

Third-Party Forest Certification in British Columbia

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British Columbia Forest Facts

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Three globally recognized forest certification programs are used in British Columbia. All promote sustainability and provide assurance of responsible forest management.

OFFERING EXTRA ASSURANCE OF WELL-MANAGED FORESTS

Canada and the United States manage forests sustainably, ensuring they are there for future generations to be used for the many things that society values; including recreation, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and forest products. All major forest certification programs in North America are recognized by companies and governments around the world.

Canada's forest industry has developed an international reputation for delivering a stable supply of quality wood products from well-managed forests. In 2009, 32 per cent of Canada's forest product exports and 52 per cent of wood product exports were from the Province of British Columbia. The province is also a world leader in third-party sustainable forest management certification, offering added assurance of excellent forest practices.

There are more than 50 independent forest certification standards worldwide, reflecting

the diversity of forest types, ecosystems and tenures. While the programs differ, most promote sustainable forest management through principles, criteria and objectives consistent with government processes around the world.

In the case of British Columbia and Canada, forest certification supplements the comprehensive laws that the province has put in place to ensure that its public forests are well-managed.

This fact sheet illustrates how the three globally recognized forest certification programs used in British Columbia support sustainable forest management. It includes a comparison table that looks at how each standard responds to key issues such as biological diversity, wildlife habitat, illegal logging and deforestation.





FOREST CERTIFICATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

By year-end 2012, British Columbia had 52 million hectares (more than 128 million acres) certified to sustainable forest management standards. Canada as a whole is the only jurisdiction worldwide that has more certified lands.

There are three forest certification programs used in British Columbia:

CANADIAN STANDARDS ASSOCIATION'S SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD



(CAN/CSA-Z809) endorsed by PEFC, is an official national standard of Canada based on nationally and internationally recognized criteria for sustainable forest management.

It addresses environmental, social and economic issues and requires local ongoing public participation. By year end-2012, British Columbia had 24.7 million hectares (61 million acres) certified to CSA.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL



(FSC Principles and Criteria) is an international non-profit organization that supports environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically

viable forest management. By year end-2012, British Columbia had 2.4 million hectares (about 5.9 million acres) certified to FSC.

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE



(SFI 2010-2014) is a non-profit organization to promote responsible forest management. It is

governed by a fully independent board with equal representation from environmental, social and economic sectors. By year end-2012, British Columbia had 25.6 million hectares (63.3 million acres) certified to the SFI program.

BC has 840,000ha certified to both FSC and SFI.

Many organizations with forest management responsibilities in British Columbia are certified to the International Organization for Standardization ISO 14001 EMS program as well. While not a forestry-specific standard, ISO is an excellent environmental management system for implementing forestry standards and for tracking performance against set targets and objectives.

BASICS OF FOREST CERTIFICATION

Independent forest certification is a voluntary process that began in the 1990s in response to concerns about logging practices and forest conversion, especially in tropical regions.

The CSA, FSC and SFI programs all depend on third-party audits where independent auditors measure the planning, procedures, systems and performance of on-the-ground forest operations against the predetermined standard.

The audits, performed by experienced foresters, biologists, socio-economists or other professionals, are conducted for certification bodies accredited to award certificates under each of the programs. A certificate is issued if a forest operation is found to be in conformance with the specified forest certification standard. In addition to the initial certification audit, an annual surveillance audit is also required to ensure that management of the forest operation continues to conform to the standard.

As the comparison table (starting on page 6) shows, the CSA, FSC and SFI certification programs provide for basic forest stewardship by ensuring that harvested areas are reforested, that laws are obeyed and that there is no unauthorized or illegal logging. And they all go beyond this by conserving biological diversity, maintaining wildlife habitat, soils and water resources, and harvesting timber sustainably, all of which are essential components of well-managed forests.

In 2008, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers said the SFI, FSC and the CSA programs “demonstrate, and promote the sustainability of forest management practices in Canada.”¹

¹Canadian Council of Forest Ministers Statement on Forest Certification Standards in Canada www.ccfm.org/pdf/CCFM_Statement_FRandEN.pdf#page=2

INTERNATIONAL FOREST CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) are independent non-profit global programs. They endorse nationally - and regionally - developed forest certification programs using processes unique to each standard.



PEFC is the world's largest forest certification umbrella organization. A non-government organization founded in 1999, it supports sustainable forest management globally through assessment and endorsement of national forest certification schemes.

A PEFC-approved assessor examines the forest certification program in detail – from how it was developed to its forestry content, chain-of-custody certification, and accreditation requirements. The forestry requirements must conform to sustainable forest management criteria that are recognized and supported by 149 governments around the world.

