

## QUICK FACTS - SUSTAINABLE BUILDING SERIES

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### Certified WOOD Products

#### BACKGROUND

Sustainable building design is linked to sustainable forest management practices. Wood is the major structural material used in over 90% of North American housing. That is one reason why it is imperative to ensure that this national treasure will be there for future generations. The Canadian forest products industry is a leader in sustainable forest management practices and Canada has maintained 90% of its original forest cover—more than any other country.

Sustainable forest management (SFM) certification programs have been growing rapidly in Canada and elsewhere in recent years. These programs respond to a variety of interests and values. The SFM certification audit is appealing to producers and customers alike because it provides customers of Canadian forest products with an independent assurance that forest management planning and practices promote SFM. Likewise the chain-of-custody audit tracks the forest product from the originating certified forest through to the end user.

#### ISSUE

Sustainable building rating systems and guidelines strengthen the interest in forest certification programs but some rating systems and guidelines have taken an exclusive approach to forest certification.

Many manufacturers are now implementing forest certification programs on a voluntary basis to demonstrate responsible forest management practices, and to show customers that their products promote sustainability. So far, forest products are the only building materials to move toward independent, voluntary stewardship certification.

There are three SFM certification standards being used by the forest sector in Canada:



- CSA - Canada's National Sustainable Forest Management Standard (CAN/CSA-Z809)



- SFI - the Sustainable Forestry Board's Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Program; and



- FSC - the Forest Stewardship Council's Principles & Criteria and/or Standards.

While these standards differ in the bodies that developed them and in approach, they all provide the assurance that their implementation promotes SFM through the application of principles, criteria and objectives that are consistent with many of the SFM criteria recognized by governmental processes around the world. Some of the fundamental differences that do exist are expected given that some were originally developed for application on private land, others on public land, and others for international reach, where social rights are not always provided for by law.

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Canada is one of the most proactive countries in the world in forest certification. The links between sustainable building approaches and forest certification are evolving and the availability of certified wood is growing in the marketplace. Beyond forest certification, there are a wide variety of environmental advantages to the use of wood products, as demonstrated by life cycle analysis.

Wood is a renewable resource and Canada's manufacturers of wood products are continually ensuring that it is renewed and the resource sustained.

The three forest certification standards in use in Canada are:

- Canada's National Sustainable Forest Management Standard (CSA) - The CSA is a not-for-profit membership-based association and the CSA Standard required extensive public participation in its development. The Standards Council of Canada approved the CSA Sustainable Forest Management Standard as a National Standard of Canada in 1996 according to nationally and internationally recognized criteria for standards development. Since the original SFM standard was published, the program continues to develop with standard revisions and complementary options such as chain-of-custody certification and label use rights to help link the certified forest with the product being delivered to the end-user.

- Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) - The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) developed the SFI program in 1995. While AF&PA continues to administer SFI Label Use Rights, all other aspects of the SFI Program were transferred in 2000 to the Sustainable Forestry Board, which was chartered as an independent body to oversee the development of the SFI Program Standard. The SFI 2005-2009 version is now available.

- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) - FSC is an independent, international not-for-profit, and non-government organization based in Bonn, Germany. Founded in 1993, FSC forest management standards are based on FSC's 10 Principles and Criteria of responsible forest management. The FSC also offers chain-of-custody certification and label use rights. In Canada, there are several regional FSC standards at various stages of development (Maritimes, Great Lakes St-Lawrence, British Columbia), and in the Fall of 2004 FSC Canada's FSC Boreal Standard was endorsed by FSC International.

Certification growth in Canada has tripled over the last two years. According to the Canadian Sustainable Forestry Certification Coalition, as of December 2004, Canada had:

- 47.4 million hectares certified under Canada's National Sustainable Forest Management (CSA)
- 35.5 million hectares certified under the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)
- 4.4 million hectares certified under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

With a total of 86.5 million hectares certified in Canada to these three SFM standards, Canada has the largest area of 3rd party independently certified forests in the world.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

See the joint Canadian Wood Council/Forest Products Association of Canada publication entitled *Green by Design* at [www.cwc.ca](http://www.cwc.ca) and visit [www.CertificationCanada.org](http://www.CertificationCanada.org).

