



# Third-Party Forest Certification in British Columbia

BC Market Outreach Network

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## BC FOREST *facts*

### OFFERING EXTRA ASSURANCE OF WELL-MANAGED FORESTS

British Columbia's forest industry has developed an international reputation for delivering a stable supply of quality wood and paper products from well-managed forests. 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.

The BC Market Outreach Network prepared this fact sheet to illustrate how the three globally recognized forest certification programs used in British Columbia support sustainable forest management. It includes a comparison chart that looks at how each standard responds to key issues such as biological diversity, wildlife habitat, illegal logging and deforestation.

*The three globally recognized certification programs used in British Columbia all promote sustainability and provide assurance of well-managed forests.*

### FOREST CERTIFICATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

British Columbia had 51.5 million hectares (127.3 million acres) certified to sustainable forest management standards in 2008. Only all of Canada has more certified lands.





There are three forest certification programs used in British Columbia:



**The Canadian Standards Association's Sustainable Forest Management Standard (CAN/CSA-Z809-02)** is based on nationally and internationally recognized criteria for sustainable forest management. It addresses environmental, social and economic issues and requires local, ongoing public participation process. In January 2008, British Columbia had 33.1 million hectares (82 million acres) certified to CSA.



**The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC Principles and Criteria)** is an international non-profit organization that supports environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable forest management. In January 2008, British Columbia had 577,295 hectares (about 1.4 million acres) certified to FSC.



**The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI 2005-2009)** 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. In January 2008, British Columbia had 17.8 million hectares (almost 44 million acres) certified to SFI.

Many organizations with forest management responsibilities in British Columbia have ISO 14001 EMS certification as well. While not a forestry-specific standard, ISO provides an excellent environmental management system foundation 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.

CSA, FSC and SFI all depend on third-party audits where auditors assess 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 5) shows, the CSA, FSC and SFI certification programs provide for the basics by ensuring that harvested areas are





reforested, that laws are obeyed and that there is no unauthorized or illegal logging. They all go beyond this by ensuring the conservation of biological diversity, the maintenance of wildlife habitat, soils and water resources, and the sustainability of timber harvesting, all of which promote sustainable forest management.

### INTERNATIONAL FOREST CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

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



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

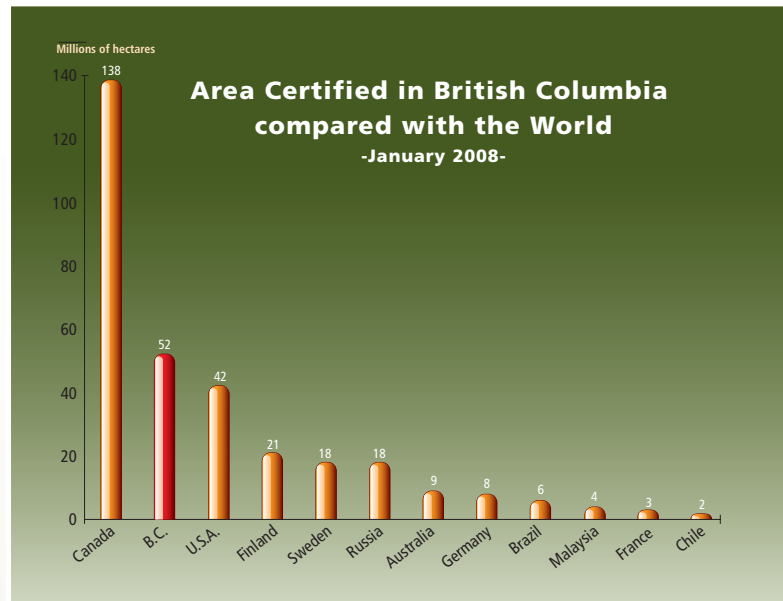
A PEFC-approved assessor examines the forest certification program in detail – from how it was developed to its forestry content, chain-of-custody certification, and accreditation requirements. The forestry requirements must conform with sustainable forest management criteria that are recognized and supported by 149 governments covering 85 per cent of the world's forests.

PEFC has endorsed 23 national standards, representing 200 million hectares (close to 495 million acres) certified around the world – more than half of them in 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 through marketplace recognition of certified 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 with those regional standards.



Since 1993, almost 94 million hectares (232 million acres) in 78 countries have been certified to FSC standards, some of which are endorsed by FSC and some developed as interim standards by the certification bodies through public consultation processes and with the approval of FSC. About 24 million hectares (59 million acres) are certified across Canada. There are four regional FSC standards in Canada, including one for British Columbia.