PEFC has endorsed 31 national standards, representing 247 million hectares (610 million acres) certified around the world. As of December 2012, 101.9 million hectares (251.8 million acres) were certified across Canada. The CSA and SFI programs were endorsed by PEFC in 2005.



FSC is an international non-government organization that promotes responsible management of the world's forests.

It accredits national working groups to develop regionally appropriate standards, endorses those standards as consistent with the globally applicable FSC Principles and Criteria, and accredits independent third-party certification bodies to certify that forest operations conform to those regional standards.

Since 1993, 173.9 million hectares (429.7 million acres) in more than 79 countries have been certified to FSC standards, some of which are endorsed by FSC and some of which are interim standards developed by certification bodies with the approval of FSC. As of December 2012, 54 million hectares (133.4 million acres) were certified across Canada. There are three regional FSC standards in Canada, including one for British Columbia.

BASICS OF CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY CERTIFICATION

Only 10 per cent of the world's forests are certified.

Forest certification is often complemented with a chain-of-custody certification, which is a mechanism used to track wood from a certified forest, providing a link between the certified forest and the certified product.

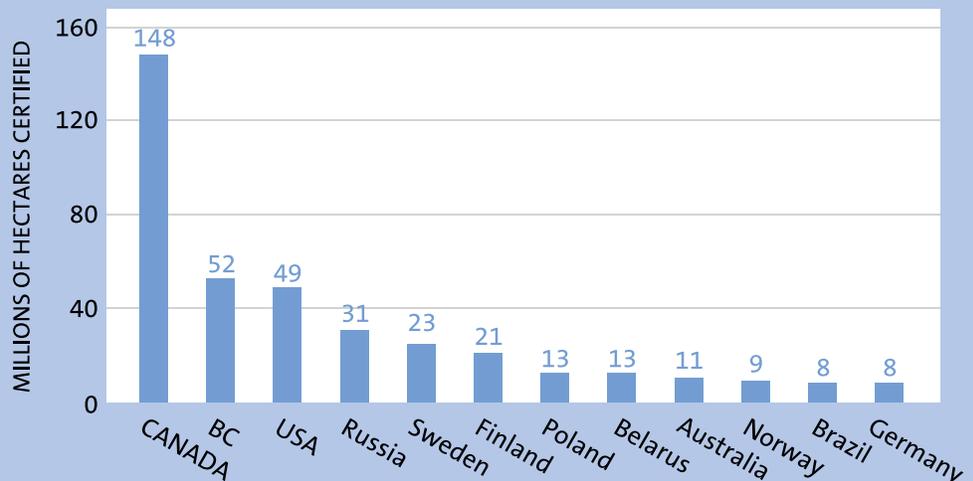
Forest certification programs used in British Columbia and international organizations such as FSC and PEFC rely on chain-of-custody certification to verify the origin of certified products and to back product claims and labels, such as the percentage of certified or recycled content.

The FSC and SFI programs have developed their own chain-of-custody standards. To ensure international alignment, CSA has adopted the PEFC chain-of-custody standard (PEFC Annex 4) for the purposes of its program.

FSC, PEFC and SFI all allow their labels to be affixed to forest products containing a mix of uncertified and certified content. Companies can claim that the product is 100 per cent certified only if it has been physically tracked separately from any uncertified content. More often the certified content is calculated as a per cent. This means, for example, that if 60 per cent of the fibre mix in a product is from certified land, the fibre can be sold as "60 per cent certified".



CANADIAN CERTIFICATION IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT YEAR-END 2012



Sources: www.certificationcanada.org (as of Dec 31/12), www.fsc.org (as of Dec 31/12), www.pefc.org (as of Dec 31/12)



CHOOSING CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

Wood is a sound environmental choice for most building needs because it is renewable, recyclable and versatile. Life cycle assessments of construction materials consistently rate wood and wood products as the best building choice, provided they come from well-managed forests.

