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PEFC Canada — Sustainable Forest Management April 18, 2025

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Preface

In 2008, PEFC Canada was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, and applied to PEFC International to become the PEFC National Governing Body for Canada, effective on January 21, 2009.

This Standard was prepared by the PEFC Canada Technical Committee, under the jurisdiction of PEFC Canada, and has been formally approved by PEFC Canada Board of Directors.

PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management

1 Introduction

1.1 General

Canada’s national identity is tied to its forests, lands, and natural resources. Forests are valued for a multitude of ecosystem services as well as cultural, environmental, social, and economic values. Sustainable forest management plays a key role in ensuring a balanced, continually improving management approach for these values.

Canadian forests are rich in biodiversity and cultural legacy. Indigenous peoples have a deep connection to the land and continue to rely on forest lands and resources. Increasingly, Canadian forests are appreciated globally for their unique collection of values and vital ecological role, in particular their role in helping to moderate climate change. Canadian forests provide habitat for a myriad of species, encompass diverse ecosystem types, and support hundreds of forest-dependent communities.

Most Canadian forests are on Crown (public) lands. The federal and provincial/territorial governments in Canada have regulatory roles in relation to forests, and on Crown lands they are accountable to the public to ensure they are sustainably managed for all important values. Each province has a comprehensive set of laws, regulations, and policies covering all aspects of forests and their management. The Government of Canada also has legislation covering topics that span provincial/territorial boundaries, such as species at risk, migratory birds, fish, aquatic habitat, and water quality. The provincial and federal governments monitor compliance with regulatory requirements.

All organizations with responsibility for forest management are required to comply with the comprehensive provincial and federal regulatory framework. In addition to complying with legislation and regulatory requirements, organizations can benefit from using voluntary tools, such as this Standard, to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable forest management (SFM). The goal of the PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management Standard continues to be a framework for forest managers to plan and practice forest management activities in a manner that reflects diverse Canadian forest values, and recognizes and protects the multiple benefits derived from Canadian forests.

The United Nations recognizes the concept of SFM to have the following key attributes¹:

- SFM ensures forests supply goods and services to meet both present-day and future needs and contribute to the sustainable development of communities;
- SFM is a dynamic and evolving concept;
- SFM implies various degrees of human intervention, ranging from actions aimed at safe guarding and maintaining forest ecosystems and their functions to those favouring specific socially or economically valuable species or groups of species for the improved production of goods and services; and

¹See: <https://www.fao.org/forestry/sfm/#:~:text=The%20aim%20of%20sustainable%20forest,the%20sustainable%20development%20of%20communities>

- In addition to forest products (comprising both wood and non-wood forest products), sustainably managed forests provide important ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, and the protection of water resources.

This Standard includes core requirements to meet international sustainability benchmarks for environmental, cultural, social, and economic values. This Standard also sets international concepts for SFM in a Canadian context, using the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) framework for SFM, composed of six criteria and 46 indicators. The CCFM framework itself was designed to be consistent with the original Montreal Process and the seven thematic elements recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007². The PEFC Canada – SFM Standard goes further by including a criterion for Indigenous relations and requiring consideration of climate change. In this Standard, criteria, elements, and indicators are used as a framework for identifying values and setting direction, thus providing vital links between local-level SFM and national and provincial forest policy.

The PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management Standard will continue to adapt in the context of federal and provincial regulations and policies as they evolve to address concerns unique to forests in various Canadian jurisdictions. Some recent examples of this evolution are Indigenous rights, caribou habitat in the boreal forest, and old growth management in Pacific Coastal forests. Canada enacted the 2021 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act which sets out Canada’s obligation to uphold human rights (including Treaty and inherent rights) of Indigenous peoples affirmed by the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This Act sets out a road map for the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples to work together to implement the Declaration based on reconciliation. Some provinces, like British Columbia, have followed suit with provincial legislation to affirm Indigenous participation in resource management decisions on Crown forests. At the same time, Indigenous participation in economic development associated with forestry activities is growing within Canada’s forest sector. The Standard now recognizes and incorporates the goals of UNDRIP to provide for meaningful participation of Indigenous communities at a local level.

Some federal and provincial regulations and policies have evolved differently in different settings across Canada. For example, in Canada’s vast boreal forest, the Canadian Government under its Species at Risk Act launched a recovery strategy focused on maintaining and/or restoring habitat for threatened boreal caribou, a species garnering considerable global attention. Provincial governments have followed with their own caribou strategies aligned with the federal direction. Concerns about old growth forest values and the ecological role of old growth forests, particularly in British Columbia, have prompted the provincial government to review old growth management, defer harvesting in high-risk ecosystems, and engage in shared decision-making regarding protection of old growth with local Indigenous communities.

The PEFC Standard provides a framework for addressing emerging issues such as caribou and old growth forests in their local context, since that context can vary across Canada. The Standard encourages and enables a systematic local process to collaboratively create local targets for

²The United Nations General Assembly in 2007 recognized the following seven thematic elements as a reference framework: (1) extent of forest resources; (2) forest biodiversity; (3) forest health and vitality; (4) productive functions of forest resources; (5) protective functions of forest resources; (6) socio-economic functions of forests; and (7) legal, policy, and institutional framework.

indicators, which will align with existing and emerging local issues within overarching federal and provincial direction. In this way, the Standard is relevant locally and encourages SFM to evolve with changing values and new science.

1.2 Adaptive management and continual improvement

Adaptive management and continual improvement are foundational concepts for SFM. Because of the nature of forest management and the many uncertainties, particularly with climate change, the emphasis is on continual improvement to appropriately adapt over time. This Standard gives organizations a system for adaptive management and continual improvement, and involvement of potentially affected parties in focused Indigenous and public participation processes. In this way, SFM under the Standard will evolve, incorporating new, emerging knowledge and society's changing environmental, social, cultural, and economic values. The focus for the Standard is not to provide a fixed desired endpoint for objectives, but rather a systematic structure to progress towards objectives through continual improvement. Certification to this Standard involves regular and rigorous independent third-party certification audits. With requirements for ongoing public participation and continual improvement, this Standard motivates organizations to go beyond legal compliance.

Continual improvement is a necessary aspect not only for SFM but also for the evolution of this Standard. That is why PFEC Canada reviews this Standard regularly to ensure that it incorporates knowledge gained through implementation.

1.3 Expected future conditions

A fundamental tenet of adaptive forest management is the need to state explicitly the expected future condition of all the SFM indicators. Those statements express how the indicators are expected to respond to the targets defined in the management plan. Each value is represented by one or more indicators for which targets need to be stated. Targets will often identify an expected or desirable future condition of an indicator. Predictive models may be available for some ecological, economic, and social indicators. When such models are not available, the expected future conditions are explored using informed professional and stakeholder judgment. Public participation is important to explore expected future conditions for the indicators and to assess how target performance is contributing to the stated future condition.

1.4 A high degree of inclusive engagement

The need for Indigenous and public participation is strongly emphasized within the Standard, which requires organizations to seek comprehensive, continuing public participation at the community level. Under the provisions of the Standard, local Indigenous peoples and the public have the opportunity to identify forest values related to environmental, social, cultural, and economic concerns and needs. They also have the opportunity to take part in the forest management planning process and collaborate with organizations to identify and select SFM objectives, indicators, and targets to ensure that these values are addressed. The Indigenous and

public participation requirements of this Standard are among the most rigorous in certification standards in the world today. Because Canadian forests are primarily publicly owned, it is vital that a Canadian forest certification standard involve local Indigenous communities and the public extensively in the forest management planning process. Forest management that meets the requirements of this Standard fosters a positive relationship between the organization, Indigenous, and local communities.

This Standard was developed in an open, inclusive forum. This Standard reflects the input of a wide array of individuals and groups from across Canada with an interest in SFM, including the forest industry, woodlot owners, governments, academics, scientists, technical experts, Indigenous peoples, unions, consumer groups, and conservation, environmental and social organizations.

The Standard recognizes that Indigenous peoples are rights-holders, not stakeholders, and that Indigenous peoples have a unique relationship to the land that should be recognized in all aspects of SFM. Indigenous participation is without prejudice to Aboriginal title and rights, and treaty rights. This Standard recognizes the deep connection of Indigenous peoples to the land, and that Canadian forests have special significance to Indigenous peoples. It further recognizes the unique rights and legal status of Indigenous peoples, and that they possess expertise, knowledge, and insights concerning SFM that are derived from their traditional and modern practices, beliefs, and experience.

Indigenous and public participation processes of engagement play key roles in the incorporation of a diversity of values into SFM. The Indigenous and public participation processes specified in this Standard do not replace the Crown's legal duty to consult with Indigenous peoples. Effective Indigenous and public participation processes make efforts to incorporate their wide range of knowledge, interests, and values with regard to SFM, as well as its differing cultural and economic ties and relationships to the forest.

1.5 Performance requirements

This Standard sets a level of performance to be met using a prescribed adaptive management system. Performance is dealt with at three levels. First, a set of SFM elements and core indicators is required.

Second, Indigenous peoples and the public have the opportunity to assist in setting specific values, objectives, additional indicators, and targets (VOITs) at the local forest level for each of the SFM elements, as well as to participate in effectiveness monitoring. This Standard requires engagement processes to establish and monitor locally appropriate targets (including thresholds and limits). Moreover, this Standard identifies key components for the engagement processes. This approach to performance not only respects government-recognized criteria for SFM but also local interpretation of the criteria and elements.

The third level is the assessment of actual changes in the forest as related to expected future forest conditions and results of management practices. Thus, this Standard involves a combination of Indigenous and public participation, performance, and management system requirements.

1.6 Third-party independent audits

To become certified to this Standard, the organization goes through a third-party independent audit of its performance to comply with the **SFM requirements** in the Standard (these requirements are found in Clauses 4 to 7). The audit is conducted by a certification body accredited by a full International Accreditation Forum (IAF) member accreditation body such as the Standards Council of Canada. The certification body employs, or has access to, a sufficient number of auditors, including audit team leaders, and technical experts to cover all of the audit work performed. Individual auditors employed or contracted by the certification body have the requisite forestry expertise and appropriate knowledge and skills relevant to the geographic areas in which it operates.

In addition to the initial certification audit, there are mandatory annual surveillance audits which include both a document review and on-site checks of the forest and management system to ensure that progress is being made towards the achievement of targets and that the SFM requirements are being met. Annual surveillance audits must occur once per calendar year, except in recertification years. The date of the first surveillance audit shall be no longer than 12 months from the certification decision date. The certification body should implement a risk-based audit sampling approach and, as such, some criteria in this Standard may be assessed more frequently than others. A full recertification audit is required every five years.

1.7 Development of standards

- This Standard has been developed to meet the requirements of the following standards:
- PEFC ST 1001:2017 Standard – Setting – Requirements;
- PEFC ST 1003:2018 Sustainable Forest Management – Requirements;
- Annex 6 Certification and Accreditation Procedures;
- PEFC GD 1007 Endorsement and Mutual Recognition of Certification Systems and their Revision; and
- PEFC ST 2001:2020 PEFC Trademark Rules.

2 Scope

2.1 Standard requirements

This Standard specifies requirements for sustainable forest management (SFM) of a defined forest area (DFA), including requirements for

- a) management framework;
- b) commitment;
- c) Indigenous and public participation;
- d) performance measures and targets;
- e) systematic review of actions;
- f) monitoring of effectiveness; and
- g) continual improvement.

2.2 Standard language

In this Standard, “shall” is used to express a requirement, i.e., a provision that the user is obliged to satisfy in order to comply with the Standard; “should” is used to express a recommendation or that which is advised but not required; and “may” is used to express an option or that which is permissible within the limits of the Standard.

Notes accompanying clauses do not include requirements or alternative requirements; the purpose of a note accompanying a clause is to separate from the text explanatory or informative material.

Notes to tables and figures are considered part of the table or figure and may be written as requirements.

Annexes are designated normative (mandatory) or informative (non-mandatory) to define their application.

3 Definitions and abbreviations

3.1 Definitions

The following definitions apply in this Standard:

Aboriginal right – commonly referred to as Indigenous rights, is the collective rights of distinctive societies flowing from their status as the original peoples of Canada. In order to be an Aboriginal right, an activity must be an element of a practice, custom, or tradition (or an element thereof) forming an integral part of a distinctive culture of an Aboriginal group claiming that right. [R. v. Van der Peet, 1996]. Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed by the Constitution Act, 1982 in section 35(1).

Aboriginal title – a right to the land itself, a collective right to the land held by all members of an Aboriginal nation, encompassing the right to use the land pursuant to that title for a variety of purposes, which need not be aspects of those Aboriginal practices, cultures, and traditions which are integral to the distinctive Aboriginal cultures. [Delgamuukw v. British Columbia, 1997]

Aboriginal treaty rights – are “those contained in official agreements between the Crown and the native peoples.” [R. v. Badger 1996]. Aboriginal and treaty rights are recognized and affirmed by the Constitution Act, 1982 in section 35(1).

Accreditation – third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body, conveying formal demonstration of its competence, impartiality, and consistent operation in performing specific conformity assessment activities. [ISO/IEC 17000:2020 Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles]

Accreditation body – the authoritative body that performs accreditation. **Note:** The authority of an accreditation body can be derived from government, public authorities, contracts, market acceptance, or scheme owners. [ISO/IEC 17000:2020 Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles]

Adaptive management – a learning approach to management that recognizes substantial uncertainties in managing forests, develops explicit statements of system response to management actions, and formally incorporates into decisions the knowledge gained from monitoring the implementation and consequences of previous actions.

Advisory group or equivalent – a public process that accounts for public input that is used to develop VOITs for the Defined Forest Area. This could be a formal public advisory group specific to *PEFC CAN ST 1001:2025* or another documented process that includes public consultation and input with outputs that are relevant to the DFA.

Afforestation – the conversion of land that has not been forested for a period of at least 50 years to forest through planting, seeding, or natural regeneration.

Analysis unit – an area that may be larger or smaller than the DFA and forms the basis of forecasts and targets. **Note:** Recognizes that the analysis appropriate for the indicator might be at a different scale than the DFA. Allows best use of existing data and analysis.

Appeal – a request by an organization that is certified or seeking certification, or another interested party, to a certification body or an accreditation body for reconsideration by that body of a certification decision that has been made.

Auditor – a person qualified to perform audits; refer to Annex B Certification Body Requirements.

Biodiversity (biological diversity) – the variability among living organisms from all sources, including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems. [Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, 1995]

Biomass – in ecology, the total mass of organisms in a given area. In forest management, tree biomass includes the living portions of trees as well as deadwood in living trees, standing dead trees, and unrotted deadwood on the forest floor. Note: In the context of sustainable forest management, biomass usually refers to plant matter.

CCFM – Canadian Council of Forest Ministers

Certification – the result of a successful certification process in conformance with this Standard, whereby the certification body issues a certification certificate and adds the organization's certification to a publicly available list maintained by the certification body. Note: Certification of a management system is sometimes also called registration.

Certification applicant – an organization that has applied to an accredited certification body for certification to this Standard.

Certification audit – a systematic and documented verification process used to obtain and evaluate evidence objectively in order to determine whether an organization meets the SFM requirements of this Standard.

Certification body – an independent third party that is accredited as being competent to certify organizations with respect to nationally and internationally recognized standards.

Certification certificate – the official document issued by a certification body to an organization upon successful completion of the certification process (including the certification audit). Note: Where more than one organization is included in the certification process, the names of all organizations will be listed on the certificate.

Complaint – an expression of dissatisfaction, other than an appeal, by any person or organization to a certification body or an accreditation body related to the activities of that body, where a response is expected.

Compliance – conformity with legal obligations and other adopted obligations.

Component – an individual element of the SFM system. Note: Components include policy, planning, implementation and operation, checking and corrective action, and management review.

Conformance – fulfillment of a requirement of this Standard. Note: Non-legal requirements include policies, work instructions, or standards (including this Standard).

Continual improvement – the ongoing process of enhancing SFM performance using

- a) experience;
- b) assessment of results;
- c) incorporation of new knowledge in line with the organization’s SFM policy; and
- d) application of SFM requirements.

Corrective action – action to eliminate the cause of a detected nonconformity or other undesirable situation and to prevent recurrence.

Defined forest area (DFA) – a specified area of forest, including land and water (regardless of ownership or tenure), to which the requirements of this Standard apply. Note: A DFA can consist of one or more blocks or parcels. For volume-based tenures a statement of applicability within a forest management unit can be made.

Deforestation – the conversion of forest to another land use. It does not include temporary tree-cover loss such as tree harvests followed by regeneration, or temporary loss resulting from natural disturbances such as wildfires, insect epidemics, or wind storms. Note: See http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/j9345e/j9345e07.htm#P224_17608.

DFA-related worker – an individual employed by an organization to work for wages or a salary who does not have a significant or substantial share of the ownership in the employer’s organization and does not function as a manager of the organization.

Ecosystem – plants, animals, and micro-organisms and their non-living environment, inter-acting as a functioning unit. Note: Ecosystem “can describe small-scale units, such as a drop of water, as well as large-scale units, such as the biosphere.” [Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, 1995]

Element – the subcategory used to define the scope of each SFM criterion. Note: Each SFM criterion contains several elements. The SFM elements were derived from the national-scale elements developed by the CCFM for more specific local applications.

Environment – the surroundings in which an organization operates. Note: The environment encompasses air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans, and the interrelations of these elements.

Fish habitat – refers to water frequented by fish and any other areas on which fish depend directly or indirectly to carry out their life processes, including spawning grounds and nursery, rearing, food supply, and migration areas. [Fisheries Act, 2019]

Focal species – species that warrant special conservation attention. Note: Criteria for selection of focal species can include ecological, socio-cultural, scientific, and economic considerations.

Forecast – an explicit statement of the expected future condition of an indicator.

Forest – an ecosystem dominated by trees and other woody vegetation growing more or less closely together, its related flora and fauna, and the values attributed to it.

Forest condition – the state of the forest ecosystem as determined by a range of variables associated with forest structure, composition, and processes.

Forest conversion – direct human-induced change of forest to non-forest land or forest plantation.

Forest land – terrain supporting a forest or capable of doing so.

Forest plantations – tree stands established by planting or seeding, often with one or few species, intensively managed exclusively for fibre production, and which lack most of the key characteristics of natural forests.

Indicator – a variable that measures or describes the state or condition of a value.

Indigenous – an accepted term currently used to refer to the three distinct groups of Aboriginal peoples of Canada: First Nations, Inuit and Métis. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Indigenous (Aboriginal) peoples: First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Interested party – an individual or organization interested in or affected by the management activities of a DFA.

Introduced species – plants, animals, or micro-organisms that have been introduced by human action outside their natural past or present distribution, and whose impacts on the ecosystem and on the genetic integrity of native species and local provenances have been scientifically evaluated, and negative impacts can be avoided or minimised.

Invasive alien species – plants, animals, or micro-organisms that have been introduced by human action outside their natural past or present distribution, and whose introduction or spread threatens the environment, the economy, or society, including human health. [CFIA, 2006]

Long term – in the context of making forecasts regarding forest structure and composition, at minimum, twice the average life expectancy of the predominant trees in a DFA, up to a maximum of 300 years.

Migratory bird – a migratory bird referred to in Canada’s Migratory Birds Convention Act and includes the sperm, eggs, embryos, tissue cultures and parts of the bird.

Multi-site certification – a certification approach where multiple sites are managed under a single central entity covered under one certification.

Native species – a species that occurs naturally in an area; a species that is not introduced.

Objective – a broad statement describing a desired future state or condition of a value.

Old growth forest – an old growth forest differs significantly from younger stands in structure, ecological function, and species composition with respect to canopy closure, age class structure, accumulation of woody debris, and the presence of species and functional processes that are representative of the potential natural community. [Canadian Forest Service’s Forestry Glossary]. Note: The age and structure of old growth forests vary significantly by forest type and from one eco-region to another.

Organization – a company, corporation, firm, enterprise, government, authority, or combination thereof, incorporated or not, public or private, that has its own functions and administration,

and that, for the purposes of this Standard, applies for certification. Note: For organizations with more than one operating unit (e.g., a division), a single operating unit may be defined as an organization.

PEFC – the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification is a global alliance of national forest certification systems. As an international non-profit, non-governmental organization, PEFC is dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management through independent third-party certification. [<https://pefc.org/discover-pefc/what-is-pefc>]

PEFC claim – the declaration of organizations certified to this SFM Standard on material/products, as stated in sales and delivery documentation, namely the claim “100% PEFC certified” or 100% PEFC origin.” Note: A list of PEFC accepted abbreviations and translations of PEFC claims is available on the PEFC website.

PEFC recognized certificate – a valid accredited forest management certificate issued by a PEFC certification body.

Personnel – management, contractors, and DFA-related workers employed by an organization.

Productivity – the ability of a forest ecosystem to capture energy, support life forms, and produce goods and services.

Protected area – an area of land and/or sea specifically dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means. [IUCN, 1994]

Reforestation – the re-establishment of trees on forest land following natural (e.g., fire) or human (e.g., timber harvest) disturbance.

Seral stage – an identifiable period of vegetative community development.

SFM performance – the assessable results of SFM as measured by the level of achievement of the targets set for a DFA.

SFM policy – an organization’s statement of intentions and principles in relation to SFM that provides a framework for objectives, targets, practices, and actions.

SFM requirements – the public participation, performance, and system requirements of this Standard.

SFM system – the structure, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes, and time frames specified by a certification body for implementing, maintaining, and improving SFM.

Species at risk – species defined as at risk by national and provincial legislation applicable to a given DFA.

Stand – a community of trees possessing sufficient uniformity in composition, age, arrangement, or condition to be distinguishable from the forest or other growth on adjoining areas, thus forming a silvicultural or management entity [Canadian Forest Service’s Forestry Glossary].

Strategy – a coordinated set of actions designed to meet established targets.

Sustainable forest management (SFM) – management that maintains and enhances the long-term health of forest ecosystems for the benefit of all living things while providing environmental, social, cultural, and economic opportunities for present and future generations.

Sustainable harvest level – the harvest level of forest products that, with consideration for environmental, social, cultural, and economic factors, leads to no significant reduction of the forest ecosystem’s capacity to support the same harvest level over the long term.

Target – a specific statement describing a desired future state or condition of an indicator. Note: Targets should be clearly defined, time-limited, and quantified, if possible.

Tenure – the terms under which a forest manager or owner possesses the rights, and assumes the responsibilities, to use, harvest, or manage one or more forest resources in a specified forest area for a specified period of time.

Top management – persons with decision-making authority regarding SFM policy, resource allocation, and planning in the DFA.

Value – a DFA characteristic, component, or quality considered by an interested party to be important in relation to an SFM element or other locally identified element.

Watershed – an area that drains all precipitation received as a runoff or base flow (groundwater sources) into a particular river or set of rivers.

Wetlands – areas that are seasonally or permanently waterlogged and characterized by vegetation adapted for life in saturated/flooded conditions. Wetlands can be treed, shrubby, or open, and include bogs, fens, swamps, marshes, and shallow open water areas. Some wetlands are stagnant systems (e.g., bogs), slow flowing (e.g., fens, swamps), or have fluctuating water levels (e.g., marshes, shallow open water).

Woodlot – small area of wooded land, often privately owned.

3.2 Abbreviations

The following abbreviations apply in this Standard:

CoC — chain of custody

DFA — defined forest area

PAG — public advisory group

PEFC — Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification

SFM — sustainable forest management

VOIT — Values, Objectives, Indicators, and Targets

4 Sustainable forest management requirements

4.1 General requirements

The **organization** shall meet the

- a) Section 5 **Indigenous** and public participation requirements;
- b) Section 6 **SFM performance** requirements; and
- c) Section 7 **SFM system** requirements.

Note: See Clause A.4.1 for a commentary on this Clause.

4.2 Required activities

The **organization** shall meet the **sustainable forest management (SFM)** requirements of this Standard, which include

- a) **compliance** with legislation applicable to the defined forest area (**DFA**);
- b) **values, objectives, indicators, and targets** (VOITs) that clearly address the **SFM Criteria** and **Elements** in this Standard;
- c) ongoing and meaningful **Indigenous** and public participation;
- d) implementation of **adaptive management**;
- e) progress towards or achievement of **performance targets**; and
- f) **continual improvement** in performance.

Note: See Clause A.4.2 for a commentary on this Clause.

4.3 Sale of certified products

At the point of sale or transfer of products from areas certified under this Standard, the **organization** shall provide the next entity in the supply chain with documentation to confirm the **certification status** and **PEFC claim**. The documentation shall include for each delivery

- a) certified **organization's name** as the supplier of the material;
- b) customer's name;
- c) product identification;
- d) quantity of product(s);
- e) delivery identification based on date of delivery, delivery period, or accounting period;
- f) the applicable **PEFC claim** specifically for each claimed product covered by the documentation; and
- g) certificate number of the certified **organization's PEFC recognized certificate**.

4.4 Trademark use

- a) The use of the PEFC trademarks, i.e., PEFC logo and labels, claims on-product, and PEFC initials, shall be in compliance with PEFC ST 2001, PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements.
- b) In order to enable the organization to use the PEFC trademarks in accordance with the PEFC Trademarks Rules, the organization shall obtain a valid trademark licence from the PEFC Council or another PEFC authorized body.

5 Indigenous and public participation requirements

5.1 General requirements

The organization shall establish and implement an Indigenous and public participation process or processes by

- a) starting a new process;
- b) building on an existing process; or
- c) reviving a previous process.

Note: See *Clause A.5.1 for a commentary on this Clause.*

5.2 Indigenous peoples

The **organization** shall

- a) demonstrate through documentation that meaningful efforts were made to contact and encourage Indigenous peoples to become involved in the SFM process;
- b) provide Indigenous peoples access to relevant background information;
- c) provide a rationale for development of VOITs that are based on equivalent processes rather than discussion with a PAG;
- d) acknowledge that Indigenous peoples' participation is without prejudice to Aboriginal title and rights, or treaty rights; and
- e) demonstrate that the Indigenous participation process is open, inclusive and responsive.

Note: See *Clause A.5.2 for a commentary on this Clause.*

5.3 Interested parties

The **organization** shall

- a) openly seek representation from a range of interested parties;
- b) demonstrate through documentation that meaningful efforts were made to contact and encourage interested parties to become involved in the SFM process;
- c) provide interested parties with access to relevant background information;
- d) Provide a rationale for development of VOITs that are based on equivalent processes rather than discussion with a Public Advisory Group; and
- e) demonstrate that the public participation process is open, inclusive, and responsive.

Note: See *Clause A.5.3 for a commentary on this Clause.*

5.4 Process: basic operating rules for advisory groups

The **organization** shall demonstrate that the **Indigenous** and public participation processes for advisory groups work according to clearly defined operating rules agreed on by all participants, and contain provisions on

- a) content;
- b) goals;
- c) timelines;
- d) internal and external communication;
- e) resources (including human, physical, financial, informational, and technological, as necessary and reasonable);
- f) roles, responsibilities, and obligations of participants and their organizations;
- g) conflicts of interest;
- h) decision-making methods;
- i) authority for decisions;
- j) mechanisms to adjust the process, as needed;
- k) access to information (including this Standard);
- l) participation of industry, government, Indigenous peoples, appropriate experts, and other interested parties or individuals;
- m) involvement of experts (i.e., ecologists, biologists, hydrologists, etc.), if required when appropriate to the topic of discussion;
- n) dispute-resolution mechanisms; and
- o) mechanisms to measure participant satisfaction with the process.

Note: See *Clause A.5.3 for a commentary on this Clause.*

5.5 Work of the public advisory group or equivalent

The **organization** shall make best efforts to form a functional public advisory group (PAG). A rationale shall be provided where the **organization** determines a functional PAG is not possible. In these cases, an equivalent process may be used.

