

SECTION 3

SFI 2015-2019 FIBER SOURCING STANDARD AND THE SMALL LANDS GROUP CERTIFICATION MODULE

2018



SUSTAINABLE
FORESTRY
INITIATIVE

SFI-00001





SFI 2015-2019 FIBER SOURCING STANDARD AND THE SMALL LANDS GROUP CERTIFICATION MODULE

1. GENERAL

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SECTION 3

1. GENERAL

1.1 Scope

What the *Fiber Sourcing Standard* Does

The *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* promotes responsible forestry practices based on 14 *Principles*, 13 *Objectives*, 21 *Performance Measures* and 55 *Indicators*. These *fiber sourcing* requirements include measures to broaden the practice of *biodiversity*, use forestry *best management practices* to protect water quality, provide outreach to landowners, and utilize the services of forest management and harvesting professionals.

What the *Fiber Sourcing Standard* Covers

The *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* applies to any organization with a *fiber sourcing* program that acquires roundwood and field-manufactured or primary-mill residual chips, pulp and veneer to support a forest products facility. Appendix 1 applies to any *primary producer* or *secondary producer* who uses the *SFI Certified Sourcing* on-product label or claim.

Geographic Application of the *Fiber Sourcing Standard*

The *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* applies to organizations in the United States and Canada that procure wood domestically or globally. *Secondary producers* who utilize Appendix 1 can apply it to any organization globally.

1.2 Additional Requirements

SFI Program Participants that own or have management authority for forestlands must also conform to the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*.

Use of the *SFI* on-product labels and claims shall follow Section 5 - Rules for Use of *SFI* On-Product Labels and Off-Product Marks as well as ISO 14020:2000.

1.3 References

This standard incorporates, by dated or undated reference, provisions from other publications. These normative and informative references are cited at the appropriate places in the text and the publications are listed hereafter. For dated and undated references, the latest edition of the publication applies.

Normative References

- i. ISO/IEC 17021:2011 - Conformity Assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ii. ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 Standardization and related activities - General vocabulary
- iii. Section 7 - *SFI* Policies
- iv. Section 9 - *SFI 2015-2019 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualifications and Accreditation*
- v. Section 10 - Communications and Public Reporting
- vi. Section 13 - *SFI* Definitions
- vii. Interpretations for the Requirements for the *SFI* 2015-2019 Program

For the purposes of this standard, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 apply, together with the definitions in the *SFI* Definitions (Section 13).

Informative References

- i. ISO 14001:2004 Environmental Management Systems - Specification with guidance for use
- ii. PEFC ST 1003:2010 Sustainable Forest Management Requirements, November 26, 2010
- iii. Section 6 - Guidance to *SFI* 2015-2019 Standards
- iv. Section 8 - *SFI* Standards Development and Interpretations Process
- v. Section 11 - Public Inquiries and Official Complaints
- vi. Section 12 - Optional Modules

1.4 *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard Principles*

SFI Program Participants believe 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* forest land bases. They support *sustainable forestry* practices on forestland they manage, and promote it on other lands. They support efforts to protect private property rights, and to help all private landowners manage their forestland sustainably. In keeping with this responsibility, *SFI 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* such as the *conservation* of soil, air and water quality, carbon, *biological diversity*, *wildlife* and *aquatic habitats*, recreation and aesthetics.

2. *Forest Productivity and Health*

To provide for regeneration after harvest and maintain the productive capacity of the forest land 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, *invasive exotic plants and animals*, 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 areas* and to conform with forestry *best management practices* to protect water quality.

4. *Protection of Biological Diversity*

To manage forests in ways that protect and promote *biological diversity*, including animal and plant species, *wildlife habitats*, and ecological or natural community types.

5. Aesthetics and Recreation

To manage the visual impacts of forest operations, and to provide recreational opportunities for the public.

6. Protection of Special Sites

To manage lands that are ecologically, geologically or *culturally important* in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

7. Responsible Fiber Sourcing 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. Legal Compliance

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

9. Research

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

10. Training and Education

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

11. Community Involvement and Social Responsibility

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* on all lands through community involvement, socially responsible practices, and through recognition and respect of *Indigenous Peoples'* rights and *traditional forest-related knowledge*.

12. Transparency

To broaden the understanding of forest certification to the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* by documenting certification audits and making the findings publicly available.

13. Continual Improvement

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

14. Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Illegal Logging in Offshore Fiber Sourcing

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*.

1.5 SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard Objectives

A summary of the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard Objectives* follows:

Objective 1. Biodiversity in Fiber Sourcing

To address the practice of *sustainable forestry* by conserving *biological diversity*.