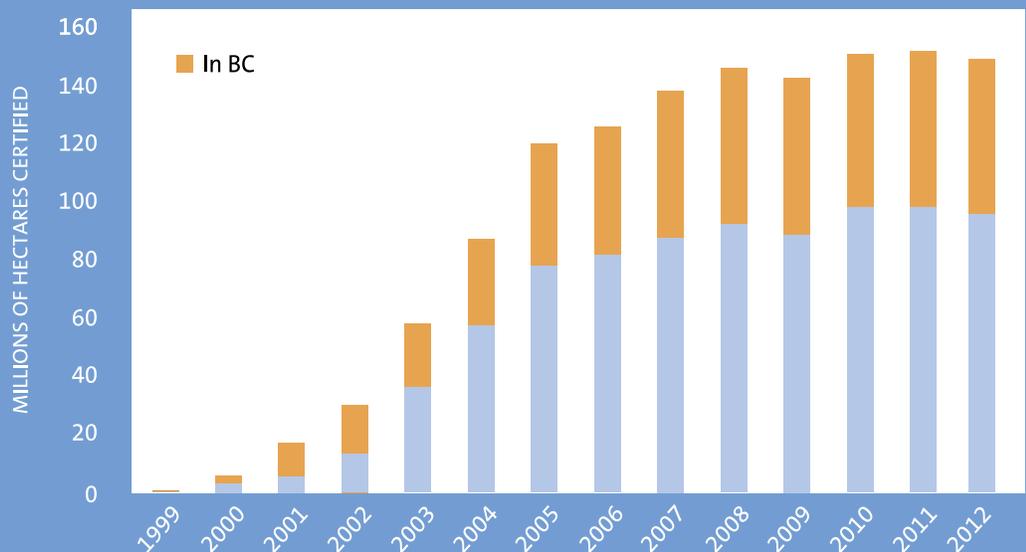
Many companies, large and small, are creating forest product procurement strategies so their suppliers know they will only buy products that come from legal sources and from operations that manage forests to high environmental standards. They represent a range of sectors including printers, home building centres, packaging companies, mills, wholesale lumber distributors and paper merchants.

In many cases, their procurement strategies give preference to suppliers who certify their operations to a credible program such as CSA, FSC or SFI. Buyers can find certified products to meet any need, from furniture to paper, and many popular products come in certified packaging.

Companies are using their buying power to improve forest management by choosing products they know are the result of responsible practices. They are demonstrating their corporate social responsibility and sending a clear signal to customers that they care about the global environment. Encouraging the use of all credible forest certification standards helps increase the availability of products from certified sources – and this improves global forest management standards.

In May 1999, 230,000 hectares on northern Vancouver Island were certified to the CSA standard, becoming the first lands in British Columbia to be certified to a third-party forest certification standard. The amount of land certified in the province has grown rapidly since. Today virtually every major forest company operating in British Columbia has achieved certification, and many small forestry operators, mills and manufacturers have acquired or are pursuing it as well.

CERTIFICATION TREND IN CANADA



COMPARING CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The fact that there is a choice of standards in British Columbia makes certification more likely, and this strengthens forest management.

While the three programs used in British Columbia have differences, the table on the following pages reinforces that they all promote principles, criteria and objectives that are viewed as the basis of sustainable forest management around the world. All three have balanced governance, with boards representing environmental, social and economic interests, and all three revise their standards regularly through an open public process. Governments, including the United Kingdom, France and Germany, recognize that CSA, FSC and SFI all promote sustainable forest management.

Credible certification options are available that reflect specific regional conditions and meet the needs of individual forest managers. For example, FSC was originally developed with the intent of addressing deforestation and forest conversion in developing countries. It has a strong focus on social issues including the rights of workers and indigenous peoples. CSA was developed in Canada where the majority of forest products come from public land so it has an especially rigorous public participation process. The SFI program has requirements that promote responsible forest management on uncertified private lands in Canada and the United States with strong outreach and training requirements, as well as avoiding controversial sources in offshore procurement.



The information contained below has been summarized from publicly available sources to provide an introductory guide to forest certification. Readers can obtain more detail from those sources, which are listed at the end.

