

**Section 8. *SFI Standards* Development and
Interpretations Process
November 2012**

SFI Standards Development and Interpretations Process

Section 1: Procedures for SFI Standards Revision (Forest Management, Fiber Sourcing, Chain of Custody)

Section 2: *SFI 2015-2019 Standards* Development Process

Section 2: Interpretations Process

1. Procedures for SFI Standard Revision

1.1 Actors and Responsibilities

The SFI Board of Directors is responsible for standard development and revision and will convene the Forum. The SFI Board of Directors, Resources Committee and the External Review Panel (independent oversight role) constitute the Forum and ensure that the revision process includes economic, environmental and social representation equally. Any individual can suggest candidates to the nominations committee. The nominations committee considers suggestions and invites individuals to be considered by the Board. The Forum follows the procedures outlined in this document for SFI Standard Revision¹.

1.1.1 SFI Board

SFI Board members include representatives of environmental, conservation, social professional and academic groups, independent professional loggers, small family forest owners, public officials, labor and the forest products industry. The 18 member SFI Board of Directors include:

- Six directors from non-profit environmental /conservation organizations representing the environmental sector;
- Six directors from community or social interest groups such as universities, labor, independent professional loggers, family forest owners or government agencies representing the social sector; and
- Six directors from the forest, paper and wood products industry or other for-profit forest ownership or management entities representing the economic sector.

SFI Board members are invited by the Board Nominations Committee to participate as directors and must be approved by the full Board. The Board is a voluntary Board.

1.1.2 SFI Resources Committee

Each SFI Inc. Board member appoints one person from their organization (or other organization they may choose) to serve on the SFI Inc. Resources Committee (RC) or the Board member may choose to represent themselves on the Resources Committee. As such, the Resources Committee has the same equal representation of social, environmental and economic interests as the SFI Inc. Board.

1.1.3 SFI External Review Panel

The SFI External Review Panel is an independent panel of experts that provides diverse perspectives and expertise to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative[®] (SFI[®]) program while contributing to quality assurance and continuous improvement. As part of the Forum, Panel members provide external independent oversight to ensure the standard revision process is objective and credible and that all comments are treated equally and fairly. The volunteer External Review Panel is made up of 15-18 external experts. Its membership maintains a balance of technical skills and organizational experience, with four to six members from each of the following categories – environmental/conservation groups, professional/academic groups, and public agencies (local, state, provincial, tribal or federal governments). Panel members come from universities, government agencies, foundations, professional associations, and landowner/conservation organizations. The SFI External Review Panel selects its own members

¹ https://www.sfi.com/~/media/Files/2018/08/SFI_Standard_Revision_2018.pdf

based on their individual expertise and experience, following an election process set out in its charter. It develops its own agenda to represent the public interest as an outside observer of the SFI program. All stakeholders can suggest candidates to the SFI External Review Panel for consideration.

1.2 Procedures

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative Standards setting process shall be on a five year cycle, which is consistent with international protocols for forest certification standard revision cycles. The SFI Standards development process is open, transparent and consensus² based and SFI Inc. Board decisions regarding final changes to the SFI Standards shall be consistent with PEFC ST 1001:2010 for consensus³ based decision making. The revision process shall begin in the first quarter of the year prior to the year the existing standard expires. The *SFI Standards* setting process shall begin with a public notice to all stakeholders prior to the start of the process. The start of the process will be communicated on the SFI website, in newsletters and emails to all stakeholders inviting comments. SFI shall identify stakeholders relevant to the objectives and scope of the standard-setting work. A stakeholder mapping exercise will be used to identify which interest sectors-both public and private-are relevant (environmental, economic, social) including stakeholders who may not be able to participate by conventional means and what means of communications will best reach each stakeholder group. This mapping exercise will be done at the beginning of each standard review process and will define who the stakeholders are and what is necessary to ensure all can participate in the process if they so choose.⁴ The process shall include an initial 60 day public comment period, a second 30 day public comment period and a final consultation period of at least 60 days (See Figure 1).

The External Review Panel shall independently monitor the entire process including a review of all comments received on draft standards and their disposition.