Objective 2. Adherence to Best Management Practices

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* through the use of *best management practices* to protect water quality.

Objective 3. Use of Qualified Resource and Qualified Logging Professionals

To encourage forest landowners to utilize the services of *qualified logging professionals, certified logging professionals* (where available) and *qualified resource professionals*.

Objective 4. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state and local laws and regulations.

Objective 5. Forestry Research, Science and Technology

To invest in *forestry* research, science and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based and broaden the awareness of *climate change* impacts on forests, *wildlife* and *biological diversity*.

Objective 6. Training and Education

To improve the implementation of *sustainable forestry* practices through appropriate training and education *programs*.

Objective 7. Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* through public outreach, education, and involvement and to support the efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.

Objective 8. Public Land Management Responsibilities

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on *public lands*.

Objective 9. Communications and Public Reporting

To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

Objective 10. Management Review and Continual Improvement

To promote continual improvement in the practice of *sustainable forestry* by conducting a management review and monitoring performance.

Objective 11. Promote Conservation of Biological Diversity, Biodiversity Hotspots and High-Biodiversity Wilderness Areas

To promote the *conservation of biological diversity, biodiversity hotspots* and *high-biodiversity wilderness areas* in *fiber sourcing programs*.

Objective 12. Avoidance of *Controversial Sources* including *Illegal Logging*

To avoid *illegal logging* in *fiber sourcing* programs.

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

To avoid *controversial sources* in *fiber sourcing* programs.

1.6 SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard Requirements
Fiber sourcing within the United States and Canada (Objectives 1-10 apply).

Objective 1. *Biodiversity in Fiber Sourcing*

To address the practice of *sustainable forestry* by conserving *biological diversity*.

Performance Measure 1.1. Promotion and *conservation of biological diversity*.

Indicators:

1. *Program Participants* shall address *conservation of biodiversity*, individually or collaboratively, through a *program* which includes one or more of the following:
 - a. promotion of *biological diversity* utilizing information from organizations such as World Resources Institute, The Nature Conservancy, NatureServe, Conservation International, State Wildlife Action Plans, State Forest Action Plans and assessments;
 - b. conducting local and regional level *landscape* assessments;
 - c. involvement with local or regional *conservation* efforts;
 - d. use of relevant information on *biological diversity* from credible sources (such as those noted above) in approved training and education programs; or
 - e. other credible approaches.
2. *Program* to address *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value* in harvests of *purchased stumpage*.

Objective 2. 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 2.1. *Program Participants* shall clearly define and implement *policies* to ensure that facility inventories and *fiber sourcing* activities do not compromise adherence to the *principles of sustainable forestry*.

Indicators:

1. *Program* to require that harvests of *purchased stumpage* comply with *best management practices*.
2. Use of written agreements for the purchase of raw material sourced directly from the forest is required and must include provisions requiring the use of *best management practices*.

3. *Program* to address adverse weather conditions.
4. *Program Participants* shall clearly define their *fiber sourcing policies* in writing and make them available to *wood producers*.

Performance Measure 2.2. *Program Participants* shall monitor the use of *best management practices*.

Indicators:

1. A *verifiable monitoring* system to:
 - a. monitor the use of *best management practices* by *wood producers* supplying the *Program Participant*; and
 - b. evaluate use of *best management practices* across the *wood and fiber supply area*.
2. Use of information from the *verifiable monitoring system* to maintain rates of conformance to *best management practices* and to identify areas for improved performance.

Objective 3. Use of *Qualified Resource* and *Qualified Logging Professionals*

To encourage forest landowners to utilize the services of *qualified logging professionals*, *certified logging professionals* (where available) and *qualified resource professionals*.

Performance Measure 3.1. *Program Participants* shall encourage landowners to utilize the services of *qualified logging professionals*, *certified logging professionals* (where available), *qualified resource professionals* and to apply *principles* of sustainable forest management on their lands.

Indicators:

1. *Program* to promote the use of *qualified logging professionals*, *certified logging professionals* (where available), and *qualified resource professionals*.
2. List of *qualified logging professionals*, *certified logging professionals* and *qualified resource professionals* maintained by a *Program Participant*, state or provincial agency, loggers' association or other organization.

Objective 4. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, provincial, state and local laws and regulations.

Performance Measure 4.1. *Program Participants* shall comply with applicable federal, provincial, state and local *forestry* and related social and environmental laws and regulations and take steps to avoid *illegal logging*.

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. *Program* to assess the risk that the *Program Participant's* fiber sourcing program could acquire material from *illegal logging* by considering some of the following:
 - a. communications with suppliers;
 - b. independent research;
 - c. contract documentation; and
 - d. maintaining records.
5. *Program* to address any significant risk identified under 4.1.4.

