

## FACT SHEET

# MAKING THE CASE FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION

Since third-party sustainable forest management (SFM) certification programs 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, three third-party certification standards have been widely adopted in Canada. In addition to Canada’s own standard, developed by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA), forest companies have also adopted certification programs developed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). All three programs are recognized internationally. As of 2014, Canada leads the world in third-party sustainable forest management certification with 161 million certified hectares.

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 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 (CSA or SFI).

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. Companies are also required to publicly disclose audit reports; verify that harvested areas are being reforested; confirm that all applicable laws have been obeyed; and demonstrate 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, manufacturing and distribution.



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

## More Than Just Harvesting

All three of the certification programs in use in Canada, besides including requirements for timber harvesting, address 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 management that affect local communities, in particular by seeking to engage local communities in discussion and decision-making regarding these issues.

## Aboriginal Engagement

Each of the certification 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



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

## Advantages of Adopting Multiple SFM Standards

Port Hawkesbury Paper LP (PHP LP), a leading producer of super calendered and other fine papers, was one of the first Canadian forest products companies to adopt more than one major SFM standard. According to Andrew Fedora, PHP LP's Leader in Sustainability and Outreach, "SFM standards and programs are essential for any forest products company interested in improving their forestry practices and maintaining public trust." This can be achieved by following a single SFM standard but there are clear benefits to maintaining multiple certifications. PHP-LP is currently dual-certified to the FSC and to the SFI standards.

"All major SFM standards are robust," said Mr. Fedora, "but each (standard) excels slightly in different

areas. Some standards put more emphasis on elements such as safety, training and efficiency; while others focus more so on stakeholder engagement and social issues." Incorporating more than one SFM standard helps companies such as PHP LP increase the merit and credibility to their SFM system.

Certification to more than one standard also reinforces the marketability of PHP LP's products. "In terms of both product sales and public trust, some markets favor certain SFM standards over others," states Mr. Fedora. "Maintaining multiple certifications helps strengthen our social license and allows us to service a wider range of customers from around the globe."

workers in harvesting, processing, and other forest-related activities.

### Clear Cutting

Each standard addresses clear cutting in its own way. All of the standards are sensitive to the ecological requirements of specific forest types and 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.

### How Standards Evolve

All of the standards remain current and relevant through reviews which usually occur every five years. When it's time to make revisions, committees consisting 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 systems has also helped to promote continuous evolution.

### Why Forest Companies Seek Certification

Since forest certification systems were introduced in the mid-1990s, Canadian forest companies and industry organizations have embraced them enthusiastically.

This is 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. In addition, 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.

### Choosing a Standard

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 and United States, the SFI standard is most commonly used.

In addition, some companies choose standards that are in tune with their operating environments.

### Earning & Maintaining 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. 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.

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A supercalendered papermaking machine produces 1,000 metric tonnes of high-quality paper each day, used by customers around the world to produce catalogues, magazines, and flyers.

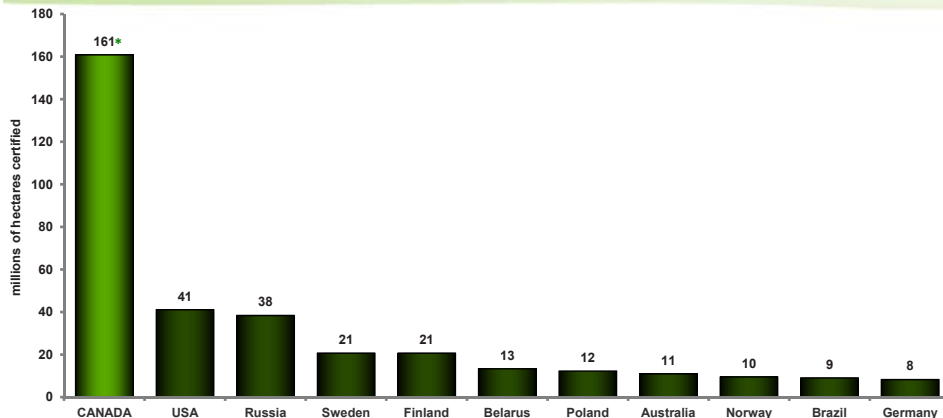
**Certification and Buyer Confidence**

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.

**Chain-of-Custody Verification**

All of the systems 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.

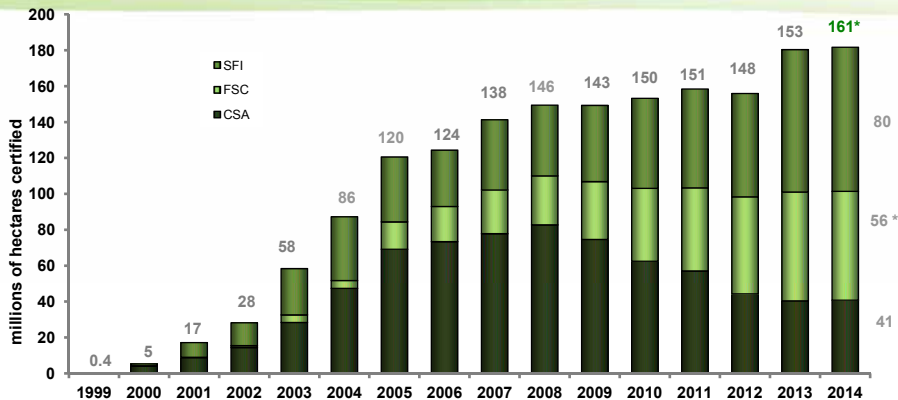
**Canadian Certification in the Global Context**  
2014 Year-end



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

Source: www.certificationcanada.org as of Dec 31/14

**SFM Certification in Canada 1999-2014**  
2014 Year-end



\* Double counting of areas certified to more than one standard has been removed from this figure. Bar heights include double counting.

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

Source: www.certificationcanada.org as of Dec 31/14