



Key Facts About SFI

SFI's mission is to advance sustainability through forest focused collaboration. We achieve this through a variety of means including standards setting, conservation collaboration, community and Indigenous engagement, and environmental education and career pathways. These key facts focus on the SFI Standards.

SFI Governance Reflects Diversity of Interests in the Forest and Conservation Sector

- Governance of SFI is structured purposefully to ensure equal voting power to environmental, social, and economic sectors.
- SFI is governed by a [Board of Directors](#) comprised of 18 individuals across three sectors: six members from the environmental sector, six members from the social sector, and six members from the economic sector.
- Board members include executive-level individuals of conservation organizations, academic institutions, Indigenous/tribal entities, family forest owners, public officials, labor, and the forest products industry.
- The SFI Board approves the SFI Standards following a multi-layered, robust, and transparent process of standards development, technical review, and consultation.

SFI Standards: Rigorous, Inclusive and Transparent Continuous Improvement Process

- The SFI standards have gone through multiple revisions over the past 25 years, with the most recent revision having produced the [2022 SFI Standards](#).
- During the [recent revision](#) period, there were two 60-day public consultation periods, open to anyone interested in providing feedback on SFI's then existing Standards or the Standards under development. Nearly 2,300 individuals and organizations participated in this open process by submitting comments and/or participating in 10 theme-based webinars (e.g., biodiversity).
- In addition, a diverse set of technical experts from the conservation community, the forest products industry, brand owners, private forest landowners and public forest managers, government agencies, trade associations, landowner associations, academia, and others were

part of [Task Groups](#) that reviewed all comments submitted, and provided recommendations to the [SFI Board](#).

- To ensure full transparency, all comments from the [1st comment period](#) and [2nd comment period](#), and explanations as to how the comments are addressed, are posted on SFI's website.
- Further, a separate group called the [External Review Panel](#) (ERP) provides ongoing, independent review of SFI and its work. This panel is made up of non-economic, non-industry external experts. The ERP monitors the SFI standard revision process and reviews every public comment submitted to ensure that the revision process is transparent and objective and that the comments were meaningfully addressed.
- New requirements emerged from this transparent and open revision process, which cover many themes including but not limited to climate smart forestry, fire resiliency and awareness, species management and recovery, and Indigenous Peoples' rights, recognition, and training. A summary of major enhancements, that resulted from this revision process, is located in the following [document](#).
- SFI has [multiple standards](#) to provide important solutions to the long-term sustainability of our forests.
 - The [SFI Forest Management Standard](#) applies to organizations who own or manage forestland.
 - The [SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard](#) applies to organizations that do not own or manage land but do procure wood directly from forests.
 - The [SFI Chain of Custody Standard](#) applies to organizations that source, process, manufacture, handle, trade, convert, or print forest-based products.
 - The [SFI Module for Indigenous Peoples and Families](#) offers owners and managers of Indigenous lands the opportunity to participate in a group certification program and benefit from economies of scale.
 - The [SFI Small Lands Group Certification Module](#) uses the infrastructure of SFI's Fiber Sourcing standard to find cost effective ways for mills or wood-procurement organizations to serve as Group Managers and engage small landowners in certification under one group certificate.
 - The [SFI Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard](#) (in development) is for organizations that own, manage, or are responsible for urban and community forests.
- There are over 350 million acres/140 million hectares of SFI-certified forests in North America ([see map](#)), and tens of millions of acres positively influenced by the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard.
- Many different kinds of organizations are certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard. These organizations include conservation organizations as well as organizations that manage

public lands, private lands, lands managed and/or owned by Indigenous Peoples, academically held/managed lands, and smallholder lands.

Indigenous Relations

- SFI is committed to building and promoting forest-focused collaborations rooted in recognition and respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge. [View our Indigenous relations commitment.](#)
- We firmly believe that inclusive, collaborative approaches to policy, program and relationship development lead to real progress on the ground and a positive difference in people's lives.
- The SFI Forest Management Standard is aligned with Indigenous values, including rights, knowledge, and environmental considerations.
- Today, 52 Indigenous groups across Canada and the U.S. work on over 9-million hectares/ 22-million acres of land certified to SFI.