The PAG or equivalent shall have opportunities to work with the **organization** to

- a) identify and select VOITs based on **SFM elements** and any other local issues of relevance to the **DFA**;
- b) develop, assess, and select one or more possible strategies for achieving **targets**;
- c) review the **SFM** plan;
- d) evaluate results of monitoring programs, and discuss improvements; and
- e) discuss any issues relevant to **SFM** in the **DFA**.

The **organization** and the PAG shall ensure that the VOITs are consistent with relevant government legislation, regulations, and policies.

Note: See Clause A.5.4 for a commentary on this Clause.

5.6 Communication requirements

5.6.1 The **organization** shall ensure public availability of

- a) the SFM plan;
- b) a demonstration that there is ongoing communication with the public and Indigenous peoples; and
- c) a summary of the results of independent certification and surveillance audit reports produced by the Certification Body in accordance with Annex B.

5.6.2 The organization shall make available to the PAG or equivalent

- a) information about the **DFA** and the **SFM requirements** including the public participation process;
- b) information about the progress being made in the implementation of the **SFM** plan; and
- c) an annual report summary of the performance in meeting and maintaining the **SFM requirements**.

6 SFM performance requirements

6.1 DFA-specific performance requirements

The organization, working with the public and Indigenous participation processes, shall establish DFA-specific performance requirements that address the SFM elements in Clause 6.3, as follows:

- a) for each **element**, one or more **DFA-specific values** shall be identified;
- b) for each **value**, one or more **objectives** shall be set;
- c) for each **value**, one or more meaningful **indicators** shall be identified, including core and locally selected **indicators**. **Indicators** shall be quantitative where feasible;
- d) for each indicator, data on the current status shall be provided, and one or more appropriate targets shall be set. Each **target** shall specify acceptable levels of variance for the indicator and clear time frames for achievement. A clear justification shall be provided for why the **targets** have been chosen, and how they support the applicable **value** and **objectives**;
- e) one or more strategies shall be described for achieving identified **targets**; and
- f) the expected response of each **indicator** in relation to the **target** shall be described. Where analytical **forecasts** were used, the methods, assumptions, and limitations used for making the **forecast** shall also be described.

The work shall be recorded and summarized in the **SFM** plan. During plan implementation, measurements shall be taken for each indicator at appropriate times and places. Measurement results shall be interpreted in the context of the expected response. See Figure A.4 for an illustration of the relationship of VOITs. See Clauses 7.5.1 and 7.6 for information on **adaptive management**.

Note: See Clause A.6.1 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.2 SFM Criteria — general

The **organization**, in **conformance** with the Indigenous and public participation process requirements of Clause 5, shall take into account each of the discussion items listed under each Criterion below at least once during each certification cycle.

The organization shall identify DFA-specific VOITs for each element, as well as any other values associated with the DFA. The organization may identify analysis units applicable to the DFA used to determine objectives, indicators, and targets for each element. Analysis units may be larger or smaller than the DFA.

The indicators shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the core indicators identified in this Standard. Note: See Clause A.6.2 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3 SFM criteria, elements, and core indicators

6.3.1 Criterion 1 — biological diversity

Note: See Clause A.6.3.1 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.1.1 General

Conserve biological diversity by maintaining function and diversity of living organisms and the ecosystems of which they are a part, including ecological elements that contribute to cultural values.

6.3.1.2 Discussion items for Criterion 1

- forest habitat connectivity and conservation at the landscape level;
- management in the context of natural disturbance regimes and patterns and the range of natural variation;
- maintenance of endemic species populations and communities over time;
- local and regional protected areas and integrated landscape management;
- silvicultural regimes and practices such as integrated pest management and pesticide use, structural retention, and timber harvest practices (including clear-cutting);
- practices to limit the spread of invasive alien species, and the regulatory prohibitions related to adverse ecological effects and the use of exotic tree species;
- management and protection of biological resources of cultural heritage significance;
- management of cultural values and resources;
- locally available processes and methods for identifying sites with special biological and cultural significance;
- conservation of old growth forest attributes and ecosystems;
- participation in government programmes to protect threatened and endangered species; and
- the role and importance of wetlands.

6.3.1.3 Element 1.1 — ecosystem diversity

Conserve ecosystem diversity at the stand and landscape levels by maintaining the variety of communities and ecosystems that naturally occur in the DFA. Establish forest plantations only in afforestation projects.

Core indicators

1.1.1 — **Ecosystem** area by type.

1.1.2 — Forest area by type or species composition.

1.1.3 — Forest area by **seral stage** or age class.

1.1.4 — Degree of within-stand structural retention.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.1.3 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.1.4 Element 1.2 — species diversity

Conserve species diversity by ensuring that habitats and forest conditions for the native species found in the DFA are maintained over time, including habitats for known occurrences of species at risk.

Core indicators

1.2.1 — Degree of habitat protection for selected focal species, including **species at risk**.

1.2.2 — Degree of suitable habitat in the long term for selected focal species, including **species at risk**.

1.2.3 — Proportion of regeneration comprised of native species.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.1.4 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.1.5 Element 1.3 — genetic diversity

Conserve genetic diversity by maintaining the variation of genes within species and ensuring that reforestation programs are free of genetically engineered trees.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.1.5 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.1.6 Element 1.4 — protected areas and sites of special biological, geological, heritage, or cultural significance

Respect protected areas identified through government processes. Co-operate in broader landscape management related to **protected areas** and sites of special biological or cultural significance.

Identify sites of special biological, geological, heritage, or cultural significance within the **DFA**, and implement management strategies appropriate to their long-term maintenance.

Core indicators

1.4.1 — Protection of sites of special significance.

1.4.2 — Proportion of identified sites with implemented management strategies.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.1.6 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.2 Criterion 2 — Ecosystem condition and productivity

Note: See Clause A.6.3.2 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.2.1 General

Conserve forest **ecosystem** condition and **productivity** by maintaining the health, vitality, and rates of biological production.

6.3.2.2 Discussion items for Criterion 2

- climate change impacts and adaptations;
- trends in natural and human-caused disturbances;
- proportion of naturally disturbed area that is not salvage harvested; and
- biomass utilization.

6.3.2.3 Element 2.1 — Forest ecosystem condition and productivity

Conserve forest **ecosystem productivity** and productive capacity by maintaining **ecosystem** conditions that are capable of supporting naturally occurring species. Reforest promptly and use tree species ecologically suited to the site.

Core indicators

2.1.1 — **Reforestation** success.

2.1.2 — Proportion of regeneration comprised of **native species**.

2.1.3 — Additions and deletions to the **forest** area.

2.1.4 — Proportion of the calculated long-term **sustainable harvest level** that is actually harvested.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.2.3 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.3 Criterion 3 — Soil and water

Note: See Clause A.6.3.3 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.3.1 General

Conserve soil and water resources by maintaining their quantity and quality in forest **ecosystems**.

6.3.3.2 Discussion items for Criterion 3

- soil productivity;
- sensitive sites;
- soil disturbance prevention and mitigation measures;
- site rehabilitation in areas of severe soil disturbance;
- water quality and quantity in **watersheds** supplying domestic water and **fish habitat**;
- management practices and regulatory requirements that conserve water and soil; and
- the role and importance of **wetlands**.

6.3.3.3 Element 3.1 — Soil quality and quantity

Conserve soil resources by maintaining soil quality and quantity.

Core indicators

3.1.1 — Level of soil disturbance.

3.1.2 — Level of downed woody material.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.3.3 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.3.4 Element 3.2 — Water quality and quantity

Conserve water resources by maintaining water quality and quantity.

Core indicators

3.2.1 — Proportion of **watershed** or water management areas with recent **stand-replacing** disturbance.

3.2.2 — Proportion of forest management activities consistent with prescriptions to protect identified water features.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.3.4 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.4 Criterion 4 — Role in global ecological cycles

Note: See Clause A.6.3.4 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.4.1 General

Maintain forest conditions and management activities that contribute to the health of global ecological cycles.

6.3.4.2 Discussion items for Criterion 4

- carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels used in forest operations; and
- the role of forest ecosystems and their management in the global carbon cycle.

6.3.4.3 Element 4.1 — Carbon uptake and storage

Maintain the processes that sequester carbon and store it in forest ecosystems.

Core indicators

4.1.1 — Net carbon uptake.

4.1.2 — **Reforestation** success.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.4.3 for a commentary on this clause.

6.3.4.4 Element 4.2 — Forest conversion and Afforestation

Protect **forest lands** from **deforestation**. No **forest conversion** unless in justified circumstances. Encourage **afforestation** where ecologically appropriate.

Core indicators

4.2.1 — Additions and deletions to the **forest** area.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.4.4 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.5 Criterion 5 — Economic and social benefits

Note: See Clause A.6.3.5 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.5.1 General

Sustain flows of **forest** benefits for current and future generations by providing multiple goods and services.

6.3.5.2 Discussion items for Criterion 5

- benefits for local communities and **Indigenous** peoples (cultural, spiritual, economic, health, etc.);
- fair distribution of benefits and costs;
- proportion of goods and services sourced from local communities (to the extent that they are available and reasonably cost-competitive); and
- the significant vulnerabilities for community sustainability linked to **forest** and timber supply conditions over time.

6.3.5.3 Element 5.1 — Timber and non-timber benefits

Manage the **forest** sustainably to produce a mix of timber and non-timber benefits. Support a diversity of timber and non-timber forest products and forest-based services.

Core indicators

5.1.1 — Documentation of the diversity of timber and non-timber resources, including products and services produced in the **DFA**.

5.1.2 — Evidence of open and respectful communications with **forest**-dependent businesses, **forest** users, **Indigenous** peoples and local communities to integrate non-timber resources into forest management planning. When significant disagreement occurs, efforts towards conflict resolution are documented.

Note: See *Clause A.6.3.5.3 for a commentary on this Clause.*

6.3.5.4 Element 5.2 — Communities and sustainability

Contribute to the sustainability of communities by providing diverse opportunities to derive benefits from **forests** and by supporting local community economies.

Core indicators

5.2.1 — Level of participation and support in initiatives that contribute to community sustainability.

5.2.2 — Level of participation and support in training and skills development.

5.2.3 — Level of direct and indirect employment.

Note: See *Clause A.6.3.5.4.*

6.3.6 Criterion 6 — Society's responsibility

6.3.6.1 General

Sustainable forest management includes society's responsibility for worker and community safety, and the requirement for fair, equitable, and effective forest management decisions.

6.3.6.2 Element 6.1 — Fair and effective decision-making

Demonstrate that the **SFM** public participation process is designed and functioning to the satisfaction of the participants and that there is general public awareness of the process and its progress.

Core indicators

6.1.1 — Level of participant satisfaction with the public participation process.

6.1.2 — Evidence of efforts to promote capacity development and meaningful participation in general.

6.1.3 — Availability of summary information on issues of concern to the public.

Note: See *Clause A.6.3.6.2 for a commentary on this Clause.*

6.3.6.3 Element 6.2 — Safety

Demonstrate that the **organization** is providing and promoting safe working conditions for its employees and contractors.

Core indicators

6.2.1 — Evidence of co-operation with **DFA-related workers** to improve and enhance safety standards, procedures, and outcomes in all **DFA**-related workplaces and affected communities.

6.2.2 — Evidence that a worker safety program has been implemented and is periodically reviewed and improved.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.6.3 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.7 Criterion 7 — Indigenous relations

6.3.7.1 General

Recognize and respect the unique rights and values of Indigenous peoples.

6.3.7.2 Element 7.1 — Aboriginal and treaty rights

Recognize and respect **Aboriginal title** and rights, and treaty rights. Understand and comply with current legal requirements related to existing **Aboriginal title** and rights, and treaty rights.

Core indicators

7.1.1 — Evidence of a good understanding of the nature of Aboriginal and treaty rights, including title.

7.1.2 — Evidence of ongoing open and respectful communications with **Indigenous** peoples to foster meaningful engagement, and consideration of the information gained about their **Aboriginal title** and rights, **values** and priorities through this process. Where there is communicated disagreement regarding the **organization's** forest management activities, this evidence would include documentation of efforts towards conflict resolution.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.7.2 for a commentary on this Clause.

6.3.7.3 Element 7.2 — Respect for Indigenous forest values, knowledge, and uses

Respect **Indigenous forest values**, knowledge, and uses as identified through an **Indigenous** input process.

Core indicators

7.2.1 — Evidence of efforts to promote capacity development and meaningful participation for Indigenous individuals, communities, and resource-based companies.

7.2.2 — Evidence of understanding and incorporation of **Indigenous** knowledge through the engagement of willing **Indigenous** communities, using a process that identifies and cares for culturally important resources and **values**.

7.2.3 — Efforts to include **Indigenous** informed forest management with willing Nations and/or protection of areas where culturally important practices, **values**, and resources occur.

Note: See Clause A.6.3.7.3 for a commentary on this Clause.

7 SFM system requirements

7.1 General

The **organization** shall establish and maintain an **SFM system** as specified in Clause 7.

Note: See Clause A.7.1 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.2 SFM policy

Top management shall define and maintain the **organization's SFM** commitment through policy statements and/or other documented public statements. The statements shall contain a commitment to

- a) achieve and maintain **SFM**;
- b) meet or exceed all relevant legislation, regulations, policies, and other requirements to which the **organization** subscribes;
- c) provide for public participation;
- d) respect and recognize **Aboriginal title** and rights, and treaty rights;
- e) provide participation opportunities for **Indigenous** peoples with rights to and interests in **SFM** within the **DFA**;
- f) promote gender equality;
- g) provide conditions and safeguards for the health and safety of **DFA-related workers** and the public;
- h) honour all international agreements and conventions relevant to **SFM** to which Canada is a signatory;
- i) improve knowledge about the forest and SFM, monitor advances in **SFM** science and technology, and incorporate these advances where applicable; and
- j) demonstrate **continual improvement** of **SFM**.

The statement(s) shall be documented, communicated, and made publicly available.

Note: See Clause A.7.2 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.3 Planning

7.3.1 Defined forest area

The **organization** shall clearly designate a **DFA** to which this Standard applies.

The **organization** shall define the geographic extent and the respective ownership and management responsibilities for the **DFA** and utilize applicable inventories and maps to support the **SFM** plan.

Note: See Clause A.7.3.1 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.3.2 Defined responsibilities

The **organization** shall identify the parties present in the **DFA**, and clearly describe their respective roles and responsibilities.

Where there are parties operating within the **DFA** that are not interested in participating or are not necessary for the achievement of the **SFM elements**, the **organization** may proceed without their involvement provided that the overall **objectives** and **targets** can still be achieved.

Note: See Clause A.7.3.2 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.3.3 Rights and regulations

The **organization** shall

- a) respect the legal rights and responsibilities of other parties in the **DFA**;
- b) demonstrate that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements relating to ownership, tenure, rights, and responsibilities in the **DFA** have been identified and complied with;
- c) demonstrate that the legal and constitutional rights relevant to **SFM** (including those specified in the International Labour Organization [ILO] Conventions and Recommendations to which Canada is a signatory [such as “Freedom of Association” and “Protection of the Right to Organize”]) and the health and safety of **DFA-related workers** are respected, and their contributions to **SFM** are encouraged;
- d) demonstrate that the acquired and legal rights of private **woodlot** owners to set the **values**, **objectives**, **indicators**, and **targets** relating to their properties are respected; and
- e) establish and maintain procedures to identify and have access to all legal and other requirements to which the **organization** subscribes that are applicable to the **DFA** and determine how these obligations apply to the **organization**. This includes requirements related to ownership tenure, rights, and responsibilities in the **DFA**.

Note: See Clause A.7.3.3 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.3.4 Incorporation of Indigenous and public participation requirements

The public participation requirements specified in Clause 5 shall be incorporated into the **SFM system**.

Note: See Clause A.7.3.4 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.3.5 SFM plan

The **organization** shall document, maintain, and make publicly available an **SFM plan** for the **DFA**. The **SFM plan** for each **DFA** shall include

- a) a comprehensive description and map of the **DFA** including **analysis units** (if applicable);
- b) a summary of the most recent forest management plan and the management outcomes;
- c) a set of VOITs for **indicators**;

- d) the current status of **indicators** based on monitoring requirements (monitoring requirements should be at a minimum once per **certification** cycle);
- e) **forecasts** for each **indicator**, including a description of the assumptions and analytical methods used for forecasting where relied upon;
- f) a description of the chosen **strategy** for each **target**, including all significant actions to be undertaken and the associated implementation schedule;
- g) a description of the monitoring requirements including the frequency of reporting; and
- h) an analysis of actual and expected outcomes.

Note: See Clause A.7.3.5 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.4 Implementation and operation

Note: See Clause A.7.4 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.4.1 Structure, responsibility, and resources

Roles, responsibilities, and authority required to implement and maintain **conformance** with **SFM requirements** shall be defined, documented, and communicated within the organization.

The **organization** shall provide resources essential to the implementation and control of the **SFM requirements**, including human resources and specialized skills, technology, and financial resources.

Note: See Clause A.7.4.1 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.4.2 Competence, training, and knowledge

The **organization** shall identify training needs. It shall also ensure that **personnel** receive training in accordance with the impact of their work on the **DFA** and their ability to ensure that **SFM requirements** are met.

The **organization** shall establish and maintain procedures to ensure that personnel, at each relevant function and level, have knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in achieving **conformance** with the **SFM** policy and **SFM requirements**. The **organization** shall ensure that its personnel are qualified on the basis of appropriate training and/or work experience and have opportunities to gain new knowledge. The **organization** shall also require contractors working on its behalf to demonstrate that their **personnel** have the requisite training and awareness levels. The organization shall continually improve its knowledge of the **DFA** and **SFM** and shall monitor advances in **SFM** science and technology, and incorporate them where and when applicable.

Note: See Clause A.7.4.2 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.4.3 Communication

The organization shall establish, implement, and maintain procedures

- a) for internal communication between its various levels and functions; and
- b) for receiving, documenting, and responding to relevant communications from external interested parties.

Note: See Clause A.7.4.3 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.4.4 SFM documentation

The **organization** shall establish and maintain documentation, in paper or electronic form, that

- a) describes the **SFM requirements** and their interaction; and
- b) provides direction to related documentation.

Organizations shall ensure that **DFA-related workers** and contractors have access to the documentation relevant to their responsibilities and tasks.

Note: See Clause A.7.4.4 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.4.5 Document control

The **organization** shall establish, implement, and maintain procedures for controlling all documents (paper or electronic) required by this Standard.

Procedures and responsibilities for the creation and modification of the various types of documents shall be established and maintained.

Note: See Clause A.7.4.5 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.4.6 Operational procedures and controls

The **organization** shall

- a) establish, implement, and maintain the operational procedures and controls needed to meet the **SFM requirements**; and
- b) communicate relevant procedures, controls, and requirements to employees, suppliers, and contractors working on behalf of the **organization**.

Note: See Clause A.7.4.6 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.4.7 Emergency preparedness and response

The **organization** shall establish, implement, and maintain procedures for preventing and responding to environmental emergencies and accidents.

Note: See Clause A.7.4.7 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.5 Checking and corrective action

7.5.1 Monitoring and measurement

The **organization** shall

- a) Establish, implement, and maintain procedures to monitor on a regular basis progress towards **conformance** with the **SFM requirements** in the **DFA**;
- b) record performance levels and monitor indicators for comparison with targets/forecasts; and
- c) periodically assess the quality and meaningfulness of the **targets, forecasts, and non-core indicators** where applicable.

Note: See Clause A.7.5.1 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.5.2 Corrective action

7.5.2.1 Procedures for corrective action

The **organization** shall establish, implement, and maintain procedures for

- a) defining responsibility and authority for identifying and investigating nonconformity;
- b) taking action to mitigate impacts; and
- c) initiating and completing **corrective action**.

Any **corrective action** taken to eliminate the causes of actual and potential nonconformities shall be appropriate to the magnitude of the problem and commensurate with the impact encountered.

7.5.2.2 Nonconformity

Where nonconformity occurs, the **organization** shall

- a) react to the nonconformity and, as applicable:
 - i. take action to control and correct it;
 - ii. address the consequences;
- b) evaluate the need for action to eliminate the causes of the nonconformity, in order that it does not recur or occur elsewhere, by:
 - i. reviewing the nonconformity;
 - ii. determining the causes of the nonconformity; determining if similar nonconformities exist, or could potentially occur;
- c) implement any action needed;
- d) review the effectiveness of any corrective action taken; and
- e) make changes to the management system, if necessary.

Note: See Clause A.7.5.2 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.5.3 Records

The **organization** shall establish, implement, and maintain procedures for the identification, maintenance, and disposal of **SFM requirement** records. These records shall include training records and the results of audits and reviews.

In addition, the **organization** shall retain documented information as evidence of

- a) the nature of the nonconformities and any subsequent actions taken; and
- b) the results of any corrective action.

Note: See Clause A.7.5.3 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.5.4 Internal audits

7.5.4.1 Internal audit requirements

The **organization** shall

- a) plan, establish, implement, and maintain an internal audit programme(s) including the frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements, and reporting, which shall take into consideration the importance of the processes concerned and the results of previous audits;
- b) define the audit criteria and scope for each audit;
- c) select the auditors and conduct audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;
- d) ensure that the results of the audits are reported to relevant management; and
- e) retain documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit program and the audit results.

7.5.4.2 Internal audit procedures

The **organization's** internal audit program, including any schedules, shall be based on the importance of the specific SFM activity and the results of previous audits.

Audit procedures shall cover the following:

- a) scope;
- b) frequency;
- c) methods;
- d) responsibilities and requirements for conducting audits;
- e) auditor qualifications; and
- f) reporting results.

7.6 Management review

The **organization's** top management shall meet at least annually, to review at least the following:

- a) the status of actions from previous management reviews;
- b) changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the management system;
- c) information on the **organization's** performance, including trends in:
 - i. nonconformities and **corrective actions**;
 - ii. monitoring and measurement results; and
 - iii. audit results; and opportunities for continual improvement.

Note: See Clause A.7.6 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.7 Multi-site certification requirements

Note: The **organization** shall meet the requirements of IAF MD1, Audit and **Certification** of a management system operated by a multi-site **organization**.

7.7.1 Basic requirements

Where a multi-site **organization** adopts and implements this Standard, the **organization** shall

- a) have a single management system
- b) identify all sites of the multi-site **organization**; and
- c) identify a central entity to represent the multi-site **organizations**. This central entity is part of the **organization** and shall not be subcontracted to an external **organization**.

Note: See Clause A.7.7.1 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.7.2 Central entity responsibilities

The central entity shall

- a) provide a commitment on behalf of the multi-site **organization** to meet the requirements of this Standard and represent the **organizations** in the certification process, including
 - i) communication with the certification body;
 - ii) submission of an application for certification; and
 - iii) maintenance of a contractual arrangement with the certification body.
- b) have organizational authority to define, establish, and maintain the management system;
- c) Where an organizational ownership and institutional hierarchy is not clearly defined, establish a written agreement with all sites which includes confirmation of participation in the multi-site **organization**, and a commitment to meet the requirements of this Standard;
- d) conduct a management review of the management system for all sites consistent with Clause 7.6;

e) be responsible for ensuring that data is collected and analyzed from all sites and shall be able to demonstrate its authority and ability to initiate organizational change as required in regard, but not limited, to

- i. system documentation and system changes;
 - ii. management review;
 - iii. **complaints**;
 - iv. evaluation of **corrective actions**;
 - v. internal audit planning and evaluation of the results; and
 - vi. statutory and regulatory requirements pertaining to the applicable standard(s);
- f) keep records of
- i. contact information for all participants of the group **organization**;
 - ii. the **DFA** associated with each site;
 - iii. the results of audits of the group **organization**; and
 - iv. the results of monitoring programs; and
- g) provide participants with information and guidance as specified in Clause 7.5 Checking and **Corrective Action**.

Note: See Clause A.7.7.2 for a commentary on this Clause.

7.7.3 Site responsibilities

Each site in a multi-site **certification** shall

- a) provide the central entity with a written agreement as specified in Clause 7.7.2 c);
- b) provide a commitment to meet the requirements of this Standard;
- c) respond effectively to requests from the central entity for access to information and access to the **DFA** in relation to audits and reviews of conformity with this Standard; and
- d) implement **corrective actions** established by the central entity.

Note: See Clause A.7.7.3 for a commentary on this clause.

Annex A (informative) Guidance for Implementation and Certification

Notes:

a) This Annex is not a mandatory part of this Standard.

The clause numbering scheme in this Annex has been devised to facilitate reference to related clauses in the main body of this Standard.

A.4 Sustainable forest management requirements

A.4.1 General requirements

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 4.1.*

SFM requirements are presented in four separate clauses to facilitate understanding of the main principles of this Standard. However, these four sets of requirements are interrelated and should be considered together, rather than independently. For example, the performance requirements provide much of the content for the Indigenous and public participation process(es). Similarly, an important function of the system requirements is to provide the organization with the means to manage and track its SFM performance for the purposes of continual improvement.

A.4.2 Required activities

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 4.2.*

The SFM requirements create a framework that facilitates effective and consistent on-site forest management while focusing on continual improvement. To be certified, the organization needs to meet the SFM requirements, which include Indigenous and public participation processes, performance, and system requirements specified in Clauses 5, 6, and 7. All of the SFM elements, as well as other values identified through the Indigenous and public participation processes, are addressed by establishing values, objectives, indicators, and targets for the specific DFA. An SFM system is established and maintained that includes the following components:

- policy;
- planning;
- implementation and operation;
- checking and corrective action; and
- management review to achieve continual improvement.

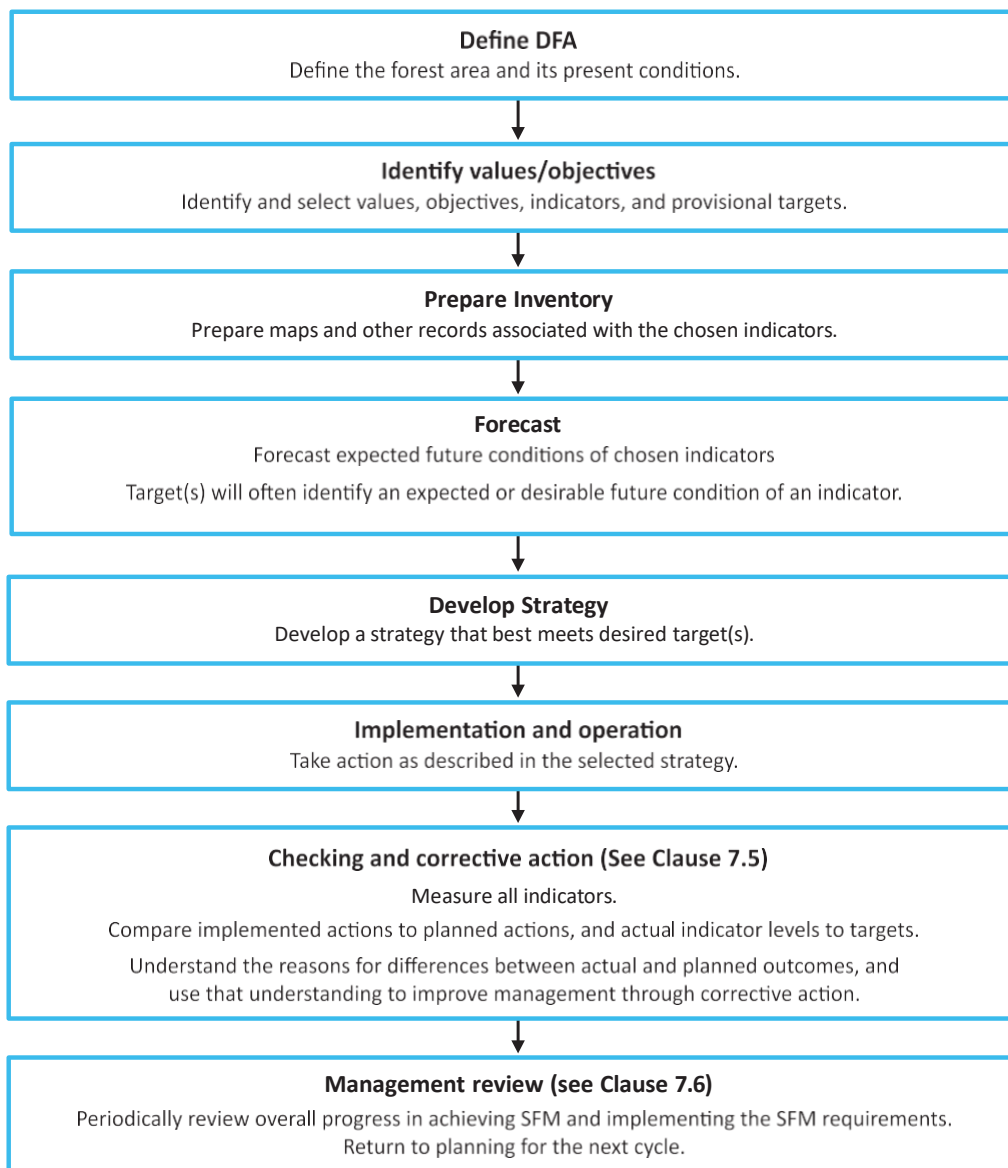
Adaptive management

The SFM system requirements are based on the principle of **adaptive management**, which enables and encourages the improvement of management actions and practices based on knowledge gained from experience. The organization should incorporate adaptive management concepts when implementing and maintaining the SFM system.