Performance Measure 4.2. *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, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures, workers' compensation, *Indigenous Peoples'* rights, workers' and communities' right to know, prevailing wages, workers' right to organize, and occupational health and safety.

Objective 5. Forestry Research, Science and Technology

To invest in *forestry* research, science and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are based and broaden the awareness of *climate change* impacts on forests, *wildlife* and *biological diversity*.

Performance Measure 5.1. *Program Participants* shall — individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, associations or other partners — provide in-kind support or funding for forest research to improve *forest health*, *productivity*, and sustainable management of forest resources, and the environmental benefits and performance of forest products.

Indicators:

1. Financial or in-kind support of research to address questions of relevance in the region of operations. Examples could include, but are not limited to, areas of forest *productivity*, water quality, *biodiversity*, community issues, or similar areas that build broader understanding of the benefits and impacts of forest management.
2. Research on genetically engineered trees via *forest tree biotechnology* shall adhere to all applicable federal, state, and provincial regulations and international protocols ratified by the U.S. or Canada depending on jurisdiction of management.

Performance Measure 5.2. *Program Participants* shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, associations or other partners develop or use state, provincial or regional analyses in support of their *sustainable forestry programs*.

Indicator:

1. Participation, individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees* and/or associations at the national, state, provincial or regional level, in the development or use of some of the following:
 - a. regeneration assessments;
 - b. *growth and drain* assessments;
 - c. *best management practices* implementation and conformance;
 - d. *biodiversity* conservation information for family forest owners; and
 - e. social, cultural or economic benefit assessments.

Performance Measure 5.3. *Program Participants* shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts involving *SFI Implementation Committees*, associations or other partners broaden the awareness of *climate change* impacts on forests, *wildlife* and *biological diversity*.

Indicators:

1. Where available, monitor information generated from regional climate models on *long-term forest health*, *productivity* and *economic viability*.
2. *Program Participants* are knowledgeable about *climate change* impacts on *wildlife*, *wildlife habitats* and *conservation of biological diversity* through international, national, regional or local *programs*.

Objective 6. Training and Education

To improve the implementation of *sustainable forestry* practices through appropriate training and education *programs*.

Performance Measure 6.1. *Program Participants* shall require appropriate training of personnel and contractors so that they are competent to fulfill their responsibilities under the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

Indicators:

1. Written statement of commitment to the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* communicated throughout the organization, particularly to facility and woodland managers, *fiber sourcing* staff and field foresters.
2. Assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities for achieving *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard Objectives*.
3. Staff education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.
4. Contractor education and training sufficient to their roles and responsibilities.
5. *Program Participants* shall have written agreements for the use of *qualified logging professionals* and/or *certified logging professionals* (where available) and/or *wood producers* that have completed training *programs* and are recognized as *qualified logging professionals*.

Performance Measure 6.2. *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*.

Indicators:

1. Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria and identify delivery mechanisms for *wood producer* training courses and periodic continuing education that address:
 - a. awareness of *sustainable forestry* principles and the *SFI Program*;
 - b. *best management practices*, including streamside management and road construction, maintenance and retirement;
 - c. *reforestation*, *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. awareness of rare forested natural communities as identified by provincial or state agencies, or by credible organizations such as NatureServe and The Nature Conservancy;
 - f. logging safety;
 - g. U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) regulations, wage and hour rules, and other provincial, state and local employment laws;
 - h. transportation issues;
 - i. business management;
 - j. public *policy* and outreach; and
 - k. awareness of emerging technologies.
2. The *SFI Implementation Committee*-approved *wood producer* training programs shall have a continuing education component with coursework that supports the current training programs, safety and the *principles of sustainable forestry*.
3. Participation in or support of *SFI Implementation Committees* to establish criteria for recognition of logger certification *programs*, where they exist, that include:
 - a. completion of *SFI Implementation Committee* recognized *wood producer* training *programs* and meeting continuing education requirements of the training *program*;
 - b. independent in-the-forest verification of conformance with the logger certification *program* standards;
 - c. compliance with all applicable laws and regulations including responsibilities under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, the Canadian Species at Risk Act and other measures to protect *wildlife habitat*;
 - d. use of *best management practices* to protect water quality;
 - e. logging safety;

- f. compliance with acceptable *silviculture* and utilization standards;
- g. aesthetic management techniques employed where applicable; and
- h. adherence to a management or harvest plan that is site specific and agreed to by the forest landowner.

