

SFI CERTIFICATION FOR FIRST NATIONS BUSINESSES, ORGANIZATIONS, & COMMUNITIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

A GUIDE PRODUCED BY THE SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY
INITIATIVE & BC FIRST NATIONS FORESTRY COUNCIL



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BC First Nations Forestry Council

Forest Certification Overview

The Forestry Council works to ensure that certification systems respect and reflect the values, authority, and priorities of First Nations in BC. Our goal is to build understanding of certification as one tool among many to advance First Nations stewardship, rights recognition, and participation in the forest sector.

Forest certification is a voluntary, third-party process providing assurance that forests are managed according to defined environmental, social, and economic standards. It demonstrates a commitment to sustainable forest management and responsible wood products.

Key Principles of Certification Systems:

- **SUSTAINABILITY:** Ensures forest resources are maintained for future generations.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** Conserves biodiversity, water, soil, and wildlife habitat.
- **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Respects Indigenous rights, values, and cultural heritage.
- **ECONOMIC ACCOUNTABILITY:** Promotes fair business practices and supports local communities.
- **INDEPENDENT VERIFICATION:** Certification audits are carried out by accredited third parties.

Why is Certification Important for First Nations?

- Provides recognition of First Nations stewardship values and cultural practices.
- Creates opportunities for market access and premium pricing in wood products.
- Enhances credibility with governments, industry, and international buyers.
- Offers a framework to align sustainable practices with First Nations laws and values.

Certification Programs in BC

Several certification systems are recognized in Canada and BC, including:

- Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
- PEFC Canda (PEFC, formerly CSA)

For more information, connect with our Forest Certification Steering Committee:

Info@forestrycouncil.ca

SFI INDIGENOUS RELATIONS COMMITMENT

ADVANCING RESPECTFUL FOREST-FOCUSED COLLABORATION

As an independent, non-profit sustainability organization, SFI is committed to building and promoting forest-focused collaborations rooted in recognition and respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge. 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.

SFI recognizes the enduring leadership of Indigenous Peoples with respect to sustainable forest management. We deeply respect the unique place-based traditional knowledge that Indigenous Peoples have come to possess through countless generations of relationships with their territories.

We recognize that Indigenous Peoples are essential partners in any forest-focused collaboration and that their full participation will better enable us to collectively advance forest sustainability. Together, we can create a world that values and benefits from sustainably managed forests.

SFI draws its energy and inspiration from our many partners, including the dozens of Indigenous communities and businesses who have certified their forestlands to the SFI Standard and more than one hundred that we have partnered with and invested in through programs and initiatives reaching across all four pillars of our work. Every day, we strive to cocreate meaningful change alongside our community partners, while also listening, learning and growing as an organization to become the best possible partner we can be.

SFI is convinced that an investment in a young person's future is an investment in an entire community's future. We are committed to enhancing the number, relevancy and accessibility of education, training and job opportunities for Indigenous youth within the forest sector. We will accomplish this through direct investment, strategic partnerships, employer education and SFI's own employment practices.

SFI deeply respects Indigenous Peoples' rights and will adopt the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for policy, program and relationship development. We specifically acknowledge Indigenous Peoples' rights to self-determination, to develop strategies for the use of their territories, and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations.

SFI recognizes the need for ongoing education and training on Indigenous Peoples' rights and respectful relationship building within the corporate sector. We are committed to providing our forest sector network with training, guidance, resources and supports that will promote greater understanding, recognition and respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights, traditional knowledge, representative institutions and distinctive relationships with the forest.

SFI believes that communities themselves are best positioned to create the innovative forest-focused solutions that address the needs of today while also building the lasting capacity to achieve their many aspirations long into the future. SFI will maintain its flexible, adaptive approach to forest-focused community investment that responds to the evolving interests and priorities of our community partners.

Working together is critical. By investing in actions and initiatives that make a real difference in people's lives today, learning from our community partners, providing forest sector leadership and looking to future, SFI will steadfastly advance its commitment to building and promoting meaningful forest-focused collaborations that enable all communities to fully value and benefit from sustainably managed forests.

SFI BOARD APPROVED 2021

WELCOME

The BC First Nations Forestry Council is a non-profit organization which supports and provides services to First Nations in their efforts to increase their participation and leadership within British Columbia's forest sector. Through engagement, collaboration, and respect for past laws and protocols, we strive to unite diverse groups, fostering a future where First Nations play a central role in shaping the sustainable management of our forests for generations to come.

This partnership with SFI to support First Nations seeking certification is a valuable one. Many SFI standard requirements reflect and support values and an approach to land management that are important to First Nations communities. For example, 43,000 people in SFI-certified organizations have been trained in recognizing and respecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples to meet new requirements of the SFI 2022 Forest Management Standard.

But I value that SFI offers more than just standards, with pillars of work in community, education, and conservation that can support First Nations communities, businesses, and organizations in advancing their self-determined forest-focused priorities. Over the years, I've seen SFI's commitment to building relationships with First Nations and providing programs and resources to support their goals and grow their capacity. We are excited to work together to empower First Nations to seize opportunities and make informed decisions that will revolutionize British Columbia's forest sector.

