

PROMOTING TRACEABILITY AND RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT PRACTICES

THROUGH THE SFI 2022 FIBER SOURCING STANDARD



CHALLENGE

Landowners who are not certified to a forest management standard represent a significant portion of the forest fiber supply in the United States and eastern Canada. As governments, brand owners, and civil society increasingly seek transparency into the origin of forest-based products, it is critical that SFI-certified organizations understand and track fiber sources to assess and mitigate the risk of sourcing from controversial sources.

OPPORTUNITY

The [SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard](#) distinguishes SFI from other certification programs by governing how SFI-certified organizations procure fiber from non-certified forestlands, elevating sustainability across entire forest landscapes. Fiber Sourcing Standard requirements apply only to organizations operating in Canada and the United States, regions where the risk of [deforestation](#), illegality, and other types of controversial sources is already low based on numerous credible sources.

For example:

- **DEFORESTATION:** Both the European Commission [Country Classification List](#) and Forest Trends' [Global Illegal Logging and Associated Trade Risk Assessment Tool](#) identify Canada and the United States as low-risk countries for deforestation.
- **ILLEGALITY:** Both the [Transparency International \(TI\) Corruption Perception Index \(CPI\)](#) and [World Justice Project \(WJP\)](#) scores prove low risk for Canada and the United States.

SFI FIBER SOURCING GOES BEYOND RISK AVOIDANCE

Despite the low-risk nature of the United States and Canada, the SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard requirements goes beyond merely requiring a risk assessment and risk avoidance. The Standard requires proactive, collaborative, landscape-level measures to ensure the responsible procurement of all fiber sourced by a mill. Uniquely, the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard requires SFI-certified organizations to individually, or collaboratively with the SFI Implementation Committees (SICs), implement measures to conserve biodiversity, protect soil and water quality, support logger and forester training programs, provide landowner outreach and assistance, and invest in scientific research.

Consequently, SFI Fiber Sourcing positively impacts both direct operations and broader cultural expectations around forest management and timber harvesting at the landscape level. It achieves this by requiring evidence of compliance with these requirements across all procurement operations, most notably from non-certified lands/operations.

LANDSCAPE-LEVEL IMPACTS

To meet the SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard, SFI-certified organizations must understand and actively monitor their “Wood and Fiber Supply Area,” which is defined as the geographic area from which an SFI-certified organization procures its wood and fiber. SFI-certified mills typically source wood and chips from a defined procurement area, often within a 100 to 200 mile radius of the mill.

EVALUATED THROUGH ANNUAL AUDITS

Within this supply area, mills must meet several Performance Measures under the SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard to demonstrate traceability and responsible procurement practices. These Performance Measures require organizations to implement systems that monitor sourcing risks, promote sustainable forestry practices, and support landowners and loggers in applying responsible forest management.

Compliance to the SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard must be demonstrated and verified by third-party auditing bodies during annual audits, including required in-woods field verification site visits; an element that is typically not required for FSC Controlled Wood or PEFC CoC audits, which validates the “PEFC Controlled Sources” claim.

The following section provides further detail on these Performance Measures, including practical explanations of how the SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard requirements are implemented on the ground.

SUMMARY

Certification to the SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard requires SFI-certified organizations to demonstrate knowledge of the origin of their wood fiber supply and the supply chain participants involved, and to implement measures that ensure responsible sourcing.

By requiring legal compliance, implementing measures to protect soil and water quality, mandating the use of trained loggers, conducting landscape-level biodiversity assessments, and supporting landowner outreach, SFI-certified organizations actively advance sustainable forest management while protecting species at risk and Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value. Companies certified to the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard can place the Certified Sourcing label on their products. Therefore, consumers choosing products with the SFI Certified Sourcing label can have confidence that the fiber in their products originates from responsibly managed forests, thereby positively contributing to a world that values and benefits from sustainable forestry.



IMPACT OF THE SFI 2022 FIBER SOURCING STANDARD

The following Performance Measures in the [SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard](#) demonstrate traceability and responsible procurement practices.

SFI 2022 FIBER SOURCING STANDARD OBJECTIVES

<p>OBJECTIVE 1. BIODIVERSITY IN FIBER SOURCING</p> 	<p>OBJECTIVE 2. ADHERENCE TO BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES</p> 	<p>OBJECTIVE 3. USE OF QUALIFIED RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS, QUALIFIED LOGGING PROFESSIONALS AND SFI-CERTIFIED LOGGING COMPANIES</p> 	
<p>OBJECTIVE 4. LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE</p> 	<p>OBJECTIVE 5. FORESTRY RESEARCH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY</p> 	<p>OBJECTIVE 6. TRAINING AND EDUCATION</p> 	<p>OBJECTIVE 7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND LANDOWNER OUTREACH</p> 
<p>OBJECTIVE 8. PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES</p> 	<p>OBJECTIVE 9. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC REPORTING</p> 	<p>OBJECTIVE 10. MANAGEMENT REVIEW AND CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT</p> 	<p>OBJECTIVE 11. AVOID CONTROVERSIAL SOURCES</p> 

OBJECTIVE 1: BIODIVERSITY IN FIBER SOURCING

To address the practice of sustainable forestry by conserving biological diversity.

