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.

2011- 04 - 18

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 private woodlot 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

Name: **Mr. John Walter**
Title: Executive Director
Standards Council of Canada
Date: 2011=
Ottawa, Canada

On behalf of the American Forest Foundation

Name: **Robert Simpson**
Title: Senior Vice President, Forestry
American Forest Foundation
Date: 2011-
Washington D.C., United States

2. Prerequisites

2.1. A CB seeking to become accredited for ATFS activities must conform to ISO/IEC 17021 and be accredited by SCC **or** the ANAB to perform SFI 2010-2014 forest management certification audits.

2.2. To participate in the SCC accreditation program for ATFS, the CB for ATFS certification shall meet requirements of ISO 19011 and the SFI 2010-2014 forest management auditor qualification and competency criteria and apply these requirements and criteria to its ATFS certification process.

2.3. 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. Auditees are required to submit a summary of the certification report to ATFS. Interested parties may request from ATFS copies of an auditee's summary.

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 If a CB's audit team identifies a non-conformance during an on-site audit, the CB is required to notify the auditee (including state Tree Farm Committees for regional audits) and ATFS support staff 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 reference it throughout the oversight of the ATFS program.

4.2. Sampling Plan

4.2.1. The sampling requirements for Regional Groups can be found in Annex 1 of this Accreditation Rule.

4.2.2. The sampling requirements for Independent Managed Groups (IMGs) can be found in Annex 2 and Annex 4 of this Accreditation Rule.

- Annex 2 is applicable for sites consisting primarily of category 2 landowners (as defined by the ATFS Independently Managed Group Certification Requirements (May 2010)), and may be appropriate for IMGs with a small number of large landowners
- Annex 4 is applicable for IMGs consisting primarily of several category 1 landowners (as defined by the ATFS Independently Managed Group Certification Requirements (May 2010)).
- Either Annex is applicable for state agency group managers, whereby the agency operates a number of offices, and exercises some degree of regulatory oversight of landowner's management activities as part of the condition for continued membership in the group.

4.2.3 The sampling requirements for Individual Lands can be found in Annex 3 of this Accreditation Rule.

Annex 1. Sampling Procedure for Regional Groups

1. CBs shall have a process for sampling land owners/acreage that is part of an ATFS Regional Group.
2. This process shall include at a minimum the following sampling plan:
2.1. A minimum of three states per region shall be selected and audited, unless all other states in the region have been visited within the current certification cycle.
2.2. By selected state, calculate the square root of the total ATFS certified properties per state.
2.2.1. The square root is the total individual certified properties in the selected state to be sampled the given year.
2.2.2. Determine the percentage of land owner's acreage per selected state that falls within each tract as outlined in table 1 below.
2.3. The properties to be sampled per selected state shall be divided (by percentage) within the state from table 1.

Table 1:

Tract	Acreage Categories
1	10-100
2	101-500
3	501-1000
4	1001+

For example, three states = Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota

- Total certified individual properties in Wisconsin is 1,177
- Square Root for WI is 34 properties for minimum sample
- Individual certified WI properties have the following percentages:
  - 10-100 acres 42% of total properties, 14 sample properties
  - 101-500 acres 32% of total properties, 11 sample properties
  - 501-1000 acres 16% of total properties, 5 sample properties
  - 1001+ acres 10% of total properties, 3 sample properties

3. The process shall also include guidance on determining the number of certified properties to be audited; the sampling plan above is focused on acreage.
4. When selecting the three states per year and the properties to audit, the CB is expected to factor in various risk factors.
4.1 Risk factors may include time since last internal monitoring inspection, recent harvest activities if known, cultural sites if known, threatened or endangered species if known, etc.
4.2 Information on risk factors may vary according to the state sampled. CB shall take into account level of information available in each state when assessing various risk factors.
4.3 If there is sufficient information at the time at which the field sample is selected, the CB shall sample a mixture of properties from those either currently engaged in harvest activities or having been harvested within the past three years, as well as those properties that have not been harvested within the past three years
5. For annual surveillance audits, take .6 (as a coefficient) of the square root of the total ATFS certified properties per state. Then follow the process as outlined above.
6. For re-certification audits, take .8 of the square root of the total ATFS certified properties per state. Then follow the process as outlined above.
7. All states within a regional certification shall be included in a certification or surveillance audit at least once within a five year cycle independent from the certification cycle as prescribed by ISO 17021. The sampling intensity of audits will follow the ISO guidelines (e.g. a 3 year cycle).
8. A CB shall conduct an audit at the state office to review the 004 documentation maintained by the state program for the Regional Group.
8.1. CBs shall focus on the 004 documentation maintained for the ATFS National Required Sample.
8.2 The 004 documentation outlines the sampling approach, as currently developed by Virginia Tech, for the ATFS National Required Sample.

