

Process for American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) Independently Managed Group (IMG)

The [American Tree Farm System® \(ATFS\) Independently Managed Group \(IMG\) Certification Standards 2021](#) contain the requirements for the implementation by, and independent certification of, group organization(s) comprising a number of group member properties under one centrally administered program. A Group Entity holds the single certificate on behalf of the Group Organization and is authorized to represent the Group Members in the implementation of the AFF Standards of Sustainability and ATFS IMG Standards

All lands eligible for ATFS certification may undergo a third-party certification audit to judge conformance to the AFF Standards of Sustainability. The following outlines the process for Independently Managed Groups interested in seeking third-party certification of their forestlands.

1. Group Entity submits an application to an ANAB or SCC-accredited Certification Body and undergoes an audit for conformance with the [AFF Standards of Sustainability](#) and [Independently Managed Group Standards](#).
 - Additional audit fees payable to the certification body are estimated as:
 - \$7500-\$10,000 for the small (<50,000 acres)
 - \$10000-\$15000 for medium (50,000-100,000 acres)
 - \$15000+ for large (>100,000 acres)
2. Upon positive certification decision, the Certification Body issues a certificate and notifies ATFS. The Certification Body shall also notify ATFS of any changes to a previously issued certificate.
3. The Group Entity must make the Executive Summary of the certification report publicly available. The Certification Body shall write the Executive Summary of the certification report and shall include findings on the auditee's conformity with the AFF Standards and ATFS program requirements.
4. Group Manager completes the Group Data Reporting Form and the IMG Annual Reporting Summary and submits to ATFS for uploading into the ATFS Database.
 - ATFS administrative fees for IMG's are as follows:
 - < 249,999 acres = \$0.02 per acre
 - 250,000 – 499,999 acres = \$0.03 per acre
 - 500,000 – 1,000,000 acres = \$0.04 per acre
 - ≥1,000,001 acres = \$0.05 per acre
5. ATFS records information on certification and communicates to appropriate state(s) leadership of the new certification for programmatic purposes.
6. Internal Monitoring of the Group Organization is conducted by the Group Manager per the IMG Certification Standards requirements.

Please contact Stephen Lloyd, ATFS Certification Manager, with questions at SLloyd@forestfoundation.org.