	CANADIAN STANDARDS ASSOCIATION SFM STANDARD (CAN/CSA-Z809-08)	FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL PRINCIPLES & CRITERIA ¹ (FSC-STD-01-001)	SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE STANDARD (SFIS 2010-2014)
CONSERVE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND PROTECT SPECIES AT RISK	Conserve and maintain ecosystem, species and genetic diversity; ecosystem productivity and resilience; and habitats for native species and species at risk. (Criteria 1 and 2 and Elements 1.1-1.4, 2.1)	Conserve biological diversity through protection and maintenance, restoration or enhancement of forest regeneration and succession; genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity; productivity of forest ecosystems; and species at risk. Establish conservation zones and protection areas to protect species at risk. (Criteria 6.1-6.10)	Manage quality and distribution of wildlife habitats and implement stand-and landscape-level measures that promote a diversity of habitats and successional stages and conserve forest plants and animals, and aquatic species. Promote conservation of biodiversity through landowner outreach and off-shore procurement. (Performance Measures 4.1, 4.2, 8.1 and 11.1)
PROTECT AND MAINTAIN SPECIAL SITES (Biological and cultural)	Respect legislated protected areas; cooperatively identify and manage sites of special geological, biological and cultural significance for the long term. (Criterion 6 and Elements 1.4 and 6.2)	Protect representative samples of natural ecosystems, sites of special significance to indigenous peoples, and rare and endangered species and habitats. Maintain or enhance high conservation value forests. (Criteria 3.3, 6.2 and 6.4)	Protect sites that are ecologically, geologically or culturally important, including forests with exceptional conservation value. Respect Indigenous uses of non-timber forest products on public lands. (Performance Measures 4.1, 6.1, 8.1 and 18.2)
USE OF CHEMICALS	In the public participation process, address the use of pesticides, related regulations and integrated pest management. (Criterion 1)	Strive to avoid use of chemical pesticides. (Criterion 6.6)	Minimize use of chemicals. (Performance Measure 2.2)
USE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS	Reforestation programs are free of genetically modified organisms. (Element 1.3)	Prohibit use of genetically modified organisms. (Criterion 6.8)	Adhere to all applicable laws when conducting research on genetically modified trees. (Performance Measure 15.1)
MAINTAIN SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES	Conserve soil and water resources by maintaining their quantity and quality in forest ecosystems. (Criterion 3 and Elements 3.1 and 3.2)	Maintain and enhance watersheds and fisheries. Protect water resources. Conserve soils and minimize forest damage during harvesting, road construction and other disturbances. (Criteria 5.5 and 6.5)	Maintain long-term forest and soil productivity. Protect water bodies and riparian zones. Promote and conform to best management practices to protect water quality. (Performance Measures 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 10.1, 10.2, and 16.2)
ENSURE HARVEST LEVELS ARE SUSTAINABLE	Manage the forest to produce a sustainable flow of timber and non-timber benefits. (Criterion 2 and Element 5.1)	Rate of harvest is not to exceed what can be permanently sustained. (Criterion 5.6)	Ensure that harvest levels are sustainable and consistent with appropriate growth-and-yield models. (Performance Measure 1.1)
NO WOOD FROM ILLEGAL OR UNAUTHORIZED SOURCES (Also see Chain-of-Custody below)	Meet or exceed all relevant legislation, regulations, policies and other requirements. (Clauses 4.2, 5.4, 7.2, 7.3.3 and 7.5.1)	Respect all national and local laws, administrative requirements, and international treaties and agreements. Protect areas from illegal harvesting and other unauthorized activities. (Criterion 1.5)	Comply with applicable federal, provincial, state, and local forestry and related environmental laws, statutes, and regulations. Avoid wood from controversial sources, including illegal logging. (Principles 8 and 9 and Performance Measures 12.1, 13.1 and 14.1 and SFI Requirements Section 7 'Legality Requirements and Policies for the Avoidance of Illegal Logging')
REFOREST HARVESTED AREAS AND PROTECT FOREST LANDS FROM DEFORESTATION AND CONVERSION	Reforest promptly using ecologically suitable species. Protect forests from deforestation where ecologically appropriate. (Elements 2.2 and 4.2)	Maintain ecological functions such as forest regeneration and succession. Do not convert forests to plantations or non-forest except in specified, limited circumstances. (Criteria 6.3 and 6.10)	Reforest sites within specified time limits, using ecologically appropriate species. When sourcing fibre in North America, educate landowners on reforestation and afforestation. (Performance Measures 2.1 and 8.1)