Forest ecosystems change continuously as a result of both human and non-human influences. SFM necessitates the establishment of relationships between forest values and management actions. Adaptive management facilitates knowledge of these relationships at the temporal and spatial levels at which forest systems are managed. SFM in accordance with this Standard uses adaptive management to achieve continual improvement. This is done by regularly monitoring and assessing a set of core and locally selected indicators and by modifying forecasts, activities, and plans based on this information (see Figure A.1).

Figure A.1

Adaptive management as applied to forests
(See Clause A.4.2.)



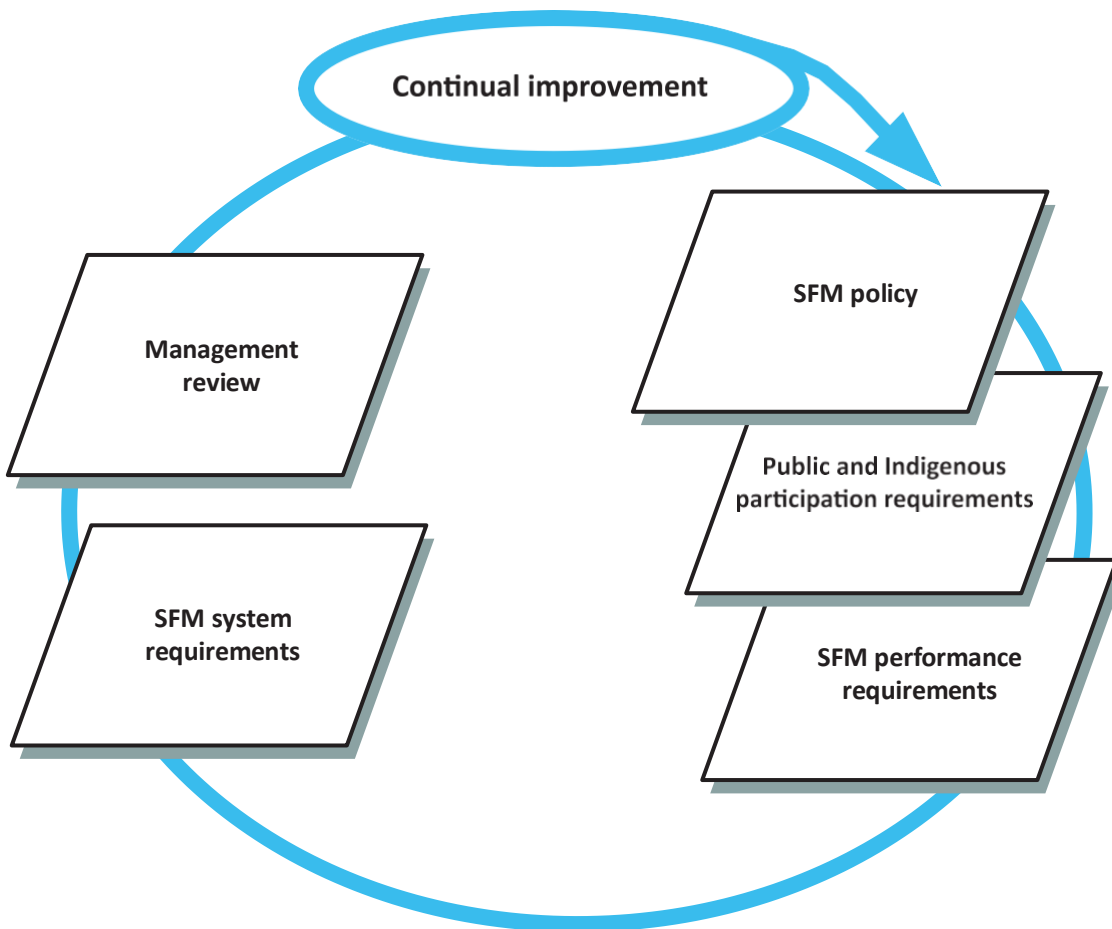
Continual improvement

Continual improvement (see Figure A.2.) and overall progress towards SFM are achieved when all SFM requirements are aligned and working together. Each of the four SFM requirements has specific considerations, and each is dependent on the others to be effective.

SFM policy and management review are the fundamental generators of continual improvement. The SFM policy sets the foundation for SFM for the organization and acts as a guide. Management review provides an opportunity for the organization to examine its performance against the SFM requirements, both individually and collectively. The review, which takes place annually or more frequently, maintains the continual improvement cycle through specific guidance, direction, and the allocation of necessary resources.

Figure A.2

SFM continual improvement loop
(See Clause A.4.2.)



A.4.3 Sale of certified products

PEFC Canada has endorsed the use of the PEFC International PEFC ST 2003:2020 Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products as the Chain of Custody Standard to be implemented by organizations certified to this SFM standard.

This section is provided to ensure consistency with PEFC ST 2003:2020 Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products – Requirements, for the purpose of ensuring PEFC claims are made consistent with the requirements of the standard. Consistent with PEFC ST 2003:2020 section 3.31 PEFC recognized certificate, a valid certificate of a PEFC endorsed forest certificate system (i.e., PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management PEFC CAN ST 1001:2025) will be issued by the Certification Body upon successful certification to this standard. The certificate number is a unique identifier either numerical or alpha-numeric combination found on the certificate.

The PEFC claim made on the invoice or delivery documentation shall be consistent with PEFC ST 2003:2020 Chain of Custody of Forest and Tree Based Products – Requirements section 3.27 PEFC claim, e.g., “100% PEFC certified” or “100% PEFC origin.”

A.5 Indigenous and public participation requirements

A.5.1 General requirements

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 5.1.*

Indigenous and public participation processes of engagement are key to incorporating a diversity of values into SFM. (For more information on public participation, see Beckley et al., 2006.) The Indigenous and public participation processes specified in this Standard do not replace the Crown’s legal duty to consult with Indigenous peoples.

Organizations with management responsibilities on publicly owned forests are encouraged, and in some jurisdictions obliged, to engage with local Indigenous communities and the public in meaningful two-way information and knowledge sharing.

Private forest landowners can voluntarily adopt processes with extensive public input. Through their participation in the process, citizens can enhance their knowledge of SFM in general and of other interests and values related to local forests. They also gain a valuable opportunity to be involved in the decision-making processes for local forests.

Implementation of Indigenous and public participation processes as specified in this Standard gives local communities the opportunity to be involved proactively in the management of a DFA. Interested parties are invited to have input in the major steps of SFM, and the organization has an obligation to heed such input, either by accepting it and revising management accordingly or by responding with specific reasons for not accepting it. This Standard recognizes that alternate processes may be appropriate in some cases and should be incorporated into SFM. For example, where recent land use planning processes, discussions, or decisions have taken place or where significant barriers exist to forming Public Advisory Groups in a manner consistent with section 5. For example, Indigenous led processes, government-to-government processes, or government led/legislated processes may meet the requirements for engagement and provide valuable input

into SFM. In cases where alternate processes are used as a foundation for engagement, the spirit and intent of the participation processes as outlined in this Standard should be aligned with section 5. Key criteria to evaluate if an alternative process is appropriate include the following:

- 1) application to the DFA;
- 2) process is open and inclusive as appropriate;
- 3) process is responsive to participants;
- 4) meaningful efforts for engagement were used;
- 5) relevant background and educational materials are provided to aid decision-making;
- 6) availability of the results of the process or details of the discussions;
- 7) communication by the organization to the alternate group of the intention to incorporate the outcome into the SFM and invitation for further input.

Where it is recognized that an alternate process contains important aspects of SFM but not the full range of values, objectives, indicators, or targets, additional targeted outreach or other methods of engagement may be appropriate.

Indigenous and public participation processes, however, have their limits. In a DFA-specific process, participants should not expect to be able to change existing public policies, laws, and regulations established by governments, nor to promote a concept that is illegal. Indigenous and public participation processes for SFM under this Standard respect existing authority for decisions associated with the use and management of the DFA.

Effective Indigenous or public participation processes make an effort to incorporate a wide range of knowledge, interests, values, and involvement with regard to SFM, as well as cultural and economic relationship to the forest. The approach to soliciting engagement may vary according to the DFA, the desired outputs, and the specific needs and rights of parties, etc. A variety of strategies for engagement might have to be employed on a single DFA in the development and implementation of the SFM requirements. For example, one strategy is to involve a local group of interested and affected parties on an ongoing basis. This strategy could be complemented by communication with a broader public to increase awareness and understanding of SFM and to provide a mechanism for soliciting a wide range of input into the development and implementation of the SFM requirements. Other examples include targeted culturally appropriate methods of engagement that allow for greater accessibility, and utilizing the results of other independent processes that reflect the Standard principles of SFM.

The organization will be implementing the SFM requirements in an environment where other decision-making processes already exist. The organization will need to take previous planning into account and build upon existing management systems, public processes, and decisions relevant to the DFA, even though they might be applicable to a land base larger than the DFA. The organization might have an opportunity to use existing public participation processes when implementing the SFM requirements. Where the outputs of such processes are regulatory or policy requirements of the jurisdiction in which the DFA is situated, these requirements should be reflected in the SFM system.

The organization can build on the results of existing or former public participation processes but might need to refine and/or expand them to apply specifically to the DFA and to meet the public participation requirements of this Standard. Where existing processes do not address all the public participation requirements of this Standard, the organization should ensure that the gaps are filled through complementary measures.

A.5.2 Indigenous peoples

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 5.2.*

The Standard recognizes that Indigenous peoples are rights-holders, not stakeholders, and that Indigenous peoples have a unique relationship to the land that should be recognized in all aspects of SFM.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #92 calls upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework.

Organizations recognize the role they can play in advancing reconciliation through the development of respectful relationship with Indigenous peoples, and providing access to jobs, training, and educational opportunities.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the right Indigenous peoples have to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of lands and resources. Efforts can be made to involve Indigenous peoples in development of priorities and strategies for forest lands and resources through the SFM participation processes.

Indigenous participation is without prejudice to Aboriginal title and rights, and treaty rights.

This Standard recognizes the deep connection of Indigenous peoples to the land, and that Canadian forests have special significance for Indigenous peoples. It further recognizes the unique rights and legal status of Indigenous peoples, and that they possess expertise, knowledge, and insights concerning SFM derived from their traditional and modern practices, beliefs, and experience. Indigenous peoples are rights-holders not stakeholders and therefore Indigenous forest users and communities require unique consideration in the engagement process.

The encouragement of Indigenous communities to become involved in identifying and addressing SFM values can vary from community to community, but always begins with the respect for their rights, values, and Indigenous knowledge. It should be made known to Indigenous communities that Indigenous participation is without prejudice to Aboriginal title and rights, and treaty rights.

From a foundation of respect, an organization can involve Indigenous representatives in the decision-making process based on their interests, values, and traditions, and integrate their knowledge into management planning at the outset. This can result in opportunities for capacity-building, Indigenous employment opportunities, co-management and business development with Indigenous contractors and businesses, including joint ventures.

If an organization approaches an Indigenous forest user or community with an understanding of what they might expect from the engagement and what some of their concerns might be, the chances of engaging effectively and alleviating concerns are increased. When attempting to engage Indigenous peoples in a meaningful way, an organization should

- approach the Indigenous community to determine the appropriate authority on the theme of SFM. The appropriate authority might be the elected Chief and Council, or a forestry committee established by a band/Nation. The appropriate authority can vary by community;
- have a background on Indigenous peoples and the rapidly changing legal context;
- have an understanding of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, existing provincial policies and legislation on Aboriginal participation and consultation; and
- be open to the perspectives of Indigenous peoples on their participation and on key aspects of SFM.

Information about the SFM plan should be provided to Indigenous communities associated with the DFA (e.g., through workshops or training sessions), particularly if they are not already receiving information through active participation in an advisory group or alternate process. Providing this information can facilitate mutual understanding and encourage further participation.

Several reasons might be associated with a lack of participation by Indigenous groups, including but not limited to

- treaty engagement;
- land claim issues;
- court hearings pertaining to relevant issues;
- issues related to resources, representation and participation; and
- the relationship between the organization and interested parties and/or Indigenous peoples.

The organization should provide interested Indigenous communities with options for participation in the process which could include being part of the broader public participation process and/or having a separate engagement process that is designed in cooperation with the Indigenous peoples and better aligned with their culture.

Indigenous peoples who have an interest in or who are affected by forest management in a DFA should be given an opportunity to contribute their knowledge to the process of setting values, objectives, indicators, and targets. In some cases, this opportunity might necessitate a separate process.

Some jurisdictions have specific regulations or policies regarding Indigenous participation. Even where regulations or policies are in place, and especially where they are not, the organization should seek out guidance directly from Indigenous peoples regarding the best methods and/or frequency of contact.

A.5.3 Interested parties

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 5.23.*

Public participation

To seek representation of those directly affected by or interested in forest management in the DFA, the organization needs to have an understanding of the relevant interests and positions of local, interested parties. In addition, it is important that the organization consider the broader public interest, particularly where decisions are likely to be seen as regionally significant or contentious. The organization openly seeks representation from DFA-related workers and/or their union representatives.

Interested parties can be engaged in public participation processes in several ways. Specific groups or individuals can be selected and personally invited to participate. Alternatively, parties may be invited to nominate a representative. Where it is advisable on practical grounds to restrict the number of participants, clear criteria for selection should be established and a mechanism should be developed to provide those interested parties not selected with the opportunity to have input in the process.

An organization seeking certification could benefit from knowing the reasons for a person's or group's lack of participation, as it might be within the organization's ability to facilitate such participation. Reasons that might be associated with lack of participation can include issues related to representation and participation or the relationship between the organization and interested parties. It is likely beyond the organization's ability to control or remove some impediments to participation, but in other cases (such as the relationship between the organization and interested parties), it might be feasible for the organization to initiate discussions on solutions that would enable the desired participation.

Open, inclusive, and responsive participation

An organization seeking certification is able to demonstrate efforts to engage interested parties in the public participation process(es). When interested parties elect not to participate in or to disengage from the process, the reasons for these decisions, including any efforts made to continue their participation, are documented. Such documentation may be in the form of a list that tracks participation, reasons for change in participation levels, and efforts to retain a range of interests.

Engagement is not confined to a single event; it is an ongoing process. Engagement consistently provides input towards the continual improvement of the organization's fulfillment of the SFM requirements and continues to do so during the monitoring and follow-up phases of the SFM system. Engagement processes involve development and continual adjustments as the participants change and as they gain experience with the process.

A.5.4 Process: Basic operating rules for advisory groups

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 5.4*

Organizations should encourage the development of engagement processes that are appropriate to local circumstances and evolve based on the function of the range of participants and their values and needs. To ensure that the participants have some degree of ownership of the process in which they are being asked to participate, this Standard specifies requirements for agreement on the operating rules that guide the process. This involves a determination of the relative importance of the required characteristics of a participation process according to local circumstances. For example, if participants exercising their responsibility under this Clause 5.4 jointly determine that a dispute-resolution mechanism [Item a) xiv] is unnecessary, then such a process would not be included in the operating rules.

The content of the operating rules will be at the discretion of the organization/participants. The following is a list of considerations for the rules:

i) Content

The operating rules should specify the range of considerations and issues to be addressed in the process.

ii) Goals

The aims or purposes for the public participation process should be defined. The goals should address the expectations of the interested parties that have initially chosen to participate.

iii) Timelines

The operating rules should specify the expected duration of various stages of the process, including delivery dates for key outcomes. Timelines should be sensitive to both efficiency (i.e., implementation of this Standard without undue delay) and effectiveness (i.e., taking sufficient time to meet SFM requirements and successfully complete key tasks). Operating rules should include the flexibility necessary to adjust to the needs of changing membership and increasing experience with the process.

iv) Internal and external communication

The success of the public participation process is greatly influenced by the extent and quality of communications, both internal and external. Consideration should be given to the ways in which

- the organization will communicate with other participants, including access to relevant background and educational material;
- participants will communicate and interact with each other; and
- participants will communicate with their respective constituencies and the broader public. [See commentary to Item vi).]

v) Resources

Effective public participation requires resources for successful implementation. The operating rules should specify the resources that will be made available to the process, by which parties, and under what conditions. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Human resources are needed to implement and service the process.
- Physical resources include meeting places and transportation services.
- Financial resources are needed to defray process costs and to underwrite the direct expenses of participants attending meetings.
- Relevant information, a key ingredient in any planning process, should be assembled and put in a format that is readily accessible to participants.
- Technological resources are mainly the analytical tools associated with planning, including geographic information systems, remote sensing images, and various communications tools.

vi) Roles, responsibilities, and obligations of participants

Expectations of both the participants and the organization should be clear at the outset and throughout the public participation process. Participant representation (do they represent themselves or an organization or affiliation?), attendance (are alternates permitted? how many meetings can a participant miss?), continuity, and similar matters are critical to credible, efficient, and valuable public participation. Where the participants come into the process representing other organizations, they have the responsibility to keep their respective constituencies regularly apprised of the process and report the views of their constituents back into the process.

vii) Conflict of interest

The public participation process should have a system to deal with conflicts of interest, particularly when participants have relationships with the organization or any other party that is required to be declared.

viii) Decision-making methods

For effective engagement, participants should know how meetings will be conducted and decisions made. It is particularly important to establish

- whether meetings will use a specific method (e.g., consensus seeking); and
- if there is any voting, how it will be done.

ix) Authority for decisions

The operating rules should clarify which participants in the process have the authority to decide on specific matters. Participants should know about the organization's regulatory responsibilities; this helps define the scope of the organization's authority and of the public participation process.

x) Mechanisms to adjust the process as needed

Changes to the public participation process are sometimes needed during implementation as participants become more involved. Such changes should be made in accordance with protocols specified at the beginning of the process. Public advisory groups might need to adjust these protocols as they become more mature and experienced. The requirements of mature public advisory groups may differ from the requirements outlined in this Standard for the initial creation of a public participation process.

xi) Access to information

Information is critical to a sound public participation process. Participants, and particularly the organization, should bring forward relevant information. To understand SFM as described in this Standard, it is vital that the organization ensure that all participants be given an opportunity to read this Standard.

Conditions of confidentiality of certain information should be specified, if applicable. This Standard recognizes the rights of Indigenous peoples to their intellectual and cultural knowledge, innovations, and practices, and the need to protect sensitive information when it is shared. Generally, information presented by any party in a forum that is part of the public participation process becomes public information. Conditions on the use of any information, from any source, exchanged in separate Indigenous consultation processes may be governed by prior agreements among all the parties involved.

xii) Participation of industry, governments, Indigenous communities, appropriate experts, and other interested parties or individuals

Government representatives, representatives of the Indigenous governments or community, Indigenous forestry business members, industry representatives, and/or appropriate experts may become regular participants in the process or they may take observer or technical-support roles. Non-local interests might also have a desire to provide input. The means of ensuring the necessary input from these groups should be agreed upon in advance. In addition, Aboriginal communities should be provided with the opportunity to participate in ways that meet their specific needs.

xiii) Involvement of experts

In addition to experts who are members of the engagement process or regular contributors of input to the process, the participants might find it useful to invite experts to discuss technical issues on an ad hoc basis. One approach is to design special ad hoc forums for dialogue between such appropriate experts, members of the public participation process, and local interested parties.

xiv) Dispute-resolution mechanism

A common decision-making approach used in public participation processes for forest management in Canada today is that of consensus, which might or might not require unanimity. Given the heated debates that sometimes surround contemporary forest management, total agreement can be difficult to reach on some DFA-specific issues. The operating rules should anticipate this circumstance and outline a means of dealing with conflict. The group may want to consider a process for removal or exclusion of a participant who is not willing to work in a consensus building environment. Many guides are available to help participants understand participatory and/or consensus-seeking processes and develop means to resolve disputes. The guiding principles published by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (reproduced in Table A.1) are of particular relevance since they were developed in a Canadian context.

xv) Mechanism to measure participant satisfaction with the process

While developing the initial rules for the establishment of a public participation process, it is important to think of the longer term and the need to maintain an ongoing process that meets the needs of the participants. To achieve this objective, the rules established at the start of the process should identify a mechanism to measure ongoing satisfaction with the process as it matures.

Participatory processes work best when participants are satisfied with how the process is running. Therefore, process conveners and facilitators need to know how participants are feeling about the means and protocols of engagement. Different methods can be used for gauging participant satisfaction, including qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys.

Table A.1

Guiding principles of consensus processes

(See Clause A.5.3.)

Principle No.

1 Purpose driven

People need a reason to participate in the process.

2 Inclusive, not exclusive

All parties with a significant interest in the issues should be involved in the consensus process.

3 Voluntary participation

The parties who are affected or interested participate voluntarily.

4 Self design

The parties design the consensus process.

5 Flexibility

Flexibility should be included in the process to enable it to adjust as it matures.

6 Equal opportunity

All parties must have equal access to relevant information and the opportunity to participate effectively throughout the process.

7 Respect for diverse interests

Acceptance of the diverse values, interests, and knowledge of the parties involved in the consensus process is essential.

8 Accountability

The parties are accountable both to their constituencies and to the process that they have agreed to establish.

9 Time limits

Realistic deadlines are necessary throughout the process.

10 Implementation

Commitment to implementation and effective monitoring are essential parts of any agreement.

Note: Adapted from NRTEE, *Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Putting Principles in Practice* (1996).

A.5.5 Work of the Public Advisory Group or equivalent

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 5.6.*

Values, Objectives, Indicators, and Targets

5.5 It is the organization's responsibility to provide participants with an opportunity to be involved with the activities specified in Clause 5.5. However, the level of involvement will be up to the participants. If the participants choose to focus only on the values, objectives, indicators, and targets that they consider to be locally significant, it remains the responsibility of the organization to address all of the items specified in Clause 5.5 and to report back to the participants on its decisions. The participants should be given an opportunity to provide input, should they so desire. Where the participants of an engagement process are uninterested in a values, objectives, indicators, and targets approach, it is appropriate for the organization to default to existing legislation or develop an appropriate values, objectives, indicators and targets approach internally.

Indigenous peoples may elect to establish a separate advisory group or different engagement process. Where the organization has successfully established one or more advisory groups or equivalent, these groups are provided the opportunity to work with the organization to identify and select the values, objectives, indicators, and targets specific to the DFA, to develop, assess, and select one or more possible strategies related to each of the targets, and to review results in achieving the SFM plan. It should be clear to participating interested parties that the SFM plan will evolve over time as issues relevant to the DFA are discussed and performance measures are evaluated.

Where an organization is utilizing an existing process, values, objectives, indicators, and targets may be derived from the outcomes of that process. Rationale should be included where values, objectives, indicators, and targets are developed based on the outcomes of an external process (see section A.5.1 General requirements).

Issues in 5.5 might arise in association with the discussion items specified for each criterion in Clause 6.3 or during other discussions that are part of the engagement process. The outcome of discussions regarding an issue(s) relevant to SFM in the DFA should consist of one or more of the following:

- demonstration that the issue raised is not applicable to the DFA;
- identification of one or more DFA-specific values and the associated objectives, indicators, and targets;
- identification of the issue as a topic that the public participation process should discuss on an ongoing basis;
- establishment and implementation of performance-based thresholds and specifications to address the issue;
- addressing the issue through policy, operational controls, and/or best management practices;
- demonstration that the issue has already been addressed through satisfaction of a previously identified value; and
- other means, developed and accepted through the public participation process, that clearly and adequately address the issue.

A key role for the advisory group or equivalent is the development of values, objectives, indicators, and targets for the DFA. Outcomes of this process, at minimum, comply with existing government laws and regulations. The process also respects the findings of any earlier formal public participation processes that have developed values, objectives, indicators, or targets relating to the SFM elements at a landscape or regional level in the area in which the DFA is situated.

Decision-making

The requirements of this Standard include a rigorous process designed to provide interested parties with an opportunity to influence decisions and to provide input on important issues. However, this does not mean that the decision-making power resides with the public alone. The organization demonstrates that it takes the public input seriously and that it is responsive to and respectful of this input. In doing so, the organization should clearly explain how decisions, including any trade-offs, are reached.

A.5.6 Communication requirements

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 5.6.*

Public Access to Information

5.6 The organization is required to provide information to a broader public about the process and progress of implementing the SFM requirements. The strategies for disseminating such information include

- public announcements in the media;
- development of a website;
- open houses;
- town meetings;
- smaller meetings with specific interest groups; or
- other forms of communication.

Opportunities should be provided for sharing information, views, and values. Input received through the broader process of public communication should be considered by the organization and advisory group or equivalent and responded to in a timely fashion.

Public availability of the SFM plan should include the values, objectives, indicators, and targets.

Audit reports

Third-party audit summary reports consistent with Annex B should be made available to the public by the organization.

Public advisory group or equivalent annual reporting

The organization should prepare information that describes their progress in meeting and maintaining the SFM requirements and makes that information available to the public. Specifically, this annual reporting should demonstrate the organization's performance when compared with SFM targets and how those targets are aligned with SFM values, objectives, and indicators. The annual report should be open and factual so that the reader can be confident

that all of the SFM requirements continue to be met and that the organization is living up to its SFM policy statement and its commitment to continual improvement. Progress, success, shortcomings, emerging issues, future plans, **corrective actions**, and management commitment could be some of the topics to be addressed by the annual reporting process. Because some readers of the report might not have been involved in the engagement process, information regarding any major issues related to SFM in the DFA should be included. Public availability of a summary of the annual report should include any targets that were not met.

A.6 SFM performance requirements

A.6.1 DFA-specific performance requirements

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.1.*

Because values represent what is important in and for a DFA, the organization should have a clear and transparent mechanism for identifying DFA-specific values and translating them into detailed targets that can be met with implementation of a chosen strategy. This Standard identifies a basic set of mandatory core indicators and specifies a process for identifying other indicators and setting associated targets. The values, objectives, indicators, and targets identified during Indigenous and public engagement processes may be documented in a table.