### BASICS OF CHAIN-OF-CUSTODY CERTIFICATION

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. To ensure international alignment, CSA and SFI have adopted chain-of-custody requirements that are based on the PEFC chain-of-custody standard (PEFC Annex 4).

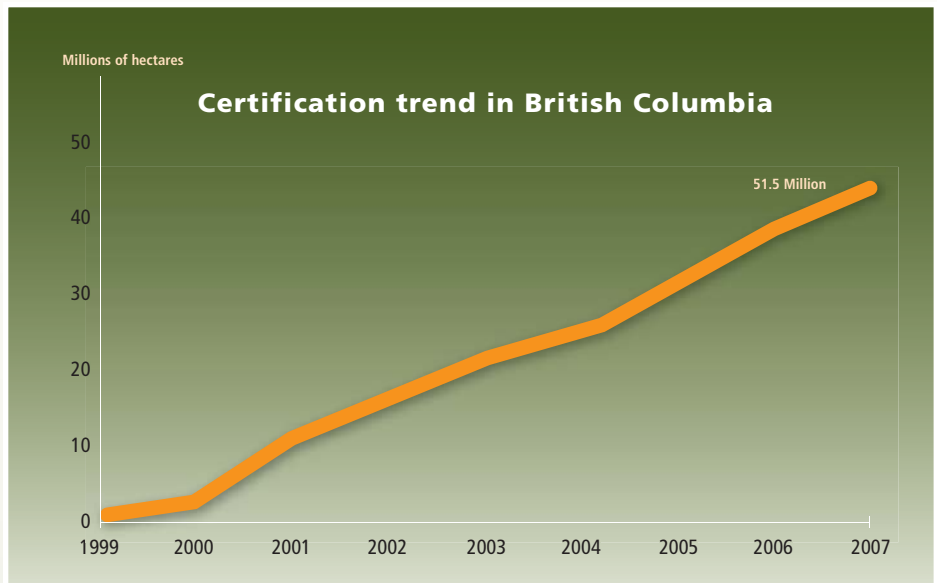


**CHOOSING CERTIFIED PRODUCTS**

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 it comes from well-managed forests.

British Columbia’s solid wood and pulp and paper industries complement each other. Fibre for pulp and paper production comes from sawmill wood residue that at one time was burned or sent to a landfill. Trees that are not suitable for higher-value products such as lumber may be used as pulp logs.

*In May 1999, 210,000 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 British Columbia has grown rapidly since. Today virtually every major forest company operating in British Columbia has either achieved or is pursuing certification, and it is becoming a priority for small forestry operators, mills and manufacturers.*



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. In many cases, these procurement strategies give preference to suppliers who certify their operations to a credible program such as CSA, FSC or SFI.

This allows companies to use 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.

Companies like Centex Homes, Hallmark Cards, Lowes, Office Depot, Staples and Time recognize the CSA, FSC and SFI certification standards and allow full access to products from forests certified to these standards. Encouraging the use of all credible forest certification standards promotes the use of certification and increases the availability of products from certified sources – and this improves global forest management standards.





### COMPARING CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

It is unlikely that any one forest certification standard could address the diversity of forest types and ecosystems across North America or even across British Columbia. The fact that there is a choice of standards makes certification more likely, and this strengthens forest management.

While the three programs used in British Columbia have differences, the chart on the following pages reinforces the reality that they all promote principles, criteria and objectives that are viewed as the basis of sustainable forest management around the world. 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 does not just focus on the land being certified but also requires risk assessment for procured wood to encourage procurement from acceptable sources. It has strong outreach and training requirements for suppliers.