- **Performance Measure 1.2:** Promotion and Conservation of Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value



WHAT OBJECTIVE 1 MEANS IN PRACTICE:

SFI-certified organizations are required to promote the conservation of biodiversity across their sourcing area, including taking measures to conserve Forests with Exceptional Conservation Value (FECV). Completing an FECV assessment of their supply chain requires SFI-certified organizations to identify their supply area and have relationships with their wood suppliers.

These assessments use datasets from government agencies, NatureServe, State Natural Heritage programs, and other reputable organizations to determine which species and habitats may be present. The SFI-certified organization then develops targeted programs to guide harvesting practices in areas where unique species or sensitive habitats are present. These programs include training for forest practitioners to help them identify and protect species at risk and FECV. Overall, these requirements ensure the SFI-certified organization understands the biodiversity characteristics of its sourcing area and takes concrete steps to conserve at-risk biodiversity attributes.

OBJECTIVE 2: ADHERENCE TO BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry through best management practices to protect water quality.



- **Performance Measure 2.1:** Certified Organizations Shall Clearly Define and Implement Policies to Ensure that Facility Inventories and Fiber Sourcing Activities Do Not Compromise Adherence to the Principles of Sustainable Forestry
- **Performance Measure 2.2:** Certified Organizations Shall, Individually or Through Cooperative Efforts Monitor the Use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) Relative to Scale.

WHAT OBJECTIVE 2 MEANS IN PRACTICE:

SFI-certified organizations are required to clearly define their fiber sourcing policies and make them available to wood suppliers and to have written agreements with them requiring adherence to best management practices (BMPs) to protect water quality. They must also use a verifiable, auditable monitoring system of on-the-ground inspections to confirm harvests of purchased stumpage (meaning the mill buys wood directly from landowner) comply with BMPs. In addition, individually or collaboratively, SFI-certified organizations must monitor and evaluate broader BMP compliance within their wood and fiber supply area and identify opportunities for improved performance.

The impact of this requirement has been documented in peer-reviewed journals such as [Forest Policy and Economics](#). The authors concluded that “*the role of the SFI Fiber Sourcing Standard becomes instrumental, as this standard is helpful in promoting sustainable forestry practices on uncertified forestlands, typically owned by families who do not have sufficient financial and technical resources for certifying their forestlands.*”

OBJECTIVE 3: USE OF QUALIFIED RESOURCE PROFESSIONALS, QUALIFIED LOGGING PROFESSIONALS AND CERTIFIED LOGGING COMPANIES

To promote and utilize qualified logging professionals, qualified resource professionals and certified logging companies.



- **Performance Measure 3.2:** Certified Organizations, Through Their Relationships with Wood Producers and Landowners, Shall Maximize the Delivery of Raw Materials from Qualified Logging Professionals and/or Certified Logging Companies.

WHAT OBJECTIVE 3 MEANS IN PRACTICE:

SFI-certified organizations are required to use trained logging professionals; meaning individuals with specialized timber harvesting skills who have completed SFI-recognized training programs and ongoing education.

Based on SFI's annual survey, 94% of all fiber supplied to SFI-certified mills was delivered by trained harvesting professionals. Supplier agreements for open-market (indirect) wood and fiber purchases often take into account mileage (zones) for procured fiber, supporting traceability efforts for fiber delivered to a mill. By maintaining detailed records of who supplies their wood and verifying the training credentials of these professionals, SFI-certified organization create a clear and auditable chain of responsibility. This ensures that the wood the mill uses comes from a qualified supplier, providing supply chain transparency and accountability in compliance with SFI Standards.

OBJECTIVE 4: LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

To comply with all applicable laws and regulations including international, federal, provincial, state, and local.



- **Performance Measure 4.1:** Certified Organizations Shall Comply with All Applicable Federal, Provincial, State and Local Forestry and Related and Environmental Laws and Regulations.
- **Performance Measure 4.2:** Certified Organizations Shall Take Appropriate Steps to Comply with All Applicable Social Laws at the Federal, Provincial, State, and Local Levels in the Country where the Certified Organization Operates.

WHAT OBJECTIVE 4 MEANS IN PRACTICE:

SFI-certified organizations must comply with all applicable laws and maintain a written policy for social laws, consistent with the spirit and intent of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998).