Broad public and stakeholder involvement is important to the *SFI* program. The SFI Standards review process shall be conducted on a national level in Canada and in the United States. Stakeholders, including disadvantaged and key stakeholders and those from the environmental community, forest products industry, private forest landowners, customers, local and federal government agencies, trade associations, landowner associations, academia and all other stakeholders shall be invited to participate in the review process. The start of the standards review process and all subsequent public review periods shall be communicated publicly to all interested stakeholders with an invitation to provide comments on the standards and standard setting process.⁵

² Consensus as defined by PEFC and ISO: General agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process that involves seeking to take into account the views of all parties concerned and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. NOTE - **Consensus** need not imply unanimity. Item 1.7 in *ISO/IEC Guide 2:1991* and item 3.1 in *PEFC Standard Setting Requirements PEFC ST 1001:2010 dated 2010-11-26*. *PEFC ST 1001:2010* and *ISO Guide 59:1994, Code of Good Practice for Standardisation* are normative references.

³ The SFI Inc. Board of Directors has a balance of stakeholders including representatives of environmental, conservation, social professional and academic groups, independent professional loggers, small family forest owners, public officials, labor and the forest products industry. The SFI Inc. Board of Directors voting structure in the SFI Inc. bylaws defines the consensus based approach used for final approval of revisions to the SFI Standard: a minimum of eighty percent of those present, which must include at least two representatives of each Sector [environmental, social, economic] is required to approve any action of the Board.

⁴ Stakeholders will be identified by doing a stakeholder mapping exercise that includes defining which interest sectors are relevant and why, and for each sector what are likely to be the key issues, who are the key stakeholders including those who may not be able to participate by conventional means, and what means of communication will best reach them.

⁵ The public announcement will include where to find the publicly available standards-setting procedures, the objectives, scope and steps of the standards setting process including key dates, information on how stakeholders can participate in the process, information

The first draft of proposed changes to the *SFI Standards* shall be released and published to the *SFI* website during the first quarter of the second review year, followed by an additional 30 day public comment period to allow all stakeholders an opportunity to provide additional comments regarding proposed changes.

This first draft will also be presented and discussed with *SFI Program Participants* and all other stakeholders at regional workshops conducted by the Forum and SFI, Inc. throughout the U.S. and Canada. All stakeholders who have commented on proposed changes or who have proposed changes to the *SFI Standards* shall use this opportunity to raise any concerns regarding their comments and the manner in which the *SFI Standards* Review task group addressed their comments or suggested changes.

Formal complaints regarding the disposition of comments shall be submitted in writing to the External Review Panel Secretariat (<http://www.sfiprogram.org/sustainable-forestry-initiative/external-review-panel.php>) for review⁶. The ERP shall acknowledge receipt of all complaints, impartially and objectively review all complaints and provide feedback to the Forum regarding complaints where additional review and potential action by the Forum is warranted. Once resolved, the decision on the complaint and the complaint process shall be communicated to the complainant.

A second draft of the proposed changes to the *SFI Standards* shall be delivered to the *SFI Inc.* Board of Directors during the second quarter of the final review year and posted to the *SFI* website. The *SFI, Inc.* Board bylaws require a 45-day advance notice to review proposed changes to the standards before Board action can occur. The *SFI Inc.* Board will meet in third quarter of the final review year to discuss the third *SFI Standards* draft and approve moving the proposed changes forward for a final consultation period of at least 60 days following the SFI annual conference in September.