Table A.2

Sample incorporation of Indigenous and public participation process(es)
content requirements and DFA performance requirements

(See Clause A.6.1.)

process content(see Clause 5.5)	DFA performance requirements (see Clause 7.3.5)	Explanations and examples
Identify and select values, objectives, indicators, and targets.	For each element, identify one or more DFA-specific values.	When considering Element 1.2, species diversity, habitat for a population of pileated woodpeckers could be a DFA-related value. There can be many values for each element.
	For each value, identify one or more objectives.	For the pileated woodpecker habitat, the objective could be to maintain the habitat at the present level. Limit objectives to one per value; however, in some circumstances, more than one objective might be necessary.

process content(see Clause 5.5)	DFA performance requirements (see Clause 7.3.5)	Explanations and examples
	For each value, identify the core indicator and any other locally selected indicators.	For the pileated woodpecker habitat, the indicator might be the habitat carrying capacity, measured by the number of breeding pairs per 100 km ² Each value can have more than one indicator.
	For each indicator, provide data on current status and identify a target.	For the pileated woodpecker habitat, the current habitat carrying capacity might be 20 pairs per 100 km ² , and the target might be a minimum of 20 pairs per 100 km ² .
Develop appropriate strategies.	Develop appropriate strategies to achieve the targets.	Each strategy includes all the major actions that could affect the habitat for the pileated woodpecker (e.g., access, timber harvest, regeneration, protection).
	Describe the expected response of each indicator in relation to the target.	For the pileated woodpecker habitat, quantitative habitat modelling indicates that the target of 20 pairs of pileated woodpeckers per 100 km ² will be met. The methods, assumptions, and limitations for making the forecast are also described.
Review the SFM plan.		This step allows all parties to agree that the SFM plan properly reflects the decisions reached throughout the process so far.
Review monitoring programs, evaluate results, and determine opportunities for improvement.	Design field measurement programs and implement them.	Collect appropriate data to track indicators and any other variables deemed important in checking the performance of forecasting models.
	Analyze results and include them in the Aboriginal and public participation processes for interpretation and discussion.	All parties should examine monitoring data in the context of the forecasts and discuss how to improve the SFM plan for its next revision/iteration.

Identifying DFA-specific values

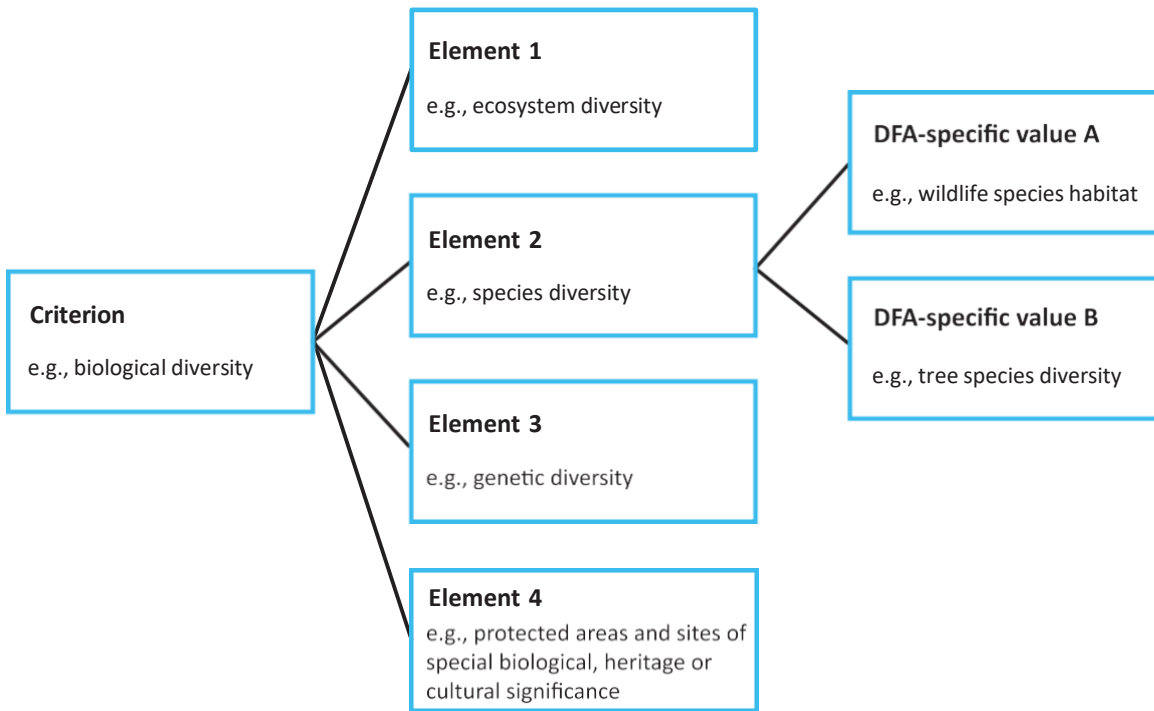
A set of forest values is to be created that pertains specifically to the DFA. In the engagement process, interested parties might wish to begin by identifying DFA-specific values and then organizing them under the elements. Alternatively, they might begin by considering the elements and then ensuring the identification of at least one DFA-specific value for each element. The SFM criteria and elements specified in Clause 6 serve as organizing concepts and ensure that DFA-specific values cover a comprehensive range of SFM considerations. (See Figure A.3.)

During the process, interested parties might identify DFA-specific values that are not apparently associated with any of the SFM elements. In such a case, the number of elements might have to be increased to include the additional values.

Figure A.3

Criteria, elements, and DFA-specific values

(See Clause A.6.1.)



Note: Objectives and indicators are identified for DFA-specific values in Figure A 4.

Defining objectives

Each value will have at least one objective that describes the desired future condition for the value. Interested parties may develop more than one objective for each value. In such a case, the parties should strive to ensure compatibility among the objectives, aiming for mutually supporting objectives rather than conflicting ones.

Identifying core and locally selected indicators

Indicator development

Indicators are the means of measuring or describing the state or condition of forest values. Some indicators are prescribed as core indicators in Clause 6.3. Others are identified through the local Indigenous and public participation processes. Interested parties are guided in various ways regarding indicator selection, including:

- their own ideas about useful indicators; and
- indicators related to government regulations and policies that relate to the DFA.

The organization's own internal management policies and procedures can dictate the need for certain indicators, and the participants might find it useful to consult with technical experts. The final indicator set is the result of the input from a number of sources.

Indicator selection

Selecting indicators involves defining what is to be measured and why it is important. Indicators pertaining directly to forest conditions are preferred over those that pertain to SFM activities. Direct measurement of a forest condition provides a better gauge of most values than measuring an activity that influences the condition.

In some instances, direct measurements of forest conditions are not feasible, and an indirect measurement is necessary. In such cases, the relationship between the selected indicator and the condition being measured should be clearly established and periodically checked to ensure that the stated relationship remains valid. For example, if a certain ecosystem type is used as a surrogate for the population of a rare species, it is necessary to confirm periodically that the rare species is present in the ecosystem type.

In the indicator selection process, interested parties should apply a set of quality criteria when assessing whether proposed indicators should be retained for use. Such criteria should consider the following:

- feasibility — the process of monitoring indicators should be practical, cost effective, and efficient.
- measurability — targets can only be set for indicators that can be measured;
- predictability — indicators whose future levels can be predicted with reasonable accuracy should be used;
- relevance — indicators should be clearly applicable to their associated values;
- understandability — indicators should be simple, clear, and easy to understand; and
- validity — indicators should be consistent with the scientific understanding of the value they measure and should be technically valid (objectively obtained, documented, comparable, and reproducible).

Setting targets

Each indicator requires one or more targets to define the desired future condition. A target may be a specified level for an indicator at a given point in the future or a series of such levels for a corresponding series of points in the future. See Table A.2 or a sample target.

Targets can be set in a variety of ways. Using the “bull’s eye” concept, a target could call for the indicator to show a fixed quantity or a fixed range. Alternatively, the target could specify a minimum or maximum value for the indicator. Whichever approach is chosen, targets should specify acceptable departures (e.g., the size, location, duration, and frequency of a deviation) from the chosen limits.

There is a danger in trying to set firm targets at the beginning of the planning process, as it is possible that no feasible strategy can be designed and implemented to meet all targets. A better approach is to set tentative or provisional targets at the beginning of the planning process, and then iteratively develop and assess strategies and adjust targets until a match is obtained between an appropriate set of targets and an acceptable strategy (see Table A.2).

A key concept in determining appropriate SFM performance in relation to ecological elements is the range of natural variation. For each chosen indicator, consideration should be given to a reference time frame, the limits on the range of natural variation, and behaviour of the indicator within these limits. As part of the engagement process, the organization and participants should examine carefully and discuss fully the role of the range of natural variation in the context of SFM in the DFA.

Designing and evaluating strategies

In the context of this Standard, a strategy comprises the actions, specified according to type of action and time and place of implementation, that are proposed to achieve one or more targets. A strategy can be as simple as holding workshops and open houses to meet targets for satisfactory Indigenous and public participation. Conversely, it can be as complex as a comprehensive set of silvicultural prescriptions to meet targets for a sustainable wood supply while conserving biodiversity, water, and soil, and promoting carbon sequestration. A particular strategy can relate to a specific target (e.g., workshops relate to public participation) or can relate to targets for many indicators at once (e.g., a silviculture strategy relates to biodiversity, forest productivity, soil and water, carbon budget, and wood supply).

If only one type of action is appropriate for achieving a target, then only one strategy is developed. However, for many indicators, a range of strategies might be appropriate. For example, in exploring how to meet targets for habitats of focal species (see Element 1.2 in Clause 6.3.1.4), the organization and participants might wish to explore the relative effectiveness of different means of harvesting timber (e.g., clear-cutting vs. partial cutting) or regenerating harvested areas (e.g., natural vs. planting). Possible strategies should be limited in number (for tractability of assessment work) and easily distinguished (so that any analytical results can show how the indicator responses to the assessed strategies actually differ).

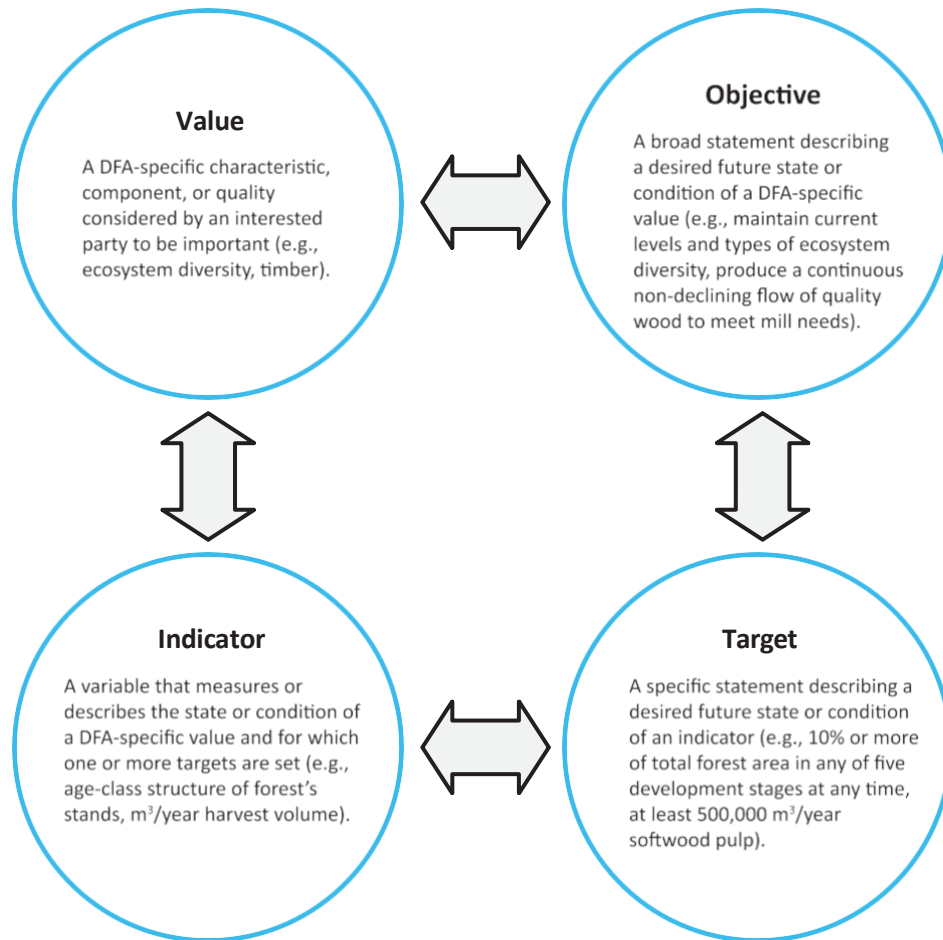
A good strategy is one that has the best potential to help managers achieve established targets. Where there is essentially only one strategy deemed to work in this regard, strategy assessment

is simple. However, where several strategies are under consideration, strategy assessment and selection can be complicated. For example, where a set of silviculture strategies has implications for many indicators specified in Clause 6.3, strategy evaluation is a complicated exercise of examining forecasts for all the relevant indicators under the full range of strategies considered.

Figure A.4

Relationship of values, objectives, indicators, and targets

(See Figure A.3.)



Forecasts

An important part of implementing sustainable forest management requirements is comparing the indicator conditions that evolve over time with those that were forecasted (expected), then assessing the acceptability of variances. While a quantitative analysis might be needed to forecast some indicators (such as those found in timber supply models), other indicators will rely more on expert and local input.

Forecasts for quantitative indicators are normally made using models that can range from simple equations to complex spatial models. For example, forecasts for qualitative and conformance-based indicators are normally made using non-analytical techniques. In addition, forecasts may be based on analysis units that are smaller or larger than the DFA, if they are appropriate for the indicator and make best use of existing data and analysis. Examples include timber supply area resource data and associated analyses (volume-based tenures), wildlife habitat areas, etc. Explanations should specify the particular time and space considerations since many indicators change over time and are unevenly distributed across the DFA or analysis units (which may be larger or smaller than the DFA).

Organizations should address two issues when making indicator forecasts. The first is potential interactions among indicators. Many of the indicators chosen to represent DFA-specific values will not be independent of each other; forecasts should recognize these interdependencies. The second issue relates to the fact that some indicators are influenced as much by human actions within the DFA that are not related to SFM as they are by actions related to SFM. Examples include recreational forest use, and exploration and extraction of minerals, oil, or gas from below the earth's surface. In such cases, there can be cumulative effects. In the context of this Standard, the cumulative effects on an indicator are those from both SFM actions and from other actions. Organizations are urged to assess cumulative effects in their indicator forecasting exercises where practicable.

Monitoring indicators and targets

Monitoring is repetitive measurement, or measurement over time. Monitoring delivers the data required to assess management effectiveness. In the context of adaptive management of forests, managers should monitor both the actions they take (to determine if actions match the plan) and the effects of the actions (to determine if the desired indicator responses are being achieved and targets met).

Adaptive management is, above all, a learning exercise in which comparisons of expectations with real outcomes can reveal where managers have been successful in delivering on values and where value satisfaction is inadequate. The latter can result from departures from planned actions or from lack of sufficient knowledge to forecast indicator outcomes with confidence. Monitoring provides the data needed to determine the magnitude and nature of differences between forecasts and reality, and the reasons for the differences. Ultimately, the goal is to improve strategies for the next round of SFM planning. Monitoring data and analyses is an essential component of an overall assessment of the ongoing validity of values, objectives, indicators, and targets.

In some cases, DFA managers do not have authority to manage for specific public values associated with the DFA land base. For example, the organization has authority to manage wildlife habitats but not wildlife populations.

A.6.2 SFM criteria — General

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.2.*

Successful implementation of SFM requires both a strong process and a comprehensive content. The content of SFM is determined by the values established for the DFA.

In this Standard, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers SFM criteria continue to be used as a basis for the standard and an additional criterion on Indigenous rights has been added.

Each criterion is followed by a list of suggested discussion items. These represent issues commonly faced by forest managers, Indigenous communities and interested parties in DFAs across Canada. As part of Indigenous and public participation processes specified in this Standard, organizations should provide participants an opportunity to discuss each of the items and demonstrate, through clear records, that the issues inherent in the items have been brought to a satisfactory resolution. Revisiting the discussion items may be necessary during the SFMP revision process. In some cases, the suggested discussion items are not of interest to the Indigenous peoples or interested parties but the organization should make periodic reviews to encourage discussion and prioritize the importance of discussion items.

Each element is described in a heading followed by an elaborating statement. Core indicators are subsequently identified for use in SFM implementation in accordance with this Standard. Where core indicators have been deemed to apply to several elements, they are repeated under each applicable element.

A.6.3 SFM criteria, elements, and core indicators

A.6.3.1 Criterion 1 — Biological diversity

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.1.*

Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and has developed a national strategy for biodiversity conservation (the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, 1995). The Convention on Biological Diversity recognizes the dependency of Indigenous peoples and local communities on biological diversity and their unique role in conserving life on earth. This recognition is enshrined in the preamble of the Convention and its provisions. Under Article 8(j) of the Convention, Parties have undertaken to respect, preserve and maintain the knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the conservation of biological diversity, promote their wider application with the approval of knowledge holders and encourage the equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of biological diversity.

Biological diversity is the variability among living organisms and the ecological complexes of which they are a part. This includes diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems. Biological diversity, often shortened to biodiversity, includes ecological, genetic, social, and cultural dimensions related to the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources. The measurement of biodiversity is complex and often has a qualitative and quantitative aspect. A fundamental requirement for biodiversity conservation is the in-situ

conservation of ecosystems and natural habitats with special focus on scales of time, space, and hierarchical order. Because forests are ecosystems of incredible biological richness, biodiversity is central in the pursuit of SFM.

Landscape ecology provides insight into a range of themes regarding landscape patterns that underpin biodiversity conservation. These include the concepts of landscape composition, configuration, and connectivity. All can be influenced by forest management. Landscape composition as determined by a range of patch types (e.g., forest stands) and matrix (the nature of the surrounding land in which patches are situated) affects habitat suitability for the range of forest species. Configuration or the spatial arrangement of patches can affect distribution of habitat across the range of various species populations. Landscape connectivity, or the connectedness of vegetation cover in a landscape, can influence both habitat connectivity (connectedness of habitat patches) and ecological connectivity (the connectedness of ecological processes at multiple scales). Other elements are often considered with connectivity, such as edge or boundaries between dissimilar plant communities (different vegetation types, successional stages, or vegetative conditions). On the whole, connectivity on the managed landscape influences both the species population movement and potential gene flow between remnant patches and the ability of the ecological landscape to continue to functionally support these species populations over time.

Landscape patterns and habitat patch structures in forested landscapes are not static due to various natural and human-induced disturbances at multiple scales, and subsequent forest succession. Concerns in forested ecosystems regarding harvesting and management are often related to species dependent on the amount and distribution of habitat patches that provide interior forest conditions, and the complex structure associated with late successional forests, including old growth.

Pattern is important. Anthropogenic linear features, such as roads, pipelines, electricity transmission lines, and seismic lines, are often implicated in reducing forest connectivity and increasing fragmentation, as well as contributing to overall forest loss. Uniform patterns created by dispersed cutblocks and relatively short rotation age are generally less desirable. Managers can improve connectivity by leaving corridors, strips, and patches of standing timber, and individual trees. In landscapes severely fragmented and/or deforested, reforestation and afforestation activities can be employed.

Many experts believe that natural disturbance regimes and the range of natural variation in forest ecosystems provide a sound context to understand management of landscape patterns for the conservation of forest biodiversity. These concepts acknowledge that groups of species have evolved with the forest disturbances that occur through natural forces such as fire, insect outbreaks, disease, and windthrow. Human disturbances can best be managed by considering rates of natural disturbances and the structures, shapes, and patterns of the resulting ecosystems and landscapes. Management strategies designed to ensure that the forest continues to function within the range of natural variation are therefore likely to reduce the risk of losing biological diversity. Managers may take guidance from historical or current disturbance regimes, and they may investigate how future climate change might alter the disturbance regimes during the next century. It should be recognized, however, that human-caused

disturbances cannot entirely emulate the effects of natural disturbances and that not all aspects of natural disturbances can or should be emulated. Nonetheless, the frequency and patterns of natural disturbance should inform forest management.

Wetlands are a component of forest ecosystems that provide many valuable ecological services. Wetlands are rich in biodiversity and provide important habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals.

Except for commercial tree species, in most cases the organization has no authority to manipulate plant and animal populations. Rather, it manipulates habitats through management actions focused primarily on trees. Habitat, in terms of both quantity and quality, is a key component of the health of species populations. Species cannot exist where habitats are inhospitable. However, just because the habitat is suitable does not mean that a species will occupy it to its fullest capacity; other forces, such as abiotic events (i.e., severe weather), competition, predation, diseases, and human activities can prevent a species from occupying its normal range at normal densities. For forest-dwelling species, managers should take special care with species that exist at their range limit, that exist in isolated populations, and for which knowledge is deficient.

In conservation planning, protected areas are widely seen as pivotal in conserving biodiversity and maintaining natural ecological processes. In some circumstances, small protected areas can serve vital protection functions (e.g., a small critical habitat for a species); in others, large protected areas are required. Conservation design strives to establish networks of protected areas that are representative of both the enduring landscape features and the local or regional biodiversity.

Silvicultural practices, including timber harvesting, can either degrade or enhance biodiversity values. For example, uninformed timber harvesting can destroy forest habitats for some species, whereas sensitive timber harvesting can actually be used to improve habitat conditions. Key attributes of silvicultural practices that influence biodiversity include type of treatment, spatial extent and layout, timing (seasonal and long term), and intensity. An example of a habitat element that requires special attention in the design and implementation of forest treatments is deadwood, whose snags and downed logs provide habitat for a diverse range of forest species.

In some parts of Canada, invasive alien species have the potential to threaten native forest biodiversity. Examples include the Emerald Ash Borer in southwestern Ontario and the Brown Spruce Longhorn Beetle in Nova Scotia. SFM demands prudence in monitoring and treatment design to limit the spread of invasive alien species into Canadian forests. This might mean that the organization agrees not to engage in practices where there is a risk of introducing invasive alien species, or commits to undertaking special actions should an invasive alien species become established, through no fault of the organization, in the DFA.

Canadian legislation strictly controls pesticide use through a robust regulatory framework that emphasizes documentation (i. e., Pest Control Products Act and Health Canada), prohibition of highly toxic chemicals (i.e., although WHO Class 1A and 1B classifications are not used directly in Canada though Health Canada's rigorous risk assessment process ensures that substances with comparable high toxicity are either not registered or are subject to extremely limited

and well-defined exceptions), adherence to international bans (i.e., Canada is party to the Stockholm Convention and has phased out or banned the use of these substances, ensuring compliance with international environmental and health standards), and strict usage protocols (i.e., Pest Control Products Act establishes legally binding labels on pesticide products that detail the proper methods of application, required equipment and safety precautions. Additionally, provincial regulations require that pesticide applicators undergo certification or training, ensuring that they are competent to handle these chemicals safely).

Some have raised concerns over whether tree breeding programs are gradually reducing the genetic diversity of native forests. Attention should be given to the nature of the gene pools associated with seed stocks of native species, as well as effective population sizes in seed orchards.

A.6.3.1.3 Element 1.1 — Ecosystem diversity

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.1.3.*

Ecosystem conservation represents a coarse-filter approach to biodiversity conservation. It assumes that by maintaining the structure and diversity of ecosystems well distributed across the landscape, the habitat needs of various species will be provided. For many species, if the habitat is suitable, populations will be maintained. This concept is important for poorly known species. Two key characteristics of forest ecosystems are the vegetation community type and its seral stages. The community type is normally described in terms of the species composition since it is an expression of the unique combination of climate, soil moisture, and nutrient regimes of the site. The seral stages are driven by succession and disturbance processes and are normally described in terms of age classes. These two factors are strong predictors of the biotic communities that will inhabit both forest stands and the entire forest landscape.

Ecosystem area by type

In conservation biology, ecosystem representation is about making sure that ecologically distinct ecosystem types are represented in the non-commercial (unmanaged, natural) land base. This is to ensure that little-known species and ecological functions are sustained and benchmarks of the range of ecosystems are maintained in an “unmanaged” state in case we need to study them at some point.

An analysis of ecosystem type representation (often synonymous with the term “habitat types”) within the DFA illustrates the existing distribution, abundance, and patch size class, within both the non-commercial landscape and the commercial landscape. Representative ecosystem types should be summarized at a scale that is relevant ecologically (fitting with natural landscape disturbance types and scales) and useful for management. Hierarchical forest ecosystem classification schemes may be useful to help determine appropriate scales. For example, in British Columbia the most relevant scale may be the biogeoclimatic subzone level. However, for practical management, subzones with similar disturbance patterns and broadly similar ecosystem types may best be grouped together. Good representation of ecosystem types will also have an age distribution that reflects the natural pattern and a degree of connectivity.

Ultimately it is best if all ecosystem types, including old growth forest types, are adequately

represented and well distributed across those parts of the management unit where they are naturally found. Ecosystem types that may be poorly represented in some form of protected status could be priority candidates for forest planning and management actions within the commercial forest. For example, designations for protection of non-timber values that totally or partially constrain timber harvest could be evaluated for potential inclusion of underrepresented ecosystem types. Other non-forested or special ecosystem types, for example, karst features and rare soil types, should also be incorporated in the planning process. Management activities including infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, landings) should be planned in a manner consistent with required protection of representative ecosystem types.

Forest area by type or species composition

An analysis of forest area by stand type or species composition allows for an understanding of landscape pattern elements that is more general than a representation of ecosystem types. Again information should be summarized at a scale that is relevant ecologically and useful for management.

Forest area by seral stage or age class

Analysis of forest area by seral stage or age class also provides a more general understanding of some landscape pattern elements, in this case related to stand age and the associated structural elements.

Degree of within-stand structural retention

Within-stand structural retention exhibits important features that provide habitat heterogeneity, including downed wood, tree cavities, large trees, and large dead snags. Retention of these structures in the managed forest matrix is important to provide stand structural heterogeneity across the landscape to encourage a diversity of habitats; maintain unharvested refugia in large disturbed areas; assist some species to repopulate the regenerating ecosystem over time; and provide for a degree of connectivity throughout the managed landscape to facilitate movement of species populations. For example, where it is important, retention of old forest attributes will help maintain a degree of those habitat elements and connectivity in the developing stands.

The four indicators work together to assist managers in managing landscape pattern for conservation of biodiversity. For example, some clear gaps in the representation network of ecosystem types may be deemed acceptable in the short term considering the distribution of stand types and age classes. As well, stand level retention could be used across the managed landscape in some ecological units as an interim strategy to compensate for perceived issues in the other indicators.

A.6.3.1.4 Element 1.2 — Species diversity

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.1.4.*

While ecosystem conservation is the coarse-filter approach to biodiversity management, species diversity is the fine-filter approach. For most species, forest managers only have the ability to manipulate habitats, not species populations. In some cases, legal protection is afforded to the

habitat or elements of the habitat of a species whose population is in decline and may be at risk of extinction (species at risk). Other species can become the focus of management (focal species) for a wide range of reasons, such as their significance to Aboriginal communities or their sensitivity to disturbance or influences such as climate change. Exploitation of protected plant and animal species at risk for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited, and managed by government agencies, not forest managers.

To account for the degree of habitat protection provided for selected focal species, including species at risk, forest managers should recognize short-term habitat needs, particularly for critical and core habitats, and consider existing protection plans for species at risk. For the longer term, forest managers can use habitat supply models (as part of forest forecasting exercises) when they exist and are reasonable in order to assess the long-term availability of habitat suitable for selected focal species, including species at risk. To account for concerns that forests be regenerated primarily with native tree species, managers should address and monitor the proportion of regeneration comprised of native species.

Management activities including infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, landings) should be planned in a manner consistent with required habitat protection for focal and species at risk.

Forest managers should also acknowledge the risks of introducing and spreading invasive species in the forest, particularly invasive plants and address those risks through monitoring and operational practices.

A.6.3.1.5 Element 1.3 — Genetic diversity

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.1.5.*

Ecologists recognize that species diversity rests on a foundation of diversity in gene pools within and among species. Unfortunately, gene-pool diversity is difficult to measure. Until practical indicators of characteristics inherent to genetic diversity are developed, this element should be addressed through discussions and management protocols. For tree species, such discussions and protocols focus on tree breeding programs and seed stocks.