Objective 7. Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach

To broaden the practice of *sustainable forestry* through public outreach, education, and involvement and to support the efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.

Performance Measure 7.1. *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, sporting organizations, labor, universities, extension agencies, the *American Tree Farm System*® and/or other landowner cooperative *programs* to apply *principles* of sustainable forest management.

Indicators:

1. Support, including financial, for efforts of *SFI Implementation Committees*.
2. Support, individually or collaboratively, education and outreach to forest landowners describing the importance of and providing implementation guidance on:
 - a. *best management practices*;
 - b. *reforestation* and *afforestation*;
 - c. *visual quality management*;
 - d. *conservation objectives*, such as of critical *wildlife habitat* elements, biodiversity, *threatened and endangered* species, and *Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value*;
 - e. management of harvest residue (e.g., slash, limbs, tops) considers economic, social, environmental factors (e.g., organic and nutrient value to future forests) and other utilization needs;
 - f. control of *invasive exotic plants and animals*;
 - g. characteristics of *special sites*; and
 - h. reduction of wildfire risk.
3. 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 Program* or *conservation* easements.
4. *Program Participants* are knowledgeable about credible regional *conservation* planning and priority-setting efforts that include a broad range of stakeholders and have a *program* to take into account the results of these efforts in planning.
5. *Program Participants* with *fiber sourcing programs*, either individually or collaboratively with *SFI Implementation Committees*, encourage forest landowners to participate in forest management certification *programs*.

Performance Measure 7.2. *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.

Indicator:

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

Performance Measure 7.3. *Program Participants* shall establish, at the state, provincial, or other appropriate levels, procedures to address concerns raised by loggers, consulting foresters, employees, unions, the public or other *Program Participants* regarding practices that appear inconsistent with the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard principles and objectives*.

Indicators:

1. Support for *SFI Implementation Committees* (e.g., toll-free numbers and other efforts) to address concerns about apparent nonconforming practices.
2. Process to receive and respond to public inquiries. *SFI Implementation Committees* shall submit data annually to *SFI Inc.* regarding concerns received and responses.

Objective 8. Public Land Management Responsibilities

To participate and implement sustainable forest management on *public lands*.

Performance Measure 8.1. *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.

Objective 9. Communications and Public Reporting

To increase transparency and to annually report progress on conformance with the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

Performance Measure 9.1. A *Program Participant* shall provide a summary audit report, prepared by the *certification body*, to *SFI Inc.* after the successful completion of a certification, recertification or surveillance audit to the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

Indicator:

1. The summary audit report submitted by the *Program Participant* (one copy must be in English), 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 the *Program Participant* that was audited, including its *SFI* representative;
 - d. a general description of the *Program Participant's* forestland, fiber procurement and/or 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 audit was conducted and completed;
 - g. a summary of the findings, including general descriptions of evidence of conformity and any nonconformities and corrective action plans to address them, opportunities for improvement, and exceptional practices; and
 - h. the certification decision.

The summary audit report will be posted on the *SFI Inc.* website (www.sfiprogram.org) for public review.

Performance Measure 9.2. *Program Participants* shall report annually to *SFI Inc.* on their conformance with the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*

Indicators:

1. Prompt response to the *SFI* annual progress report survey.
2. Record keeping for all the categories of information needed for *SFI* annual progress report surveys.
3. Maintenance of copies of past survey reports to document progress and improvements to demonstrate conformance to the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

Objective 10. Management Review and Continual Improvement

To promote continual improvement in the practice of *sustainable forestry* by conducting a management review and monitoring performance.

Performance Measure 10.1. *Program Participants* shall establish a management review system to examine findings and progress in implementing the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing 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 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing 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 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

Fiber sourcing outside the United States and Canada (For fiber sourcing from outside the United States and Canada, Objectives 11-13 also apply.)

Objective 11. Promote Conservation of Biological Diversity, Biodiversity Hotspots and High-Biodiversity Wilderness Areas

To promote the *conservation of biological diversity, biodiversity hotspots and high-biodiversity wilderness areas* in *fiber sourcing programs*.

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

Indicators:

1. *Fiber sourcing* from areas outside the United States and Canada promotes *conservation of biological diversity*, utilizing information from the following sources:
 - a. *biodiversity hotspots and high-biodiversity wilderness areas* as identified by Conservation International; and
 - b. *rare species and habitat information derived* from organizations such as the World Resources Institute, the *Alliance for Zero Extinction*, the World Wildlife Fund, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and NatureServe.
2. *Program with direct suppliers* to promote the *principles of sustainable forestry*.
3. Documented information that includes knowledge about *direct suppliers' application of the principles of sustainable forestry*.