### SUMMARY COMPARISON

	CSA SFM STANDARD (CAN/CSA-Z809-02)	FSC PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA <sup>1</sup>	SFI® STANDARD (SFIS 2005-2009)
<b>CONSERVE BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY</b>	<p>Conserve biological diversity by maintaining integrity, function, and diversity of living organisms and the complexes of which they are a part. (Canadian Council of Forest Ministers Criterion 1 - a CSA requirement)</p> <p>Note: CSA also addresses this issue through its CSA SFM Element 1.4 Protected Areas and Sites of Special Biological Significance.</p>	<p>Forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems and landscapes, and, by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and the integrity of the forest. (FSC P6)</p> <p>Representative samples of existing ecosystems within the landscape shall be protected in their natural state and recorded on maps. (FSC 6.4)</p> <p>Note: FSC standards refer to management regimes that are influenced by an understanding of natural disturbance patterns.</p>	<p>Programs to promote biological diversity at stand and landscape levels. (Performance Measure 4.1)</p>
<b>MAINTAIN WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SPECIES DIVERSITY</b>	<p>Conserve ecosystem diversity at the landscape level by maintaining the variety of communities and ecosystems that naturally occur in the defined forest area. (CSA SFM Element 1.1)</p> <p>Conserve species diversity by ensuring that habitats for the native species found in the defined forest area are maintained through time. (CSA SFM Element 1.2)</p>	<p>Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Forest regeneration and succession.</li> <li>b) Genetic, species, and ecosystem diversity. (FSC 6.3)</li> </ul> <p>Safeguards shall exist which protect rare, threatened and endangered species and their habitats (e.g., nesting and feeding areas). (FSC 6.2)</p> <p>These critical habitats are also addressed through the High Conservation value assessment. (FSC 9.1 and 9.3)</p>	<p>Apply knowledge, gained through research, science, technology, and field experience, to manage wildlife habitat and contribute to the conservation of biological diversity. (Performance Measure 4.2)</p> <p>Plans to locate and protect known sites associated with viable occurrences of critically imperiled and imperiled species and communities. (Indicator 4.1.3)</p> <p>Support of and participation in plans or programs for the conservation of old-growth forests in the region of ownership. (Indicator 4.1.6)</p>

<sup>1</sup>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.fsc.canada.org](http://www.fsc.canada.org)






**SUMMARY COMPARISON CONTINUED**

	<b>CSA SFM STANDARD (CAN/CSA-Z809-02)</b>	<b>FSC PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA</b>	<b>SFI® STANDARD (SFIS 2005-2009)</b>
<b>PROTECT/MAINTAIN SPECIAL SITES</b>	<p>Respect protected areas identified through government processes. Identify sites of special biological significance within the defined forest area and implement management strategies appropriate to their long-term maintenance. (CSA SFM Element 1.4)</p> <p>Respect traditional Aboriginal forest values and uses identified through the Aboriginal input process. (CSA SFM Element 6.2)</p>	<p>Management activities in High Conservation Value Forests shall maintain or enhance the attributes, which define such forests. Decisions ... shall always be considered in the context of a precautionary approach (FSC P9)</p> <p>HCVFs address forests of high biological, social and cultural values. The manager must conduct assessments, with consultation, and develop management strategies and monitoring programs for HCVFs. (FSC 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4).</p>	<p>Manage lands that are ecologically, geologically, historically, or culturally important in a manner that recognizes their special qualities. (Objective 6)</p> <p>Note: SFI also addresses this issue through its Commitment to the Protection of Special Sites and Forests With Exceptional Conservation Value, Conservation of Biodiversity Hotspots and Major Tropical Wilderness Areas. (SFI Program Overview 5.0)</p>
<b>MAINTAIN SOIL AND WATER RESOURCES</b>	<p>Conserve soil resources by maintaining soil quality and quantity. (CSA SFM Element 3.1)</p> <p>Conserve water resources by maintaining water quality and quantity. (CSA SFM Element 3.2)</p>	<p>Written guidelines shall be prepared and implemented to control erosion, minimize forest damage during harvesting, road construction, and all other mechanical disturbance; and protect water resources. (FSC 6.3 &amp; 6.5)</p>	<p>Implement management practices to protect and maintain forest and soil productivity. (Performance Measure 2.3)</p> <p>Meet or exceed all applicable federal, provincial, state and local water quality laws and best management practices . . . (Performance measure 3.1)</p>
<b>ENSURE HARVEST LEVELS ARE SUSTAINABLE</b>	<p>Manage the forest sustainably to produce an acceptable and feasible mix of both timber and non-timber benefits. (CSA SFM Element 5.1)</p> <p>Conserve forest ecosystem productivity and productive capacity by maintaining ecosystem conditions that are capable of supporting naturally occurring species. (CSA SFM Element 2.2)</p>	<p>The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels which can be permanently sustained. (FSC 5.6)</p>	<p>Ensure that long-term harvest levels are sustainable and consistent with relevant growth-and-yield models and written plans. (Performance Measure 1.1)</p>
<b>NO WOOD FROM ILLEGAL OR UNAUTHORIZED SOURCES</b>	<p>Products marked with the CSA SFM Mark must not contain any wood or wood raw material from illegal or unauthorized harvesting such as harvesting in forest areas protected by law. (CSA CoC - PEFC Annex 4 - requirements and label use rules)</p>	<p>Forest management areas should be protected from illegal harvesting, settlement and other unauthorized activities. (FSC 1.5)</p>	<p>Procurement policies support the principles of sustainable forestry including efforts to thwart illegal logging and promote conservation of biological diversity. (Performance Measure 8.5)</p>
<b>PROTECT FORESTLANDS FROM DEFORESTATION AND CONVERSION</b>	<p>Protect forestlands from deforestation or conversion to non-forests. (CSA SFM Element 4.2)</p>	<p>Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur, except in specific circumstances ... (FSC 6.10 &amp; 10.9)</p>	<p>Reforest after final harvest . . . through artificial regeneration within two years or two planting seasons, or by planned natural regeneration methods within five years (Performance Measure 2.1)</p>
<b>ABORIGINAL RIGHTS AND/OR INVOLVEMENT</b>	<p>Aboriginal and Treaty Rights: Recognize and respect Aboriginal and treaty rights. (CSA SFM Element 6.1)</p> <p>Respect for Aboriginal Forest Values, Knowledge, and Uses: Respect traditional Aboriginal forest values and uses identified through the Aboriginal input process. (CSA SFM Element 6.2)</p> <p>Demonstrate through documentation that efforts were made to encourage Aboriginal forest users and communities to become involved in identifying and addressing SFM values. (CSA 5.2d)</p>	<p>Indigenous peoples shall control forest management on their lands and territories unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies. (FSC 3.1)</p> <p>Forest management shall not threaten or diminish, either directly or indirectly, the resources or tenure rights of indigenous peoples. (FSC 3.2)</p> <p>Sites of special cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance to indigenous peoples shall be clearly identified in co-operation with such peoples, and recognized and protected by forest managers. (FSC 3.3)</p> <p>Indigenous peoples shall be compensated for the application of their traditional knowledge ... (FSC 3.4)</p>	<p>Program Participants with forest management responsibilities on public lands shall confer with affected indigenous peoples. (Performance Measure 12.4)</p> <p>Indicator 1: . . . that includes communicating with affected indigenous peoples to enable Program Participants to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand and respect traditional forest-related knowledge;</li> <li>- identify and protect spiritually, historically, or culturally important sites; and</li> <li>- address the sustainable use of non-timber forest products of value to indigenous peoples in areas where Program Participants have management responsibilities on public lands.</li> </ul>



