthy and productive forest conditions to *minimize* susceptibility to damaging agents.
3. Participation in, and support of, fire and pest prevention and control programs.
4. Where available, monitor information generated from regional climate models and consider the results of these efforts in planning where practical and consistent with management objectives.

Performance Measure 2.5. *Program Participants* that deploy *improved planting stock*, including *varietal seedlings* shall use sound scientific methods.

Indicator:

1. *Program* for appropriate research, testing, evaluation, and deployment of *improved planting stock*, including *varietal seedlings*.

Objective 3. Protection and Maintenance of Water Resources. To protect water quality in streams, lakes, and other water bodies.

Performance Measure 3.1. *Program Participants* shall meet or exceed all applicable federal, provincial, state, and local water quality laws and meet or exceed *best management practices* developed under Canadian or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency–approved water quality programs.

Indicators:

1. *Program* to implement state or provincial *BMPs* during all phases of management activities.
2. Contract provisions that specify *BMPs* compliance.
3. Plans that address wet-weather events (e.g., *inventory* systems, wet-weather tracts, definitions of acceptable operating conditions).
4. Monitoring of overall *BMPs* implementation.

Performance Measure 3.2. *Program Participants* shall have or develop, implement, and document *riparian protection* measures based on soil type, terrain, vegetation, harvesting system and utilization levels, and other applicable factors.

Indicators:

1. *Program* addressing management and *protection* of streams, lakes, and other water bodies and *riparian* zones.
2. Mapping of streams, lakes, and other water bodies as specified in state or provincial *BMPs* and, where appropriate, identification on the ground.
3. Implementation of plans to manage or protect streams, lakes, and other water bodies.
4. Identification and *protection* of *nonforested wetlands*, including bogs, fens, and marshes, and vernal pools of ecological significance.
5. Where regulations or *BMPs* do not currently exist to protect *riparian* areas, use of experts to identify appropriate *protection* measures.

Objective 4. Conservation of Biological Diversity including *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*. To manage the quality and distribution of *wildlife habitats* and

contribute to the *conservation of biological diversity* by developing and implementing *stand-* and *landscape-*level measures that promote *habitat* diversity and the *conservation* of forest plants and animals, including *aquatic fauna*.

Performance Measure 4.1. *Program Participants* shall have programs to promote *biological diversity* at *stand* and *landscape* levels.

Indicators:

1. *Program* to promote the *conservation* of native *biological diversity*, including species, *wildlife habitats*, and ecological or natural community types, at *stand* and *landscape* levels.
2. *Program* to protect *threatened and endangered* species.
3. Plans to locate and protect known sites associated with viable occurrences of *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities also known as *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*. Plans for *protection* may be developed independently or collaboratively and may include *Program Participant* management, cooperation with other stakeholders, or use of easements, *conservation* land sales, exchanges, or other *conservation* strategies.
4. Development and implementation of criteria, for conventional and, where applicable, *bioenergy feedstock* harvesting, as guided by regionally appropriate *best scientific information*, for retention of *stand-level wildlife habitat* elements such as snags, stumps, mast trees, pollinator habitat, down woody debris, den trees, and nest trees.
5. Assessment, conducted individually or collaboratively, of forest cover types and *habitats* at the individual ownership level and, where credible data are available, across the *landscape*, and incorporation of findings into planning and management activities, where practical and when consistent with management objectives.
6. Support of and participation in plans or *programs* for the *conservation* of *old-growth forests* in the region of ownership.
7. Participation in *programs* and demonstration of activities as appropriate to limit the introduction, impact, and spread of *invasive exotic plants and animals* that directly threaten or are likely to threaten native plant and animal communities.
8. *Program* to incorporate the role of prescribed or natural fire where appropriate.

Performance Measure 4.2. *Program Participants* shall apply knowledge gained through research, science, technology, and field experience to manage *wildlife habitat* and contribute to the *conservation of biological diversity*.

Indicators:

1. Collection of information on *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* and other *biodiversity*-related data through forest *inventory* processes, mapping, or participation

in external programs, such as NatureServe, state or provincial heritage programs, or other credible systems. Such participation may include providing nonproprietary scientific information, time, and assistance by staff, or in-kind or direct financial support.

2. A methodology to incorporate research results and field applications of *biodiversity* and ecosystem research into forest management decisions.
3. Collection of information, individually or collaboratively, on climate change impacts on *wildlife habitats* and *conservation of biological diversity* through international, national, regional or local programs.

Objective 5. Maintenance of Visual Quality and Recreational Benefits. To manage the visual impact of harvesting and other forest operations.

Performance Measure 5.1. *Program Participants* shall manage the impact of harvesting on *visual quality*.

Indicators:

1. *Program* to address *visual quality management*.
2. Incorporation of aesthetic considerations in harvesting, road, landing design and management, and other management activities where visual impacts are a concern.

Performance Measure 5.2. *Program Participants* shall manage the size, shape, and placement of clearcut harvests.

Indicators:

1. Average size of clearcut harvest areas does not exceed 120 acres (48.6 hectares), except when necessary to meet regulatory requirements or to respond to *forest health* emergencies or other natural catastrophes.
2. Documentation through internal records of clearcut size and the process for calculating average size.

Performance Measure 5.3. *Program Participants* shall adopt a *green-up requirement* or alternative methods that provide for *visual quality*.

Indicators:

1. *Program* implementing the *green-up requirement* or alternative methods.
2. Harvest area tracking system to demonstrate compliance with the *green-up requirement* or alternative methods.

3. Trees in clearcut harvest areas are at least 3 years old or 5 feet 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 *performance measure* are utilized by the *Program Participant*.

Performance Measure 5.4. *Program Participants* shall provide recreation opportunities for the public.