Objective 12. Avoidance of Controversial Sources including Illegal Logging

To avoid *illegal logging* in *fiber sourcing programs*.

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

(See Section 7 – SFI Policies.)

Indicators:

1. Process to assess the risk that the *Program Participant's fiber sourcing program* could acquire material from *illegal logging* such as consulting information from the World Resources Institute Risk Information Tool, the World Bank Legal Rights Index, or Transparency International.
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. Documented information that includes 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 avoid *controversial sources* in *fiber sourcing programs*.

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

Indicators:

1. Process to assess the risk that the *Program Participant's fiber sourcing* could take place in countries without effective laws addressing the following:
 - a. workers' health and safety;
 - b. fair labor practices;
 - c. *Indigenous Peoples' rights*;
 - d. anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures;
 - e. prevailing wages; and
 - f. workers' right to organize.
2. *Program* to address any significant risk identified under 13.1.1.

SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module

1. GENERAL

1.1 Scope

This module applies to a SFI *Program Participant* certified to the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*.

1.1.1 Maximum size of ownership eligible for certification under this Module

A small forest or woodlot owner, under the scope of this SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module, shall have no more than 20,000 acres or 8,000 hectares in aggregate across their entire ownership, regardless of whether it is managed by the landowner or a landowner agent. Those landowners with more than 20,000 acres or 8,000 hectares in aggregate across their entire ownership shall be certified to the *SFI 2015-2019 Forest Management Standard*. If the small forest or woodlot owner meets eligibility requirements, individual parcels of land that fall within the *wood and fiber supply area* can be included in the *certified area*.

1.1.2 What the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module Does

The SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module offers certification of a group of small family forest lands, under one certificate, that are supplying the SFI *Program Participant* that is certified to the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*. The SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module allows landowners to sell and SFI *Program Participants* to procure fiber as certified forest content and satisfies the requirements for the use of SFI Chain of Custody labels.

1.1.3 What the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module Covers

The SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module covers:

- requirements of the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* that include measures to broaden the practice of conservation of biodiversity, use of forestry best management practices to protect water quality, provide outreach to landowners, and utilize the services of forest management and harvesting professionals and
- additional requirements relating to the management of the *Group Certification Organization*¹ and additional requirements for sustainable forest management.

1.1.4 Geographic Application of the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module

The SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module applies to organizations (the SFI *Program Participants*, landowners and others involved in the fiber supply chain) in the United States and Canada.

1.2 References

This SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module incorporates, by dated or undated reference, provisions from other publications. These normative and informative references are cited at the appropriate places in the text and the publications are listed hereafter. For dated and undated references, the latest edition of the application applies.

1.2.1 Normative references

- i. ISO/IEC 17021:2011 – Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- ii. ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 - Standardization and Related Activities – General Vocabulary
- iii. SFI 2015-2019 Standards and Rules:

¹ The requirements for the management of the Group Certification Organization are based on Appendix 1 of Section 9 of the SFI Standards and Rules.

- Section 3- SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard
- Section 7 – SFI Policies
- Section 9 – SFI 2015 – 2019 Audit Procedures and Auditor Qualification and Accreditation
- Section 10 – Communication and Public Reporting
- Section 13 – SFI Definitions

iv. Interpretations for the Requirements for the SFI 2015 – 2019 Standards and Rules

For the purposes of this Module, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 apply together with the definitions in the SFI Definitions (Section 13).

1.2.2 Informative References

- i. PEFC ST 1002:2010 - Group Forest Management Certification
- ii. PEFC ST 1003:2010 - Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements
- iii. Section 6 – Guidance to SFI 2015 – 2019 Standards and Rules
- iv. Section 8 – SFI Standards Development and Interpretations Process
- v. Section 11 – Public Inquiries and Official Complaints

1.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this Module, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004 apply together with the definitions in the SFI Definitions (Section 13) together with the following definitions.

- **certified area**

The forest area covered by a *group forest certificate* representing the sum of forest areas owned or managed by *Group Members*.

- **group certification organization**

A specific type of multi-site organization where forest owners, forest owners’ organizations, forest managers, forest products manufacturers or forest products distributors without a pre-existing legal or contractual link can form a group for the purposes of achieving certification and gaining eligibility for a sampling approach to certification audits (Appendix 1 to Section 9 of the SFI Program).

- **group forest certificate**

A document confirming that the *group certification organization* complies with the requirements for certification.

- **group manager**

An organization with overall responsibility for ensuring the conformity of forest management in the *certified area* of the *Group Certification Organization* to the certification requirements.

