

FACT SHEET

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION

Since third-party sustainable forest management certification standards were introduced in Canada in the mid-1990s, certification—which complements Canada’s already stringent laws and regulations regarding forest management—has become a widely-respected means of demonstrating that Canadian forest companies meet the highest standards of sustainable forest management.

Today, in addition to Canada’s own Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard introduced in 1996, the international Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and North American (US and Canada) Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) have also been widely adopted by Canadian forest companies. All three standards are recognized internationally. Today, Canada leads the world in third-party sustainable forest management certification, with far more certified forest lands than any other country.

CSA and SFI are endorsed by the international *Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes* (PEFC), the world’s largest forest certification umbrella organization. Certification of a chain of custody, a mechanism used to track wood from certified sources through all phases of manufacturing to the buyer, is offered by the FSC, SFI and PEFC (also used by CSA).

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Photograph from “The Forests of Canada” collection, Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Services, 2003.

Why has third-party certification become so important to both producers and buyers of forest products? What issues do they address? And how do the standards fit into the framework of federal and provincial laws and regulations that govern Canada’s forest industry?

Issues addressed by certification standards

To verify that forest lands are being managed sustainably, all three certification standards used in Canada require that a forest company’s planning, procedures, and systems meet the standard’s requirements, and employ auditing procedures to measure performance of on-the-ground forest operations against predetermined criteria. They all require public disclosure of audit reports, verify that harvested areas are being reforested, confirm that all applicable

laws have been obeyed, and that no unauthorized logging has taken place. In addition, a separate certification process addresses chain-of-custody issues—ensuring that there is rigorous tracking and record keeping from the forest floor through all the steps of wood processing and manufacturing.

Do the standards address more than just tree harvesting issues?

All three of the certification programs go beyond requirements for timber harvesting by requiring the conservation of biological diversity, the maintenance of wildlife habitat, and the protection of soil, water, and air quality. In addition, the standards address social and economic issues arising from forest harvesting that affect local communities, in particular by seeking to engage local communities in discussion and decision-making regarding these issues.



Photograph from "The Forests of Canada" collection, Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Services, 2003.

Advantages of Adopting ALL SFM Standards

NewPage Port Hawkesbury Corporation, a leading Nova Scotia producer of newsprint and fine papers, was among the first Canadian forest product companies to adopt all three of the major SFM certification standards used in this country. Why adopt all three? According to Andrea Doucette, NewPage's Supervisor of Forest Sustainability, the main reason is the drive to excel in environmentally responsible forest stewardship.

"We have always seen ourselves as an environmentally progressive company and, even before certification, set the bar high for ourselves," Ms. Doucette said. "The requirements articulated in the various standards provide additional guidance on how forests should be managed today.

As a result, we have created a really well integrated sustainable forest management system that we will maintain for the long-term. We are very proud of that."

Certification to more than one standard also reinforces the marketability of NewPage's products. "Many of our customers require or prefer us to be certified to one standard or another, with different countries tending to adhere to different standards," Ms. Doucette said. "So, for us, being certified to more than one standard also means that we are able to provide products that meet the diverse requirements of customers around the world."

What do the standards say about Aboriginal involvement in decision-making?

Each of the programs requires, in its own way, engagement with Aboriginal peoples to ensure that Aboriginal rights, knowledge and values are respected. They also promote economic and social benefits for Aboriginal communities by engaging Aboriginal companies and workers in harvesting, processing, and other forest-related activities.

How is clear cutting addressed?

Each standard addresses clear cutting in its own way. All of the standards are sensitive to the ecological requirements of specific forest types and all recognize that the choice of silvicultural systems should be guided by what is ecologically appropriate for the local forest, which in many Canadian forests could be a clear cut system.

Are the standards evolving?

All of the standards remain current and relevant through reviews which usually occur every five years. When the time to revise arrives, committees consisting of a balance of representative stakeholders are established and the public is invited and encouraged to raise issues and contribute ideas. What is learned through consultation and review becomes the basis for updating the standards. Competition among the various standards has also helped to promote continuous evolution.