Annex 2. Sampling Procedures for ATFS Independent Managed Groups (IMGs)

1. IMGs follow a separate sampling procedure from that of Regional Groups (as outlined in Annex 1). In particular, a sampling system for participating IMG properties is recommended as follows. Certification bodies may select to follow an alternative compliance path, adhering to the sampling design requirements detailed in the agreement signed in 2009. This sampling procedure is included in Annex 4 of this document.

2. CBs shall have a process for sampling the properties that are part of an ATFS IMG. The sampling process follows IAF guidance for the certification of multiple sites based on sampling, which includes the following considerations:

- Commonality and review of management plan(s) within the IMG
- Internal monitoring program
- Number of managing sites

3. CBs shall design a sampling process to be conducted within the population of managing sites for the IMG. This sampling process shall include, at a minimum, the following sampling plan:

3.1. Calculation of the number of **IMG sites** to be included in the audit. A site is defined as a permanent location where management of the Group program procedures is carried out, at least in part.

3.1.1. For example, a Group Manager has one management system (group administration) for all properties covered under the Group Program, but this system is implemented through a **Central Office** and three field offices; therefore the IMG has four sites.

3.1.2. A population of all **IMG sites** of the group organization will form the population to be sampled using the methodology in Table 1.

3.1.3. The **Central Office** site will always be included as one of the audited sites for each audit cycle.

Table 1: Number of Sites to be Visited

Certification Stage	**Sample Site calculation**
Certification	= square root (#sites)
Surveillance	= square root (#sites) * 60%
Re-certification	= square root (#sites) * 80%

3.2 Calculation of the number of audit days for each IMG site in the audit.

3.2.1 Audit duration at each site shall be based upon the effective number of personnel at that site. The effective number of personnel shall consist of all **full time equivalent (FTE)** personnel involved with the implementation of the IMG program.

3.2.2 The total number of **IMG employees** and/or **contract management,** expressed in **full-time equivalents** (FTEs), will be used in conjunction with accepted IAF guidance to determine the audit duration for each site. Please see Table 2 for IAF Guidance.

3.2.3 This is a baseline calculation. The CB shall have a process for adjusting the auditor day calculation based upon risk factors present in the Group Program to be audited (see 3.2.4 and 3.2.5)

3.2.4 An auditor-day calculation is to be made for each site selected for audit.

3.2.5 For Group Programs with one to five sites, the auditor day calculation will be adjusted for sampling intensity according to Table 1.

Table 2: Guidance for Assignment of Total Auditor days required per site according to risk assessment

	Total (Auditor Days Required)		
Effective # FTEs	High	Average	Low
1-5	3	2.5	2.5
6-10	3.5	3	3
11-15	4.5	3.5	3
16-25	5.5	4.5	3.5
26-45	7	5.5	4

3.3.6 When selecting the properties to audit as part of the field sample for each **IMG site**, the CB is expected to favor those having evidence of higher risk activities during the audit cycle. The CB should consider higher risk activities such as, but not limited to, road building and timber harvesting.

3.3.7 The CB should also weight sample selection toward properties containing species at risk, cultural sites, fish and riparian values etc.