SFI Standards: Performance-Based and System-Based

- The SFI Standards include both systems-based performance requirements and prescriptive outcomes-based performance requirements to achieve their objectives.
- For example, the SFI Forest Management Standard promotes "sustainable forestry" based on 13 Principles, 17 Objectives, 41 Performance Measures, and 114 Indicators. In some cases, Indicators take an outcomes-based approach and impose binary, prescriptive requirements (e.g., indicators relating to reforestation, harvesting, protection of biodiversity, and chemical use take a prescriptive based approach with specific prohibitions and/or metrics). Other Indicators, by necessity, take a systems-based approach which allow some flexibility as to how to achieve the Performance Measure, based on local variation. For greater certainty, systems-based Indicators still require specific results to achieve the Performance Measure.

Certification to the SFI Standards Undertaken by Independent Accredited Certification Bodies

- While SFI sets the standard, independent, third party-accredited [certification bodies](#) certify organizations to the SFI Standards.
- A certificate is issued only after the independent certification body determines a specific operation conforms to the SFI Standard's requirements.
- In addition, annual surveillance audits by certification bodies are mandatory on all certified operations to maintain certification.
- After a successful audit, public [summaries](#) are posted to the SFI website. These summaries include general descriptions of conformities, non-conformities, corrective action plans, opportunities for improvement, and exceptional practices.

Accreditation of Certification Bodies

- All [certification bodies](#) who conduct certification to the SFI Standards must be accredited under [ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board](#) (ANAB) or by the [Standards Council of Canada](#) (SCC).
- The accreditation (by [ANAB](#) or [SCC](#)) of certification bodies (such as KPMG, NSF, etc.) ensures that the audits conducted by such certification bodies—of organizations certified to SFI—are credible. This allows the market and agencies to place reliance on the results of third-party certification.

Certification Complaints Process

- An official [complaints process](#) is an important component of any legitimate certification program. SFI's official [complaints process](#) allows individuals or organizations to make a complaint regarding the validity of a certification to the SFI Standard. Each complaint is openly and independently investigated.
- A complaint does not challenge the credibility or the content of the SFI Standard, rather, it challenges the audit findings and the decision to grant the certification.
- Certification bodies are the first to investigate the complaint. If the findings of the certification body do not satisfy the complainant, the complainant can appeal to the accreditation body ([ANAB](#) and [SCC](#)) who perform an independent final investigation and adjudication of the complaint.

Stringent Rules Govern SFI Representations and Use of SFI On-Product Labels

- Only certified organizations are eligible to use [SFI on-product labels](#) and claims and make representations about being certified to SFI Standards and can do so only in accordance with specific rules and guidance.
- SFI provides [rules and guidance](#) (including authorized representations) that govern the kind of representations a certified organization can make using SFI's defined terms, with or without a label.
- [SFI's labels](#) and claims help consumers differentiate between products based on a globally recognized standard of responsible [forest management](#) and [fiber sourcing](#). Among other matters, all SFI labels must always include the SFI website as well as a unique label ID number. The label ID number tracks the label user to ensure they have a valid certification.

SFI Standard Conservation Outcomes

- SFI maintains a [Conservation Impact Sounding Board](#) made up of a diversity of perspectives to help SFI determine the conservation values and benefits associated with the footprint of lands certified to the SFI Standard. Below, are some of the findings achieved through this work:

- SFI certified lands store approximately 250,000 million metric tons (MMT) of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂e) – an amount roughly equivalent to the total emissions of all the world’s cars over a period of 38 years. This includes carbon stored in above-ground forest biomass (trees, shrubs) and in the underlying soils.
 - Over 730 billion cubic yards (559 billion cubic meters) of clean water flows through SFI-certified forests every year. That’s enough to sustain Niagara Falls for more than seven years.
 - 3 million trees were planted every day across the U.S. and Canada by SFI-certified organizations in 2021.
 - Because of the SFI Standards’ training requirements, 96% of all fiber supplied to SFI-certified mills in 2020 was delivered by trained harvesting professionals, compared to 34% in 1995 before the SFI standard existed.
 - SFI is also quantifying the biodiversity maintained and recovered on the SFI footprint.
- Results of SFI’s conservation impact achieved over the past ten years are highlighted in [SFI’s Conservation Impact: A Decade of Success](#) document.