

CARBON FARMING SKILLS:  
ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR CARBON  
FARMING INITIATIVE SERVICE  
PROVIDERS

SUBMISSION BY THE INSTITUTE OF FORESTERS OF AUSTRALIA (IFA)

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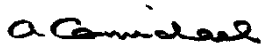
Carbon Farming Initiative Design, Land Division  
Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency  
GPO Box 854  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

The Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission about the Carbon Farming Initiative accreditation scheme.

The Institute of Foresters Australia (IFA) is the peak professional body for forest scientists, forest educators and forested land managers in Australia. We are a non-profit organisation with over 1200 members who are committed to the principles of sustainable forest management and the processes and practices which translate these principles into outcomes.

The IFA acknowledges the major contribution made to this submission by David Wettenhall.

The Institute would be pleased discuss the submission and any other issues DCCEE may wish to raise about accreditation.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Foresters of Australia (IFA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a comment to the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE) regarding the proposed national accreditation scheme for carbon service providers under the Carbon Farming Initiative.

The IFA understands the purpose of the discussion paper is to seek feedback on the design and implementation of the Carbon Farming Skills accreditation scheme.

## 2. ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF FORESTERS OF AUSTRALIA

The IFA has more than 1,200 members who are engaged in all aspects of forest management and conservation, forest industry, academia, research and sustainable natural resource management in Australia and overseas.

Voting members of the IFA:

- hold a tertiary degree qualification in forestry together with at least two years appropriate forest management or forest science experience and can demonstrate knowledge of and/or skills in the core subjects of Australian forestry; or
- hold any other tertiary qualification or other relevant experience together with at least four years appropriate forest management or forest science experience and can demonstrate knowledge of and/or skills in the core subjects of Australian forestry.

The IFA maintains the Registered Professional Forester™ (RPF) scheme that allows for public identification of foresters who have not only suitable qualifications and experience, but have made a commitment to ethical conduct and hold professional liability insurance. Membership of the IFA is not a requirement for RPFs.

Within the professional membership we have a Division which consists solely of consulting foresters who offer expert forestry consulting services, known as ACFA. New ACFA members must also be also Registered Professional Foresters and have their own Code of Practice.

Professional foresters are likely to be involved with the CFI in a number of roles. Foresters are likely to manage some of the CFI mitigation projects which include reforestation, avoided deforestation, improved forest management, soil carbon management and environmental plantings.

Professional foresters have skills through their training which equip them to measure biomass and conduct inventory of biomass across landscapes, develop natural resource management plans, research biomass accumulation of carbon, develop methodologies for the measurement of carbon in biomass, modeling the accumulation of biomass, preparation of reports for CFI projects and auditing of claims.

Many IFA members have experience in forestry Managed Investment Schemes (MIS) as company chiefs and senior management roles to line managers, independent expert foresters, researchers and regulators. These experiences may contribute to the Carbon Farming Initiative to the extent that forestry MIS involved growing trees which may have been owned and managed by separate parties on land owned by third parties. Extensive carbon farming projects may have similar social impacts to forestry MIS.

### 3. STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

#### SHOULD THERE BE ANY ADDITIONAL OR DIFFERENT CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION?

The criteria for accreditation outlined in the Public Consultation Paper were:

1. Meet proof of identity requirements and pass a 'fit and proper person' test;
2. Attain the national qualification in carbon farming; and
3. Hold professional indemnity insurance.

The IFA considers that CFI projects involving the management of forests should be the subject of a management plan approved by a Registered Professional Forester™ or a member of the ACFA Division.

The IFA recommends that the criteria for accreditation should include a commitment to full disclosure according to a standard code. The Australian Forests Growers developed a similar Disclosure Code for Afforestation Managed Investment Schemes which supported the use of standardised language and presentation of essential and comparable information for consideration by project participants.

The IFA, through its ACFA Division, has recently upgraded its Forest Valuation Standard and accompanying handbook which can be found at [www.forestry.org.au/>Contacts> ACFA](http://www.forestry.org.au/>Contacts> ACFA). Adherence to this standard is a condition of membership in the ACFA Division. The IFA intends to develop similar standards for other forest uses and has not excluded one for carbon measurement.

#### SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT ACCREDIT ANY CARBON SERVICE PROVIDERS OTHER THAN CFI PROJECT DEVELOPERS?

The discussion paper implies one purpose of the accreditation scheme is to “help landholders identify qualified service providers by ..... implementing an accreditation scheme for project developers ....”.

The IFA considers that the requirement for accreditation should be extended to other service providers, in particular, providers of information and CFI auditors.

At present there are no requirements that forestry, agricultural or natural resource management consultants be qualified, registered or licensed to practice in Australia. This allows some advisers who have limited knowledge and /or experience to offer their services as experts.

## SHOULD PARTICIPATION IN THE ACCREDITATION SCHEME BE VOLUNTARY OR MANDATORY?

In order to ensure a high standard of practice the scheme should be mandatory.

Project forest management plans must be authorised and approved by CFI accredited Registered Professional Foresters.

## SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ACCREDITATION SCHEME?

The government should consider providers of information and project service providers for immediate accreditation (grandfathering) upon demonstration of suitable qualifications and experience. Members of appropriate professional bodies should be encouraged to apply for accreditation within two years of the commencement of the scheme.