Holistic sustainability cannot be achieved without first meeting legal requirements and ensuring that social considerations are fully integrated into forest management practices.

OBJECTIVE 6: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

To improve the implementation of sustainable forestry practices through appropriate training and education programs.



- **Performance Measure 6.1:** Certified Organizations Shall Require Appropriate Training of Personnel and Contractors so That They Are Competent to Fulfill Their Responsibilities Under the SFI 2022 Fiber Sourcing Standard.

WHAT OBJECTIVE 6 MEANS IN PRACTICE:

SFI-certified organizations must have relationships their suppliers, verify training records, and have written supplier agreements. This ensures qualified logging professionals are implementing best management practices during their operations and taking into account appropriate measures to encourage reforestation/regeneration, and ensure invasive species management, cultural site protection and aesthetics management.

OBJECTIVE 7: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND LANDOWNER OUTREACH

To broaden the practice of sustainable forestry through public outreach, education, and involvement and to support the efforts of SFI Implementation Committees.



- **Performance Measure 7.1.** Certified Organizations shall support and promote efforts by consulting foresters, state, provincial and federal agencies, state or local groups, professional societies, conservation organizations, Indigenous Peoples and governments, community groups, sporting organizations, labor, universities, extension agencies, the American Tree Farm System® and/or other landowner cooperative programs to apply principles of sustainable forest management.
- **Performance Measure 7.2.** Certified Organizations shall individually or through cooperative efforts involving SFI Implementation Committee(s) support and promote, at the state, provincial or other appropriate levels, mechanisms for public outreach, education and involvement related to sustainable forest management.

WHAT OBJECTIVE 7 MEANS IN PRACTICE:

SFI-certified organizations are required to engage in outreach, education, and involvement with forest landowners, local communities, and forestry stakeholders to broaden the practice of sustainable forestry. By building awareness and understanding among landowners about sustainable forestry practices and the expectations of the SFI standard, organizations strengthen cooperation with suppliers and landowners across their sourcing areas. This enhances and exponentially multiplies the impact of the sustainability expectations of procurement operations by SFI-certified organizations. This engagement helps ensure that sustainable forestry practices—including the application of best management practices, compliance with legal requirements, and avoidance of controversial sources—are more widely understood and documented throughout the wood supply base. As a result, SFI-certified organizations strengthen the credibility of their claims that the wood fiber they procure is legal, responsible, and consistent with SFI Standards requirements, even when sourcing from non-certified lands.

OBJECTIVE 11: AVOID CONTROVERSIAL SOURCES

To manage the risk of sourcing fiber products from controversial sources.



- **Performance Measures 11.1:** The Certified Organization Shall Have a Process to Access and Collect Information Regarding the Sources of its Procured Fiber.

WHAT OBJECTIVE 11 MEANS IN PRACTICE:

SFI-certified organizations must have a process to access and collect information regarding their sources of procured fiber, specifically the country and region of harvest and tree species. In many instances, SFI-certified organizations collect much more detailed information to comply with local or statewide timber permitting and load-ticket transportation requirements administered by governmental agencies. It is quite common for SFI-certified organizations to publish “wood origin reports” or “fiber sourcing declarations” disclosing all country(ies) of harvest and species used in the manufacturing of the final product. This supports the legal compliance and due diligence efforts of downstream customers.

- **Performance Measure 11.2:** The Certified Organization Shall Individually and/or Through Cooperative Efforts Involving SFI Implementation Committee(s) Have a Process to Conduct a Risk Assessment.
- **Performance Measure 11.3:** The Certified Organization Shall Have a Process to Assess Substantiated Concerns.
- **Performance Measure 11.4:** The Certified Organization Shall Have a Process to Mitigate the Risk of Sourcing Controversial Fiber from High-Risk Areas.
- **Performance Measure 11.5:** The Certified Organization Shall Have a Process to Avoid Controversial Sources.

WHAT OBJECTIVE 11 MEANS IN PRACTICE:

SFI-certified organizations are required to establish and implement a due diligence system that identifies, assesses, and manages the risk of sourcing wood fiber from controversial sources, whether in the United States, Canada, or other countries. This includes conducting risk assessments of supply regions, classifying fiber risk levels, and maintaining information on the origin of the fiber and supplier controls. It also requires processes to mitigate and avoid controversial fiber from high-risk areas and to respond to substantiated concerns about supply sources. By systematically collecting and evaluating information about fiber origins and putting verifiable controls in place, Objective 11 ensures that SFI-certified organizations document and demonstrate that their procured wood fiber is not from controversial or unacceptable sources. This promotes traceability and responsible procurement practices, particularly for fiber that may come from non-certified lands.