Note: Within this SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module, the *Group Manager* is a *SFI Program Participant*, certified to the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*, with a fiber sourcing program that acquires roundwood and field-manufactured residual chips.

- **group member**

A landowner or a *landowner agent* covered by the *group forest certificate* who has the legal authority to manage forestland within the *wood and fiber supply area* and/or the ability to implement the certification requirements within the *wood and fiber supply area*.

Note: Only the forest area owned or managed by participating landowners and authorized landowner agents’ counts towards the *certified area*.

- **landowner agent**

A qualified resource professional, a qualified logging professional, a certified logging professional, wood producer or other individual or organization that has the legal authority to manage forestland within the wood and fiber supply area and the ability to implement the certification requirements within the wood and fiber supply area.

2. SFI SMALL LANDS GROUP CERTIFICATION MODULE PRINCIPLES

SFI Program Participants believe 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 forest land bases.

SFI Program Participants are aware that family forest ownership is made up of large numbers of small forest holdings. The limited revenues from forest management operations on the small properties of these landowners; periodicity of their management activities and revenues; as well as a limited financial ability to demonstrate their conformity with forest management certification system requirements, represent significant barriers to forest certification.

SFI Program Participants shall have a written policy (or policies) to implement and achieve the principles defined in SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard together with the following principles:

2.1 Voluntary Participation

The SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module is based on a respect for property rights and on the voluntary commitment and participation of landowners and *landowner agents*. Participation in the *Group Certification Organization* shall not require or bind landowners to harvest and sell timber or to supply the SFI Program Participant; participation also shall not prohibit landowners from participating in another *Group Certification Organization* or supplying another customer. Any supply commitments shall be stated in separately negotiated contracts between landowners and customers, and not as part of the written agreement(s) required by the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module. SFI and SFI Program Participants are committed to compliance with the competition laws of the United States and Canada, and the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module shall not be construed to conflict with those laws.

2.2 Shared Responsibility

The SFI Program Participant, as the *Group Manager* and the *Group Member* have shared responsibility for and commitment to sustainable forestry practices on the land they own, manage or from which they procure raw material

2.3 Efficiency

The SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module uses a *wood and fiber supply area* (“supply area”) approach to sustainable forest management (e.g. planning or monitoring of forest resources) where the supply area approach is more suitable and efficient due to the limited size and resources of individual landowners. The results of the *wood and fiber supply area* approach are consistent with the forest management practices implemented by individual landowners and/or resource/logging professionals.

2.4 Certified Forest Content

The SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module uses an approach based on a *wood and fiber supply area* plan, thus individual *Group Members* represent a subset of the *wood and fiber supply area* plan for the entire *certified area*. Furthermore, the *Group Manager* is required under 3.1 to monitor *Group Members’* conformance to the Forest Management Practices listed under 4.2 of the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module. Therefore, the agreement between the *Group Manager* and *Group Members* may define the conditions under which fiber from the *certified area* may be sold as certified forest content.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF THE GROUP

3.1 Responsibilities of the *Group Manager*²:

- 3.1.1 To provide a commitment³ on behalf of the whole *Group Certification Organization* to establish and maintain practices and procedures in accordance with the requirements of this SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module.
- 3.1.2 To represent the whole *Group Certification Organization* in the certification process, including communications and relationships with the certification body, submission of an application for certification and contractual relationship with the certification body.
- 3.1.3 To establish a formal relationship with all *Group Members* based on a written agreement that shall include the *Group Members'* commitment to comply with the requirements of the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module and be included under the scope of the *group forest certificate*. The written agreement shall cover the right of the *Group Manager* to implement and enforce any corrective or preventive measures, and to initiate the suspension of any *Group Member* from the scope of certification in the event of nonconformity with the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module. The written agreement can:
 - be established directly between the *Group Manager* and the *Group Member* (landowners or *landowner agents*);
 - be established between the *Group Manager* and a *landowner agent*, which represent multiple landowners based on prior agreements between the *landowner agent* and individual landowners;
 - be a written contract between the *Group Member* and the *Group Manager*, or another written document(s) where the *Group Member* makes the commitment to participate and comply with the conditions of membership and forest management performance and the *Group Manager* outlines and confirms conditions of participation.
 - Define conditions for the sale of fiber from the *certified area* as certified forest content.
- 3.1.4 To establish procedures for inclusion of new *Group Members* within the *Group Certification Organization* including an internal assessment of conformity with the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module, implementation of corrective and relevant preventive measures.
- 3.1.5 To maintain and achieve compliance with all requirements of the *SFI 2015 – 2019 SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard* that outline relationship between the *SFI Program Participant*, landowners, and resource/logging professionals; and management review and continuous improvement (Objective 2, 6, 7 and 10).
- 3.1.6 To establish written procedures for the management of the *Group Certification Organization* and clearly define and assign responsibilities for sustainable forest management and compliance with the certification requirements.
- 3.1.7 To provide all *Group Members* with information and guidance needed for effective implementation and maintenance of practices and procedures in accordance with the

² The requirements for the management of the group are based on eligibility criteria of chapter 4.1.1-4.1.4 of Appendix 1 to Section 9. In cases where the requirements of this document differ from Appendix 1 to Section 9, the requirements of this document are definitive.