3.3.8 For a particular IMG-audit cycle, the CB shall choose a representative sample of **Group Member Categories** in addition to a representative sample of acreage classes

3.3.9 Notwithstanding the above sample weighting guidance, at least 25% of the sample must be drawn at random by the CB.

Annex 3: Sampling Procedures for Individual Certification Holders

1. CBs shall develop a process for sampling properties for Individual Certificate Holders that seek certification for multiple properties all owned by the same entity.
2. This process shall use the following sampling plan as a guide.
2.1 Calculate the square root of the total individual properties owned by the Individual Certificate Holder.
2.1.1 The square root is the total individual properties owned by the Individual Certificate Holder to be sample the given year.
2.2 When selecting properties to audit, the CB is expected to favor those having evidence of higher risk activities during the audit cycle.
2.2.1 Higher risk activities include recent harvesting, wildlife, storm damage, etc.
2.3 The CB may also weight sample selection towards properties containing threatened or endangered species, cultural sites, fish and riparian values, etc.
2.4 The CB shall document how it will account for higher risk activities in the sample.
3. For annual surveillance audits, take 0.6 (as a coefficient) of the square root of the total individual properties owned by the Individual Certificate Holder and then follow the process outlined above as a guide.
4. For re-certification audits, take 0.8 (as a coefficient) of the square root of the total individual properties owned by the Individual Certificate Holder and then follow the process outlined above as a guide.
5. The CB shall document its reasons for assigning auditor days-per-site.

45-65	8	6	4.5
66-85	9	7	5
86-125	11	8	5.5
126-175	12	9	6
176-275	13	10	7
276-425	15	11	8
426-625	16	12	9
626-875	17	13	10
876-1175	19	15	11
Source: IAF Mandatory Document 5:2009 – Annex B – Environmental Management Systems			

3.2.6 The CB shall conduct its own risk assessment for systematic non-conformance with the AFF Standard and the ATFS-IMG- 01. The CB shall assign a risk rating to the IMG as a whole, or its individual sites.

Factors for increase in non-conformance risk include, but are not limited to:

- Very large number of Group Members for the number of IMG personnel involved
- System covers highly complex processes or relatively high number of unique activities
- Higher sensitivity of the forest environment
- Conflicting views of interested stakeholders
- Geographic area covered by the IMG program

Factors for decrease in non-conformance risk include, but are not limited to:

- Maturity of the management system (e.g. Group Manager control of forest management activities, regulatory enforcement etc.)
- Consistency of forest management plans
- Extensive tracking of forest management activities
- Frequency of contact with Group Members and their properties (intensity of monitoring)

3.2.7 The CB shall document its reasons for assigning auditor days-per-site..

3.2.8 The audit duration for all types of audits includes on-site time at the IMG site(s) and time spent off-site carrying out planning, document review, interacting with client personnel, interacting with stakeholders and report-writing. Off-site audit time involved in planning and report-writing shall not contribute to more than 20% of the total audit duration.

3.3 Sample-weighting of IMG audit properties:

3.3.1 The total number of Group Member properties visited during the audit will be determined by the audit duration established for each site. Reasonable time will be allotted for travel to each property, interviews of owners and/or managers and property inspection.

3.3.2 The total acres of the population of properties covered by the IMG Program will be tabulated.

3.3.3 Each property will be assigned a size class in accordance with Table 3.

Table 3: Field Sample Acreage Classes

Tract Class	Acreage Categories
1	10-100
2	101-500
3	501-1000
4	1001+

3.3.4 The sample of Group Member forest properties, by size class, drawn for audit by the CB, shall reflect the percent distribution of property size classes in the total population of IMG Group Members at the time of the audit. This should be based upon the distribution of properties in each size class.

3.3.5 The sample property list is to be constrained by the time required to reasonably conduct field reviews within the time (auditor days) calculated in 3.2.

SCC Advisories represent positions taken or policies established on operational issues related to SCC programs.

5. Application Process

5.1. ATFS has established additional requirements for this accredited certification process and it is the CB's responsibility to obtain those requirements from ATFS prior to application and ensure it fully conforms to the requirements.

5.2. The SCC's ATFS application in .pdf format can be obtained for informational use at http://www.scc.ca.

5.3. When the CB is ready to apply for ATFS accreditation, please contact the SCC for the application package and instructions.

