IMG Certification Standards 2021, V2.0

Group Manager Requirements Checklist

Generally, the Group Organization administers the overall functions of the Group and coordinates certain activities, such as:

- ensuring conformance to the AFF Standards of Sustainability,
- administering entry and departure of members,
- maintaining records and reporting,
- conducting ongoing monitoring,
- managing the group certification process.

Section Number	Group Manager Responsibility	Conformance
1.1a	The Group Organization *must* be a legal entity competent to sign agreements with Group Members and to enter into binding contracts with certification bodies and other outside entities.	
1.1b	The Group Organization *must* describe roles and responsibilities of the Group Manager and Group Members with respect to forest management decisions and actions with respect to the implementation of the AFF Standards (e.g. plan development, harvesting, monitoring, etc.)	
1.1c	The Group Organization *must* have a written commitment to sustainable forestry and conformance to the AFF Standards.	
1.1d	The Group Organization *must* ensure Group Members have a written commitment to sustainable	

	forestry and conformance to the AFF Standards of Sustainability.	
1.2a	The Group Organization *must* adhere to ATFS eligibility requirements and may further define membership parameters for their Group, if desired.	
1.2b	The Group Organization *must* designate a Group Manager(s) who is responsible for overseeing all of the administrative details of ATFS Group Certification and for ensuring compliance with all applicable requirements.	
1.2c	The Group Organization must incorporate a Group Management System to verify that all Group Members are subject to annual internal monitoring.	
1.2d	The Group Organization must document Group Management Systems and verify responsibilities between the Group Organization and Group Members.	
1.3a	The Group Organization *must* inform Group Members of any and all fees associated with administration of the Group, if any, when they join the Group Organization.	
1.3b	The Group Organization *must* hold the ATFS Certificate on behalf of the Group Members.	
1.3c	The Group Organization *must* follow the ATFS logo use guidelines and ensure proper use of promotional claims about the Group Certification.	
1.3d	The Group Organization *must* issue a document to each Group Member that confirms the Group	

	Member participation and coverage by the scope of the third-party certificate.	
1.4a	The Group Organization *must* ensure that Group Members are notified that they are subject to all of the requirements and privileges of membership in the American Tree Farm System®.	
1.4b	The Group Organization *must* define and administer a procedure for admitting Group Members.	
1.4c	The Group Organization *must* maintain a procedure for expelling Group Members if they do not meet the requirements of the AFF Standards, and are not willing or able to take appropriate corrective action.	
1.4d	The Group Organization *must* maintain and update the membership list and ATFS database to reflect entries and departures of Group Members from the Group Organization.	
1.5a	The Group Organization *must* have a procedure for addressing and resolving disputes regarding conformance with the AFF Standards between and among the Group Members and the Group Organization pertaining to Tree Farm certification.	
1.5b	The Group Organization *must* follow and conform to the AFF Dispute Resolution Policy and assist ATFS in resolving any such complaints.	
1.6a	The Group Organization *must* maintain internal Group Member records and provide updated information on a regular basis to the ATFS Database.	

1.7a	The Group Organization must have a procedure for documentation of any change in Group organization structure or protocol.	
2.1a	The Group Organization *must* make the AFF Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification accessible to Group Members.	
2.2a	The Group Organization *must* have a procedure for evaluating conformance with AFF Standards prior to property enrollment under the group certificate.	
2.2b	The Group Organization *must* ensure that each Group Member either has an individual management plan or is covered by a larger group management plan.	
2.3a	The Group Organization *must* have a procedure for evaluating eligibility according to the ATFS Eligibility Requirements prior to property enrollment under the group certificate.	
3.1a	The Group Organization *must* establish and maintain a procedure and schedule for conducting ongoing monitoring of conformance of Group Members with the AFF Standards.	
3.1b	IMG Inspectors of the Group Organization conducting internal monitoring *must* have completed the current ATFS Tree Farm Inspector training course.	
3.1c	The Group Organization *must* review conformance to the AFF Standards and document the relevant findings.	

3.1d	Where a non-conformance is identified during ongoing monitoring, the Group Organization must document the non-conformity and work with the Group Member and other appropriate parties to take corrective action.	
3.1e	The Group Organization *must* ensure implementation of the corrective action and monitor conformity as part of the regular schedule of internal monitoring.	
3.1f	The Group Organization must implement an annual monitoring protocol in accordance to the following:	
3.1.f.i	The sample size should be calculated based on the number of Group Members.	
3.1.f.ii	The size of the sample should generally be the square root of the number of Group Members, rounded up to the upper whole number.	
3.1.f.iii	Twenty-five percent of the sample should be selected at random.	
3.1.f.iv	The size of the sample may be adapted up or down by a standard taking into account the following: -results of a risk assessment -results of internal monitoring or independent audits -quality/level of confidence of internal annual monitoring -use of technologies allowing gathering of information for specific requirements -based on other means of gathering information about activities on the ground	

3.2a	The Group Organization *must* adhere to the annual reporting requirements as defined by ATFS and maintain copies of past annual reports.	
4.1a	The Group Organization *must* contract with an accredited certification body to conduct the independent certification. The accredited certification body is required to conduct the audit according to accreditation rule, #27 under ANSI American National Accreditation Body or the Standards Council of Canada.	
4.1b	The Group Organization *must* coordinate the independent audit procedure to ensure the Certification Body has access to sufficient information and Group Member properties to determine conformance to the AFF Standards and ATFS Group Certification Standard.	
4.1c	If the certification audit results in a nonconformity, the Group Organization *must* work with all appropriate parties take corrective action and ensure timely implementation.	
4.1d	The Group Organization *must* submit a copy of the ATFS Certificate and a summary of the audit report that is appropriate for public distribution to ATFS.	
4.1e	The Group Organization *must* keep the Group Organization's program up-to-date and in ongoing conformance with the AFF Standards.	