³ The requirement for landowner commitment is consistent with a requirement for a policy (or policies) to maintain and achieve principles of the SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard and principles of the SFI Small Lands Certification Group Module.

requirements of this SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module⁴. This might include information sessions on various aspects of sustainable forest management and best management practices.

3.1.8 To keep records on:

- the SFI *Program Participant's* and the *Group Members'* conformity with the certification requirements;
- all *Group Members*, including their contact details, identification of their property and its/their sizes;
- the *certified area*;
- a record of all operations carried out on the forest lands owned by the *Group Members* to support the internal monitoring program.
- the implementation of an internal monitoring program, its review and any preventive and/or corrective measures.
- the *wood and fiber supply area* plan as defined in 4.1.

3.1.9 To maintain an annual internal audit or monitoring program sufficient to ensure conformance with the requirements of the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module⁵ by the organization and individual *Group Members*. The internal audit or monitoring program can be based on a sampling of *Group Members'* properties and forest management activities provided that:

- it is based on an appropriate risk management methodology considering the scale and type of *Group Members'* activities; geographical distribution of *Group Members*; previous non-conformities; information from external parties, etc. and it provides overall confidence in the conformity of the *Group Certification Organization* and *Group Members* with the certification requirements;
- the sample is representative considering the number of *Group Members* and their geographical distribution;
- the sample covers all the participating *group members* and the number of samples equals at least the square root of the total number of participating landowners.

3.1.10 To operate a review of the conformity of *Group Members* based on results of internal audit and/or monitoring data sufficient to assess performance of the *Group Certification Organization* as a whole rather than at the individual *Group Member's* level⁶.

3.1.11 To establish corrective and preventive measures if required and evaluate the effectiveness of corrective actions taken.

3.1.12 To communicate to the relevant *Certification Body* those *Group Members* with serious and continuing non-conformities that have not been resolved and that resulted in the *Group Member's* expulsion from the *group certification organization* based on the results of internal audits and/or the monitoring program.

⁴ Objective 6 (Training and Education) and Objective 7 (Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach) of the SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard provide both framework and detailed requirements for dissemination of information, guidance, and knowledge.

⁵ The internal audit/monitoring program should accommodate various verification and monitoring mechanisms required by the SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard.

⁶ The review of the conformity and the corrective and preventive measures should be performed within the framework of Objective 10 of the SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard (Management Review and Continuous Improvement).

- 3.1.13 To consider within its internal audit/monitoring program information from the *Group Member* on continuing non-conformities that have been found if the *Group Member* is part of another *group certification organization*.

3.2 Responsibilities of the *Group Members*:

- 3.2.1 To commit through a written agreement with the *Group Manager* to implement and maintain the relevant requirements⁷ of the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module;
- 3.2.2 To respond effectively to all requests from the *Group Manager* or a certification body for relevant data, documentation or other information whether in connection with formal audits or reviews or other requirements;
- 3.2.3 To provide full co-operation and assistance in respect of the satisfactory completion of audits, reviews, monitoring, relevant routine inquiries or corrective actions; and
- 3.2.4 To implement relevant corrective and preventive actions required by the *Group Manager*.
- 3.2.5 To inform the *Group Manager* of any continuing non-conformities if the *Group Member* is part of another *group certification organization*.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The *Group Manager* shall ensure compliance of the *Group Certification Organization* with the requirements outlined in *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard*⁸ and the following additional requirements outlined in 4.1 the *Wood and Fiber Supply Area Plan* and 4.2 Forest Management Practices on *Certified Area*.