Indicator:

1. Provide recreation opportunities for the public, where consistent with forest management objectives.

Objective 6. Protection of *Special Sites*. To manage *Program Participant* lands that are ecologically, geologically, historically, or *culturally important* in a manner that recognizes their special qualities.

Performance Measure 6.1. *Program Participants* shall identify *special sites* and manage them in a manner appropriate for their unique features.

Indicators:

1. Use of existing natural heritage data and expert advice in identifying or selecting sites for *protection* because of their ecologically, geologically, historically, or *culturally important* qualities.
2. Appropriate mapping, cataloging, and management of identified *special sites*.

Objective 7. Efficient Use of Forest Resources. To promote the efficient use of forest resources.

Performance Measure 7.1. *Program Participants* shall employ appropriate forest harvesting technology and “in-woods” manufacturing processes and practices to *minimize* waste and ensure efficient utilization of harvested trees, where consistent with other *SFI Standard objectives*.

Indicator:

1. *Program* or monitoring system to ensure efficient utilization, which may include provisions to ensure
 - a. residue management considers economic, social, environmental factors (e.g. organic and nutrient value to future forests) and other utilization needs;
 - b. training or incentives to encourage loggers to enhance utilization;
 - c. cooperation with mill managers for better utilization of species and low-grade material;

- d. Exploration of markets for underutilized species and low-grade wood and alternative markets (e.g. bioenergy markets, carbon offsets); or
- e. periodic inspections and reports noting utilization and product separation.

SFI Standard Objectives 8-13 for Procurement

Procurement from sources within the United States and Canada (Objectives 8-10 apply).

Objective 8. Landowner Outreach. To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by forest landowners through *procurement programs*.

Performance Measure 8.1. *Program Participants* shall provide information to landowners for reforestation following harvest, the use of *BMPs*, and for identification and protection of important *habitat* elements for *wildlife*, including *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*.

Indicator:

1. *Program Participants* shall supply regionally appropriate information or services to forest landowners, describing the importance and providing implementation guidance on
 - a. *BMPs*;
 - b. *reforestation and afforestation*;
 - c. *visual quality management*;
 - d. *conservation of critical wildlife habitat elements, threatened and endangered species, and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*;
 - e. management of residue to consider economic, social, environmental factors (e.g. organic and nutrient value to future forests) and other utilization needs;
 - f. *invasive exotic plants and animals*; and
 - g. potential for *special sites*.
2. Encourage landowners to participate in forest management certification programs such as the American Tree Farm System.

Objective 9. Use of Forest Management and Harvesting Professionals. To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by encouraging forest landowners to utilize the services of forest management and harvesting professionals.

Performance Measure 9.1. *Program Participants* shall encourage landowners to utilize the services of *qualified resource professionals, certified logging professionals* and *qualified logging professionals* in applying *principles* of sustainable forest management on their lands.

Indicators:

1. *Program* to promote the use of *qualified resource professionals, certified logging professionals where available, and qualified logging professionals*.

2. List of *certified logging professionals* and *qualified logging professionals* maintained by *Program Participant*, state or provincial agency, loggers' association, or other organization.

Objective 10. Adherence to *Best Management Practices*. To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* through *the use of Best Management Practices* to *protect* water quality.

Performance Measure 10.1. *Program Participants* shall clearly define and implement policies to ensure that mill inventories and *procurement* activities do not compromise adherence to the *principles of sustainable forestry*.

Indicators:

1. *Program* for the purchase of raw material from suppliers that have completed training programs and are recognized as *qualified logging professionals*.
2. *Program* to require that harvests of *purchased stumpage* (including those for *bioenergy feedstocks*) comply with *BMPs*.
3. Provisions, requiring the use of *BMPs*, included in contracts for the purchase of raw material.
4. *Program* to address adverse weather conditions.

Performance Measure 10.2. *Program Participants* shall monitor the use of *BMPs*, using public or private sources of information.

Indicators:

1. A *verifiable monitoring system* to
 - a. monitor the use of *BMPs* by *wood producers* supplying the *Program Participant*;
and
 - b. evaluate use of *BMPs* across the *wood and fiber supply area*.
2. Use of information from the *verifiable monitoring system* to set goals to improve, over time, rates of *BMPs* compliance.

Procurement by manufacturing facilities enrolled in the SFI Program from sources outside the United States and Canada (Objectives 11-13 apply)

Objective 11. Promote *Conservation of Biological Diversity, Biodiversity Hotspots and Major Tropical Wilderness Areas*. To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by conserving biological diversity, *biodiversity hotspots* and *major tropical wilderness areas*.

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

Indicators:

1. *Procurement* from areas outside the United States and Canada promotes *conservation of biological diversity* utilizing information from sources such as Conservation International's *biodiversity hotspots* and *major tropical wilderness areas*, and the *Alliance for Zero Extinction's* program
2. *Program* with *direct suppliers* to promote the *principles of sustainable forestry*.
3. Knowledge about *direct suppliers'* application of the *principles of sustainable forestry*.

Objective 12. Avoidance of Controversial Sources including *Illegal Logging*. To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by avoidance of *illegal logging*.

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

1. Process to assess the risk that the *Program Participant's procurement program* could acquire material from *illegal logging*.
2. *Program* to address any significant risk identified under 12.1.1
3. *Program* with *direct suppliers* to promote the *principles of sustainable forestry*.
4. Knowledge about *direct suppliers'* application of the *principles of sustainable forestry*.

Objective 13. Avoidance of Controversial Sources including *Fiber Sourced from Areas without Effective Social Laws*. To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by avoiding *controversial sources*.

Performance Measure 13.1. *Program Participants* shall avoid *controversial sources* and encourage economically, environmentally, and socially sound practices.

Indicators:

1. Process to assess the risk that the *Program Participant's procurement* takes place in countries without effective laws addressing the following:
 - a. workers' health and safety;
 - b. fair labor practices;
 - c. indigenous peoples' rights;
 - d. antidiscrimination and antiharassment measures;

- e. prevailing wages; and
- f. workers' right to organize.