A.6.3.1.6 Element 1.4 — Protected areas and sites of special biological, geological, heritage, or cultural significance

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.1.6.*

Protected areas are important for biodiversity conservation. They can help to protect and conserve species that occur within their boundaries and can contribute to conservation across the broader landscape. They are also valuable ecosystems in their own right. A DFA exists within a larger landscape and potentially within a broader land-use planning process. Effective conservation within a landscape encompasses a network of both protected areas and sustainable activities within the DFA and other working parts of the landscape. Organizations should co-operate with provincial managers to determine whether representative samples of the ecosystems present in the DFA are protected at the landscape level either in the DFA or in the

adjacent area and should have examples of such protected areas. A peer-reviewed gap analysis may be used to identify the existence and significance of protected areas when determining whether adequate representation of the range of sites has been achieved. When identifying local values and developing objectives, indicators, and targets for biodiversity, there should be alignment with strategic or policy direction provided by the provincial government and the CCFM.

Sites of biological, heritage or cultural significance include critical areas for wildlife habitat, sensitive sites including spiritual, heritage, and cultural sites, and unusual or rare forest conditions or communities. A wide range of criteria may be used in their identification. Such sites might need protection or active management to perpetuate the conditions that make them significant. Such management may focus on preventing harmful actions (e.g., fencing or signs to discourage human traffic inside an area or construction of a sheltering structure) or on taking restorative actions (e.g., removal of barriers to periodic flooding of a wetland).

Organizations should ensure that a process is in place to identify any sites of biological, heritage, or cultural significance that would be threatened by forest management activities without the implementation of special management strategies. These sites can vary in size depending on the nature of the value identified. Management strategies should endeavour to maintain the specific values present on these sites.

Efforts should be made by the organization to involve willing Aboriginal communities in the identification and protection of sites of cultural significance. To address the issues regarding the sharing of confidential and sensitive information from Aboriginal communities, organizations are encouraged to develop information sharing agreements, such as partnership agreements and memoranda of understanding, that outline ways to protect this information.

A.6.3.2 Criterion 2 — Ecosystem condition and productivity

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.2.*

In the context of forests, mitigation of climate change entails managing forests so they can sequester and store more carbon from the atmosphere. Mitigation is addressed under Criterion 4 (see Clause A.6.3.4). Despite global mitigation efforts, climate change is occurring. Thus, Clause 6.3.2 focuses on the impacts of climate change on forests and how forests might be managed to adapt to the changes. There is limited knowledge of how forests will respond to a changing climate this century. However, it is known that forest conditions are tightly tied to the prevailing climate, and that the forest management decisions made today commit forest ecosystems to development trajectories that unfold over many decades. Climate change is already affecting Canada's forests through changes such as forest productivity, water availability, and the rate and extent of forest disturbances such as wildfires and insect outbreaks. Therefore, it is important for organizations and interested parties to investigate how climate change will impact forest management in the DFA and what actions must be considered to adapt to climate change. The differences between active and passive strategies for climate change adaptation should be considered. For example, managers might consider adapting to climate change through anticipatory planting (e.g., establishment of drought-resistant tree species) and maintenance of stands with multiple species and ages. The use of different seed sources and assisted

migration to adapt stands to climate change are also important factors to be considered to maintain ecosystem resilience and productivity. Passive strategies such as monitoring carbon dioxide emissions from forest operations or modelling forest carbon budgets in the DFA can be considered by managers of DFA.

For those organizations that wish to pursue climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning in more detail, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) has produced a set of background and guidance documents for this purpose.

Disturbances can be seen as both destructive and regenerative processes. For example, while an intense wildfire can kill whole stands of mature trees, it also can create favourable conditions for tree regeneration. Rapid and intense disturbances can therefore reduce some forest values (e.g., fire destroys valuable timber) and increase others (e.g., fire creates habitats favoured by early-successional species). While disturbances are a key driver of forest change, managers cannot usually predict where and when they will occur. Managers therefore need to engage in risk management. This includes actions such as:

- reducing the vulnerability of forests to catastrophic disturbances;
- maintaining preparedness for appropriate responses when disturbances occur;
- managing human disturbances in such a way that they do not compromise ecosystem condition and productivity; and
- using fire only when necessary to achieve management goals, e.g., fuel reduction in high hazard areas.

A key contemporary issue in SFM in Canada is the use of forest biomass beyond conventional forest products. This issue has arisen largely in response to the desire for renewable energy sources. The organization and interested parties should examine the issue closely, with initial discussions focusing on the immediate uses of non-timber biomass (e.g., left on site, burned, removed for energy or other purposes). Subsequent discussions should examine future expectations for biomass use, with emphasis on the ecological and cultural impacts of such biomass removals. If the organization intends to remove biomass, it should develop clear operational guidelines for the sustainable removal of biomass from forest ecosystems.

Initiatives beyond the organization's control can also influence forest condition and ecosystem productivity. Examples include climate change, wildfire, insects, blowdowns, government removal of forested land base to meet other objectives (i.e., housing developments, etc.).

A.6.3.2.3 Element 2.1 — Forest ecosystem condition and productivity

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.2.3.*

SFM is predicated on the principle of maintaining forested landscapes. If forest cover is removed from a site successful forest regeneration, including reforestation, is to be achieved in a timely manner. One method to gauge the success of forest renewal is tracking the proportion of harvest area successfully regenerated within a specific period of time.

Reforestation success is more than simply regenerating a disturbed area to a forested area. The indicator should examine the proportion of stands regenerated to the preferred forest type (as outlined in the silvicultural prescription) versus those simply regenerated to an acceptable forest

type. Harvested areas should be regenerated promptly using tree species ecologically suited to the site. A number of tools and guides are available to assist forest managers in choosing suitable tree species. Regenerating stands to the preferred forest type is crucial to achieving the desired future forest condition.

The core indicators from Element 1.1 (see Clause 6.3.1.3) are also relevant to maintain forest condition and productivity. Maintenance of the distribution of ecosystem types, forest types, and forest ages within the range of natural variation that can occur through time and across the DFA landscape helps to ensure that the DFA can withstand disturbance introduced by harvesting or other activities. Regeneration success should be estimated in the context of maintaining this range of natural variation.

A sustainably managed forest will also be better prepared for climate change. Organizations might want to discuss the role of proactive climate change adaptation strategies, such as assisted migration and related genetic research, which would allow the introduction of tree populations that are better adapted to future conditions. Research throughout Canada has developed protocols and standards guiding the expansion of current seed zones based on long-term provenance tests and climate modelling. Where similar information exists for the DFA, discussions on introducing new genetic material may be relevant.

Forest ecosystem productivity can be interpreted to mean both net primary production (NPP) and forest (i.e., wood) productivity. This element focuses on wood productivity or the production of wood biomass.

SFM should cover the extent of forest in a landscape, including encouraging additions to the forest ecosystems and discouraging deletions caused by humans. Such additions and deletions to the forest area should be tracked according to cause. It might be sufficient to track area changes to forest ecosystems according to a broad classification of causes (e.g., new infrastructure, industrial or residential development, impoundments or drainage works, agriculture, afforestation). There are circumstances where it can be inappropriate to foster additions to forest ecosystems. For example, the suppression of fires can lead to the in-growth of trees where they would not normally occur, and reduce the grassland and savannah conditions in western Canada.

For many people, sustainability involves limiting actual timber harvest to levels within the long-term capability of the forest to grow wood. To track this, managers need data on both harvest levels and long-term production capability to make proportional calculations. In practice, only the actual harvest level can be physically measured. The amount of wood that can be produced in perpetuity from a forest is a theoretical calculation that depends not only on the inherent wood-growing capacity of the forest ecosystem but also on the kinds and intensities of management inputs (e.g., silvicultural treatments). Because the latter inputs are under human control, a forest can have a wide range of potential long-term sustainable wood harvest levels. The organization and interested parties should develop a mutual understanding of how long-term sustainable harvest levels are to be calculated. The actual annual allowable harvest levels are determined or approved by each province using a range of analytical tools and consideration of socio-economic factors. These determinations are used by forest managers to ensure that

harvest levels are sustainable over the long term.

As a precaution, managers might wish to ensure that, over time, wood harvest levels are maintained at or below the calculated long-term sustainable level. However, for a variety of reasons, it might be sensible to harvest above the long-term sustainable level for a few years. These include

- salvaging harvests as a result of insect infestations;
- attempting to accelerate changes in forest composition toward more natural states; and
- correcting undesirable age-class imbalances, such as an over-abundance of declining stands caused by the suppression of natural disturbances. It should be recognized that all forest ages and conditions can deliver valuable ecological services.

A.6.3.3 Criterion 3 — Soil and water

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.3.*

Soil is the foundation of forest ecosystems and the main source of nutrients for all plant species. Most of the fine roots of trees, which are responsible for nutrient uptake, exist in the top 20 cm of the soil. It is therefore vital to keep soil in place and to disturb it as little as possible. A common approach is the implementation of best management practices (BMPs), established on the basis of substantial field experience and targeted research. Soil-related BMPs address topics such as appropriate kinds of machine traffic on sensitive sites, appropriate seasons for field operations, and guidelines for the sustainable removal of biomass. Even with careful use of BMPs, some sites can suffer severe soil disturbance (e.g., due to machine operations). In such cases, managers might need to take actions to rehabilitate sites.

Fresh water is considered one of the most precious natural resources in the world today. Much of Canada's fresh water moves through forest ecosystems before entering rivers and streams, and is found in wetlands such as swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. These wetlands and water bodies are not only key habitats for all aquatic organisms, but are often relied on as sources of domestic (potable) water.

Forest management activities, including infrastructure development (e.g., skid trails, roads, bridges), can have a profound influence on both soil and water quantity/quality. Forest managers should minimize any adverse impacts of these activities.

A.6.3.3.3 Element 3.1 — Soil quality and quantity

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.3.3.*

Maintaining soil quality and quantity involves implementing management strategies to minimize and mitigate soil disturbance. Measuring soil conditions, particularly chemical and physical properties, might be feasible at a specific site, but impractical across entire working forests. Established research may be used to identify the links between certain kinds of soil-related forest practices and soil conditions, and forest managers can control their practices accordingly. When monitoring operations such as harvesting and infrastructure construction (roads, bridges, landings, etc.) reveal that soil disturbances (e.g., erosion, rutting, displacement, slumping) exceed locally defined threshold levels, appropriate mitigation efforts should be implemented.

Deadwood is an important component of a healthy forest ecosystem. While live trees can be blown down and die, often trees die standing. These standing dead trees, or snags, serve as important habitat for a wide range of decomposing organisms, as well as cavity-nesting species such as woodpeckers. Coarse woody material includes both downed woody material and standing trees that have been left to allow the woody material to decompose, resulting in organic matter that eventually becomes part of the soil. Downed woody material can be managed by leaving both dead and live trees, as well as downed logs, whenever timber is harvested.

A.6.3.3.4 Element 3.2 — Water quality and quantity

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.3.4*

It is important to understand the risk to water quality and quantity associated with stand-replacing disturbances (human and natural-caused) in a defined watershed or broad water-management area. The effects due to disturbances are normally highest in the initial post-disturbance years and diminish over time as regenerating forest cover is established. The critical threshold at which the disturbance begins to affect water values varies according to a number of factors, including topography, soil properties, vegetation types, and climate. When the extent of the disturbed area approaches threshold levels, appropriate mitigation strategies are necessary. This is particularly important in watersheds such as those used for potable water or important for fish populations.

Forest ecosystem conditions at the watershed level can have a strong influence on water quality and quantity in rivers, lakes, and wetland systems. Forest ecosystems subject to stand-replacing disturbances such as fire, windthrow, or clear-cutting can temporarily lose their ability to moderate water flows associated with large rainfalls and snowfalls. These water flows include both overland flow and the sub-surface flows associated with groundwater recharge and discharge. To maintain water quality and quantity forest managers may need to restrict, to the degree possible, the proportion of a watershed's forest that has recently experienced stand-replacing disturbances. This also helps ensure that peak flow thresholds are not exceeded due to management actions. The expected increase in the intensity and frequency of hydrological events due to climate change may alter the historical condition of water bodies and features in a forest management area which could affect water quality and quantity in the watershed.

Wetlands are a component of forest ecosystems and play a pivotal role in regulating local and regional forest hydrology and serving as both a source and sink for water and nutrients.

The appropriate scale for measuring the proportion of a watershed's forests that has been recently disturbed differs according to region and conditions. If the order or size of watershed used is too large, disturbance effects will be unmeasurable or diminished by scale. Similarly, if the watershed order or size is too small, the effect of the disturbance will be exaggerated inappropriately by the scale. Watershed features such as slope or soil texture vary, as does the length of time for stands to recover, and these also affect the impact of disturbance on water flows. Engaging experts who are familiar with local or regional conditions is important

when defining the appropriate size of watershed or water management area, critical thresholds, and appropriate mitigation strategies.

Because an organization has little control over natural disturbances, it might be appropriate to distinguish between natural disturbances and the subsequent forest operations when reporting on the proportion of recent disturbances in a watershed.

There are many aspects of forest management activities including infrastructure construction (roads, bridges, landings, etc.) that may affect water quality and quantity and each of these activities may have immediate or long-term effects. Direct measurements of water quality and quantity are largely unfeasible across entire working forests. Established research on the effects of certain field practices on local water quality and flows have been used to establish regulations and guidelines to control field practices. These regulations and guidelines address such topics as fish habitat, stream crossings, and riparian areas. Forest planning and operational strategies may be guided by best management practices to minimize and mitigate impacts to water quality and quantity. Having detailed maps of surface water and wetland systems can help identify areas within a management area where certain planning, avoidance and mitigation strategies might be required.

A.6.3.4 Criterion 4 — Role in global ecological cycles

Note: This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.4.

The role of forest management and the global carbon cycle can consider two aspects, (1) the generation of carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels by heavy equipment conducting forest operations and (2) the role of forests and forest products to capture carbon dioxide emissions through carbon sequestration.

Greenhouse gas emissions (which include carbon dioxide) are the cause of climate change and in forest management are produced during various phases of forest operations (harvesting, transportation, road construction and maintenance, etc.). Forest managers can integrate practices to mitigate climate change through the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions in forest operations and through the management of the carbon sequestration of the forests and associated ecosystems in the DFA.

Carbon dioxide emissions, the primary component of GHG emissions, are produced through the burning of fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are the primary fuels for the heavy equipment and vehicles used in support of conducting forest operations. The requirement to identify and track GHG emissions through industrial processes, in which forest management would be considered, is of increasing focus as governments identify programmes and incentives to meet national and international GHG emission reduction targets.

In turn, the ability of the forest to sequester and store carbon, thereby removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, is a consideration, and management within the DFA contributes to the global carbon cycle. This can be addressed through a variety of practices such as prompt reforestation, high-levels of fibre utilization, and through the use of forest products as replacements for other GHG intense products.

A.6.3.4.3 Element 4.1 — Carbon uptake and storage

Note: This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.4.3.

Forests and associated ecosystems, such as wetlands, have great potential to sequester and store carbon from the atmosphere. Given the importance of the carbon-storage potential of forests, managers should recognize the imperative of keeping forest lands in vigorous tree growth at all times. This

includes ensuring prompt tree regeneration following disturbances such as timber harvests and natural disturbances such as wildfires and insect outbreaks. It also includes converting the smallest possible amount of forest land to non-forest land during forest operations (e.g., minimizing roads and landings). Where possible and ecologically suitable, it can also mean converting non-forest land to forest land by establishing trees — a process known as afforestation. A common example of afforestation is planting trees on abandoned farm fields.

Forest carbon has become a key SFM value, especially in light of Canada’s international commitment to lower its net carbon dioxide emissions to the atmosphere. Models for calculating a forest carbon budget (e.g., the Canadian Forest Service’s Carbon Budget Model of the Canadian Forest Sector [CBM-CFS3]) have become widely available and are readily linked to models commonly used for forecasting forest structures and potential wood supplies. Their use in forest planning can indicate whether a specific forest is expected to be a net carbon source or sink over the period normally used for wood-supply forecasts. In some cases, it can be advisable for the organization to look beyond the DFA and identify the carbon budget using existing data calculated over a broader scale (e.g., from provincial government initiatives devoted to calculating forest carbon budgets).

Two important considerations for determining the scope of carbon-budget analysis are

- whether the fate of timber harvested from the DFA is tracked as part of carbon-budget modelling; and
- whether and how carbon dioxide emissions from forest operations are identified and tracked.

A.6.3.4.4 Element 4.2 — Forest conversion and Afforestation

Note: This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.4.4.

Notwithstanding the special circumstances in which forests might not be naturally occurring ecosystems (see Clause A.6.3.2.3), it is good for the global carbon cycle to have land in forest cover across its natural range. Forests can be turned into other types of ecosystems through a variety of activities, including those that relate directly to SFM (e.g., building roads and landings) and those outside the influence of forest managers (e.g., urban and industrial developments, public infrastructure development, utility corridors, mining or resource extraction). Forest conversion unrelated to forest management, and within the control of the forest manager, will be limited to less than 5% of forest type within the certified area and will only occur under justified circumstances. Forest managers should reduce, as much as possible, the amount of area they convert to non-forest ecosystems and should discourage unwarranted forest land conversions that are beyond their control. Forest Conversion to other types of landuse is considered justified in circumstances where the conversion:

- does not result in the conversion of forest lands to agriculture use;
- is in compliance with federal, provincial/ territorial and regional policies and legislation applicable to land use and forest management and consistent with land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority including consultation with Indigenous Peoples and affected stakeholders;
- does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other sensitive or protected areas;
- does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas;
- does not destroy or significantly negatively affect areas of high conservation value or high carbon stock; and
- Makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic and social benefits.

Examples of justified forest conversion:

- Infrastructure development, converting a small section of forest for the expansion of a highway, where it supports public transportation, social objectives and economic growth;
- Community and Indigenous-led Land Use – Indigenous community in Northern Ontario converts a portion of forest for housing, cultural sites or sustainable economic projects (e.g., eco-tourism), with alignment with land-use agreements; or
- Forest health and fire risk reduction- in areas heavily affected by mountain pine beetle infestation in BC or wildfire-prone forests in Alberta, selective conversion to firebreaks or mixed-use landscapes that help protect broader forest ecosystems and nearby communities.

In Canada, the conversion of severely degraded forests to forest plantations is relatively uncommon compared to other parts of the world. Canada's forest management policies prioritize natural regeneration and sustainable forestry practices over large-scale forest plantations. However, there are some instances where degraded forests, especially in areas impacted by wildfires, insect outbreaks, or industrial activities, are replanted with commercial tree species to accelerate recovery. Where forest plantations are considered, inclusion of economic, ecological, social and/or cultural values shall be included, and shall take place in circumstances where the conversion:

- a) is in compliance with national and regional policy and legislation applicable for land use and forest management and is a result of national or regional land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority; and
- b) is established based on a decision-making basis where local Indigenous Peoples and affected stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to the decision-making on conversion through transparent and participatory consultation processes; and
- c) has a positive impact on long-term carbon sequestration capacity of forest vegetation; and
- d) does not have negative impacts on ecologically important forest areas, culturally and socially significant areas, or other protected areas; and
- e) safeguards protective functions of forests for society and other regulating or supporting ecosystem services; and
- f) safeguards socio-economic functions of forests, including the recreational function and aesthetic values of forests and other cultural services; and
- g) has a land history providing evidence that the degradation is not the consequence of deliberate poor forest management practices; and
- h) is based on credible evidence demonstrating that the area is neither recovered nor in the process of recovery.

In Canada's natural forest, post-harvest regeneration is often accomplished by the planting of site-adapted species of native trees and results in a stand with ecological characteristics consistent with those of the surrounding forest. Planted stands are managed for multiple values and almost always include a considerable component of naturally regenerated trees of a variety of species. Forest plantations and stands of introduced species in the Canadian context are rare. Where they may exist, they are often established through afforestation of unused marginal agricultural land. Due to the public ownership model in Canada, afforestation is generally initiated by government agencies.

Afforestation should only occur where it does not harm ecologically important non—forest ecosystems. In Canada, this is particularly relevant to landscapes such as grasslands, wetlands, peatlands, and alpine meadows. Afforestation of non –forest ecosystems is considered justified where the afforestation:

- Is in compliance with federal and provincial/ territorial and regional polices and legislation applicable to land use and forest management and consistent with land-use planning governed by a governmental or other official authority including consultation with Indigenous Peoples and affected stakeholders;
- Is established based on a decision-making basis where Indigenous Peoples and affected stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to the decision making on conversion through transparent and participatory consultation processes;
- does not have negative impacts on threatened (including vulnerable, rare or endangered) non-forest ecosystems, culturally and socially significant areas, important habitats of threatened species or other protected areas;
- Entails a small proportion of the ecologically important non-forest ecosystem managed by an organization;
- Does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock; and
- Makes a contribution to long-term conservation, economic and social benefits.

Examples of justified afforestation:

- Reclaiming degraded land – Planting trees on abandoned agricultural lands, former industrial sites like mines or gravel pits, re-habilitated forest roads, or areas affected by landslides or erosion i.e., to improve biodiversity and restore ecosystem functions;
- Erosion and watershed protection – planting trees in areas prone to soil erosion or along riverbanks to stabilize the land and improve water quality and stream bank integrity;
- Restoring forest ecosystems – in areas historically lost due to human activities, such as parts of the prairies where forests existed prior to extensive agricultural conversion, afforestation may be justified to improve biodiversity and ecosystem functions; or
- Enhancing Carbon sequestration in suitable areas – establishing forests in non-sensitive areas as part of climate mitigation efforts, provided they do not replace natural grasslands or wetlands.

A.6.3.5 Criterion 5 — Economic and social benefits

A.6.3.5.3 Element 5.1 — Timber and non-timber benefits

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.5.3.*

During the development of forest management plans, it is important to consider a variety of social and ecological benefits produced in the DFA. The uses and benefits considered should include, but not be restricted to, the following timber and non-timber resources:

- outdoor activities;
- timber and forest cover;
- hunting, fishing, gathering and trapping activities;
- ecotourism;
- cultural and heritage resources;
- ecological goods and services, and
- other non-timber forest resources and products.

In the rare instance where the organization has the authority for the harvest of non-timber forest products, the organization should ensure that harvesting is done in a sustainable manner.

A.6.3.5.4 Element 5.2 — Communities and sustainability

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.5.4.*

Economically and socially diverse communities, including Aboriginal communities, are more sustainable.

While an organization is not expected to financially support community diversity, it should support efforts to increase diversity and avoid preventing the establishment of other enterprises. Co-operation with other forest-dependent businesses and forest users might include initiatives such as coordinating the timing of activities to accommodate multiple uses, and making resource information available to other users.

Forests represent not only a return on investment (measured in monetary and non-monetary terms) but also a source of various benefits for DFA-related workers, contractors, and others; stability and opportunities for communities; and revenue for local, provincial, and federal governments. Through Indigenous and public participation processes and the implementation of SFM, the organization should address:

- communities and sustainability, including
 - diversification of opportunities, especially for members of underrepresented groups (e.g., Indigenous peoples, women, visible minorities, youth);
 - investment in the community and its facilities, for example through educational opportunities to provide youth with skills necessary to join the workforce, partnerships or philanthropic activities; and
 - opportunities for direct and indirect employment both in the DFA and within the community; and
- fair distribution of benefits and costs, including
 - fair and reasonable wages for DFA-related workers, as established by prevailing industry collective agreements or market rates;
 - fair return on investment to the organization and to DFA contractors;
 - local taxation as determined by applicable assessment and appeals procedures; and
 - revenues to the Crown and other landowners as determined by applicable stumpage or market rates.

A.6.3.6 Criterion 6 — Society's responsibility

A.6.3.6.2 Element 6.1 — Fair and effective decision-making

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.6.2.*

A mechanism such as a survey may be used to determine participant satisfaction with the public participation process, particularly when participants understand that consensus-based decision-making is used to incorporate all interests. The ability of people to share information, discuss and solve problems, and set and meet objectives is key to achieving and maintaining meaningful participation. Many types of initiatives (e.g., two-way information exchanges, educational opportunities) can be used to help promote meaningful participation.

Information on issues of public concern, as well as educational opportunities, should be made available to Indigenous peoples, public advisory groups, and the public in general. The sharing of learnings and opinions contributes to balanced, more acceptable plans and decisions.

A.6.3.6.3 Element 6.2 — Safety

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.6.3.*

The organization integrates safety as an overriding priority into all its day-to-day operations and workers are encouraged to take shared responsibility for their safety, the safety of their co-workers, and the safety of the public that they may interact with. Workers' commitment to safety should be encouraged and recognized, enabling them to raise concerns with co-workers and employers without reprimand.

A.6.3.7 Criterion 7 — Indigenous relations

A.6.3.7.2 Element 7.1 — Aboriginal and treaty rights

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 6.3.7.2.*

Aboriginal peoples in Canada have unique rights and ownership related to lands and resources. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, specifically recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. In section 35, the term "aboriginal peoples of Canada" refers to the First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada. Aboriginal rights refer to practices, traditions, and customs that distinguish the unique culture of each Nation and were practices prior to European contact. Aboriginal rights vary from group to group depending on the customs, practices, and traditions that have formed part of their distinct cultures (Government of Canada). Aboriginal title refers to the inherent Aboriginal right to land or a territory.

Treaty rights are recognized in agreements between Aboriginal peoples of Canada and the Crown (government) that recognize certain rights to lands and resources.

Indigenous rights are outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and inherent to Indigenous peoples everywhere in the world. Canada has signed the UNDRIP.

Although Indigenous is an accepted term now used to refer to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, Aboriginal rights is often referred to because it is the term used in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, and is consistent with language in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples require engagement and consultation regarding forest management decisions and incorporation of Indigenous values into forest management.

Some examples of the rights that section 35 of the Constitution Act has been found to protect include hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, sacred and spiritual practices, and title. SFM requirements are not in any way intended to define, limit, interpret, or prejudice ongoing or future discussions and negotiations regarding these legal rights and do not stipulate how to deal with Aboriginal title and rights, and treaty rights.

The foundation for healthy Indigenous relationships is based on respecting Aboriginal title and rights while promoting a consensus-based process for forest management decision-making.

A consensus-based process strives for decision-making based on consent from Indigenous Nations, where the aim is to come up with proposals that work for everyone, and everyone's input is heard and considered.

This Standard upholds current legal requirements, which continue to evolve. However, this Standard goes beyond current legal compliance and includes other methods of respecting Aboriginal title and rights, such as

- making efforts to understand Aboriginal rights;
- seeking acceptance of forest management plans on the basis of Indigenous communities having a clear understanding of the plans;
- identification of and respect for Indigenous forest values and uses;
- recognition of Indigenous peoples' expertise;
- use of Indigenous knowledge; and
- development of meaningful and effective working relationships with Indigenous peoples, which are integral components of involving Indigenous communities in the development of forest management plans.

It is important for the organization to have an understanding of Aboriginal title and rights, and treaty rights, as well as the Indigenous interests and values that relate to the DFA. Engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities, through individuals and community representatives and leaders, and Indigenous forestry businesses results in contributions to forest management and operating plans as well as supporting meaningful relationships.

The organization should also be aware that the Indigenous interests or rights of one group (community or Nation) can be different than those of another. Several organizations that have applied this Standard have benefited from cross-cultural training and shared community experiences with Indigenous peoples.

A.6.3.7.3 Element 7.2 — Respect for Indigenous forest values, knowledge, and uses

Note: *This commentary is related to 6.3.7.3.*

Organizations are also required to make special efforts to obtain Indigenous participation (see Clause 5.2). A meaningful relationship might include:

- a process for engagement and information exchange that already exists or is jointly developed between the organization and Indigenous governments, individuals, or communities;
- encouragement of other organizations (such as governmental agencies) to provide capacity and participation opportunities for Indigenous communities;
- the use of Indigenous knowledge in planning and management of forest lands and resources, while supporting and assisting in the protection of this knowledge;
- encouraging willing Indigenous communities to identify important cultural resources, sites, and values for incorporation in management planning and operational prescriptions;
- planning based on the mutually agreeable incorporation of values and management of sites and values;
- the tracking and fulfillment of agreements and commitments made between the organization and Indigenous communities; and
- understanding the importance of Indigenous forestry businesses (both timber and non-timber resources) to the communities and the opportunities inherent to all parties from the development of business relationships.