## SUMMARY COMPARISON CONTINUED

	CSA SFM STANDARD (CAN/CSA-Z809-02)	FSC PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA	SFI® STANDARD (SFIS 2005-2009)
<b>REQUIRE INDEPENDENT AUDIT FOR CERTIFICATION CLAIMS</b>	Third-party audit by certification body accredited by Standards Council of Canada, according to ISO Guide 66 and/or ISO 17021 for EMS with specific forestry qualifications for CSA audits.	Third-party audit by certification body accredited by Accreditation Services International GmbH. Prior to 2006, certification bodies were accredited directly by FSC International.	Third-party audit by certification body accredited by ANSI - ASQ National Accreditation Board according to ISO Guide 66 and/or ISO 17021 for EMS with specific forestry qualifications for SFI audits.
<b>AUDIT OF FOREST PLANNING AND PRACTICES</b>	Audit includes but is not limited to checking SFM plans and practices to ensure conformance with plans and requirements of the standard.	Audit includes but is not limited to checking forest management plans to determine that plans conform with the standard requirements and are implemented in the field. (FSC P7)	Audit includes but is not limited to checking SFM plans and practices to ensure conformance with plans and requirements of the standard.
<b>REQUIRE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE</b>	Requires public disclosure of the certification audit report, and annual audit reports, as well as the SFM Plan and SFM annual report.	Requires full disclosure of a summary of the certification audit report and annual audit reports, as well as the management plan and a variety of other management documents.	Claims of certification shall be accompanied by a public report made available on the SFI website which includes a summary of the audit findings, including general descriptions of any non-conformances and corrective action plans to address them...
<b>INVOLVEMENT/ SUPPORT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS</b>	Members of CSA SFM Technical Committee responsible for the standard include Wildlife Habitat Canada, Canadian Wildlife Federation, NatureServe Canada and consumer, Aboriginal and labour representatives.	Environmental organizations such as WWF, Sierra Club, Greenpeace and ForestEthics support the objectives of FSC and have been involved to varying extents in providing input into FSC standards for Canada and in promoting the FSC program in the marketplace.	SFI has the support of and works in partnership with numerous conservation groups, including The Conservation Fund, Conservation International, the American Bird Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited (US).  Conservation groups are represented on SFI's board of directors and its independent External Review Panel. SFI represents local interests through 37 SFI Implementation Committees.
<b>CHAIN OF CUSTODY</b>	CSA CoC certification requires conformance with the internationally recognized PEFC Council CoC Requirements set out in PEFC Annex 4.  For further information, visit the CSA website at <a href="http://certifiedwood.csa.ca">http://certifiedwood.csa.ca</a>	FSC CoC certification requires conformance with the internationally recognized FSC CoC Standard 40-004 v2.  For further information, visit the FSC websites at <a href="http://www.fsc.org">www.fsc.org</a> or <a href="http://www.sfccanada.org">www.sfccanada.org</a> .	SFI CoC certification requires conformance with SFI Annex 2, which is based on the internationally recognized PEFC Council CoC Requirements set out in PEFC Annex 4.  For further information visit <a href="http://www.sfiprogram.org">www.sfiprogram.org</a>
<b>LABELS</b>	 <p>CSA provides optional on-product labels for organizations that have a valid CoC certification and meet the CSA label use requirements.</p> <p>The CSA labels cover 70% minimum certified content and 100% minimum certified content.</p>	 <p>FSC provides optional on-product labels for organizations that have a valid CoC certification and meet the FSC label use requirements.</p> <p>The FSC labels cover 100% certified, 100% recycled, and a "Mixed Sources" label that can include a combination of certified, controlled, and/or recycled content.</p>	 <p>SFI provides optional on-product labels for organizations that have a valid CoC certification and meet the SFI label use requirements.</p> <p>The SFI certified content labels cover 100% SFI certified content as well as a content label, which reports on the percentage of SFI certified content in the product.</p> <p>Under all of SFI's labels, non-certified fibre cannot come from controversial sources, which includes illegal logging and biodiversity hotspots.</p>