Why Forest Companies Seek Certification

Since forest certification standards were introduced in the mid-1990s, Canadian forest companies and industry organizations have embraced them enthusiastically. Why is this so? First, because an increasing number of forest product *buyers* around the world demand certification as a means of demonstrating to their customers that wood products come from forests managed to standards recognized by respected non-governmental organizations. Second, the standards provide practical guidance on improving sustainable forest management practices. This, in turn, improves economic performance and makes Canada's forest products more marketable around the world.

What is the major advantage of certification to Canadian forest companies?

Through voluntary market-based forest certification programs, forest companies in Canada can provide their customers around the world with the assurance that the products they buy come from sustainably managed forests.

How do companies choose among the standards?

The choice of a standard or standards depends largely on where a forest company sells its products and who it sells them to. In Canada, the CSA standard is the most commonly used. In the United States, the SFI standard is a more common requirement. In addition, some companies choose standards that are in tune with their operating environments. For instance, FSC has regional standards which are particularly appropriate to the management of forests in specific forest ecosystem zones in Canada.

What administrative framework is required to support certification?

To earn and maintain certification for the forest lands they manage, companies must meet legal requirements, develop and implement sustainable management practices, and develop in-house professional expertise to conduct the employee training, internal monitoring, public consultation, and liaison with external auditors that are integral to all certification regimes. Typically, a coordinator and small staff provide core expertise, supplemented over time by the increasing sustainable management skills of employees throughout the company.

Why Buyers Want Certified Forest Products

In recent years, a rapidly growing number of responsible forest products buyers have adopted procurement policies requiring that any paper or wood product be certified as legally obtained and sustainably produced. Corporate social responsibility of this kind is considered essential to the long-term sustainability of the world's forests.

The Relationship between CSA Certification and National Laws in Canada

The foundation for acceptable forest management practices in Canada is set out in a comprehensive body of provincial and federal forestry and related laws and regulations. Consequently, there is no need for Canada's CSA Standard to duplicate that framework. The purpose of the CSA and other standards is to provide a means of measuring forest companies' practices against nationally and internationally recognized criteria for sustainable forest management defined by respected non-governmental organizations. Importantly, the CSA standard complements applicable laws and regulations by acknowledging that they must be obeyed, and that no unauthorized logging can be allowed—in effect, adding weight to the laws of the land.



A "single-grip" harvester equipped with eco-tracks that limit damage to the forest floor selectively removes trees in a forest south-east of Monastery, Nova Scotia, managed by NewPage Port Hawkesbury Corporation. Thinning the forest permits more light to penetrate the stand, encouraging faster regeneration of "climax" species such as white pine, red spruce, and yellow birch.

FACT SHEET



Fed by wood fibre harvested in Nova Scotia, the supercalendered papermaking machine at NewPage's Port Hawkesbury mill produces 1,000 metric tonnes of high-quality paper each day, used by customers around the world to produce catalogues, magazines, and flyers.

What are the advantages of certification to buyers of forest products?

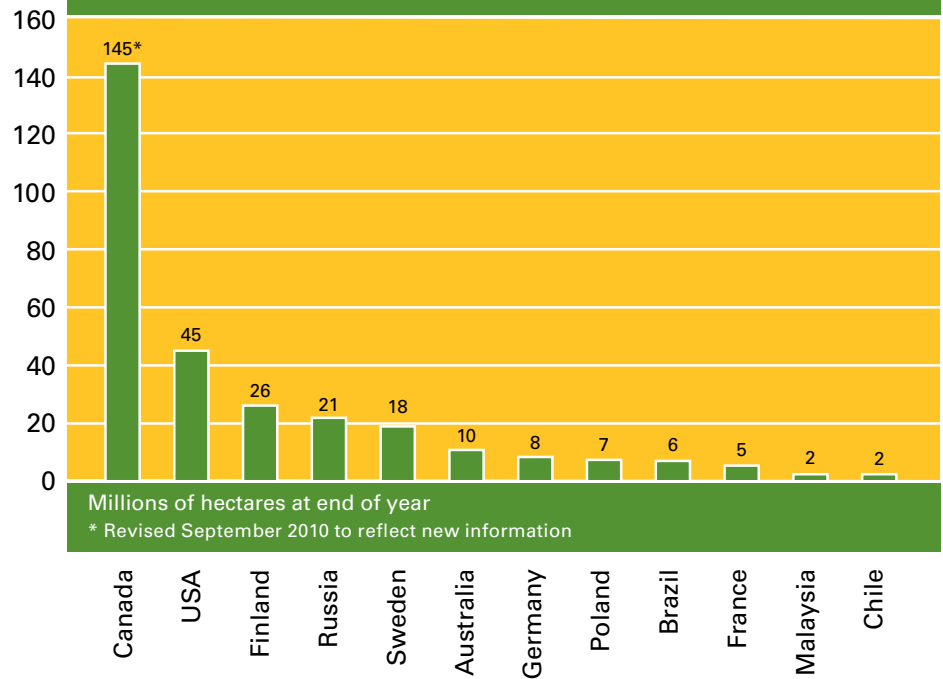
In the past, socially responsible consumers of forest products have had to approach suppliers to ask questions about the sustainability of their forestry practices. The adoption of forest certification by forest product producers provides assurances to the buyers of forest products that the products come from well managed forests.