2. *Program* to address any significant risk identified under 8.6.1.

SFI Standard Objectives 14 – 20 for Forest Management and Procurement

Objective 14. Legal and Regulatory Compliance. Compliance with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local laws and regulations.

Performance Measure 14.1. *Program Participants* shall take appropriate steps to comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local *forestry* and related social and environmental laws and regulations.

Indicators:

1. Access to relevant laws and regulations in appropriate locations.
2. System to achieve compliance with applicable federal, provincial, state, or local laws and regulations.
3. Demonstration of commitment to legal compliance through *available regulatory action information*.
4. Respect protected areas identified through government processes.

Performance Measure 14.2. *Program Participants* shall take appropriate steps to comply with all applicable social laws at the federal, provincial, state, and local levels in the country in which the *Program Participant* operates.

Indicator:

1. Written *policy* demonstrating commitment to comply with social laws, such as those covering civil rights, equal employment opportunities, antidiscrimination and antiharassment measures, workers' compensation, indigenous peoples' rights, workers' and communities' right to know, prevailing wages, workers' right to organize, and occupational health and safety.

Objective 15. Forestry Research, Science, and Technology. To improve forestry research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based.

Performance Measure 15.1. *Program Participants* shall individually and/or, through cooperative efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees (SICs)*, and/or through associations provide in-kind support or funding for forest research to improve the health,

productivity, and sustainable management of forest resources and the environmental benefits and performance of forest products.

Indicator:

1. Current financial or in-kind support of research to address questions of relevance in the region of operations. The research shall include some of the following issues:
 - a. *forest health, productivity*, and ecosystem functions;
 - b. chemical efficiency, use rate, and *integrated pest management*;
 - c. water quality and/or effectiveness of *BMPs*;
 - d. *wildlife* management at *stand* or *landscape* levels;
 - e. *conservation* of *biological diversity*;
 - f. ecological impacts of *bioenergy feedstock* removals on *productivity, wildlife habitat, water quality*, and other ecosystem functions;
 - g. climate change research for both adaptation and mitigation.
 - h. social issues;
 - i. forest operations efficiencies and economics;
 - j. energy efficiency;
 - k. life cycle analysis;
 - l. avoidance of *illegal logging*; and
 - m. avoidance of *controversial sources*.

4. Research on genetically engineered trees via *forest tree biotechnology* shall adhere to all applicable federal, state, and provincial regulations and international protocols.

Performance Measure 15.2. *Program Participants* shall individually and/or, through cooperative efforts of *SICs*, and/or through associations develop or use state, provincial, or regional analyses in support of their *sustainable forestry* programs.

Indicator:

1. Participation, individually or through cooperative efforts of *SICs* or associations at the state, provincial, or regional level, in the development or use of some of the following:
 - a. regeneration assessments;
 - b. *growth and drain* assessments considering both conventional and *bioenergy feedstock* harvesting;
 - c. *BMPs* implementation and compliance;
 - d. *biodiversity conservation* information for family forest owners; and
 - e. social, cultural or economic benefit assessments.

Objective 16. Training and Education. To improve the practice of sustainable forest management by resource professionals, *wood producers*, and contractors through appropriate training and education *programs*.

Performance Measure 16.1. *Program Participants* shall require appropriate training of personnel and contractors so that they are competent to fulfill their responsibilities under the *SFI Standard*.

Indicators:

1. Written statement of commitment to the *SFI Standard* communicated throughout the organization, particularly to mill and woodland managers, wood *procurement* staff, and field foresters.
2. Assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities for achieving *SFI Standard objectives*.
3. Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.
4. Contractor education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.

Performance Measure 16.2. *Program Participants* shall work individually and/or with *SFI Implementation Committees*, logging or *forestry* associations, or appropriate agencies or others in the *forestry* community, to foster improvement in the professionalism of *wood producers*.

Indicator:

1. Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria and identify delivery mechanisms for *wood producers'* training courses that address:
 - a. awareness of *sustainable forestry principles* and the *SFI Program*;
 - b. *BMPs*, including streamside management and road construction, maintenance, and retirement;
 - c. regeneration, *invasive exotic plants and animals*, forest resource *conservation*, aesthetics, and *special sites*;
 - d. awareness of responsibilities under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the Canadian Species at Risk Act, and other measures to protect *wildlife habitat* (e.g. *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*);
 - e. logging safety;
 - f. U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration(OSHA) and Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (COHS) regulations, wage and hour rules, and other provincial, state and local employment laws;
 - g. transportation issues;
 - h. business management
 - i. public policy and outreach;
 - j. awareness of emerging technologies and markets (e.g. *bioenergy feedstock* removal, carbon offsets)

Objective 17. Community Involvement in the Practice of Sustainable Forestry. To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* by encouraging the public and *forestry* community to participate in the commitment to *sustainable forestry* and publicly report progress.

Performance Measure 17.1. *Program Participants* shall support and promote efforts by consulting foresters, state, provincial and federal agencies, state or local groups, professional societies, conservation organizations, indigenous peoples and governments, community groups and the *American Tree Farm System*® and other landowner cooperative programs to apply principles of sustainable forest management.

Indicators:

1. Support for efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.
2. Support for the development of educational materials for use with forest landowners (e.g. information packets, websites, newsletters, workshops, tours, etc.).
3. Support for the development of regional, state or provincial information materials that provide landowners with practical approaches for addressing *special sites* and *biological diversity* issues, such as *invasive exotic plants and animals*, *specific wildlife habitat*, *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*, and *threatened and endangered species*.
4. Participation in efforts to support or promote *conservation* of managed forests through voluntary market-based incentive *programs* such as current-use taxation *programs*, Forest Legacy, or *conservation* easements.
5. *Program Participants* are knowledgeable about credible regional *conservation* planning and priority-setting efforts that include a broad range of stakeholders. Consider the results of these efforts in planning where practical and consistent with management objectives.