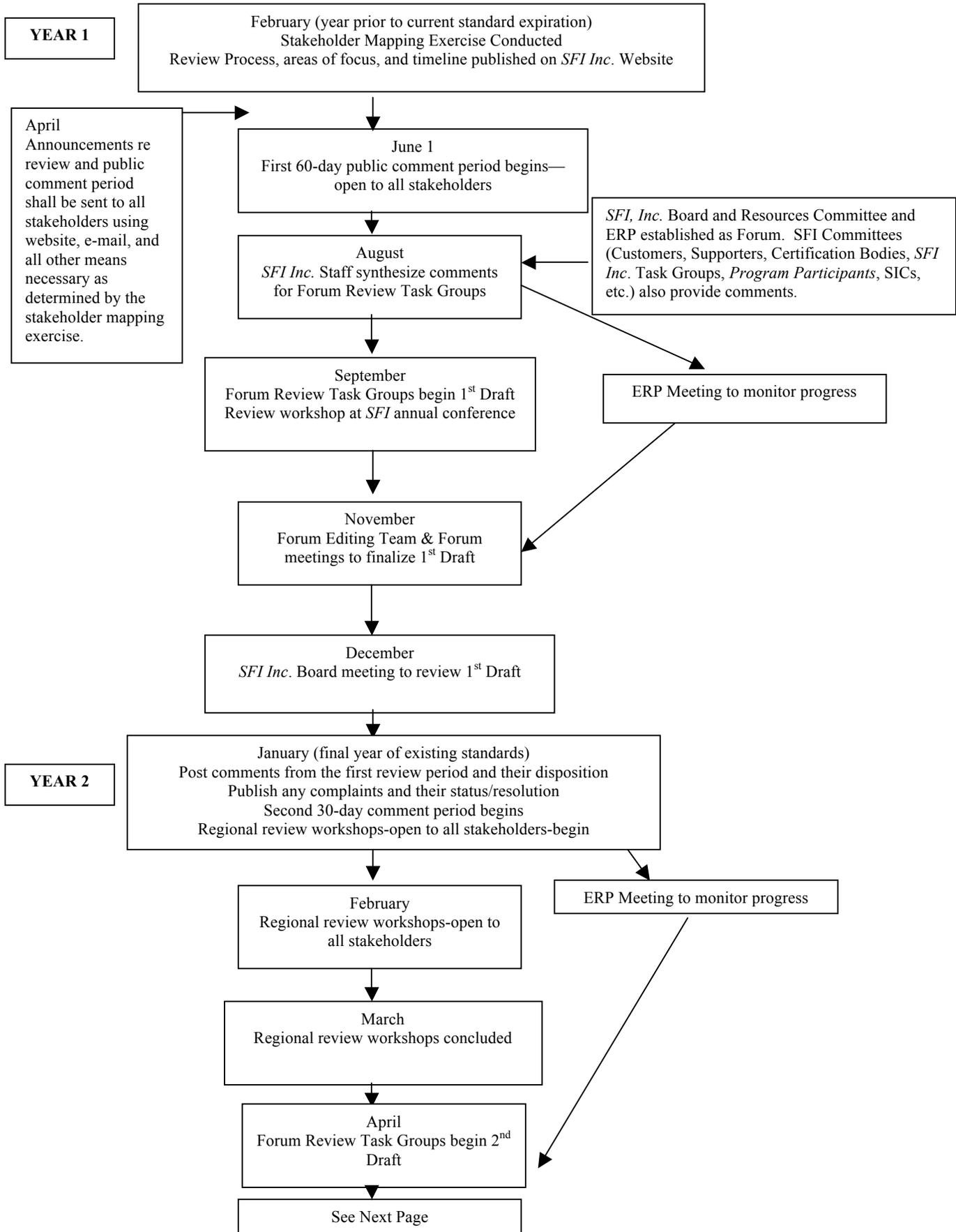
Following the consultation period of at least 60 days, the revised *SFI Standards* shall be finalized by the Forum and approved by the SFI Board and published to the *SFI* program website by December 31 of the review year. Printed copies will be available during the first quarter of the following year. All program participants have one year to fully implement new and revised *SFI Standards'* elements adopted by the Forum.