Agreements based on information sharing and engagement should encourage the dissemination and use of information, respect confidentiality, and specify the parameters for the release of information. In order to address the issues regarding the sharing of confidential and sensitive information from Indigenous communities, organizations are encouraged to develop information-sharing agreements, such as partnership agreements and memoranda of understanding that outline ways to protect this information.

It is recognized that the evidence of understanding and the level of support by companies varies across the country due to the large variety of opportunities, circumstances, and interest amongst Indigenous

communities. The expectation is that all companies will reach out in a manner that indicates an evolving level of effort and innovative approaches to involvement that are respectful of the local Aboriginal communities' wishes.

In order to effectively incorporate Indigenous rights and interests into SFM plans, a process should be established to identify, address, and protect Indigenous rights, uses, cultural resources, and values. Examples of management and protection activities might include management and/or protection of riparian areas and wetlands or establishment of wildlife corridors.

A.7 SFM system requirements

A.7.1 General

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.1.*

SFM system requirements are intended to ensure that an infrastructure (including resources, processes, and controls) that enables an organization to deliver on the overall goal of SFM in the DFA is established and maintained. System requirements are the delivery mechanism of SFM.

The organization is required to establish SFM values, objectives, indicators, and targets for all SFM elements (see Clause 6.3) and develop an SFM plan that describes the methods by which the targets are to be achieved in the DFA. The organization needs to put in place the resources, processes, and controls necessary to ensure successful implementation of the SFM plan. Progress can be assessed by the regular measurement and assessment of performance against the SFM requirements, including the effects on the forest. Through monitoring, measurement, and management review, the organization can report on its progress and demonstrate that **corrective actions** are taken in the event of any unplanned variances.

A.7.2 SFM policy

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.2.*

The ongoing commitment and leadership of top management are crucial. An early step in developing or improving an SFM system is obtaining a commitment to the SFM system from the top management of the organization that is responsible for managing the DFA. The responsibility for setting and approving the SFM policy normally rests with the organization's top management, while other levels of management might be responsible for implementing policy and suggesting modifications.

An SFM policy establishes an overall sense of direction for the sustainable management of the DFA and sets out the principles of action for an organization. It also establishes the level of responsibility and performance required of the organization, against which all subsequent actions will be measured. The SFM policy statement is the yardstick for the organization managing the DFA. Therefore, there is a requirement for the policy to be documented, communicated both internally and externally, and readily available to any interested party.

The SFM policy statement should be reviewed periodically as part of the continual improvement process and modified, where appropriate, to reflect changing circumstances and the results of implementing the SFM requirements.

Canada is a signatory to many international agreements and conventions which may impact or influence the SFM plan, including agreements issued by the International Labour Organization, Convention on Biological Diversity, UNDRIP and others. Management should consider these as part of the SFM plan. It is also important to follow and understand scientific and technological advances that may be used to improve SFM and incorporate them into the plan over time.

A.7.3 Planning

A.7.3.1 Defined forest area

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.3.1.*

One of the first steps in meeting the SFM requirements is to establish the geographical boundaries of the DFA to be managed under the SFM requirements. The DFA may be privately or publicly owned land, or a combination of both.

The SFM requirements are to be addressed for the entire DFA. This is a primary consideration in determining the extent of the DFA and the organizations or individuals needed to meet the SFM requirements. There is no specified minimum or maximum size for a DFA: it can range from a few hectares to more than a million hectares, and can be a combination of smaller units or even a combination of non-contiguous operating areas. The DFA may consist of one or more analysis units used to determine objectives, indicators, and targets for each SFM element.

In the case of non-contiguous or overlapping areas, all parties needed to address the SFM elements for the DFA should consider the issues associated with isolated parcels and common areas within the overall plan for sustainability of the DFA (see Clause 7.3.2).

Changes to the geographic extent of the DFA may be made over time without affecting certification, provided that the impacts of the changes are insignificant. Changes to a DFA can result from a variety of circumstances. For example, under volume-based tenure, the operating areas of the organizations that make up the applicant can vary from year to year, and this can influence the geographic extent of the DFA. In this case, historical operating areas of volume-based tenures may be included in the DFA. Where owners or managers of small, non-contiguous parcels of land come together to form the

applicant, the addition of new areas to the DFA or the deletion of existing areas from the DFA may occur according to the interests of participants. Even in cases of area-based tenure, factors can arise that result in modifications to the boundaries of a DFA. In all cases, these changes should be documented. Slight changes to a DFA, with no apparent impact on values, objectives, indicators, and targets, might not require changes to the methods of meeting the SFM requirements of the SFM plan.

The organization can be subject to a range of rights and responsibilities related to its operations in the DFA, depending on the pattern of land ownership and the types of activities that are carried out in the DFA. These rights and responsibilities will generally be set out in agreements between the landowner (e.g., the government in the case of public lands) and the organization. There can be other parties

in the DFA in addition to the applicant, but whose legal rights and responsibilities are respected by the organization. These rights and responsibilities, which include all the existing legislative and policy responsibilities assumed and executed by various government agencies, should be documented.

Inventories and maps to support the SFM plan, including identification and mapping of forest resources with primary protective functions, can be done by the organization or by government agencies, or a combination of both, however they shall be incorporated into the organization's plans and procedures. In Canada, federal and provincial/ territorial legislation combined with strategic governmental planning ensures that areas providing essential protective functions—such as water catchments, biodiversity hotspots, terrain stability, and culturally significant landscapes—are systematically mapped and integrated into forest management plans. Under frameworks like the Canadian Forest Act and various provincial regulations (e.g., Ontario's Forest Management Planning Manual & Forest Conservation Act

and the BC Forest and Range Practices Act), these critical areas are identified and safeguarded through specific land use designations (e.g., conservation reserves, protected areas or special management areas), environmental assessments, public consultations, and adaptive management practices. This integrated approach ensures that operations not only avoid degrading these functions but actively work to maintain or enhance them.

A.7.3.2 Defined responsibilities

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.3.2.*

Certification is specific to the DFA to which the SFM requirements are applied. Any combination of owners and managers can constitute the applicant, and any combination of public land and private land can constitute a DFA, provided that the SFM requirements of this Standard can be met.

Depending on the pattern of land ownership and the nature of the relationship between governments and licensees or users on public land, there will likely be shared responsibilities for managing forest values in a DFA. These responsibilities should be defined. Where responsibilities related to any of the SFM elements are shared among organizations or individuals, it might be necessary to consider these organizations for inclusion as part of the applicant. An open invitation to participate in meeting the SFM requirements should be provided to those with management responsibilities.

There can be individuals or organizations, in the forest sector or other resource sectors (e.g., mineral or oil/gas) and operating inside or outside the boundaries of the DFA, whose activities can have a significant impact on the ability of the organization to achieve SFM targets within the DFA. Such individuals or organizations should be invited to participate in the process. If they are not interested in participating or are not necessary for the achievement of the SFM elements, the organization may proceed without their involvement provided that the objectives and targets can still be achieved. The organization should try to anticipate the impacts of these actions in the development of SFM targets, and to co-operate with such individuals or organizations to minimize potential negative impacts.

Attempts made to include other organizations, as well as the reasons given for their participation or non-participation, should be documented.

The role of government

Many DFAs in Canada are situated on public land where governments are responsible for the forest values specified in the SFM elements; however, participation in meeting the SFM requirements cannot be made mandatory. This Standard is voluntary and non-regulatory, and meeting the SFM requirements is not dependent on government involvement.

Volume-based tenure

SFM requirements are intended to achieve performance targets in a DFA, and their implementation requires a significant level of co-operation among organizations operating on volume-based tenures. In such circumstances, individual organizations are unlikely to have sufficient responsibility and control to ensure that all SFM elements are addressed in the DFA. Organizations that operate on a volume-based tenure should determine the extent of their responsibilities related to implementing the SFM requirements in the DFA and identify the responsibilities of other organizations operating in the same area. Each organization within the DFA may have its own “corporate personality” in the form of vision, mission, policy statements, and operating procedures, provided that they meet the requirements of this Standard. All organizations seeking or maintaining certification under this Standard within the DFA, however, should agree to the same SFM targets for the DFA and should have the resources, processes, and controls in place to ensure that they are met.

Because the implementation of the SFM requirements is voluntary and non-regulatory, there might be cases where individuals or organizations with management responsibilities are not interested in participating or not necessary for the achievement of SFM elements. This does not preclude successful certification to this Standard for the individuals or organizations that are interested in proceeding; it is not necessary for all individuals or organizations with management responsibility to be involved, provided that the operations of those parties not participating do not prevent the applicant from meeting its SFM targets in the DFA.

A.7.3.3 Rights and regulations

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.3.3.*

Rights and tenure within the DFA

Property rights and land tenure arrangements will be clearly defined and documented for the relevant forest area. In addition, legal and traditional rights related to the forest land shall be clarified, recognized, and respected.

The organization can be subject to a range of rights and responsibilities, in addition to Aboriginal title and rights, and treaty rights, related to its operations in the DFA and in accordance with the pattern of land ownership and the types of activities carried out in the DFA. These rights and responsibilities are generally set out in agreements between the landowner (e.g., the government in the case of public lands) and the organization. There can be other parties in the DFA that are not part of the applicant but whose legal rights and responsibilities should be respected by the organization. These rights include but are not limited to:

- guide outfitters licences/certificates;
- angling guide licences;
- registered traplines and trapping licences;
- easements and covenants;
- public and private rights-of-way;
- statutory tenures (e.g., licences, permits), including mineral exploration and development;
- customarily or legally permitted uses of public land for gathering of non-timber forest products, hunting, fishing, etc.;
- rights or obligations related to construction, rehabilitation, or maintenance of trails or other recreation facilities;
- rights to use public footpaths or roads (e.g., access to well-known landmarks, features, or viewpoints);
- water-use rights and obligations (licensed and unlicensed); and
- common-law rights of riparian owners.

Such rights and responsibilities should be documented. They include all the existing legislative and policy responsibilities assumed and executed by various government agencies.

Legal requirements within DFA

The organization should establish and maintain a list of all legal requirements pertaining to the DFA and be able to demonstrate that it is aware of legal requirements and has a system to ensure legal compliance. Specific legal requirements can be related to various aspects of the organization's forestry activity, including

- the activity (e.g., road construction, resource management, authorizations, licences and permits);
- the organization's products or services; and
- monitoring, measurement, and reporting.

Some issues that should be considered (for legal and other requirements) are the organization's access to and identification of relevant requirements, tracking changes to requirements, and communication of relevant information on requirements to personnel, contractors, and subcontractors.

Several sources can be used to identify legal requirements and ongoing changes, including company legal departments, all levels of government, industry associations or groups, commercial databases, and professional services.

Complying with government-specified requirements alone may not be sufficient to demonstrate SFM on a DFA. SFM plan targets may exceed government requirements in certain circumstances.

Compliance with Legislation

Organizations implementing the **Standard** must comply with a multi-tiered regulatory framework that includes international agreements, federal, provincial/territorial, and local legislation, regarding forest management practices, biodiversity, climate action, Indigenous rights, environmental protection, disposal of wastes and hazardous material, wildlife and species at risk conservation, labor laws, anti-corruption measures and other relevant legislation.

To meet **SFM requirements**, organizations must identify and implement compliance with laws and regulations at multiple levels:

International agreements govern Forestry operations, for example:

- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
- Canada-U.S. Softwood Lumber Agreement

Federal Legislation (Applicable Across Canada): certain aspects of forestry and environmental protection are regulated nationally, particularly those that cross provincial boundaries, for example:

- Species at Risk Act (SARA) – Protection of endangered species and their habitat.
- Migratory Birds Convention Act – Protection of migratory birds and their nests.
- Fisheries Act – Protection of fish, fish habitat, and water quality.
- Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) – Management of pollutants and toxic substances.
- Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act - governs the movement of hazardous materials
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System – requirements for proper labeling and safety data sheets for hazardous materials
- Canada Labour Code – Governs employment standards and occupational health and safety.
- Criminal Code of Canada and Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act – examples of anti-corruption laws that apply to businesses, government officials, and organizations operating domestically and internationally.

Federal Resources: Natural Resources Canada – Forest Laws and Regulations

Provincial and Territorial Legislation: Forest management is primarily regulated at the provincial and territorial level. Each province/territory has its own Forest Act or equivalent, and varying land use policies, environmental regulations, and compliance monitoring systems. Key areas of regulation include:

- Forest resource allocation (tenures, permits, and licensing).
- Operational planning requirements (e.g., forest management plans, public consultation).
- Environmental standards for logging, water protection, and reforestation.
- Waste control and hazardous materials (e.g., Environmental Management Act in British Columbia, Waste Control Regulation in Alberta, Environmental Protection Act in Ontario, Regulation Respecting Hazardous Materials in Quebec, etc.),
- Protection of species and sensitive ecosystems (e.g., respective Wildlife Acts in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, Endangered Species Act in Ontario, Species at Risk Act in New Brunswick, Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act in Newfoundland & Labrador, Endangered Species Act in Nova Scotia, PEI Environmental Protection Act, etc..)
- Fire prevention and pest management.
- Labor laws and occupational health and safety regulations.

Regional and Locally Applicable Legislation

In addition to federal and provincial/ territorial laws, organizations must assess smaller-scale regulatory instruments, including:

- Higher Level Planning that is legally enforceable when incorporated into provincial regulations, for example through Land Use Orders (LUOs) or objectives set under the Government Actions Regulation (GAR) in British Columbia. Vancouver Island Land Use Plan is an example of a regional legal framework for balancing forest use and conservation.
- Land Use Orders (LUOs) – Set specific requirements on forestry activities in designated areas (e.g., Great Bear Rainforest Agreements and Haida Gwaii Land Use Objectives Order).
- Indigenous Land Agreements – Forestry operations must comply with legal agreements and land-use rights.
- Municipal Bylaws – Some municipalities regulate forest practices within their boundaries.
- Community Watershed Designations: Municipalities may have additional restrictions on forest activities affecting water supplies.

Although it is a primary responsibility of the Government to ensure protection of forests against illegal activities of third parties, forest companies and organizations operating in Canada have a legal and ethical responsibility to prevent, detect, and report unauthorized and illegal activities by third parties (e.g., illegal logging, poaching, land encroachment).

Rights of workers to organize

Organizations must respect legal and constitutional rights, including labor rights outlined in international agreements that Canada has agreed to, such as the right to join unions and organize. This also includes ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and compliance with Canadian labor laws and regulations. The right of DFA-related workers to organize and participate in collective bargaining are respected, including full recognition of unions and their representatives, as well as, outcomes of the negotiations with unions. The organization shall refrain from interference in legitimate union activities and organizing efforts.

DFA-related workers should have access to training and awareness programs related to SFM and be represented in the public participation process for the SFM plan.

Note: See also Elements 6.1 (Clause 6.3.6.2) and 6.2 (Clause 6.3.6.3).

Rights of equal opportunities, non-discrimination and freedom from workplace harassment

In Canada's forest industry, employers must follow laws that ensure equal opportunities, fair wages, and a safe, harassment-free workplace. The Canadian Human Rights Act and provincial human rights codes

prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, and other factors. The Employment Equity Act promotes diversity in federally regulated forestry jobs, while the Pay Equity Act ensures fair wages. Workplace safety, including protection from harassment and violence, is covered under the **Canada Labour Code (Part II)** for federal workplaces and provincial occupational health and safety laws (e.g., BC's Workers Compensation Act, Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act). Forestry employers must also comply with Employment Standards Acts in each province, which regulate wages, overtime, and working conditions.

Rights of private woodlot owners and landowners

The values of private woodlot owners should be addressed in the context of important public values. Private woodlot owners have acquired rights and responsibilities which are recognized by this Standard. While all SFM requirements apply regardless of ownership, this Standard recognizes that private landowners have the right to decide the objectives for their land and limit public access for certain activities.

A.7.3.4 Incorporation of Indigenous and public participation requirements

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.3.4.*

For an explanation of Indigenous and public participation requirements, see Clause 5 and Clause 7.3.4.

A.7.3.5 SFM plan

Note: *See Clause 7.3.5.*

An SFM plan will be developed for each DFA. SFM plans should cover a 20- to 25-year period and should be revised as necessary. The SFM plan is the principal vehicle for transforming the organization's commitments to SFM into actual actions in the forest. The SFM plan summarizes the current state of the DFA as well as the values, objectives, indicators, and targets of SFM developed through the Indigenous and public participation processes. The organization should consider the inclusion of a brief summary of the organization's operating environment, including the SFM plan linkages to higher level plans and other regulatory requirements. Such a summary would provide an understanding of the organization's planning and practices that goes beyond the information provided in the SFM plan or in a matrix of values, objectives, indicators, and targets developed through Indigenous and public participation processes. In the event that approved forest management plans and associated reports exist to satisfy regulatory requirements, the SFM plan may refer to these documents to satisfy the requirements of this Standard.

Organizations should ensure that the SFM plan not only contains the right information but also presents the information in a way that makes it readily understandable to interested parties. The complicated technical components of the planning process should be explained in terms of their essential components and implications. Organizations are encouraged to explore alternative forms of communication for SFM plans, including customary print-based media as well as digital options (e.g., websites, videos).

Because of the extended time frame of an SFM plan, specific details about what is to be accomplished in any given year might not be included. As a result, short-term plans may be developed. Short-term plans should clearly demonstrate how planned activities lead to the achievement of the SFM targets. One method is to include benchmarks, which represent intermediate milestones along the way to achieving a target.

A.7.4 Implementation and operation

A.7.4.1 Structure, responsibility, and resources

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.4.1.*

The capabilities and support required by an organization constantly evolve in response to changing requirements. To fulfill its SFM requirements, an organization should focus and align its people, systems, strategies, resources, and structure. The human resources, physical resources (e.g., facilities and equipment), and financial resources required to meet the SFM requirements (including the fulfillment of SFM targets) are to be defined and made available to all levels of the organization. The allocation of sufficient resources to ensure the success of the SFM system is a measure of the organization's commitment.

The organizations and individuals responsible for the implementation of each aspect of the SFM requirements are to be identified. General and specific responsibilities, authority, and accountability should be assigned to all persons whose activities influence the SFM requirements.

A.7.4.2 Competence, training, and knowledge

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.4.2.*

Top management has a key role to play in building awareness and motivating personnel by explaining the organization's commitment to SFM and communicating its commitment through the SFM policy. It is the actions of individual personnel, however, that transform the SFM requirements into an effective process, leading to satisfactory on-site performance.

The knowledge and skills necessary to achieve SFM should be identified. These should be considered in training, skills development, and ongoing education. Appropriate training should be provided to all personnel within the organization and to relevant contractors. Personnel and contractors will have sound knowledge of the methods and skills required to perform their tasks and should be aware of the impact of their activities on SFM. Education and training are needed to ensure that personnel and contractors have appropriate and current knowledge of regulatory requirements, internal standards, and the organization's policies and targets. The level of training will vary according to the task.

- Training programmes typically include
- identification of qualification requirements for personnel and tasks;
- identification of personnel and contractor training needs;
- development of a training plan to address defined needs;
- verification of conformance of the training programme to regulatory or organizational requirements;
- training of target personnel/contractor groups;
- documentation of training received; and
- evaluation of training received.

As a means to achieve continual improvement, the organization is required to monitor advances in SFM science and technology and incorporate them where and when applicable. The organization should also be engaged in the acquisition of knowledge about the DFA and SFM. This can be achieved through such activities as inventory data collection, gathering of conventional knowledge, and involvement in research.

A.7.4.3 Communication

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.4.3.*

The following communication and reporting issues should be considered:

- What is the process for communicating with DFA-related workers and contractors?
- What is the process for communicating with external interested parties?
- What is the process for communicating the organization's SFM policy and performance?
- How are the results from internal and external audits communicated to all appropriate people in the organization?
- What is the process for making the SFM policy available to the public?
- Is internal communication adequate to support continual improvement of the SFM?
- Communication includes establishing processes to report internally and, where desired, externally on the SFM activities of the organization in order to
 - demonstrate commitment to the SFM requirements;
 - deal with internal concerns and questions about the SFM requirements;
 - raise awareness of the Indigenous and public participation processes and the organization's SFM policy and plan (see Clause A.7.3.5 for information on the contents of the SFM plan); and
 - inform interested parties of the organization's progress in fulfilling the SFM requirements as appropriate and as required by this Standard.

Results from monitoring, measurement, performance checks, audits, and management reviews should be communicated to those within the organization who are responsible for delivering and managing these functions. In addition, the organization will likely need to develop a number of internal reports and schedules as part of the SFM requirements.

A.7.4.4 SFM documentation

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.4.4.*

The primary purpose of SFM documentation is to describe the methods of fulfilling the SFM requirements. Documentation also enables the evaluation of an organization's progress towards SFM. Effective documentation encourages awareness on the part of personnel and contractors of the requirements of the SFM plan. The nature of the documentation can vary depending on the size and complexity of the DFA and the organizations implementing the SFM requirements. Where SFM requirements are integrated with an organization's overall management systems, the SFM documentation may be integrated into existing documentation.

SFM system manual

Organizations may consider developing an SFM system manual to describe the methods of fulfilling each of the SFM requirements. Such a document would serve as a reference for the implementation and maintenance of the SFM requirements. The SFM system manual is different from the SFM plan, which focuses on performance requirements.

Documentation issues

The following documentation issues should be considered:

- How are documents and procedures identified, documented, communicated, and revised?
- Does the organization have a process for developing and maintaining documentation?
- How is SFM documentation integrated with existing documentation, where appropriate?
- How do personnel and contractors access the relevant documentation needed to fulfill their responsibilities and perform their job activities?

A.7.4.5 Document control

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.4.5.*

The purpose of documentation control is to ensure that the organization creates and maintains documents in a manner that is adequate to fulfill the requirements of this Standard.

A.7.4.6 Operational procedures and control

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.4.6.*

Implementation of the SFM requirements and the SFM plan is accomplished through the establishment and maintenance of operational procedures and controls. These are often referred to as best management practices, work instructions, standard operating procedures, etc. Such operational controls are designed to ensure that activities or tasks are completed in a systematic way with desired outcomes. Operational controls also increase the probability that legal requirements are met and allow for targeted training of new personnel and contractors. Operational controls should focus on operational specifications and thresholds that are easily and clearly understood by DFA-related workers.

In addition to safety management (see A.6.3.6.3) the scope of operational procedures and controls shall cover all activities where there is a risk of environmental impacts, or risk to sensitive ecological, cultural or social features.

An example of operational controls would be procedures for building and maintenance of adequate infrastructure such as roads, skid tracks and bridges. These features must be planned, established and maintained to ensure safe, efficient delivery of goods and services while minimizing negative impacts on the environment consistent with legal requirements as well as best management practices. In Canada, forestry legislation ensures that infrastructure is planned, built, and maintained in a way that supports efficient forestry operations protecting water, soil, wildlife and ensuring safe and effective transportation of forest products and people. These requirements are enforced at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels through regulations and forest management frameworks. For example, federal regulations such as the Fisheries Act, and Migratory Birds Convention Act prevent habitat destruction. Provincial and Territorial regulations have additional legislative requirements and / or permits for forestry road construction and maintenance. When the applicant comprises more than one organization, various operational procedures and controls may be used, provided that they enable each organization to meet the requirements of the SFM plan.

A.7.4.7 Emergency preparedness and response

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.4.7.*

Emergency plans and procedures are established to ensure that there will be an appropriate response to unexpected environmental emergencies or accidents. The organization should define the types of emergencies that could occur in the DFA and maintain appropriate response procedures. Emergencies may include fire and spills of hazardous material onto land or into water. Contingency plans should be developed for forest disturbances such as insect and disease outbreaks and blowdown.

Emergency procedures should take into account incidents arising, or likely to arise, as a consequence of both normal operating conditions and abnormal or unique operating conditions.

Emergency plans may include:

- a list of types of emergencies;

- identification of emergency organizations and responsibilities;
- a list of key personnel and their contact information;
- details of emergency services (e.g., fire control and spill management services);
- internal and external communication plans;
- actions taken in the event of different types of emergencies;
- information on hazardous materials, including each material's potential impact on the environment and measures to be taken in the event of accidental release;
- provisions for clean-up and remediation as necessary; and
- emergency response training plans and testing exercises.

A.7.5 Checking and corrective action

A.7.5.1 Monitoring and measurement

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.5.1.*

A true measure of success in implementing the SFM requirements is comparing the indicator conditions that evolve over time with those that were forecast, and then assessing the acceptability of any variances. The periodic assessment of indicator conditions is key in determining if values are being sustained and SFM targets are being achieved. This includes assessment of actual changes in the forest. Understanding the reasons for variances between the actual and forecast results is essential to continual improvement. Management strategies should be adapted accordingly.

Assessing values, objectives, indicators, and targets

SFM is always a work in progress. At each stage of SFM planning, the values, objectives, indicators, and targets should be examined for continuing quality and validity. Values and objectives can lose their validity as public expectations change. Through monitoring experience, some indicators might be deemed less useful and others more so. Management experience might show that previous targets were either easily met (resulting in more rigorous objectives) or impossible to meet (necessitating more realistic goals). Overall assessment of the quality and meaningfulness of the values, objectives, non-core indicators, and targets for the DFA should be carried out at the beginning of each major round of SFM planning, with engagement of interested parties in accordance with requirements for Indigenous and public participation.

Assessing SFM performance requirements

Indicators should be compared with targets (or short-term benchmarks) according to a defined schedule. Unacceptable variances from any target should be identified, and the reasons determined and explained. Such variances can be caused by

- failure to implement fully the activities specified in the SFM plan;
- deficiencies in the information available when setting targets, leading to false assumptions about the feasibility of their achievement;
- poor choice of indicators; or
- factors beyond the control of the organization. An analysis of variances allows the organization to determine whether progress towards stated objectives is being made.

Assessing the SFM system requirements

Because the SFM system requirements are the delivery mechanism for the overall SFM performance, the effectiveness of the SFM system should be assessed regularly and improved as necessary. This is usually achieved through internal monitoring and corrective action processes.

Legal compliance

Compliance with legal requirements is a critical part of the SFM requirements. The key steps to ensuring legal compliance include

- obtaining a thorough knowledge of applicable legal requirements;
- ensuring that all legal requirements are met; and
- taking the necessary and appropriate **corrective actions** if a legal requirement is not met.

A.7.5.2 Corrective action

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.5.2.*

The organization should have a plan for addressing non-conformances that are identified during external or internal audits and ensure that corrective action is taken.

The organization should implement and record any changes in the documented procedures resulting from corrective action. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations reached as a result of observation, measuring, monitoring, audits, and other reviews of the SFM requirements should be documented, and the necessary corrective actions identified.

Management should ensure that these corrective actions are implemented and that there is systematic follow-up to ensure their completion and effectiveness. The need for implementation of corrective actions may trigger an adjustment to the SFM plan.

A.7.5.3 Records

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.5.3.*

Records are evidence of the ongoing maintenance of the SFM requirements and the progress towards targets. The number and types of records will vary greatly among DFAs and organizations. Records include all the documents necessary to demonstrate conformance with the SFM requirements, including documentation of the Indigenous and public participation processes, the SFM performance requirements, and the SFM system requirements.

To fulfill the SFM requirements, the organization maintains a range of records and information. Effective management of records is essential to the successful implementation and maintenance of the SFM requirements. Documentation procedures should include

- identification;
- collection;
- indexing;
- filing;
- storage;
- maintenance;
- retrieval;
- retention; and
- disposition.

A.7.5.4 Internal audits

The organization should establish a schedule for performance of internal audits, identify personnel who will perform these audits and create training programmes that enable these internal audits to be performed without bias. These internal audits should be an integral part of the continual improvement process for the SFM plan.