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PUBLIC OUTREACH, TRAINING AND RESEARCH	Implement a public participation process for the development of strategies, values, objectives, indicators, targets and other topics of relevance for all elements in the standard including monitoring progress. Educate public participants and general public on forest ecosystems. Train workers about sustainable forest management. Conduct research where needed to ensure that plan is meeting habitat requirements. (All criteria, Clauses 5.1-5.5, 7.4.2 and A6.1.8 and Element 6.5)	Consult with affected people about management planning for forest operations. Train forest workers on local laws, international agreements and implementation of management plan. Offer training and other services to local communities. Conduct research to support monitoring program. (Criteria 4.1, 4.3, 7.3 and 8.2)	Participate in public planning processes for operations on public lands. Provide, or support the provision of advice, training and education to landowners, workers and producers about sustainable forest management. Conduct or financially support forest research. (Performance Measures 8.1, 15.1, 16.2, 17.1-17.3 and 18.1)
ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND/OR INVOLVEMENT	Contact Aboriginal communities and encourage involvement. Understand and respect Aboriginal values, knowledge and forest uses, and title, treaty, and other rights after seeking their input. (Clauses 5.2, 7.2 and 7.3.3 and Elements 6.1 and 6.2)	Allow Indigenous peoples to control forest management on their lands unless they delegate it. Do not diminish Indigenous rights. With their cooperation, identify and protect sites of significance to indigenous peoples and compensate them for application of traditional knowledge. (Criteria 3.1-3.3)	Comply with all local and national social laws. Confer with Indigenous peoples on public lands. Avoid wood from locations lacking effective social laws that address indigenous peoples' rights. (Performance Measures 13.1, 14.2 and 18.2)
REQUIRE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE	Make Sustainable Forest Management Plan, annual report, and audit findings publicly available. (Clauses 7.4.3 and 7.3.5)	Require that a summary of the management plan, results from monitoring and audit summaries are publicly available. (Criteria 7.4 and 8.5 and policy FSC-STD-20-009)	Place summary audit reports on the Sustainable Forestry Initiative website. (Performance Measure 19.1)
REQUIRE THIRD-PARTY AUDIT	Conduct annual surveillance audits and periodic re-certification audits according to international standards. Auditors must be accredited by a member of the International Accreditation Forum such as the Standards Council of Canada. (Annex B, Clauses B.1.1-B.1.4 and ISO 10911)	Conduct annual surveillance certification audits and re-certification audits every five years according to international standards and policies. Auditors must be accredited by Accreditation Services International. Lead auditors must be certified under ISO or equivalent requirements. (FSC-STD-20-001, FSC-STD-20-002, FSC-STD-20-004, ISO Guide 65, ISO 19011, ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001)	Conduct annual surveillance audits and re-certification audits every three years according to international standards. Auditors must be accredited by a member of the International Accreditation Forum such as the Standards Council of Canada. (Audit Procedures and Qualifications – SFI Requirements Section 5.5; ISO 10911 and ISO 17021)
CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY AND IDENTIFICATION OF FIBRE SOURCES	Track certified material from forest to final product using PEFC chain-of-custody standard. PEFC label must indicate if product contains a mix of fibre – which must be recycled, from certified forests, or from other responsible sources. Label may only be used if certified plus recycled content is at least 70 per cent and product contains no virgin fibre from controversial or illegal origins. (PEFC Annex 4: Chain of Custody of Forest-Based Products – Requirements)	Track certified material from forest to final product using FSC chain-of-custody standard. FSC label must denote 'MIX' if product contains a mix of fibre – which must be recycled, from certified forests, or from other responsible sources. Label may only be used if certified-forest and recycled content meets a minimum requirement (usually 70 per cent) and product contains no virgin fibre from controversial or illegal origins. (FSC-STD-40-004 and FSC-STD-40-021)	Track certified material from forest to final product using SFI chain-of-custody standard. SFI label must indicate how much of the product is recycled, from certified forests, or from other responsible sources. To use label product must not contain virgin fibre from controversial or illegal origins. (SFI Chain of Custody Standard)
LABEL EXAMPLES			
WEBSITES	www.pefccanada.org www.csaasfmforests.ca	www.fsccanada.org	www.sfiiprogram.org
	¹ The specific FSC requirements for forest certification in British Columbia are set out in the “Forest Stewardship Council Regional Certification Standards for British Columbia, October 2005” which can be found on-line at www.fsccanada.org		

FINDING CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

As a world leader in forest certification, British Columbia suppliers can deliver a wide range of certified products suitable for any project. Forestry Innovation Investment has posted a search tool on its forest information website www.naturallywood.com that lets customers identify suppliers in British Columbia who can offer chain-of-custody certificates for CSA (PEFC), FSC and SFI.

The website search option also allows readers to find out how much land in British Columbia is certified to CSA, FSC and SFI, which companies have achieved forest certification, how long it has been certified and which certification body conducted the audit.



SOURCES

Certification Programs

Canadian Standards Association's Sustainable Forest Management Standard

www.certifiedwood.csa.ca
www.csasfmforests.ca

FSC Canada – British Columbia

www.fsc.ca/bc/BritishColumbia.htm

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes

www.pefc.org

Sustainable Forestry Initiative

www.sfi-program.org

Certification Statistics

Certification Canada provides information about the certification programs used in Canada along with national statistics and information for buyers relevant to this topic www.certificationcanada.org

ACRONYMS

CoC	Chain of custody
CSA	Canadian Standards Association
EMS	Environmental management system
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
OHSAS	Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series
PEFC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes
SFI	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
SFM	Sustainable forest management

About 50% of wood products exported from Canada come from the Province of British Columbia's sustainably-managed forests. This publication is part of the 'Forest Facts' series, published by Forestry Innovation Investment. Visit www.naturallywood.com for details.

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British Columbia wood. Sustainable by nature. Innovative by design.