4.1 *Wood and Fiber Supply Area Plan*

The *Group Manager* shall develop and update a *wood and fiber supply area* plan that adequately covers the fiber procurement area by the *Group Certification Organization*. The plan shall:

- 4.1.1 Be based on a long-term resource analysis including periodic or ongoing forest inventory, mapping and monitoring of forest resources; and include or be based on analysis of social, environmental and economic impacts of forest operations on forest resources;
- 4.1.2 Promote the maintenance and enhancement of the quantity of forest resources, identify risks of conversion of forests to other land uses, measures for the mitigation of risks and the potential for conversion of agricultural and treeless land into forests;
- 4.1.3 Be consistent with applicable legislation and land-use plans;
- 4.1.4 Include a description of forest resources, their different uses and functions, and objectives for their management;
- 4.1.5 Include analysis and determination of long-term sustainable harvest levels by monitoring *growth and drain* trends across the *wood and fiber supply area*. The monitoring system shall identify trends and develop forest management activities, on the *certified area*, to promote sustainable harvesting levels on the *wood and fiber supply area*.
- 4.1.6 Include a review of non-timber activities and opportunities (e.g., conservation of soil, air and water quality, carbon, biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic habitats, recreation and aesthetics); and sustainable management and use of those non-timber forest products that are affected by forest management practices;

⁷ The *Group Manager* should within the framework of Objective 6 (Training and Education) and Objective 7 (Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach) of the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* provide *Group Members* with a specific list and guidance on the requirements of the SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module that are relevant to them and management operations on their land.

⁸ This list and guidance also includes Interpretations for the Requirements for the *SFI 2015 – 2019 Standards and Rules* relevant to the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* or to the additional requirements.

- 4.1.7 Review results of monitoring of harmful agents, such as environmentally or economically undesirable wildfire, pests, diseases, invasive exotic plants and animals and list or provide information on measures to protect forests from those agents to maintain and improve long-term forest health, productivity and economic viability;
- 4.1.8 Include identification and mapping of sensitive sites and areas with high biodiversity values on the *certified area* and the *wood and fiber supply area*;
- 4.1.9 Include identification and mapping of areas with specific water and soil protection functions, including steps to ensure their protection, maintenance and enhancement of their protective functions;
- 4.1.10 Include description of appropriate silviculture and regeneration methods to achieve forest management objectives identified in 4.1 and 4.2;
- 4.1.11 Be made available to the relevant landowners and/or *landowner agents* and provide the basis for the SFI Program Participant's verification, internal audit or monitoring program⁹;
- 4.1.12 Be made publicly available, except confidential business and personal information and other information made confidential by legislation or for the protection of cultural sites or sensitive natural resources.

4.2 Forest Management Practices on *Certified Area*

The *Group Manager* shall ensure through a *verifiable monitoring system*, or the training of *landowner agents*, or through individual outreach to landowners that:

- 4.2.1 All harvested areas shall be promptly regenerated by natural regeneration, tree planting or direct seeding to achieve acceptable species composition that is well adapted to the site conditions and to promote vertical and horizontal structural diversity of forests. Desirable advanced natural regeneration shall be protected during harvest. Plantings of introduced tree species should minimize risk to native ecosystems;
- 4.2.2 Harvesting and transportation operations, including planning, construction and maintenance of the road system, are carried out in time and in a manner that minimize damages to forest stands, trees, biodiversity, water and/or soil resources;
- 4.2.3 Forest management retains *stand-level wildlife habitat* elements such as snags, stumps, mast trees, down woody debris, den trees and nest trees;
- 4.2.4 The spillage of oil and disposal of waste/litter on forest land is avoided. Where it does occur it is collected, stored and removed in an environmentally-responsible way;
- 4.2.5 The use of fire is only allowed as a silvicultural or forest management technique for achievement of defined forest management goals;
- 4.2.6 The use of pesticides is controlled and minimized with preference for the use of integrated pest management methods. The use of WHO Type 1A and 1B pesticides¹⁰, chlorinated hydrocarbons and any pesticides banned by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants is avoided; and the use of pesticides will be based on the manufacturer's instructions, and use of proper equipment and training;
- 4.2.7 The use of fertilizers is controlled to ensure protection of the environment;
- 4.2.8 There is a *Program* to address any issues identified by the requirements in 4.1.8 to promote/conservate special sites and areas with high biodiversity values;

⁹ The Objective 6 (Training and Education) and Objective 7 (Community Involvement and Landowner Outreach) of the *SFI 2015-2019 Fiber Sourcing Standard* provides a framework for communicating the content of the forest management plan or its relevant parts to landowners, resource and logging professionals and for its on-the-ground implementation.

¹⁰ Exemptions can be allowed where no other viable alternative exists.

- 4.2.9 There is a *Program* to address any issues identified by the requirements in 4.1.9 to protect, maintain and enhance water and soil functions;
- 4.2.10 A harvest plan shall be prepared for each harvest activity to address appropriate silviculture and regeneration methods identified in 4.1.10, and other forest management practices as identified in 4.2.

SECTION 3