How can buyers be sure that the products they are receiving are from certified sources?

All of the standards incorporate chain-of-custody audits that track the movement of certified forest products through the harvesting and processing chain. Companies that have met the requirements of an independent third-party chain-of-custody audit can apply to use a product "mark" that designates their products as originating from a forest certified to the selected standard. Many buyers around the world will only accept forest products bearing such a mark.

Canadian Certification in the Global Context

2010 Mid-Year *

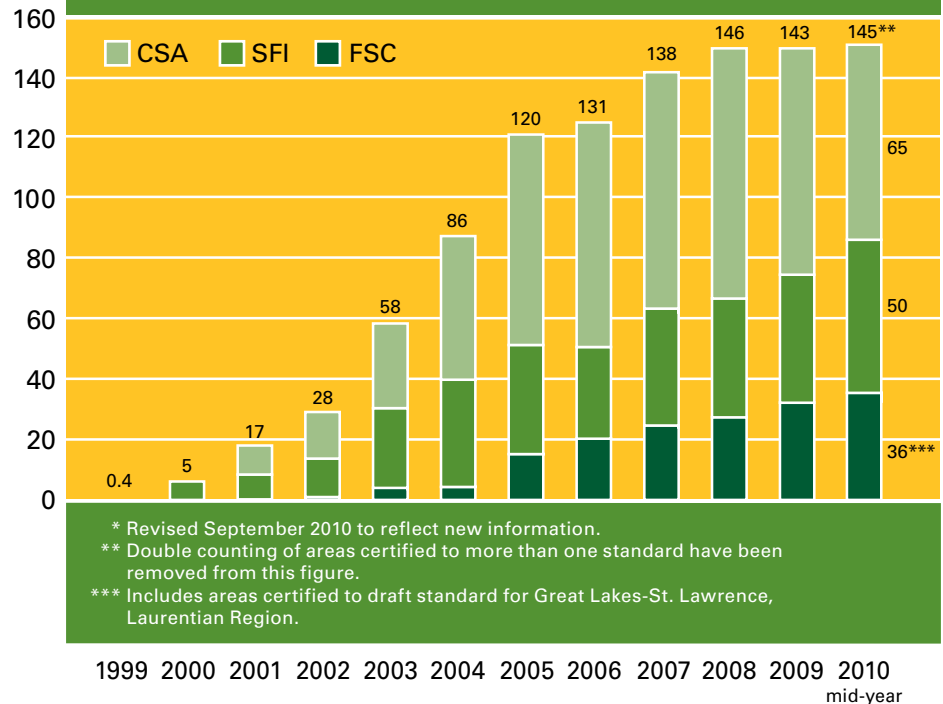


Millions of hectares at end of year

* Revised September 2010 to reflect new information

SFM Certification in Canada, 1999–2010

2010 Mid-Year *



* Revised September 2010 to reflect new information.

** Double counting of areas certified to more than one standard have been removed from this figure.

*** Includes areas certified to draft standard for Great Lakes-St. Lawrence, Laurentian Region.

1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 mid-year