### GLOSSARY

**ANSI** American National Standards Institute  
**CoC** Chain of custody  
**CSA** Canadian Standards Association  
**EMS** Environmental management system

**FSC** Forest Stewardship Council  
**HCVF** High conservation value forests  
**ISO** International Organization for Standardization  
**PEFC** Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes

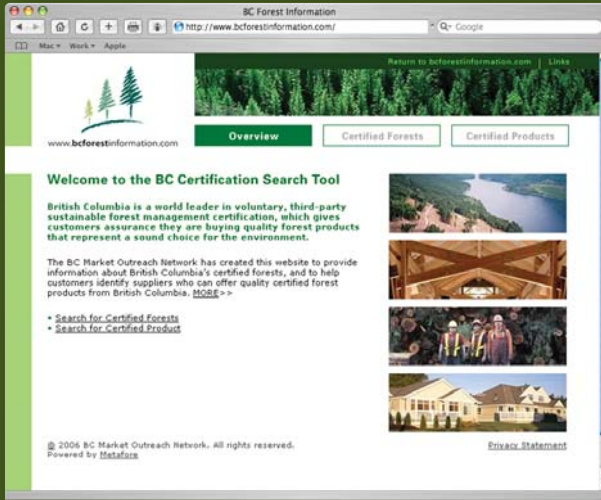
**SFI** Sustainable Forestry Initiative  
**SFM** Sustainable forest management



## FINDING CERTIFIED PRODUCTS

As a world leader in forest certification, British Columbia suppliers can deliver a wide range of certified projects suitable for any project. The BC Market Outreach Network has posted a search tool on its forest information website [www.bcforestinformation.com](http://www.bcforestinformation.com) that lets customers identify suppliers in British Columbia who can offer chain-of-custody certificates for CSA, FSC and SFI. In addition, suppliers may have certification to chain-of-custody standards that can track a mix of certified forest fibre used in the product.

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, the species found in a certified forest, 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](http://www.certifiedwood.csa.ca)
- Forest Stewardship Council International [www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org)  
FSC Canada [www.fscscanada.org](http://www.fscscanada.org)  
FSC British Columbia [www.fscscanada.org/BritishColumbia.htm](http://www.fscscanada.org/BritishColumbia.htm)
- The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes [www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org)
- Sustainable Forestry Initiative [www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org)

### Other useful links

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/](http://www.certificationcanada.org/)



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BC Forest Facts is a publication of the BC Market Outreach Network, delivering facts about British Columbia's sustainable forest management on behalf of the British Columbia government and the forest sector. Visit our website at [www.bcforestinformation.com](http://www.bcforestinformation.com)

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