A.7.6 Management review

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.6.*

An organization will review its performance in meeting the SFM requirements and continually improve its progress in achieving SFM. The organization's top management should, at appropriate intervals, conduct a complete and thorough review. This review could be one comprehensive annual review or a series of smaller reviews throughout the year during regular organizational processes. The review should be broad enough in scope to address all dimensions of the SFM requirements and the DFA (see Clause A.6) and could include some, or all, of the following:

- the Indigenous and public participation processes;
- the values, objectives, indicators, targets, strategies, and forecasts;
- performance in relation to targets;
- changes in the forest in relation to forecasts;
- findings of monitoring and audits (internal and external);
- corrective actions;
- the SFM policy and the need for changes;
- changing legislation or other relevant requirements;
- changing expectations, requirements, or responsibilities of interested parties;
- changes in types of forest operations or forest activities;
- changes in the organization or in resource requirements and availability;
- advances in science and technology;
- lessons learned from experience; and
- changes in the DFA.

A.7.7 Multi-site certification requirements

A.7.7.1 Basic requirements

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.7.1.*

Multi-site certification is an alternative approach to forest certification which allows forest managers of a single legal entity/ common ownership with several forest management operations in multiple locations (a multi-site organization), i.e., manages several forest management sites under a single certificate.

A.7.7.2 Central responsibilities

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.7.2.*

In a **multi-site certification** a representative with central responsibilities is selected and identified to represent all sites. This central management entity is responsible for providing a commitment on behalf of all the site managers to meet the requirements of this Standard, for establishing procedures for management of the multi-site certification, for representing all sites in communication with the

certification body and for ensuring that conformance of the sites with the requirements of this Standard is regularly monitored. Other responsibilities of the central management entity include recording keeping and providing information and guidance to all sites relevant to their responsibilities and tasks.

A.7.7.3 Site responsibilities

Note: *This commentary is related to Clause 7.7.3.*

Each site in a multi-site certification manages a portion of the forest area identified as the DFA for the purpose of certification to this Standard. Each site must sign an agreement with the central entity confirming their participation and commitment to the Standard, cooperate with audits and monitoring requirements, allowing access to the DFA when required and complete corrective actions as required.

Annex B (normative) — PEFC Canada Certification Body Requirements

Note: *This Annex is normative for Certification Bodies accredited to certify to the PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management PEFC CAN ST 1001:2025 standard.*

Introduction

PEFC Canada requires that certification bodies operating forest management certification against the PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) standard meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1. This document is based on ISO/IEC 17021-1. It does not include the text of this standard, which can be obtained from ISO or national standard organisations.

Part of the certification process for a DFA involves an audit determining whether the organization has met

- a. Indigenous and public participation requirements specified in section 5, Indigenous and public participation requirements;
- b. performance requirements specified in section 6 SFM performance requirements; and
- c. system requirements specified in section 7 SFM system requirements.

The audit includes an on-site audit of the DFA and field inspections of forest sites. The organization may be structured as a single site certification or a multi-site certification. See Clause 7.7 for requirements on multi-site certification.

B1. Scope

This document lays out the PEFC Canada requirements for certification bodies operating sustainable forest management certification against the PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management Standard PEFC CAN ST 1001:2025. Certification bodies shall follow the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1 [Conformity assessment -- requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems] and this annex when carrying out audits against the PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management Standard PEFC CAN ST 1001:2025.

B2. Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this standard. For both dated and undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendment) applies.

ISO/IEC 17000, *Conformity assessment – Vocabulary and general principles*

ISO/IEC 17021-1, *Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems – Part 1: Requirements*

ISO 19011, *Guidelines for auditing management systems*

PEFC ST 2001, *PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements* (hereinafter PEFC Trademarks standard)

IAF MD 1:2018, Mandatory Document for Audit and Certification of a management system operated by a multi-site organization

IAF MD 4:2018 Mandatory Document for the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes

IAF MD 5:2013 Mandatory Document for Determination of Audit Time of Quality, Environmental, and Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems

IAF MD 11:2013 Mandatory Document for the Application of ISO/IEC 17021 for Audits of Integrated Management Systems

B3. Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this Annex, the relevant definitions given in ISO/IEC 17000, ISO/IEC 17021-1, and PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management standard PEFC CAN ST 1001:2025, together with the following definitions, apply:

Affected stakeholder—A stakeholder who might experience a direct change in living and/or working conditions caused by implementation of a standard, or a stakeholder who might be a user of a standard and therefore is subject to the requirements of the standard.

Note 1: Affected stakeholders include neighbouring communities, Indigenous people, workers, etc. However, having an interest in the subject matter of the standard (e.g., NGOs, scientific community, civil society) is not equal to being affected.

Note 2: A stakeholder who might be a user of the standard is likely to become a certified entity, e.g., a forest manager in the case of a forest management standard, or a wood processing enterprise in the case of a chain of custody standard.

Audit programme—Arrangements for a set of one or more audits planned for a specific time frame and directed towards a specific purpose (Source: definition is based on ISO 19011:2018 clause 3.4).

Audit plan—Description of the activities and arrangements for a specific audit (Source: definition is based on ISO 19011:2018 clause 3.6).

Certification decision maker—A person or a group of persons (e.g., a committee) that has not been involved in the audit process and is assigned by the **certification body** to make the certification decision.

Certified area—The forest area covered by a sustainable forest management system according to the PEFC Canada - Sustainable Forest Management Standard PEFC CAN ST 1001:2025.

Client organisation (client)—Organisation that is certified or is seeking certification of its forest management system.

Note: The client is the holder of a **certificate** and is responsible for ensuring that all requirements of the forest management standard are met with respect to the **certified area** covered by that **certificate**.

Corrupt practice—Corrupt practices include bribery of public officials; embezzlement, trading in influence, abuse of function, and illicit enrichment by public officials; and bribery and embezzlement in the private sector, as well as money-laundering and obstruction of justice, in alignment with by the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Documented information—Information required to be controlled and maintained by an organisation using any format and media, from any source.

Expired certification—The certification is not renewed after the certificate expiry date.

Information and communication technologies—Information and communication technologies, ICT, is the use of technology for gathering, storing, retrieving, processing, analysing, and transmitting information. It includes software and hardware such as smartphones, handheld devices, laptop computers, desktop computers, drones, video cameras, wearable technology, artificial intelligence, and others. The use of ICT may be appropriate for auditing/assessment both locally and remotely (Source: IAF MD4:2023).

Major nonconformity—The absence of, or failure to implement and maintain, one or more requirements of the PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management standard PEFC CAN ST 1001:2025, that may result in a systemic risk to the function and effectiveness of the forest management.

Note 1: A major nonconformity may be an individual nonconformity or several minor but related nonconformities that when considered in total are judged to constitute a major nonconformity.

Minor nonconformity—A failure to fulfil the requirements of the PEFC Sustainability Benchmarks or the PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management standard PEFC CAN ST 1001:2025 against which the audit is carried out that does not result in systemic risk to the function and effectiveness of the forest management.

PEFC Canada—PEFC Canada is the entity that has permission from the PEFC Council to issue PEFC trademarks licences and to notify **certification bodies** on behalf of the PEFC Council in Canada.

PEFC recognised database—Databases held by the PEFC Canada where any data necessary to implement the forest management certification, such as up to date participants data and area covered by the certificate, is captured and maintained and properly protected.

Special audits—Special audits are unplanned, or otherwise outside the audit programme, and may be done on short notice.

Note: Special audits may be necessary due to scope extension, or to investigate complaints or substantiated concerns.

Reviewer—A person or a group of persons (e.g., a committee) that has not been involved in the audit process and is assigned by the **certification body** to review all the information and results related to the audit.

Standards Council of Canada (SCC)—the accreditation body authorized to accredit certification bodies to the PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management Standard PEFC CAN ST 1001:2025

Substantiated concern—Information or complaint supported by proof or evidence, indicating a serious failure to conform with the requirements of the PEFC endorsed system and/or there is a reputational risk for PEFC.

Note 1: Substantiated concerns can be concerns by third parties, as well as concerns of the **client** itself.

Suspended certification—The certification is temporarily invalidated by the **certification body**.

Technical expert—Person who provides specific knowledge or expertise to the audit team (Source: definition based on ISO/IEC 17021:2015, clause 3.14.).

Terminated certification—The certification has been voluntarily cancelled by the **client** during the validity of the certification cycle.

B4. General requirements

B4.1 Legal and contractual matters

B4.1.1 The **certification body** shall establish a legally enforceable certification agreement with the **client** that clearly specifies.

- a) The applicable ISO/IEC standard(s) against which the **certification body** is operating.
- b) The certification body's accreditation status, scope of accreditation, and that **SCC** has issued the accreditation; and,
- c) The PEFC notified certification body status, scope of the notification, and that **PEFC Canada** has issued the notification.

B4.1.2 The certification agreement shall include, at least, the following content:

- a) Client's commitment to fulfil the certification requirements, including appropriate implementation.
- b) Client's commitment to implement changes in an agreed transition period when there are changes in the certification requirements.
- c) Client's commitment to keep records for the compliance with the certification requirements for the duration of the current cycle plus the previous certification cycle.
- d) Client's obligation to inform the **certification body** within 30 days of changes that may affect its ability to conform with the certification requirements.
- e) Client's commitment to provide access during the certification process to observers from **SCC**, PEFC Council and/or **PEFC Canada** as well as representative(s) of workers and trade unions (e.g., for witnessing activities or validation audits) upon request.
- f) Client's commitment to make the necessary arrangements for the conduction of the audits and investigation of complaints.
- g) The conditions under which the **certification body** may conduct **special audits**, as per B7.6.3, and the client's commitment to accept those.
- h) Client's commitment to sign a PEFC Canada Trademark Usage Contract and use the PEFC trademarks and the accreditation trademarks and certification body trademarks in compliance with any applicable requirements and consistent with the scope of certification, and to not make any references or claims that may be misleading or unauthorised or may bring PEFC, PEFC Canada, **certification bodies** or **SCC** to disrepute.
- i) Upon suspension, withdrawal, or termination of certification, client's commitment to discontinue its use of all advertising matter that contains any reference to the certification and take actions and measures as required by the **certification system** (e.g., the return of certification documents), as appropriate.
- j) Upon suspension, withdrawal, or termination of certification, or if PEFC's endorsement of the system or standard they are certified against is suspended or terminated, client's commitment to stop any use of the PEFC claims or PEFC trademarks.
- k) If the **client** provides copies of the certification documents to others, the documents shall be reproduced in their entirety or as specified in the **certification system**.

- l) Client's commitment to keep records of all complaints and **substantiated concerns** received that relate to compliance with certification requirements.
- m) Client's commitment to take appropriate action with respect to complaints and any deficiencies that affect compliance with the requirements for certification.
- n) Client's commitment to make records of all complaints and **substantiated concerns** available to the **certification body**, PEFC Council, **PEFC Canada**, and/or **SCC**, on request.
- o) Client's commitment to promptly pay PEFC Canada National Sustainable Forest Management Program support fees.

B4.2 Management of impartiality

B4.2.1 The **certification body** shall have and implement procedures to ensure that personnel involved in the certification activities are free from conflict of interest and independent from the **client**.

B4.3 Confidentiality

B4.3.1 The **certification body** shall comply with all applicable privacy and data protection laws.

B4.3.2 The **certification body** shall commit to a data protection related agreement with the PEFC Council and when appropriate, also with **PEFC Canada**. The agreement shall specify the rights and obligations of each party concerning the protection of personal data.

B4.4 Risk based approach

Certification bodies operating sustainable forest management certification shall follow a risk-based approach.

B5. Resource requirements

B5.1 Personnel involved in the certification activities

B5.1.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that personnel involved in the certification activities have the relevant and appropriate knowledge and competencies corresponding to these activities, including PEFC specific knowledge.

B5.1.2 Any personnel involved in PEFC certification shall have at least basic knowledge of the PEFC system and certification criteria appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

B5.1.3 The certification body should ensure a workplace that is safe, provides equal opportunities, is non-discriminatory, promotes gender equality, and is free from workplace intimidation and harassment. Appropriate training and internal policies should be implemented.

B5.1.4 Auditors, reviewers and certification decision makers

B5.1.4.1 General

The **certification body** shall have a documented process to ensure that auditors, reviewers and certificate decision makers have personal attributes, knowledge, and skills in accordance with the following requirements.

B5.1.4.2 Education

Auditors, reviewers and certificate decision makers shall have the knowledge corresponding to at least a post-secondary education that includes or is supplemented with courses related to forestry. The specific education relating to forestry can be substituted by work experience in this sector if the **certification body** can demonstrate it is equivalent to the required education.

B5.1.4.3 Working experience

B5.1.4.3.1 Auditors require a minimum of three years full time professional experience in a forestry related discipline (e.g. forestry, biodiversity, natural resources management).

B5.1.4.3.2 The **reviewer** and **certification decision maker** require relevant experience according to the type of audits (initial, surveillance and recertification) to be reviewed and a minimum of three years full time experience in conformity assessment.

B5.1.4.3.3 The number of years of total work experience may be reduced by one year if the auditor, reviewer and/or certificate decision maker has completed a post-secondary education in forestry, biodiversity, or natural resources management.

B5.1.4.4 PEFC forest management training

New auditors, reviewers and certification decision-makers shall receive and successfully complete initial training recognised by the PEFC Canada on the PEFC Canada SFM **certification system** before they start their auditing activities.

B5.1.4.5 Audit training

The **certification body** shall ensure that auditors, reviewers and certification decision-makers have successfully completed training in audit techniques based on ISO 19011.

B5.1.4.6 Audit experience

B5.1.4.6.1 To qualify as an **auditor**, the auditor shall perform, as an auditor-in-training, at least 40 hours of forest management audits against a PEFC-endorsed forest management standard in Canada or equivalent audits (e.g. ISO 9001, 14001, or 45001 auditing experience in the forestry or related sector, biodiversity, natural resources management) under the leadership of a qualified audit team leader within the last year.

Note: The 40-hour period as auditor-in-training should cover different types of audits (initial, surveillance and recertification) and should include a minimum of 20 hours of forest management system auditing against a PEFC-endorsed forest management standard in Canada.

B5.1.4.6.2 To qualify as an **audit team leader**, an auditor must also have completed two SFM audits for a minimum 40 hours of experience auditing against the PEFC Canada – Sustainable Forest Management standard. This experience shall include a certification audit and drafting the audit report under the supervision of a qualified audit team leader.

B5.1.4.6.3 To qualify as a **reviewer** or **certification decision maker**, the **reviewer** or the **certification decision maker** shall have participated as an observer in forest management audits against a PEFC-endorsed forest management standard in Canada covering at least eight hours. The observation shall include the opening meeting, a part of office assessment, a part of field assessment, and the closing meeting. Qualification as a

PEFC forest management auditor is considered as meeting this experience requirement.

B5.1.4.7 Competencies

B5.1.4.7.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that **auditors** and **reviewers** or **certification decision makers** demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- a) Principles, objectives, requirements, criteria, and indicators of the PEFC Canada standard.
- b) Appropriate knowledge of the socio-demographics, sustainability issues, cultural issues (including gender equality), indigenous interests and values and indigenous treaties, where applicable, and industrial relations in the region of application of the forest management requirements.
- c) Knowledge of legislation, regulations, or other relevant requirements, pertaining to forest management, labour issues, and data privacy and protection.
- d) The principles of forest management including: inventory, planning, protection, management of forest ecosystems, identification and management of ecologically important forest areas, carbon stocks and biodiversity, as well as technical aspects of forest operations, and their potential impacts.
- e) Management and control of online documents, data and records, confidential data, data privacy and protection; and
- f) Application of risk assessment techniques.

B5.1.4.7.2 In addition to the above, the **certification body** shall ensure that **auditors** demonstrate ability to apply knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- a) Audit principles, procedures, and techniques, and how to apply them appropriately to different audits while ensuring that audits are conducted in a consistent and systematic manner.
- b) Managing an organisation, including organisational size, structure, functions and relationships, general business processes, risk management and cultural and social aspects.
- c) Knowledge of legislation, regulations, or other relevant requirements, including:
 - i. Contracts and agreements and/or collective bargaining agreements (as applicable).
 - ii. Forest governance and law enforcement systems for Canada and the provinces included in the scope of the certificate, including those covering social, workers and trade union rights and occupational safety and health of workers.
 - iii. International conventions relating to worker rights (ILO core conventions).
 - iv. International treaties and conventions relating to forestry, forest trade, and tree-based products.
- d) The principles of forest management including: inventory, planning, protection, management of forest ecosystems, identification and management of ecologically important forest areas, carbon stocks and biodiversity, as well as technical aspects of forest operations, and their potential impacts.
- e) Understanding of and ability to interpret Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as it applies to forest monitoring and management.

B5.1.4.7.3 Auditors, including audit team leaders, and **reviewers** or **certification decision makers** that had met the requirements for qualification under CSAZ809 meet the qualification and competency requirements under this section.

B5.1.4.7.4 The **certification body** shall ensure that the audit team consists of individuals who collectively have all the required competencies for the scope of the audit.

B5.1.4.8 Maintenance of the qualification as an auditor and reviewer or certification decision maker

B5.1.4.8.1 PEFC forest management training

To maintain their qualifications, the **certification body** shall ensure that qualified auditors, reviewers and certification decision makers participate in and complete PEFC Canada forest management refresher training recognised by PEFC Canada whenever a new version of the PEFC Canada forest management standard published.

B5.1.4.8.2 Audit experience

B5.1.4.8.2.1 To maintain the auditor qualification, the auditor shall perform a minimum of 40 hours of forest management auditing against a PEFC-endorsed forest management standard in Canada per year.

B5.1.4.8.2.2 In exceptional circumstances, such as statutory leave, long-term illness, or inability of opportunities to provide certification services, auditors unable to comply with B5.1.4.8.2.1 shall perform twenty hours of forest management audits under the supervision of a qualified auditor within two years, or a formal evaluation of competencies by the **certification body** prior to the auditor taking back auditing activities.

B5.1.4.8.2.3 To maintain the reviewer or certification decision maker qualification, the qualified **reviewer** or **certification decision maker** shall participate as an observer on forest management covering at least 16 hours every two years, which includes a part of office assessment and a part of field assessment and a closing meeting.

Note: The observation may take place remotely using **ICT**.

B5.1.5 Audit team

B5.1.5.1 General requirements

B5.1.5.1.1 The audit team shall comprise auditors fulfilling the competency requirements for auditors defined in B5.1.4.7.

B5.1.5.1.2 The **certification body** shall have documented procedures for selecting and appointing the audit team, including the audit team leader.

B5.1.5.1.3 At least one member of the audit team must be a Registered Forest Professional. In jurisdictions where Professional Forestry is a Regulated Profession, auditors shall register as required by the regulator. Where SFM auditing is a reserved practice, auditing services can only be provided as entitled by regulation.

B5.1.5.1.4 The **certification body** shall consider gender balance within the audit team.

B5.1.5.2 Technical experts

B5.1.5.2.1 The **certification body** may engage **technical experts** to support the audit team. **Technical experts** shall be independent of the **client**, and their names, qualifications and affiliations shall be included in the audit report.

B5.1.5.2.2 The **certification body** shall ensure that any potential conflict of interest is declared and managed.

B5.1.5.2.3 The **certification body** shall ensure that technical experts report to the audit team leader, only operate under their scope, do not make certification decisions and do not create findings.

B5.1.5.3 Translators and interpreters

B5.1.5.3.1 Translators and interpreters used in the audit shall be independent of the **client**.

B5.1.5.3.2 In cases where independent translators and/or interpreters are not available, the names of the translators and their links with the **client** shall be included in the audit report.

B5.1.5.3.3 The **certification body** shall make sure that any potential conflict of interest is managed.

B5.1.6 Specific Requirements for reviewers and certification decision makers

In addition to the requirements listed under section 5.1.4, the following requirements relate specifically to reviewers and certification decision makers.

B5.1.6.1 The **certification body** shall be responsible for and shall retain authority of its decisions relating to certification.

B5.1.6.2 The **certification body** shall ensure that the **reviewer** and the **certification decision maker** are independent of the audit team and the **client**.

B5.1.6.3 The **certification body** shall ensure that the personnel involved in the reviewing and decision-making process have a legally binding relationship with the **certification body** that covers personnel's compliance with the requirements in this standard.

Note: The **reviewer** and the **certification decision maker** may be the same individual.

B5.2 Personnel records and annual monitoring

B5.2.1 The **certification body** shall maintain records of personnel's compliance with the requirements of this section.

B5.2.2 The **certification body** shall monitor the performance of forest management auditors annually, applying methods such as reviewing audit reports or clients' feedback, etc., based on the frequency with which they conduct audits, and the level of risk linked to their activities.

B5.2.3 As part of the monitoring, the **certification body** shall conduct an observation of each forest management auditor at least every five years.

B5.2.4 The **certification body** shall maintain **documented information** of the performance of forest management auditors.

B5.2.5 The **certification body** shall use the monitoring of auditor performance and observations to identify training needs.

B6. Information requirements

B6.1 Public information

B6.1.1 On request, the **certification body** shall provide **clients** and potential **clients** with details of their fee structure and the estimated cost of obtaining and maintaining certification.

B6.2 Certification documents

B6.2.1 The **certificate** shall include, as a minimum, the following information:

- a) identification of the **certification body**
- b) name and address of the **client**
- c) unique certificate code
- d) type of **certificate** (individual or group forest)
- e) place and date of issue
- f) the date of granting, extending or renewing certification and the expiry date or recertification due date
- g) logo and/or signature of issuing party
- h) scope of certification and standard or standards against which certification is issued
- i) accreditation mark of **SCC** as prescribed by the accreditation number (including accreditation number where applicable)
- j) the logo of the endorsed system and the PEFC logo with the certification body's PEFC trademarks licence number (with a link to the PEFC website and a note that indicates that information on endorsed systems by PEFC is publicly available on the PEFC website); and,
- k) note indicating that the updated information on the number of hectares covered by the **certificate** can be checked on the PEFC database.

B6.2.2 The effective date on a certification document shall not be before the date of the certification decision.

B6.2.3 The certificate code shall be comprised of four pieces of information, each of them separated by a dash, in this order: AAA-PEFCCA-FM-#####, where:

- AAA is the abbreviation of the **certification body**. "AAA" is a variable length upper-case abbreviation of the **certification body** that issued the **certificate**.
- PEFCCA is the abbreviation for PEFC Canada.
- FM is the abbreviation for forest management standard.
- #####: The numeric identification of the certified entity given by the **certification body**.

Note 1: The **certification body** can decide on the numeric identification, in terms of length and digits.

B6.2.4 The **certification body** shall coordinate its abbreviation with the PEFC Council prior to use. Two **certification bodies** shall not have the same abbreviation.

B6.2.5 **Certification bodies** shall use the same abbreviation with all certificate codes on any PEFC recognised **certificate** they issue against a PEFC endorsed forest management standard.

B6.2.6 If an individual **certificate** covers several forest areas, those areas shall be described on the **certificate**, or an appendix to the **certificate**. Otherwise, the certificate shall include a reference to the PEFC database or the corresponding PEFC recognised database for the information related to the certified areas.

B6.3 Reference to certification and use of marks

B6.3.1 Where the **certification body** uses the PEFC trademarks on the certification document, or for any other purposes linked to the PEFC forest **certification system**, the use shall only be carried out based on a valid licence issued by **PEFC Canada**, and in accordance with the PEFC ST 2001, PEFC Trademarks Rules – Requirements.

B6.3.2 The **certification body** shall advise the **client** that the PEFC trademarks on the issued **certificate** only refer to the client’s compliance with the PEFC Canada forest **certification system** and do not confer any right to the **client** to use those trademarks unless the **client** holds a valid PEFC trademark licence.

Note: The **client** can obtain a PEFC trademark licence from **PEFC Canada**.

B6.4 Confidentiality

The **certification body** shall limit the collection of personal data from the **client** to what is essential for the certification purposes. Collection of personal data shall always be conducted in compliance with any applicable legislation.

B6.5 Information exchange between the certification body and PEFC Council and/or PEFC Canada

B6.5.1 The **certification body** shall immediately inform **PEFC Canada** when certification is granted, suspended, terminated, withdrawn, its scope is changed or any other changes affecting the certification or the information that **certification bodies** shall report to PEFC.

B6.5.2 The **certification body** shall collect and report information, as required by **PEFC Canada**.

B6.5.3 The **certification body** shall verify the area in hectares at each audit and advise **PEFC Canada** of any change at least annually.

B6.5.4 On request, the **certification body** shall provide to the PEFC Council or/and **PEFC Canada**, any information related to the certification process and the **client**, such as the full audit report or information on open nonconformities, when there is a concern of reputational risk for PEFC.

B6.6 Engagement of Indigenous Peoples and affected stakeholders

B6.6.1 General

B6.6.1.1 The certification body shall verify the effectiveness of the client’s process for engagement of **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders** during the audit process.

B6.6.1.2 During the audit process, the **certification body** shall consider the information, if any, provided by the **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders**.

B6.6.2 Engagement process for Indigenous Peoples and affected stakeholders

B6.6.2.1 The **certification body** shall have documented procedures for the engagement of **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders**. This procedure shall ensure that any such engagement does not adversely impact impartiality, independence, and confidentiality with respect to the operations of the **certification body** or the **client**.

B6.6.2.2 The certification body's procedure for the engagement of **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders** shall include the following steps:

- a) Verification of the effectiveness of the identification of Indigenous Peoples and stakeholders by the client
- b) Ensuring public notification of the audit by the **client**.
- c) Engagement with **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders** during the audit process, as necessary.
- d) Summary of **Indigenous Peoples** and affected stakeholder engagement process in the summary audit reports.

B6.6.3 Identification of Indigenous Peoples and affected stakeholders

B6.6.3.1 The **certification body** shall require the **client** to provide, in advance of the audit:

- a) information on the client's identification of **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders**
- b) the relevant needs and expectations of these parties
- c) how they are considered within the forest management

B6.6.3.2 The **certification body** shall consider the above information when planning the audit.

B6.6.4 Public notification of the audit

B6.6.4.1 The **certification body** shall ensure that the dates of an initial or recertification audit are publicised to **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders**, no less than 30 days prior to the audit.

B6.6.4.2 The announcement may be made by the client or by the certification body itself.

B6.6.4.3 The announcement shall explain that during the audit process, the auditors will assess the client's engagement with **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders** and shall require the **client** to seek expressions of interest, in writing, from **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders**.

B6.6.5 Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and affected stakeholders during the audit process

B6.6.5.1 The **certification body** shall consider feedback received and evaluate its relevance to the assessment of the certification requirements. The **certification body** shall consult with **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders** as part of the audit process, as appropriate to the feedback received and to any requirements of the standards.

B6.6.5.2 The **certification body** shall employ effective, culturally appropriate means to consult **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders**.

B6.6.5.3 The **audit plan** should allocate sufficient time for engagement with **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders**.

B6.6.5.4 The **audit plan** should allocate sufficient time for involving **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders** in the audit process as appropriate.

B6.6.6 Summary of affected stakeholder engagement process in summary audit reports

B6.6.6.1 The summary audit report shall describe the **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholder** engagement process, including how affected stakeholder's comments were taken into account and any issues arising from the process.

B6.6.6.2 The **certification body** shall ensure that the summary audit report does not include any confidential information provided by the **Indigenous Peoples** or affected stakeholders.