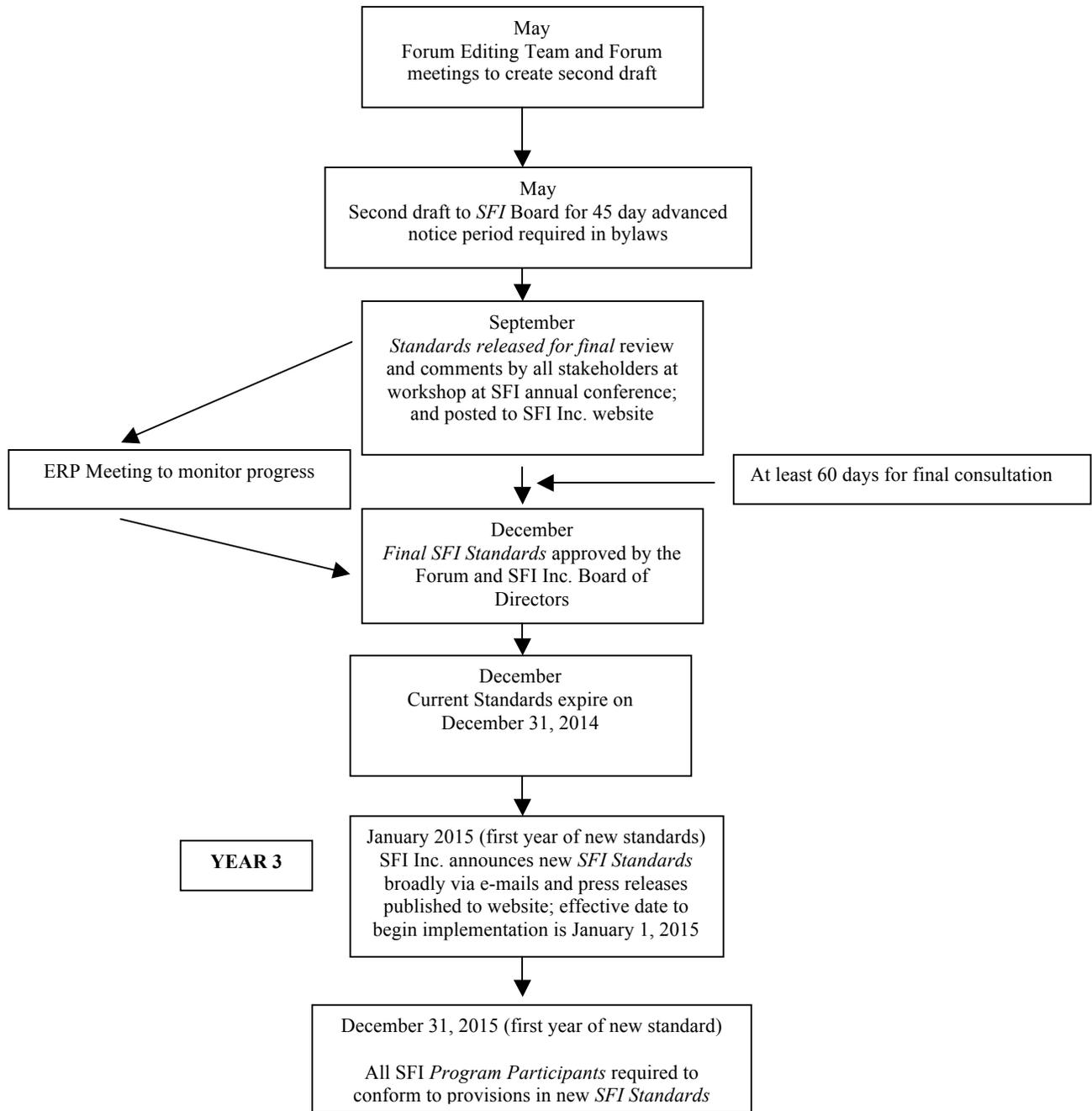
The Forum shall maintain records regarding all comments and their disposition for review by the independent External Review Panel. All comments will be considered carefully and records of their disposition maintained for a minimum of 5 years and posted to the SFI website. As in any review process, it is not necessary to agree to every suggestion, but it is important that all comments be given consideration.

These written procedures shall be publicly available to all interested parties. Additional information on the SFI Standards Development process, regional workshop reports and stakeholder comments submitted during both public comment periods and how they were addressed shall be publicly available.

⁶ For more information on the External Review Panel process, see the SFI Standards Development Process.