Performance Measure 17.2 . *Program Participants* shall support and promote, at the state, provincial or other appropriate levels, mechanisms for public outreach, education, and involvement related to sustainable forest management.

Indicators:

1. Periodic educational opportunities promoting *sustainable forestry*, such as
 - a. field tours, seminars, or workshops;
 - b. educational trips;
 - c. self-guided forest management trails; or
 - d. publication of articles, educational pamphlets, or newsletters.
 - e. Support for state, provincial, and local *forestry* organizations and soil and water *conservation* districts.

Performance Measure 17.3. *Program Participants* shall establish, at the state, provincial, or other appropriate levels, procedures to address concerns raised by loggers, consulting foresters, employees, the public, or *Program Participants* regarding practices that appear inconsistent with the *SFI Standard principles* and *objectives*.

Indicators:

1. Support for *SFI Implementation Committee* efforts (toll-free numbers and other efforts) to address concerns about apparent nonconforming practices.
2. Process to receive and respond to public inquiries.

Objective 18: Public Land Management Responsibilities. To improve the practice of sustainable forest management on public lands.

Performance Measure 18.1. *Program Participants* with forest management responsibilities on public lands shall participate in the development of public land planning and management processes.

Indicators:

1. Involvement in public land planning and management activities with appropriate governmental entities and the public.
2. Appropriate contact with local stakeholders over forest management issues through state, provincial, federal, or independent collaboration.

Performance Measure 18.2. *Program Participants* with forest management responsibilities on public lands shall confer with affected indigenous peoples.

Indicator:

1. *Program* that includes communicating with affected indigenous peoples to enable *Program Participants* to
 - a. understand and respect traditional forest-related knowledge;
 - b. identify and protect spiritually, historically, or culturally important sites; and
 - c. address the sustainable use of nontimber forest products of value to indigenous peoples in areas where *Program Participants* have management responsibilities on public lands

Objective 19. Communications and Public Reporting. To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry by documenting progress and opportunities for improvement.

Performance Measure 19.1. A *Certified Program Participant* shall provide a report, prepared by the *certification body*, to the SFI Inc. after the successful completion of certification, recertification, or surveillance audit to the 2010-2014 *SFI Standard*.

Indicator

1. The public report, shall include, at a minimum,
 - a. a description of the audit process, objectives, and scope;

- b. a description of substitute *indicators*, if any, used in the audit and a rationale for each;
- c. the name of *Program Participant* that was audited, including its SFI representative;
- d. a general description of the *Program Participant's* forestland and manufacturing operations included in the audit;
- e. the name of the *certification body* and *lead auditor* (names of the *audit team* members, including technical experts may be included at the discretion of the *audit team* and *Program Participant*);
- f. the dates the certification was conducted and completed;
- g. a summary of the findings, including general descriptions of any nonconformities and corrective action plans to address them, opportunities for improvement, and exceptional practices; and
- h. the certification decision.

The public report will be posted on the SFI Inc. website and available for public review.

Performance Measure 19.2. *Program Participants* shall report annually to SFI Inc. on their conformance with the *SFI Standard*.

Indicators:

1. Prompt response to the SFI annual progress report.
2. Recordkeeping for all the categories of information needed for SFI annual progress reports.
3. Maintenance of copies of past reports to document progress and improvements to demonstrate conformance to the *SFI Standard*.

Objective 20. Management Review and Continual Improvement. To promote continual improvement in the practice of *sustainable forestry* and monitor, measure, and report performance in achieving the commitment to *sustainable forestry*.

Performance Measure 20.1. *Program Participants* shall establish a management review system to examine findings and progress in implementing the *SFI Standard*, to make appropriate improvements in *programs*, and to inform their employees of changes.

Indicators:

1. System to review commitments, *programs*, and procedures to evaluate effectiveness.
2. System for collecting, reviewing, and reporting information to management regarding progress in achieving *SFI Standard objectives* and *performance measures*.
3. Annual review of progress by management and determination of changes and improvements necessary to continually improve conformance to the *SFI Standard*.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to *italicized* words in the *SFI Standard* and the *Audit Procedures and Qualifications*.

afforestation: The establishment of a forest or *stand* in an area where the preceding vegetation or land use was not forest.

Alliance for Zero Extinction: a global initiative of biodiversity conservation organizations, aims to prevent extinctions by identifying and safeguarding key sites where species are in imminent danger of disappearing. The goal of the Alliance is to create a front line of defense against extinction by eliminating threats and restoring habitat to allow species populations to rebound.

American Tree Farm System[®]: A national program that promotes the sustainable management of forests through education and outreach to private forest landowners.

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

aquatic habitat: An area where water is the principal medium and that provides the resources and environmental conditions to support occupancy, survival, and reproduction by individuals of a given species.

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

available regulatory action information: Statistics or regulatory compliance data collected by a federal, state, provincial, or local government agency. Note: Although conformance with laws is the intent, *certification bodies* are directed to look for a spirit and general record of compliance rather than isolated or unusual instances of deviation.

auditor: A person with the competence to conduct an audit (ISO 19011:2002, 3.8).

audit team: One or more *auditors* conducting an audit, supported if needed by *technical experts* (ISO 19011:2002, 3.9).

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, including but not limited to peer-reviewed scientific

information obtainable from any source, including government and nongovernmental sources, that has been verified by field testing to the maximum extent feasible.

biodiversity hotspots: A biogeographic conservation region with more than 1,500 endemic plant species and less than 30 percent of its historical extent.

bioenergy feedstock - Biomass used for the production of renewable energy. Biomass includes any organic products and by-products derived from trees, plants and other biological organic matter, including limbs, bark, and other cellulosic material, organic byproducts from wood pulping, and other biologically derived materials.

