



American Forest Foundation



Standards Council of Canada
Conseil canadien des normes

Agreement Between The American Forest Foundation and the Standards Council of Canada – Accepting SCC's Accreditation of Sustainable Forest Management Certification Bodies delivering certification to the American Tree Farm System's (ATFS) technical requirements.

Effective as of 2017-11-28

In the form of a letter among the Standards Council of Canada and the American Forest Foundation agreement.

Representatives from the American Forest Foundation's (AFF) American Tree Farm System (ATFS) and the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) reached an agreement in Washington D.C., United States on the date of the revision.

As a result of this agreement, SCC, as an IAF endorsed organization, is officially recognized by AFF as the Canadian accreditation body to accredit certification bodies that deliver sustainable forest management certification of family and small woodlands owners to the American Tree Farm System's technical requirements. The attached SCC and ATFS requirements outline the specific expectations. These requirements are reviewed and updated from time to time between the parties.

We, the undersigned, confirm the following agreement in accordance with our respective domestic procedures, that this agreement is valid on an on-going basis from the date of this agreement and will be reviewed on an annual basis by SCC and ATFS.

On behalf of Standards Council of Canada

On behalf of the American Forest Foundation

Name: **Mr. John Walter**
Title: Chief Executive Officer
Standards Council of Canada
Date: 2017-12-11
Ottawa, Canada

Name: **Tom Martin**
Title: President and CEO American Forest Foundation
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Standards Council of Canada
Date: 2017-12-08
Ottawa, Canada

SUBJECT: Accreditation Program for American Tree Farm System (ATFS)

APPLIES TO: ATFS SCC-Accredited and Applicant Certification Bodies

PREFACE

This Accreditation Rule is to inform certification bodies (CBs) of SCC requirements for accreditation to certify organizations for management systems conforming with the American Tree Farm System.

There are three types of ATFS certification:

- Regional Groups are group certifications made up of state programs (see www.treefarmssystem.org for region delineations).
- Independent Managed Groups (IMGs) are sub-components within ATFS's certification program. Managed and maintained by private organizations and public agencies, these groups are independent of ATFS's certified Regional Groups.
- Individual Certified Properties are those properties whose landowners have decided that they wish to have their forested ownership independently certified by an SCC-accredited CB.

All three types of properties are audited by SCC-accredited CBs and have their own ATFS Standard Operating Procedures for certification (see www.treefarmssystem.org).

ACCREDITATION RULE

1. Requirement Documents (current versions unless specified)
 - 1.1. American Forest Foundation (AFF) Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification
 - 1.2. American Tree Farm System Eligibility Requirements and Guidance for Certification
 - 1.3. American Tree Farm System Sampling Procedures for Assessments
 - 1.4. PEFC Logo Usage Rules - Requirements
 - 1.5. PEFC Certification and Accreditation Procedures
 - 1.6. American Tree Farm System Tree Farm Inspection Record
 - 1.7. American Tree Farm System Independently Managed Group (IMG) Standards
 - 1.8. ISO/IEC 17021 or ISO/IEC 17021-1, Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems (depending on where the CB is in the transition process)
 - 1.9. SCC Accreditation Program Overview
 - 1.10. SCC Requirements and Guidance for the Management Systems Accreditation Program: Sustainable Forest Management Sector Schemes
 - 1.11. IAF Mandatory Documents as applicable
2. Prerequisites
 - 2.1. The CB shall acquire and maintain SCC accreditation for SFI as a condition of applying for SCC accreditation for ATFS.
 - 2.2. A CB seeking to become accredited for ATFS activities must conform to ISO/IEC 17021 and be accredited by the SCC or ANAB to perform SFI forest management

certification audits.

- 2.3. To participate in the SCC accreditation program for ATFS, the CB for ATFS certification shall meet requirements of ISO 19011 and the SFI forest management auditor qualification and competency criteria and apply these requirements and criteria to its ATFS certification process.
- 2.4. To conform to confidentiality requirements of ISO/IEC 17021, the CB shall have formal enforceable arrangements with its ATFS clients to share information as required by Section 3 of this document.

3. Criteria for Certification Process

- 3.1. Public Consultation: The audit evidence to determine the conformity with the forest management standard shall include relevant information from external parties (for example, governmental agencies, community groups, and conservation organizations) as appropriate.
- 3.2. Public Access of Certification Reports: A summary of the certification report, including a summary of findings on the auditee's conformity with the forest management standard, shall be made available to the public by the auditee or in accordance with any applicable requirements defined by the respective forest certification scheme.
- 3.3. Certification Body Information Sharing and Transfer to ATFS and PEFC: The CB shall inform AFF (the ATFS governing body) and SFI Inc. (the PEFC National Governing Body for the United States) about all issued certificates and the validity and scope of these certificates. The CB shall inform the client organization about information provided to AFF and SFI Inc.
- 3.4. Assessment of ATFS and PEFC Logo Usage Compliance: The CB will ensure appropriate control of the PEFC and/or ATFS logo if the certified entity is a PEFC and/or ATFS logo user.
- 3.5. If a CB's audit team identifies a nonconformance during an on-site audit, the CB is required to notify the State Tree Farm Committee upon completion of the audit.

4. Additional Requirements (not documented elsewhere)

- 4.1. ATFS Auditor Time
 - 4.1.1. The CB shall have a process to determine ATFS auditor time.
 - 4.1.2. SCC shall review the CB's auditor time process during the application process and refer to it throughout the oversight of the ATFS program.

5. Application Process

- 5.1. CBs can obtain applications for informational use at www.scc.org.
- 5.2. The application fee includes the cost of one assessor day for the off-site documentation review.

6. Initial Assessments for Accreditation

- 6.1. An SCC accreditation assessor shall conduct a full documentation review.
- 6.2. After the documents are found acceptable, SCC shall conduct an office assessment and required witnessed audits.

- 6.2.1. The office assessment shall be conducted on site or remotely (at SCC's discretion) and is conducted to ensure the CB's certification process for ATFS conforms with ISO/IEC 17021 or ISO/IEC 17021-1 and is effective.
- 6.2.2. SCC shall witness the CB conducting an ATFS two-stage audit process (stages 1 and 2) at an organization at which the CB fully evaluates all ATFS requirements.
 - 6.2.2.1. The SCC assessment team shall have the same number of members as the CB audit team.
 - 6.2.2.3. Because of the level of expertise needed, SCC may use technical experts for ATFS witnessed audits. SCC will invoice the CB for the fees and expenses of the technical expert.

7. Surveillance Assessment

- 7.1. During the five-year accreditation cycle, SCC shall conduct an annual office assessment and witness a CB team conducting an ATFS audit for each type of group certified (that is, Regional Group and/or Independent Managed Group) at least once in each accreditation cycle.
 - 7.1.1. When possible, the office assessment shall be conducted concurrently with assessments for SFI and other SCC accreditation programs for which the CB is accredited.

8. Reaccreditation Assessments

- 8.1. SCC shall conduct a document review and on-site full system office assessment at approximately six months prior to the expiration of accreditation.

9. Complaints

- 9.1. Complaints about a CB accredited by SCC for ATFS or about an organization with an SCC- accredited ATFS certification shall be investigated in accordance with SCC Accreditation Rule 13, with the exception that to deter unfounded complaints, SCC shall require the complainant to agree to pay for the cost of the investigation in the event that the allegations cannot be substantiated