5.3.1. The application fee includes the cost for a reasonable amount of time for off-site documentation review.

6. Initial Accreditation Process

6.1. SCC shall follow the accreditation process outlined in SCC's program handbook, with the exceptions outlined below.

7. Required Assessments

7.1. Witnessed Audits

7.1.1. SCC does not require an initial witnessed audit prior to ATFS accreditation because the CB is already accredited for SFI; however, SCC shall witness the first ATFS audit conducted by the CB which may or may not be conducted following ATFS accreditation.

7.1.2. SCC shall witness at least one ATFS audit in each accreditation period. SCC will work with the CB to ensure that each of the three types of certifications (if applicable) is witnessed at least once during the accreditation period.

7.1.3. Because of the level of expertise needed during ATFS witnessed audits, SCC will use technical experts during most ATFS assessments. The technical expert fees and expenses will be charged to the CB.

7.2. Office Assessments

7.2.1. SCC does not require an initial office assessment prior to ATFS accreditation.

7.2.2. SCC shall conduct a maintenance office assessment, which will be combined with SCC's annual SFI office assessment.

8. Miscellaneous

8.1. SCC shall follow all other accreditation processes as outlined in SCC's program handbook.

SUBJECT: American Tree Farm System (ATFS) Program

APPLIES TO: SCC Accredited and Applicant Certification Bodies

PREFACE
This Accreditation Rule is to inform certification bodies (CBs) of SCC requirements for becoming accredited to offer certification for the America Tree Farm System (ATFS).

There are three types of ATFS certifications: Regional Groups, Independent Managed Groups (IMGs), and Individual Certified Properties.

a) Regional Groups are group certifications made up of state programs (see www.treefarmsystem.org for Region delineations).

b) 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.

c) 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.treefarmsystem.org).

ACCREDITATION RULE

1. Requirement/Reference Documents
1.1. The following documents can be obtained at www.treefarmsystem.org:
1.1.1. American Forest Foundation Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certifications Standard; 2010-2015 AFF Standards
1.1.2. National Interpretations Committee
1.1.3. Manual for Group Organizations, Group Managers, and Group Members
1.1.4. AFF Board Approved Eligibility Requirements
1.2. ATFS Inspector Training
1.2.1. The following procedures/documents are specific to CBs and auditors:
1.2.1.1. ATFS Inspector Training
1.2.1.2. In-person training course facilitated by ATFS staff and ATFS trained facilitators
1.3. ATFS Standard Operation Procedures for Group Certification
1.4. ATFS Process for Third-Party Certification of Individual Lands
1.5. The following documents can be obtained at www.pefc.org:
1.5.1. Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) Logo Use Rules Annex 5
1.5.2. Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) Certification and Accreditation procedures Annex 6
1.6. Document 004 for Regional Group Certifications, maintained by each state ATFS program committee
1.7. SCC program handbook

Annex 4: 2009 Agreement Sampling Procedures for ATFS Independently Managed Groups (IMGs)

1. IMGs follow a separate sampling procedure from that of Regional Groups (as outlined in Annex 1). In particular, a sampling system for participating IMG properties is recommended as follows.
2. CBs shall have a process for sampling land owners/acreage part of an ATFS IMG.
3. This process shall include at a minimum the following sampling plan:
3.1. Calculate the square root of the total IMG certified properties.
3.1.1. The square root is the total individual certified properties in the IMG to be sampled the given year.
3.1.2. Determine the percentage of land owner's acreage per IMG which falls within each tract as outlined in Table 1 below.
3.1.3. The properties to be sampled per selected IMG shall be divided (by representative percentages) within the IMG from Table 1.
3.1.4. These numbers will serve as the basis for property sampling within the selected IMG.

Table 1

Tract Categories	Acreage Categories
1	10-100
2	101-500
3	501-1000
4	1001+

4. When selecting the properties to audit, the CB is expected to factor in harvesting schedules and shall sample a mixture of land owners who are in harvest or have harvested within the past year as well as landowners who have not harvested within the past year.
5. For annual surveillance audits, take .6 (as a coefficient) of the square root of the total individual certified properties in the IMG and then follow the process as outlined above.
6. For re-certification audits, take 0.8 of the square root of the total individual certified properties in the IMG and then follow the process as outlined above.