Figure 1. Procedure Used for *SFI Standards* Revision

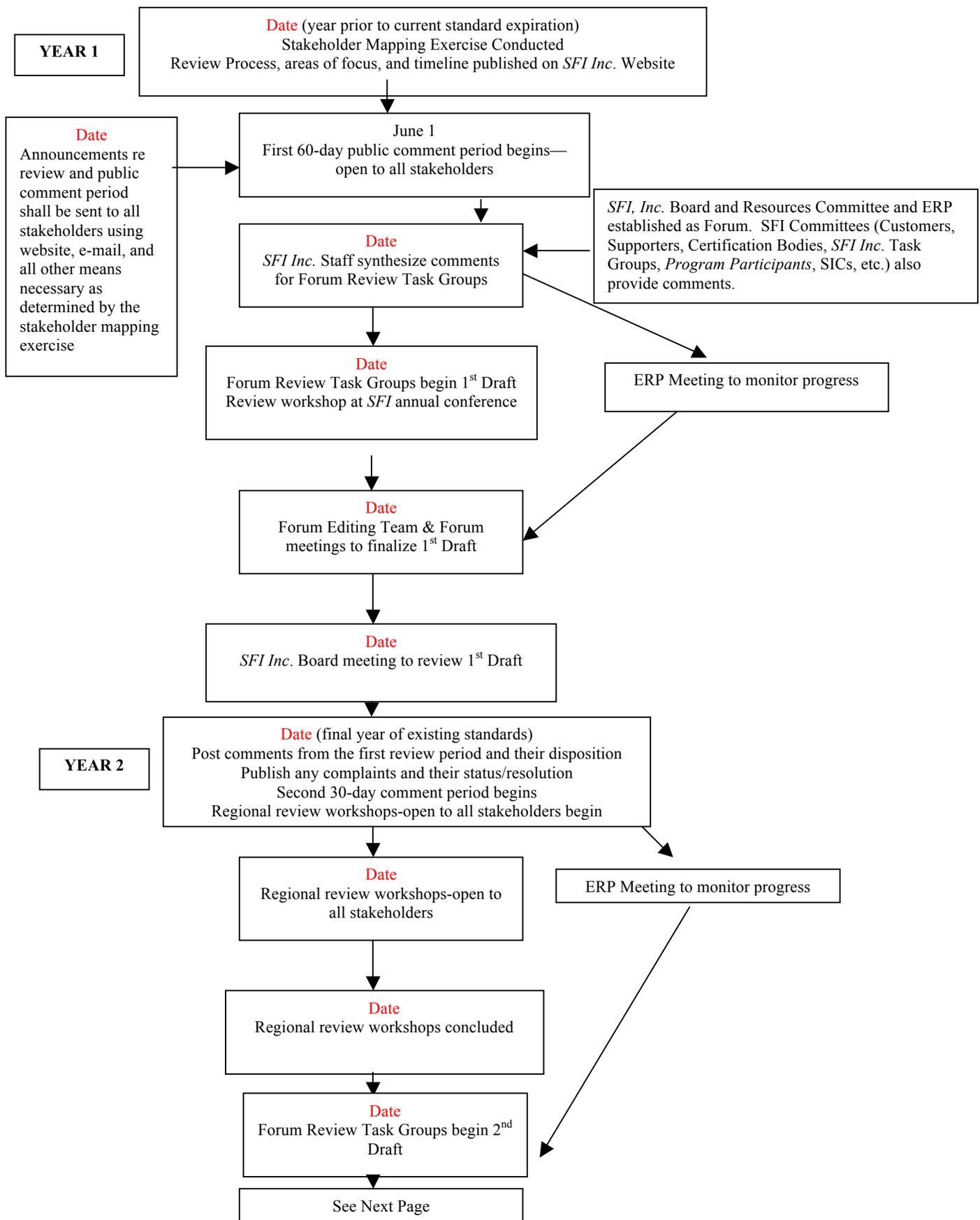


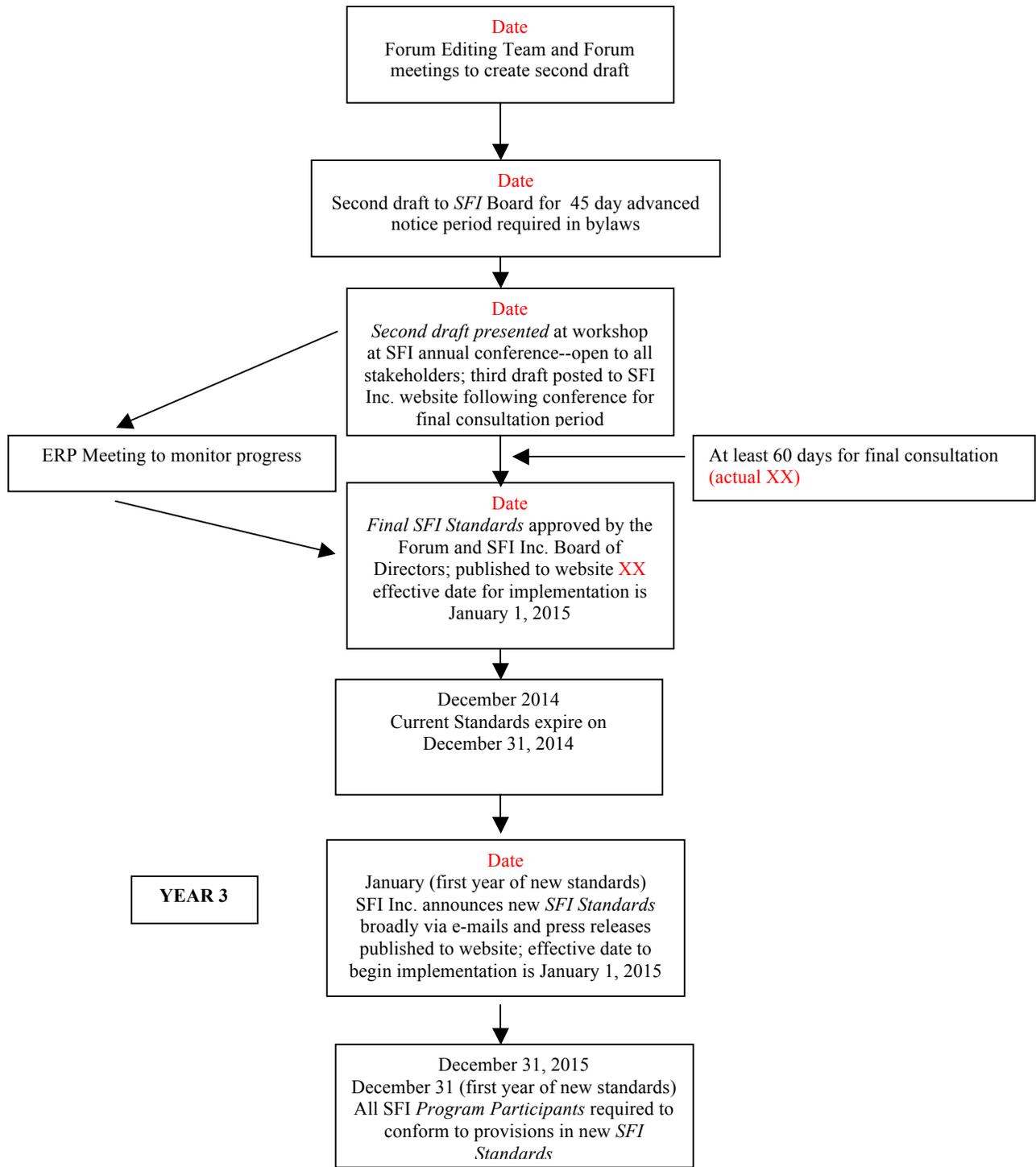


2. Development of the *SFI 2015-2019 Standard*

This section will be completed at the end of the 2015-2019 standard revision process and will document the actual process and timing of events as they occurred.

Figure 2. Procedure Used for the 2015-2019 *SFI Standards Development*
"To be updated at the end of the 2015-2019 Process"





3. Interpretations

From time to time, a formal process may be needed to interpret the *SFI Standards* and supporting documents. As part of SFI Inc.'s commitment to continual improvement of both the SFI certification process and the *SFI Standards*, such concerns shall be submitted promptly to the SFI Inc. Interpretations Committee by contacting staff at SFI Inc. 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 Standards* or SFI audit procedures.