B7. Process requirements

B7.1 Pre-certification activities

B7.1.1 Application

The **certification body** shall require the applicant **client** to provide the following information as part of the application for forest management certification:

- a) Name and address of applicant **client**, corporate entity (if applicable), and legal status (including legal business registration).
- b) Whether it is an individual or a group forest certificate
- c) Description of the area (e.g defined forest area) proposed for certification
- d) Brief description of the forest proposed for certification and its management
- e) Summary of technical facilities or resources (e.g., forest pesticide handling and storage, firefighting facilities, administrative offices, etc.) and/or other relevant infrastructure that is fundamental to the management of the forest.
- f) Any relevant information to assess if the application is to be treated as a transfer of certification instead of a new application.
- g) Declaration on participation of the applicant **client**, or the legal predecessor, in PEFC or another **certification system** for the purpose of forest management in the last five years. This shall include, but not be limited to, suspension, withdrawal, or termination of the certification in the last five years, identified nonconformities, certification decision, justification and any corrective actions that may have been taken and their resolutions.
- h) Name of consultant(s) engaged for PEFC certification implementation purposes, if any.

B7.1.2 Application review

B7.1.2.1 The **certification body** shall consider applications when all information listed under B7.1.1 has been provided.

Note: B7.1.2.13, B7.1.2.14 and B7.1.2.15 describe the requirements that the **certification body** shall follow when the application is a transfer of an existing **certificate** from one **certification body** to another and not a new application.

- B7.1.2.2** The **certification body** shall have a documented procedure for the review of applications.
- B7.1.2.3** The **certification body** shall ensure that the application review identifies and assesses the complexity and scale of the activities covered by the forest management subject to certification.
- B7.1.2.4** The **certification body** shall have a documented procedure to ensure that it has the competence and capability to provide certification services to the applicant **client**.
- B7.1.2.5** The certification body shall maintain a record of the justification for the decision to accept an application.
- B7.1.2.6** The **certification body** shall refuse to provide certification services if it lacks the competence or capability to do so.
- B7.1.2.7** Prior to acceptance, the **certification body** shall define criteria for the acceptance of the applicant **client**.
- B7.1.2.8** The criteria for acceptance shall identify any current or historic engagement in **corrupt practices** of the applicant **client**, or any legal predecessor.
- B7.1.2.9** The **certification body** shall evaluate the applicant **client** against the criteria, including, when relevant, any legal predecessors, and keep records of the evaluation. The evaluation shall determine the suitability of the applicant **client** for certification prior to acceptance.
- B7.1.2.10** The **certification body** shall reject applications where there is evidence of current engagement in **corrupt practices**.
- B7.1.2.11** In the case of historic engagement in **corrupt practices**, the **certification body** shall not accept the application unless there is evidence that the engagement in **corrupt practices** has stopped and that the applicant **client** or its legal predecessor is not subject to any ongoing investigation and/or sanctions.
- B7.1.2.12** The **certification body** shall assess information provided by the applicant **client** on its participation, or its legal predecessor's participation, in PEFC or in another **certification system** for the purpose of forest certification. If the participation in PEFC or in another **certification system** was suspended, withdrawn, or terminated, the **certification body** shall investigate the commitment and capacity of the applicant **client** to comply with PEFC certification requirements. If the investigation shows an inability or significant likelihood of failure to comply, the application shall not be further processed until the applicant **client** has demonstrated that it has the ability and commitment to comply.
- B7.1.2.13** When the **certification body** determines that the application is to be treated as a transfer of an existing **certificate** issued by another accredited **certification body**, the **certification body** shall operate according to IAF MD2.
- B7.1.2.14** In the case of transfer of certification, the **certification body** shall ensure that any open **major nonconformities** are closed prior to accepting the transfer of the **certificate**.
- B7.1.2.15** Transfer of certification is only possible if the accepting **certification body** is recognised by PEFC Canada for the same system and according to the same accreditation standard.

B7.1.2.16 The **certification body** shall communicate to the applicant **client** the result of the application review in writing. If the application is rejected, the **certification body** shall provide the justification to the applicant **client** in writing.

B7.1.3 Audit programme

B7.1.3.1 The **certification body** shall develop and maintain a documented **audit programme** that covers at least one certification cycle.

B7.1.3.2 The **certification body** shall confirm the **audit programme** with the **client** and ensure that the **client** agrees with the way the audit will be conducted and the schedule of the audit.

B7.1.3.3 The certification cycle shall not exceed 5 years.

B7.1.3.4 When defining the **audit programme**, the **certification body** shall consider the information and the results of the application review and the information from prior audits (where applicable).

Note: Guidance for preparing the **audit programme** is provided by ISO 19011, clause 5.

B7.1.3.5 The **certification body** shall identify season-specific activities and ensure that these are covered within the 5-year **audit programme**.

B7.1.3.6 The **certification body** shall include in each audit (surveillance audits and initial and re-certification audits) assessment of any requirements that cover the following areas, as appropriate:

- a) Forest conversion and requirements related to degraded forest.
- b) Maintenance, conservation, or enhancement of biodiversity and significantly high carbon stock.
- c) Requirements related to ecologically important forest areas.
- d) Compliance with fundamental ILO conventions.
- e) Legal compliance obligations. See also A.7.3.3 for regulatory requirements.
- f) Indigenous Peoples' rights, customary and traditional rights related to the forest land.
- g) Health, safety and working conditions.

B7.1.3.7 Where the **certification body** considers that feedback is critical to assess the client's compliance with certification requirements that may impact **Indigenous Peoples** or **affected stakeholders**, such as those related to human rights, local communities, customary and traditional rights related to forest land, and health, safety and working conditions, or any other requirements, the **certification body** shall seek feedback from **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders**.

B7.1.4 Risk-based approach

B7.1.4.1 The **certification body** shall determine and document the risk profile associated with each **client**.

B7.1.4.2 The **certification body** shall periodically review the risk profile and adjust the **audit programme** and the **audit plans** accordingly.

B7.1.4.3 The **certification body** shall ensure that the **audit programme** and **audit plans** for each **client** are developed in consideration of the client's risk profile.

B7.1.4.4 The **certification body** shall consider all of the SFM core indicators as part of the risk assessment and should take into consideration specific local issues that may affect the implementation of forest management.

Note 1: The risk profile will assist in determining the duration of the initial and Stage 2 (certification) assessments and the development of the **audit programme** and **audit plans**, including surveillance and recertification assessments.

B7.1.5 Determining audit time

B7.1.5.1 The **certification body** shall have documented procedures for determining and calculating the audit time and should consider the following criteria:

- a) audit time requirements of IAF MD5 for environmental management systems audits considering that the SFM audit is of higher complexity than an EMS audit
- b) area covered by the **certificate** and changes to the **certified area** and the logistics of completing a field audit of a sufficient sample of sites
- c) for a multi-site certificate, the number of sites in the scope of the certificate and the sampling requirements of IAF MD1
- d) forest types, locations, silviculture and geography
- e) number of **participants**, size and structure
- f) number of effective full-time workers (including contractors and subcontractors)
- g) number and location of offices and/or other relevant infrastructure that is fundamental to the management of the forest
- h) any activities included in the scope of the forest management standard
- i) season-specific activities
- j) other issues such as surrounding transport, roads, and sale of forest products, if applicable
- k) management system, including complaints resolution process, effectiveness of the client's internal monitoring, internal audit and review processes
- l) the results of any prior audits, including those of client's management systems
- m) risk indicators and results from the risk assessment as per B7.1.4.
- n) geolocation of the forest management unit and potential checks using remote sensing tools to identify risk for deforestation or degradation within the area

B7.1.5.2 The **certification body** shall determine the audit time, and the justification for the determination shall be maintained as **documented information**.

B7.1.6 Sampling

B7.1.6.1 The **certification body** shall develop a sampling plan that considers the results of the risk assessment.

B7.1.6.2 For multi-site audits, the certification body shall implement procedures conforming to IAF MD1.

B7.2 Planning

B7.2.1 Determining audit objectives, scope, and criteria

B7.2.1.1 The **certification body** shall clearly define the scope, the extent, and the boundaries of the audit, such as organisational units, activities, and processes to be audited.

B7.2.1.2 The **certification body** shall plan the tools and audit techniques that will be used during the audit. It shall be clearly defined for which purpose the tools and techniques are used and which requirements are covered by which tools and techniques, if applicable.

B7.2.1.3 The **certification body** shall consider the following criteria when defining the scope:

- a) Representation: the client's operations and processes shall be randomly but representatively considered. The **certification body** shall determine the processes that it considers important to be evaluated. The effectiveness of these processes shall be reflected in the audit report.
- b) Protection: areas with high impact on the achievement of the objectives of the forest management standard and identified ecologically important forest areas shall be considered.
- c) Correction: high risk areas and areas with previously identified nonconformities shall be considered.
- d) Prevention: the areas to be audited shall be determined by the **certification body** after its risk assessment.

B7.2.2 Audit plan

B7.2.2.1 The **certification body** shall have documented procedures to ensure that a risk-based **audit plan** is established for each audit. The **audit plan** shall provide the basis to conduct and schedule the audit activities.

B7.2.2.2 The **certification body** shall consider existing complaints and **substantiated concerns** when planning the audit.

B7.2.2.3 The **audit plan**, including the dates for the audits, shall be communicated no less than ten days in advance and agreed upon with the **client**.

Note: Guidance for preparing the **audit plan** is provided by ISO 19011:2018, clause 6.3.2.

B7.2.2.4 The **certification body** shall define the timelines for the submission of the audit report by the **certification body** to the **client** for confirmation of the findings and document that in the audit plan. The final audit report should be submitted to the client no later than four weeks following the closing meeting.

B7.3 Initial certification

B7.3.1 Stage 1 Document and readiness review

B7.3.1.1 The scope of the Stage 1 audit shall comprise, at least:

- a) Confirming the scope and objective of the certification audit.
- b) Confirming the locations, and activities covered by the sustainable forest management system.
- c) Auditing the client's forest management documentation.
- d) Evaluation of any forest management area specific conditions, as applicable.
- e) Evaluating the client's procedures for internal audits and management system integrity and the effectiveness of their implementation.

- f) Determining the conformity of the client's procedures for the use of the PEFC trademarks and the use of the PEFC endorsed systems trademarks, if applicable.
- g) Confirming the existence of a current signed trademark usage contract.
- h) Evaluating the client's identification of **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders**, their needs and expectations, and how those are considered within the forest management, and consider feedback received from **Indigenous Peoples** and **affected stakeholders** during the public notification of the audit and evaluate its relevance .
- i) Determining risks to be considered in the Stage 2 audit.
- j) Finalising the **audit plan** for Stage 2.

B7.3.1.2 The Stage 1 audit may be conducted remotely using ICT, according to B7.4.3.

B7.3.2 Stage 2

B7.3.2.1 The **certification body** shall assess the client's implementation of the system requirements, including its forest management system, processes, and procedures. The Stage 2 audit shall include in-the-forest assessment of the client's forest management activities. Where appropriate, the **certification body** may conduct parts of the Stage 2 audit remotely using **ICT**, in accordance with B7.4.3.

Note: Examples of elements of the **audit plan** where **ICT** could be used are interviews with employees, and review of information in electronic format.

B7.3.2.2 The **audit plan** for the Stage 2 audit shall be adapted based on any **substantiated concerns** and the findings from the review conducted in the Stage 1 audit.

B7.4 Conducting audits

The conduct of the audit shall follow the requirements of ISO 17021-1.

Note: Additional guidance for the conduct of the audits is available in ISO 19011 section 6.

B7.4.1 Conducting the opening meeting

In cases where some elements of the audit are conducted remotely, the **certification body** may conduct the opening meetings remotely using **ICT** according to IAF MD4, and any other requirements established by this standard.

B7.4.2 Conducting the closing meeting

B7.4.2.1 The audit team leader shall conduct a closing meeting with the certification management and senior management of the **client** to present the audit findings, and any recommendations related to continued certification. The list of attendees in this meeting shall be recorded.

B7.4.2.2 The audit team leader shall ensure that the **client** is able to understand the conclusions and especially all the nonconformities found.

B7.4.2.3 The **certification body** may conduct the formal closing meeting remotely using **ICT** according to IAF MD4 and any other requirements established by this annex.

B7.4.3 Remote audits

B7.4.3.1 The **certification body** may use, where appropriate, ICT methods to conduct remote audits for:

- Stage 1 of the initial certification
- Elements of the surveillance audits,
- **Special audits;**
- Non-field parts of stage 2 of the initial certification audit
- Non-field parts of the recertification audit

Example: Non-field parts of the stage 2 of the initial audit or recertification audit are the closing meeting, closure of nonconformities or administrative work.

B7.4.3.2 Audits may include **ICT** methods beyond requirement B7.4.3.1 when exceptional circumstances do not allow the auditors to conduct in field visit of the **client**.

B7.4.3.3 The **certification body** shall have documented procedures for conducting remote audits or parts of audits remotely using ICT, which includes, as a minimum:

- a) criteria and indicators to assess the appropriateness of the use of **ICT**
- b) risks associated with its use and how they may impact audit effectiveness
- c) available technology and how it will be used
- d) eligibility criteria of the **client** (e.g., accessibility of digital files, access to documented management system)
- e) **client** capacities

B7.4.3.4 The **certification body** shall conduct an assessment of the risks and opportunities associated with the use of **ICT** and the justification of their use. The **certification body** shall maintain **documented information** of this assessment.

B7.4.3.5 Certification processes may include **ICT** when:

- a) The effectiveness and/or efficiency of the audit can be increased with **ICT** while maintaining the integrity of the audit/assessment process.
- b) The **certification body** can justify that the audit techniques used deliver sufficient confidence in the client's compliance with the certification criteria;
- c) The certification body's assessment as per B7.4.3.4, according to its procedure to conduct remote audits as per B7.4.3.3, results in a low risk when conducting the audit or part of the audit remotely; and,
- d) the **client** has a centrally controlled management system accessible remotely and provides the **certification body** with the necessary records required to conduct the audit or parts to the audit remotely.

B7.4.3.6 The **certification body** shall ensure that auditors using **ICT** have been provided with appropriate training and are qualified for the use of **ICT**.

B7.4.3.7 The **certification body** shall seek confirmation of acceptance from the **client** prior to the use of **ICT** during the audit.

B7.4.3.8 Prior to the conduct of the audit, the **certification body** shall define the **ICT** to be used and make sure of its efficiency and effectiveness through testing and any other means, as appropriate.

B7.4.4 Summary audit report

B7.4.4.1 In addition to the audit report, the **certification body** shall prepare a summary of the audit report.

B7.4.4.2 The summary audit report shall include, as a minimum, the following information:

- a) Name and description of the **certification body**, name and description of the **client**, and date of the report.
- b) Number of hectares at the time of the audit.
- c) Description of the **certified area**.
- d) Audit scope, objectives, and process, including standard(s) and applied certification criteria, summary of risk assessment, and if remote technology is used, technology and justification for the use.
- e) Summary of the **audit plan**, including dates, stakeholder engagement process, locations and activities assessed, audit duration (split by proportion spent on-site and remotely – where relevant) and the audit team members, their roles, qualifications and experience.
- f) Audit results:
 - i. summary of findings demonstrating conformity or nonconformity
 - ii. brief description of any **major nonconformities** and verification of effectiveness of the actions taken to address the nonconformities,
 - iii. brief description of **minor nonconformities**,
 - iv. evaluation of the effectiveness of the action taken to address any **minor nonconformities** in previous audit reports, and, and
 - v. recommended certification decision.

B7.4.4.3 The summary audit report shall not include confidential data.

B7.4.4.4 The **certification body** shall provide a copy of the summary audit report to the **client**, the PEFC Council, and/or **PEFC Canada**.

B7.4.4.5 The summary audit report may be written in English or French. On request by either the **client**, the PEFC Council, or **PEFC Canada**, the **certification body** shall provide a copy of the summary audit report in English.

B7.4.4.6 The **certification body** shall make the summary audit report publicly available on the PEFC database which is externally accessible through the PEFC website.

B7.4.5 Cause analysis of nonconformities

B7.4.5.1 The **certification body** shall identify nonconformities with the requirements of the Standard and classify nonconformities identified during the audit as major and minor.

B7.4.5.2 The **certification body** shall require the **client** to:

- a) determine the root cause of the nonconformity

- b) develop a corrective action plan to address the identified cause
- c) specify timeframe for completion, and
- d) assign responsibilities for the implementation of the action plan

B7.4.5.3 Before the action plan is implemented, the **certification body** shall assess the action plan provided by the **client**, including the timeframe and personnel responsible. As part of the assessment, the **certification body** shall verify that the action plan adequately addresses the nonconformities.

B7.4.5.4 In the case where an action plan is rejected, the **certification body** shall provide an explanation as to why the action plan has been rejected and provide an opportunity for the **client** to review and re-submit the action plan.

B7.4.6 Effectiveness of corrections and corrective actions

B7.4.6.1 The **certification body** shall evaluate effectiveness of corrective action(s) for all nonconformities identified in audits prior to closing the nonconformities.

B7.4.6.2 The **certification body** shall verify **major nonconformities** on-site unless verification can be undertaken without on-site verification using **ICT**. The certification shall justify and document why verification can be undertaken through **ICT**.

B7.4.6.3 The time period for completion of the corrective action(s) for **major nonconformities** identified in audits and their verification by the **certification body** shall follow the rules of the **certification body** but not exceed three months.

B7.4.6.4 If specific natural conditions or extraordinary circumstances do not allow the implementation of corrective actions within the timeframes described in B7.4.5.3, the **certification body** may give an exemption. The maximum time period is 12 months, and the justification shall be documented.

B7.4.6.5 The certification body shall verify the effectiveness of corrective action(s) for **minor nonconformities** no later than at the next audit.

B7.4.6.6 Where the actions taken to address a **major nonconformity** have not effectively addressed the issue within the time frame agreed with the certification body, the **certification body** shall either suspend or withdraw the **certificate**, as appropriate,

B7.4.6.7 The **certification body** shall have procedures for immediate suspension or withdrawal of the **certificate** in cases of identification of non-reversible nonconformities or in case of intentional corrupt or fraudulent activities by certified organisations.

B7.5 Certification decision

B7.5.1 General

B7.5.1.1 Before granting initial certification and recertification, the **certification body** shall:

- a) review, accept and verify the correction and corrective actions for any major nonconformities, and
- b) review and accept the client's plan for correction and corrective action for **minor nonconformities**.

B7.5.2 Certification status

B7.5.2.1 The **certification body** shall define the status of the certification as:

- a) Valid
- b) Suspended
- c) Withdrawn
- d) Terminated
- e) Expired

B7.5.2.2 If certification is terminated, suspended, or withdrawn, or PEFC Council suspends or terminates the endorsement of the PEFC Canada forest **certification system**, the **certification body** shall inform the **client** that any further use of the PEFC trademarks and claims is not allowed. In case of suspension, the **certification body** shall monitor whether the **client** is in compliance.

B7.6 Maintaining certification

B7.6.1 Surveillance activities

B7.6.1.1 Surveillance audits shall be carried out at least annually. The **certification body** shall carry out at least four surveillance audits before the expiry date of the **certificate**.

Note 1: Annually means once every twelve months, plus or minus three months.

B7.6.1.2 In justified circumstances, the frequency of surveillance audits may be increased by the **certification body** according to the level of overall risk related to the profile of the **client** and the results of previous audits.

B7.6.1.3 Parts of the surveillance audit may be conducted remotely using **ICT** in accordance with B7.4.3 if:

- a) no **major nonconformity** was raised during the previous audit
- b) **minor nonconformity/ies** can be verified remotely, and
- c) the **client** has a centrally controlled management system accessible remotely and provides the **certification body** with all the records required to conduct the audit

B7.6.2 Recertification

B7.6.2.1 The recertification audit shall take place on-site. Certain parts of the recertification audit, for example the opening meeting, the closing meeting, closure of **minor nonconformities** or other administrative processes, e.g., system documentation, review of the internal audit or of the client's management review, may take place remotely, as per B7.4.3. The **audit plan** shall identify which components of the audit can be effectively conducted remotely.

B7.6.3 Special audits

B7.6.3.1 General

B7.6.3.1.1 The **certification body** may conduct different types of **special audits**, according to the requirements of this section.

B7.6.3.1.2 Certain components of the **special audits** or the full **special audit**, such as the opening and closing meetings, or closure of **minor nonconformities** and administrative processes, may take place remotely, as per B7.4.3. The **audit plan** shall identify which components of the audit can be effectively conducted remotely.

B7.6.3.2 Expanding scope

The **certification body** may conduct expanding scope audits when a request for scope extension made by the **client**. Scope expansion requires assessment to decide whether the extension can be granted.

Note: Expanding scope audits may happen where there is a significant change to the defined certified forest area. An expansion of scope may happen, for example, to accommodate new forest types or a change on the significant change on the forest management.

B7.6.3.3 Unannounced or short-notice audits

B7.6.3.3.1 Unannounced audits may take place when the **certification body** has a **substantiated concern** that the **client** is knowingly breaching a requirement in the standard.

B7.6.3.3.2 The certification body may suspend or withdraw a certificate if the client does not accept an unannounced or short-notice audit without justified circumstances.

B7.6.3.3.3 The **certification body** shall define the conditions under which it carries out short-notice and unannounced audits and inform the **client** accordingly.

B7.6.3.3.4 The conditions shall include the investigation of **substantiated concerns** and other reasons.

B7.7 Complaints and Appeals

B7.7.1 The **certification body** shall have a documented process whereby:

- **clients** can appeal certification decisions, and
- any person or organization can raise complaints in relation with the certification process.

B7.7.2 The complaints and appeals procedures shall publicly available and include clear timelines.

B7.7.3 These procedures shall include at least a publicly available mechanism for stakeholders to report instances of potential misrepresentation or corruption.

B7.7.4 The **certification body** shall inform the complainant about its investigations, the corresponding results and in case, the action to be taken by each party.

B7.7.5 The certification body shall inform the **PEFC Canada** within 7 days of becoming aware of a substantiated concern. Where appropriate, the certification body shall also inform the client and/or the PEFC Council.

B7.7.6 The **certification body** shall provide to the **PEFC Canada**, on request, the details of investigation, including the results, related to a substantiated concern and complaint about a **client**. On request, the information shall also be provided to the PEFC Council.

B7.7.7 The **certification body** shall provide PEFC Canada with an annual summary of the complaints they have received, as they pertain to the PEFC Canada system. This summary shall be provided in English.

Note: This summary will cover:

- a) identification of the **client**, including certificate number
- b) description
- c) subject of the complaint
- d) outcome/resolution of the complaint

B7.7.9 The **certification body** shall provide to the PEFC Council and **PEFC Canada**, on request, any information of their investigation of a substantiated concern received against a **client**.

B8. Management system requirements

B8.1 General

B8.1.1 The **certification body** shall have a system in place to maintain knowledge of and track changes in local, national, and international legislation on forest management applicable to its **clients**.

B8.1.2 On request, the **certification body** shall provide to the PEFC Council or **PEFC Canada** any information necessary for PEFC monitoring activities, including, but not limited to, management of risks of conflict of interest or impartiality and certification body rules and procedures for identifying and dealing with non-compliance by **clients**.

B8.1.3 In addition to the complaints and appeals mechanisms, the **certification body** shall conduct monitoring activities to identify and mitigate misrepresentation or corruption.

B8.1.4 The **certification body** shall protect the confidentiality and safety of **affected stakeholders** or any other person providing information in relation to PEFC certification, such as complaints and appeals.

B8.2 Internal audits of the certification body

B8.2.1 The certification body shall implement documented procedures for annual internal audits. Annually means once every twelve months, plus or minus three months.

B8.2.2 On request, the **certification body** shall provide a summary of results of its annual internal audits, limited to the performance of PEFC forest management certification, to the PEFC Council or **PEFC Canada**.

Annex C (informative) — References

Note: *This Annex is not a mandatory part of this Standard.*

The following publications were used as informative references in developing this Standard. While these references are not directly referenced within this Standard, they have helped to inform its development.

Alberta Forest Genetic Resources Council

Position Paper — Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO), 2001

CCFM (Canadian Council of Forest Ministers)

Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management in Canada: National Status, 2005

<http://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/pubwarehouse/pdfs/27407.pdf>

Defining Sustainable Forest Management in Canada: Criteria and Indicators, 2003

<http://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/pubwarehouse/pdfs/23636.pdf>

Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management in Canada: Technical Report, 1997

<http://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/pubwarehouse/pdfs/10350.pdf>

CSA Group

CSA Z809:16 (R2021) Sustainable Forest Management

Note: *CSA Group developed an initial standard, CSA Z809 Sustainable Forest Management, in 1996 (last reaffirmed in 2021) which has since been withdrawn by CSA Group.*

CAN/CSA-ISO 19011-03 (R2007) Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing

CAN/CSA Z731-03 Emergency preparedness and response

Ducks Unlimited

Smith, C. Integrating Wetlands into Forest Management: Why It Matters. Toronto: Ducks Unlimited, 2015. [Power Point Slides]

Government of Canada

Canadian Biodiversity Strategy: Canada's Response to the Convention on Biological Diversity, 1995. Ministry of Supply and Services, Ottawa.

<https://www.biodivcanada.ca/national-biodiversity-strategy-and-action-plan/canadian-biodiversity-strategy>

Delgamuukw v. British Columbia, [1997] 3 S.C.R. 1010.

R. v. Badger, [1996] 1 S.C.R. 771.

R. v. Van der Peet, [1996] 2 S.C.R. 507.

IAF International Accreditation Forum, Inc.

- IAF MD 1:2018, Mandatory Document for Audit and Certification of a management system operated by a multi-site organization
- IAF MD 4:2018 Mandatory Document for the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Auditing/Assessment Purposes
- IAF MD 5:2013 Mandatory Document for Determination of Audit Time of Quality, Environmental, and Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems
- IAF MD 11:2013 Mandatory Document for the Application of ISO/IEC 17021 for Audits of Integrated Management Systems

ILO (International Labour Organization)

Conventions and Recommendations.

<http://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/conventions-and-recommendations/lang--en/index.htm>

ISO/IEC (International Organization for Standardization/International Electrotechnical Commission)

ISO 14001:2015 Environmental management systems — Requirements with guidance for use

ISO/IEC 17000:2020 Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles

ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems

ISO/IEC 17021-2:2016 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems — Part 2: Competence requirements for auditing and certification of environmental management systems

IAF (International Accreditation Forum)

IAF MD 1: 2018 IAF Mandatory Document for the Audit and Certification of a Management System Operated by a Multi-Site Organization

IAF MD 25: 2022 Criteria for Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)

IUCN's Protected Area Programme (1994)

http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/wcpa/wcpa_overview/wcpa_ppa

NRCan (Natural Resources Canada)

Canadian Forest Service's Forestry Glossary ***<https://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/terms>***

Ménétrier, Jean. Afforestation of Wildlands: Forest 2020 Plantation Demonstration and Assessment Program in Quebec: Practical Guide 2005. Sainte-Foy, Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, Direction de la Recherche Forestière, 2005.

Operational-Scale Carbon Budget Model of the Canadian Forest Sector (CBM-CFS3), Version 1.2 User's Guide, 2011

<http://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/pubwarehouse/pdfs/33710.pdf>

The State of Canada's Forests — Annual Report, 2022.

https://natural-resources.canada.ca/sites/nrcan/files/forest/sof2022/SoF_Annual2022_EN_access.pdf

NRTEE (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy)

Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Putting Principles into Practice, 1996

PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes)

Chain of Custody, PEFC ST 2002:2020 Chain of Custody of Forest Based Products – Requirements

SCC (Standards Council of Canada)

Accreditation Program Overview

Requirements and Guidance for the Management Systems Accreditation Program: Sustainable Forest Management Sector Schemes

School of Forest Resources & Conservation, University of Florida

Hubbard, W. et al. Forest Terminology for Multiple-Use Management. University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, 1998.

Sustainable Forest Management Network

Beckley, T.M. et al. Public Participation in Sustainable Forest Management: A Reference Guide to Best Practices. Edmonton: Sustainable Forest Management Network, 2006.

UNEP (United Nations Environment Program)

Convention on Biological Diversity — Conference of Parties — 2005

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Indigenous Peoples

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

United Nations Economic and Social Development

United Nations Forum on Forests. Rep. no. Report on the 4th Session. United Nations, 2004. Web. 2014.

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/previous-sessions/unff-4/index.html>