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:

ANAB - ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board as being competent to conduct certifications to the 2005-2009 *SFI Standard*.

ANSI - American National Standards Institute as being competent to conduct certifications to the SFI Chain of Custody Standard.

SCC – Standards Council of Canada as being competent to conduct certifications to the 2005-2009 *SFI Standard* and the SFI Chain of Custody Standard.

certified logging professional: A person with specialized skills in timber harvesting gained through experience or formal training who has successfully completed *wood producer* training programs recognized by *SFI Implementation Committees* and has successfully completed, and is a member in good standing, of a logger certification program.

certified program participant is a forest landowner, forest land manager, primary or secondary forest products producer operating in the U.S. or Canada who participates in the SFI program through a contractual agreement to abide by the 2010-2014 *SFI Standard*, and who has been certified by an accredited SFI *certification body* to be in conformance with the *SFI Standard*.

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.

controversial sources: Use of *controversial sources* are not allowed in SFI-labeled products. *Controversial sources* include *illegal logging* and *fiber sourced from areas without effective social laws*.

illegal logging: the theft of timber or logs and cutting in parks, reserves, or other similar areas where otherwise precluded by law. See Annex 1 (Appendix 2) and Annex 2 (Appendix 4) for SFI Inc.'s policy on *illegal logging*.

fiber sourced from areas without effective social laws: The United States and Canada have a strong legal framework. Fiber from countries without effective laws addressing the following will need a risk assessment:

1. workers' health and safety;
2. fair labor practices;
3. indigenous peoples' rights;
4. antidiscrimination and anti-harassment measures;
5. prevailing wages; and
6. workers' right to organize.

critically imperiled: 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. Often referred to as G1.

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

degree: A professional academic degree (e.g., bachelor's) or equivalent.

direct supplier: A *procurement* source with whom a *Program Participant* has a direct contractual relationship.

economic viability: The economic incentive necessary to keep forest ownerships profitable and competitive and to keep people gainfully employed.

exotic tree species: A tree species introduced from outside its natural range, excluding species that have become "naturalized" in the 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 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.

forestry: The profession embracing the science, art, and practice of creating, managing, using, and conserving forests and associated resources for human benefit and in a sustainable manner to meet desired goals, needs, and values.

forestry enterprise: A business engaged in the management of forestland, having its own functions and administration and comprising one or more operating units.

Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value: *critically imperiled* and *imperiled* species and communities.

forest tree biotechnology: As commonly used, forest tree biotechnology encompasses structural and functional studies of genes and genomes (including development and application of genetic markers); various methods of vegetative reproduction such as micropropagation, tissue culture, and somatic embryogenesis; and genetic engineering (GE), which is the physical manipulation and asexual insertion of genes into organisms.

geographic information system (GIS): An organized collection of computer systems, personnel, knowledge, and procedures designed to capture, store, update, manipulate, analyze, report, and display forms of geographically referenced information and descriptive information.

green-up requirement: Previously clearcut harvest areas must have trees at least 3 years old or 5 feet high at the desired level of stocking before adjacent areas are clearcut.

growing stock: All the trees growing in a forest or in a specified part of it, meeting specified standards of size, quality and vigor, and generally expressed in terms of number or volume.

growth-and-yield model: A set of relationships, usually expressed as equations and embodied in a computer program or tables, that provides estimates of future stand development given initial stand conditions and a specified management regime.

growth and drain: The average annual net increase in the volume of trees during the period between inventories (including the increment in net volume of trees at the beginning of the specific year surviving to its end, plus the net volume of trees reaching the minimum size class during the year, minus the volume of trees that died during the year, and minus the net volume of trees that became cull trees during the year) minus the net volume of *growing stock* trees removed from the *inventory* during a specified year by harvesting, cultural operations such as timber *stand* improvement, or land clearing.

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.

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

improved planting stock: Products of tree improvement programs in which the parent trees were selected through Mendelian crosses for increased growth, pest resistance, or other desirable characteristics.

indicator: In the SFI Program, a specific metric that provides information about an organization's forestry and environmental performance and that is integral to assessing conformance to the *SFI Standard objectives and performance measures*.

invasive exotic plants and animals: 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.

inventory: 1. A set of objective sampling methods that quantify the spatial distribution, composition, and rates of change of forest parameters within specified levels of precision for management purposes. 2. The listing of data from such a survey.

integrated pest management: The maintenance of destructive agents, including insects at tolerable levels, by the planned use of a variety of preventive, suppressive, or regulatory tactics and strategies that are ecologically and economically efficient and socially acceptable.

land classification: The process of designating areas of land into classes or strata that are sufficiently homogeneous in their physical, vegetative, and development attributes.

landscape: 1. A spatial mosaic of several 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).

lead auditor: An *auditor* appointed to lead an *audit team*. Also referred to as an *audit team leader* (ISO 19011:2002, 3.9, note 1).

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

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

major tropical wilderness areas: The world's largest-remaining tracts of tropical forest that are more than 75 percent intact. These areas are characterized by extraordinary biological richness, including exceptional concentrations of endemic species, and are also of crucial importance to climate regulation, watershed *protection*, and maintenance of traditional indigenous lifestyles.

management responsibilities on public lands: Accountability for developing plans and translating public agencies' missions, goals, and objectives to an organized set of actions.

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

major nonconformity: One or more of the *SFI Standard performance measures* or *indicators* has not been addressed or has not been implemented to the extent that a systematic failure of a *Program Participant's* SFI system to meet an *SFI objective, performance measure* or *indicator* occurs.

minor nonconformity: An isolated lapse in *SFI Standard* program implementation which does not indicate a systematic failure to consistently meet an *SFI objective, performance measure* or *indicator*.

natural regeneration: The establishment of a plant or a plant age class from natural seeding, sprouting, suckering, or layering.

nonforested 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.

objective: In the SFI Program, a fundamental goal of sustainable forest management as embodied in objectives 1–13 of the *SFI Standard*.

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. *Program Participants* should utilize a definition specific to their region and particular forest types.

other wood supplier: A person or organization who infrequently supplies wood fiber on a small scale. Examples include farmers and small-scale land-clearing operators.

performance measure: In the SFI Program, a means of judging whether an *objective* has been fulfilled.

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

principle: In the SFI Program, the vision and direction for sustainable forest management as embodied in principles 1–9 of the *SFI Standard*.

procurement: Acquisition of roundwood (e.g. sawlogs or pulpwood) and field-manufactured or primary-mill residual chips, pulp, and veneer to support a forest products facility.

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

program: An organized system, process, or set of activities to achieve an *objective* or *performance measure*.

program participant: A forest landowner, forest land manager, primary or secondary forest products producer operating in the US or Canada who participates in the SFI program through a contractual agreement to abide by the 2010-2014 *SFI Standard*.

protection: Maintenance of the status or integrity, over the long-term, of identified attributes or values including management where appropriate and giving consideration to historical disturbance patterns, fire risk and forest health when determining appropriate conservation strategies.

public land: Land enrolled in the SFI Program that is owned or administratively managed by a government entity (federal, state, provincial, county or local), excluding easements or other encumbrances held by a government entity on private land.

purchased stumpage: *Procurement* of standing timber under a contractual agreement that gives the *Program Participant* the right and obligation to harvest the timber.

qualified logging professional: A person with specialized skills in timber harvesting gained through experience or formal training who has successfully completed *wood producer* training programs recognized by *SFI Implementation Committees* as meeting the spirit and intent of *performance measure* under Objective 8 of the *SFI Standard*.

- a. For a logging crew to be considered trained, each crew must operate under the direction of an individual, with on-site responsibility, who has completed the *SIC* approved state or provincial logger training program.
- b. All of the components of a training program could take several years to carry out, determining the point at which a logger is considered a "*qualified logging professional*" should be based on an individual logger's commitment to the program. That is, if a logger completes all the components or modules offered in a given year, that logger should be considered as a "*qualified logging professional*." If all available components or modules are not completed, then the logger is no longer considered trained until all available components are completed.

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 artificially (direct seeding or planting of seedlings).

riparian: Related to, living in, or located in conjunction with a wetland, on the bank of a river or stream or at the edge of a lake or tidewater.

second-party verification: Verification of an enterprise's performance conducted by an affiliated or interested group, such as a forest products trade association, another forestry enterprise, or a customer.

SFI certification: A systematic and documented verification process to obtain and evaluate evidence objectively to determine whether a *Program Participant's* SFI Program conforms to the *SFI Standard*.

SFI Implementation Committee (SIC): A state, provincial, or regional committee organized by *SFI Program Participants* to facilitate or manage the programs and alliances that support the growth of the SFI Program, including sustainable forest management.

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 landowners 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.

special sites: Sites that are ecologically, geologically, historically, or *culturally important*.

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 with the *conservation* of soil, air and water quality, carbon, *biological diversity*, *wildlife* and *aquatic habitat*, recreation, and aesthetics.

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

Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard (SFI STANDARD): The principles, policies, objectives, *performance measures*, and *indicators* that detail specific requirements for *Program Participants*.

Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard Audit Procedures and Qualifications (SFI APQ): The *principles* and guidelines that detail specific requirements to *Program Participants* and *Certification bodies* for conducting audits to the *SFI Standard*.

technical expert: A person who provides specific knowledge or expertise to the *audit team* (ISO 19011 2002, 3.10).

third-party certification: An assessment of conformance to the *SFI Standard* conducted according to the standards of the SFI APQ and ISO 19011 by a qualified *certification body*.

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.

varietal seedlings: genetically identical individuals produced through vegetative reproduction methods, such as micropropagation, tissue culture or somatic embryogenesis.

verifiable monitoring system: A system capable of being audited by a third party that includes (a) a means to characterize the *Program Participant's wood and fiber supply area*, which may include sources certified to a standard that requires compliance with *BMPs*, including those sources from *certified logging professionals*; (b) a process to identify and use sources of available data (e.g., state monitoring programs, certification status of suppliers) in the use of *BMPs* and (c) a method to assess supplier performance, if needed, to supplement available data.

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

visual quality management: Minimization of the adverse visual effects of forest management activities.

wildlife: Marine and freshwater aquatic and terrestrial fauna.

wood and fiber supply area: The geographic area from which a *Program Participant* procures, over time, most of its wood and fiber from *wood producers*.

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.

SFI® Audit Procedures and Qualifications (SFI APQ)

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All certification, recertification and surveillance audits to the *SFI Standard* shall be conducted by *certification bodies* accredited by the SCC or ANAB to conduct SFI certification.

Accredited *Certification bodies* are required to:

- maintain audit processes consistent with the requirements of International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17021:2006 conformity assessment-Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems; and
- conduct audits in accordance with the principles of auditing contained in the ISO 19011:2002 guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing.

ISO is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies. The preparation of International Standards is conducted by ISO technical committees.

The ISO 17021 guidelines were prepared by the ISO Committee on conformity assessment (CASCO).

The ISO 19011 guidelines were prepared jointly by Technical Committee ISO/TC 176 for Quality Management and Quality Assurance, and Technical Committee ISO/TC 207 for Environmental Management.

Together these documents provide direction for the design and implementation of management systems audit programs by accredited *certification bodies*.

1. Scope

This SFI Audit Procedures and Qualifications document supports the International Standard ISO 19011:2002 Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing by providing specific requirements to *Program Participants* and *certification bodies*. It is applicable to all forest management and wood *procurement* organizations when conducting *third-party certification*, recertification, or surveillance audits to the *SFI Standard*.

2. Normative Reference

Certification bodies and auditors must follow International Standard ISO 19011:2002, *Guidelines for Quality and/or Environmental Management Systems Auditing*, in auditing to the *SFI Standard* and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17021:2006 conformity assessment-requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems; and all SCC and ANAB requirements.

3. Terms and Definitions

Definitions of terms can be found in the 2010-2014 edition of the *Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standard*.

4. Procedures for Implementing the Principles for SFI Auditing

ISO 17021 Section 4 addresses general principles associated with auditing including impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality and responsiveness to complaints.

All information and documents, including working drafts and any reports, shall be considered confidential. *Certification bodies* shall not release any information or documents without the prior written permission of the *Program Participant*. *Auditors* shall conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner.

Certification bodies and *audit team* members and their employers shall not participate in an appraisal or advise a potential purchaser or broker a purchase of property audited within the prior three years without the written permission of the audited party. *Certification bodies*, *audit team* members, and employers shall notify the audited party of participation in such activities after the three-year period immediately upon initiation of such activities for a period of at least 10 years following the audit.

Prior to engaging in an audit and the *Program Participant's* acceptance of the *audit team*, the *Certification bodies* and *audit team* members shall disclose to the party requesting an audit any prior land appraisal or assessment work or land brokerage activity they or their employers conducted related to the property to be audited.

Certification bodies must successfully complete annual witness audits to maintain accreditation status from ANAB or SCC.

5. SFI Audit Activities

5.1. Initiating the SFI Audit

5.1.1. Substitution and Modification of SFI

Program Participants, with consent of the *certification body*, may substitute or modify *indicators* to address local conditions based on a thorough analysis and adequate justification to the *certification body*, which is responsible for ensuring that revised *indicators* are consistent with the spirit and intent of the *SFI Standard performance measures and indicators*, and that changes are appropriate for the specific local conditions and circumstances and the *Program Participant's* scope of operation and consistent with the principles of sustainable forestry.

Additional *indicators* beyond those identified in the *SFI Standard*, if included by the *Program Participant*, shall be audited like all other *indicators*.

5.2. Determination of Conformance

The *certification body* shall assess conformance to each element of the *SFI Standard's*, *objectives performance measures and indicators* within the scope of the audit. *SFI Standard* elements are *objectives*, *performance measures*, and *indicators*.

Evidence shall be compiled by examination of operating procedures, study of materials relating to forestry practices, and on-the-ground examination of field performance, and through meetings with employees, contractors and other third parties (e.g., government agencies, community groups, conservation organizations), as appropriate, to determine conformance to the *SFI Standard*.

The *certification body* shall ensure that the objectives and scope of the audit

- allow for accurate field determination of conformance for the entire operating unit;
- verify that the Program Participant's SFI Program is in conformance with SFI principles, policies, objectives, performance measures, and indicators, and any additional indicators that the Program Participant chooses; and
- verify whether the Program Participant has effectively implemented its *SFI Standard* program requirements on the ground¹

If a *major nonconformity* is found, a certificate of conformance shall not be issued until the *certification body* verifies that corrective action approved by the *lead auditor* has been implemented. A revisit may be required to verify implementation of corrective action.

If a *minor nonconformity* is found, a certificate of conformance may be issued only after the *lead auditor* approves a corrective action plan that addresses the nonconformity within an agreed-upon period, not to exceed one year. Verification that the corrective action has been effectively implemented shall occur during the next surveillance audit.

5.3. SFI Technical Audit Report to the *Program Participant*

ISO 19011 Section 6.6.1 Preparing the audit report addresses audit report contents. In addition, the SFI audit report to the *Program Participant* shall cover

- a. audit plan;
- b. a description of the audit process used;
- c. documentation of the rationale for the substitution or modification of any *indicators* and
- d. a schedule for surveillance and recertification.

See Section 7, below, regarding the development and release of public reports.

5.4. Recertification

To maintain a current SFI certificate, *Program Participants* shall recertify their SFI Programs. Recertification to the *SFI Standard* is required every three years.

6. Competence and Evaluation of Certification Bodies

6.1. Qualifications of Audit teams

Audit teams shall have the knowledge and skills to conduct an audit in accordance with the *principles* of auditing. The *certification body* shall select *audit team* members appropriate to the scope, scale, and geography of the audit. Additionally, at least one

¹ This language was in the original 2005-2009 SFI APQ and is being reinserted.

member of the *audit team* shall have knowledge of forestry operations in the region undergoing the audit, at least one member shall have knowledge of applicable laws and regulations, and at least one member shall be a professional forester as defined by the Society of American Foresters (SAF), the Canadian Institute of Forestry, or licensed or registered by the state(s) or province (s) in which the certification is conducted. For forest management audits, the *audit team* shall have expertise that includes plant and *wildlife* ecology, *silviculture*, forest modeling, forest operations, and hydrology. One specialist per discipline is not required to meet any of the above requirements.

6.2. Qualifications of Auditors

ISO 19011 Section 7.3 Knowledge and skills addresses a broad range of skills required of *auditors*. This is supplemented by ISO 19011 Section 7.3 Education, work experience, *auditor* training and audit experience.

In addition, for certifications to the 2005-2009 *SFI Standard*, *audit team* members shall have the education, formal training, and experience that promotes competency in and comprehension of

- a. *forestry* operations as they relate to natural resource management, including *wildlife*, fisheries, recreation, etc.;
- b. international and domestic *sustainable forestry* management systems and performance standards; and
- c. certification requirements related to the SFI.

Audit team members who have obtained a professional *degree* in *forestry* or a closely related field shall have a minimum of two years' relevant work experience.

The provisions of Table 1 in ISO 19011 shall not apply to SFI *auditors*.

6.3. Maintenance and Improvement of Competence

All *audit team* members shall pursue ongoing personal and professional development in

- a. forest management science and technology;
- b. sustainable forest management systems and certification programs and standards;
- c. understanding and interpretation of federal, state, and provincial *forestry* and environmental laws and codes of practice; and
- d. certification procedures, processes, and techniques, especially as these pertain to the *SFI Standard*.

An *auditor* who maintains Certified Forester, Registrar Accreditation Board, or Canadian Environmental Certification Approvals Board sustainable forest management *auditor* (CEA SFM) certification, or equivalent, shall be considered to have fulfilled continuing education requirements.

7. Public Communication and Claims

7.1. Preparing and Submitting a Public Report

A *Certified Program Participant* shall provide a report (one copy must be in English) to SFI Inc. after the successful completion of certification, recertification, or surveillance audit to the 2005-2009 *SFI Standard*. The public report will be posted on the SFI Inc. website and available for public review.

The *certification body* shall prepare the public report, which shall include, at a minimum,

- a. a description of the audit process, objectives, and scope;
- b. a description of substitute *indicators*, if any, used in the audit and a rationale for each;
- c. the name of *Program Participant* that was audited, including its SFI representative;
- d. a general description of the *Program Participant's* forestland and manufacturing operations included in the audit;
- e. the name of the *certification body* and *lead auditor* (names of the *audit team* members, including technical experts may be included at the discretion of the *audit team* and *Program Participant*);
- f. the dates the certification was conducted and completed;
- g. a summary of the findings, including general descriptions of any nonconformities and corrective action plans to address them, opportunities for improvement, and exceptional practices; and
- h. the certification decision.

8. Interpretations, Public Inquiries, and Official Complaints

8.1. Interpretations

From time to time, a formal process may be needed to interpret the *SFI Standard* and its supporting documents. As part of SFI Inc.'s commitment to continual improvement of both the SFI certification process and the *SFI Standard*, such concerns shall be submitted promptly to the SFI Inc. Interpretations Committee at the SFI Inc. website. The SFI Inc. Interpretations Committee shall respond within 45 days of receipt.

It is neither the intent nor the responsibility of the SFI Inc. Interpretations Committee to resolve disputes arising through certification; nevertheless, the committee will provide opinions and direction to assist parties in answering interpretive questions. Through this process, the SFI Program shall maintain a record of opinions and concerns available to both *Program Participants* and *certification bodies* to assist with certification planning. SFI Inc. shall periodically review this record and, where appropriate, recommend changes for inclusion in the *SFI Standard* or SFI APQ.

8.2. Public Inquiries Regarding Inconsistent Practices

Any party with information or claims about a *Program Participant's* individual practices that may be in nonconformity may seek to have those claims investigated.

The complainant shall present specific claims of nonconformity in writing and in sufficient detail to the *Program Participant*. Within 45 days of receipt of the complaint, the *Program Participant* shall respond to the complainant and forward a copy of the complaint and its response to the *Program Participant's certification body* for future review via surveillance or certification audits. The *certification body* shall investigate the validity of the complaint and the *Program Participant's* response and resolution of the claim at the time of the next scheduled surveillance audit.

A complainant who believes the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved may provide its original documentation and the response from the *Program Participant* to the appropriate *SFI Implementation Committee* Inconsistent Practices Program, which shall investigate and respond to the allegations within 45 days of receipt of documentation. If no appropriate *SFI Implementation Committee* Inconsistent Practices Program exists, the complainant may address the issue to the SFI National Inconsistent Practices office via the External Review Panel Secretariat. The *SFI Implementation Committee* or National Inconsistent Practices Program shall provide copies of its findings and any recommended actions to both the *Program Participant* and the complainant.

In the event litigation is involved between the external party and program participant, the inconsistent practices process shall be suspended pending resolution of the litigation. It shall be re-started following resolution of the litigation if SFI nonconformity issues remain.

8.3 Official Complaints Questioning the Validity of a Certification

The complaint process is an important component of any legitimate certification program, including the SFI. The complaint process enables individuals or organizations to have their complaint openly investigated. It is a credit to the transparency requirements of the *SFI Standard* that individuals and organizations can bring forward their concerns under a complaint process. A complaint does not challenge the credibility or the content of the *SFI Standard*, but rather it challenges the audit findings and the decision to grant the certification, or events that have happened since the last audit, that questions the maintenance of the certification.

8.3.1 Accreditation of *Certification bodies*

The SFI program requires *Certification bodies* to be accredited in order to conduct SFI certifications and issue certificates.

Certification body: an independent third party that is accredited by:

ANAB - ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board as being competent to conduct certifications to the 2005-2009 *SFI Standard*.

ANSI - American National Standards Institute as being competent to conduct certifications to the SFI Chain of Custody Standard.

SCC – Standards Council of Canada as being competent to conduct certifications to the 2005-2009 *SFI Standard* and the SFI Chain of Custody Standard.

8.3.2 Complaint Process

The complainant outlines their concerns in a letter to the *certification body* responsible for the audit.

The *certification body* may request additional specifics associated with the concerns and will investigate the issue in accordance with their procedures that were approved by their accreditation body.

If the *certification body* finds a sound basis for the complaint then it would require the Company to take correction and corrective action to address the complaint and advise the complainant accordingly.

If the *certification body* did not find a sound basis for the complaint and felt the certification was appropriately granted and performance has not changed since the certification, it would inform the complainant of this.

If the findings of the *certification body* do not satisfy the complainant then they can move to the higher authority which is the body that accredited the *certification body*, which is either the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) (www.anab.org) or the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) (www.scc.ca). The accreditation body would then conduct its own investigation into the complaint as the highest authority.

In the event litigation is involved between the external party and program participant, the complaint process shall be suspended pending resolution of the litigation. It shall be re-started following resolution of the litigation if SFI nonconformity issues remain.