At SFI, we believe that sustainable forests are critical to our collective future. SFI is a sustainability leader through our work in standards, conservation, community, and education. As an independent, non-profit organization, we collaborate with our diverse network to help address local and global sustainability challenges.

We have always valued our relationship with the BC First Nations Forestry Council, which is open, solutions-oriented, and committed to collaborating to advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples. SFI shares BC First Nations Forestry Council's values of Traditional Knowledge, Rights Recognition, Collaboration, and Trust. SFI is committed to building and promoting forest-focused collaborations rooted in recognition and respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge. Every day, we strive to cocreate meaningful change alongside our community partners, while also listening, learning, and growing as an organization to become the best possible partner we can be.

We are proud to have the opportunity to collaborate with the BC First Nations Forestry Council, and also proud that 24 BC First Nations have already chosen SFI certification or are part of SFI certification. Even more benefit from our Green Jobs funding, mentorship programs, grants, and other programs and resources. We share a commitment to rights recognition, sustainable forest management, youth supports, capacity building, and more to set BC First Nations up for success in the forest sector.



Lennard (Suxʷsxʷwels) Joe
CEO
BC First Nations Forestry Council



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Abusow".

Kathy Abusow
President and CEO
Sustainable Forestry Initiative



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INTRODUCTION

SFI and the BC First Nations Forestry Council are excited to collaborate to increase Indigenous participation in forestry as both organizations have complimentary strategic goals. SFI's 2025-2030 Strategic Direction is grounded in promoting responsible forestry and sourcing, providing nature-based solutions from the SFI footprint, fostering a lifetime of learning, and creating positive change that sustains communities. BC First Nations Forestry Council's Forest Strategy includes goals for a strong forest economy that supports meaningful sharing of revenues with First Nations, tenure reform that recognizes UNDRIP and supports a healthy and strong forest sector, and collaborative stewardship and land use planning. Together, we can work to achieve outcomes like increased integration of Indigenous Peoples' rights, Traditional Knowledge, and self-determined priorities into forest management practices; greater forest health and enhanced climate adaptation and mitigation; increased fire resilience for forests and communities; and more.

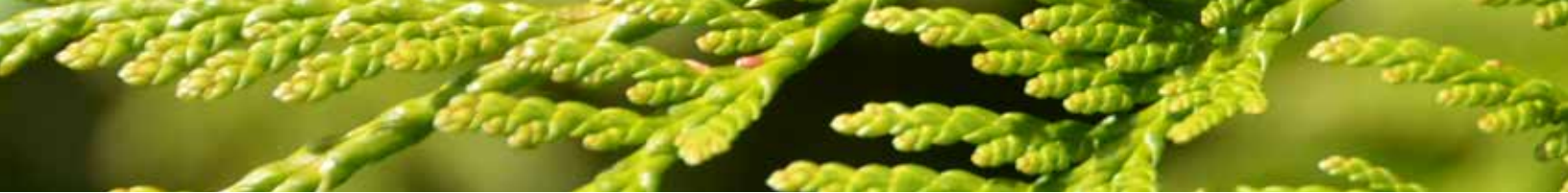
In BC, First Nations are increasingly recognized as leaders and partners in forestry. Initiatives like First Nations Woodland Licences, Community or First Nation Forestry Agreements, and the Indigenous Forest Bioeconomy Program foster economic opportunities; promote sustainable forest management; and support reconciliation efforts. As First Nations continue to secure forest tenures, there are tools and resources that can help sustainably manage forest resources while providing meaningful economic benefits. One tool is SFI's Forest Management Standard, which supports the implementation of many First Nations priorities and values and includes measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, cultural values, and forests with exceptional conservation value.



Through our partnership, we want to support First Nations in making BC forests more resilient to fire and climate change, protecting or recovering biodiverse species, supporting strong First Nation economies, and promoting a healthy and viable forest sector in BC that recognizes and advances Indigenous rights and interests within the province. We look forward to working together to offer a flexible, adaptive approach to forest-focused community investment that responds to the evolving interests and priorities of our First Nation partners.

MEET SFI'S INDIGENOUS RELATIONS TEAM





INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES SUPPORT THE SFI FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

CERTIFICATION	COMMUNITIES	LOCATION
Capacity Forest Management	Campbell River Indian Band • Kitasoo/Xai'xais First Nation • Lake Babine Nation, Lower Similkameen Indian Band • Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nation • 'Namgis First Nation • Wuikinuxv First Nation	British Columbia
Forbidden Timber Ltd.	Klahoose First Nation	British Columbia
Hampton Resources, Inc.	Burns Lake Native Development Corporation: Ts'il Kaz Koh First Nation (Burns Lake Band) • Lake Babine Nation • Skin Tyee Band • Cheslatta Carrier Nation • Nee Tahi Buhn Band • Wet'suwet'en First Nation	British Columbia
K'ómoks First Nation Forestry LP	K'ómoks First Nation • Qualicum First Nation	British Columbia
Stuwix Resources Joint Venture	Cook's Ferry Indian Band • Coldwater Indian Band • Nooaitch Indian Band • Shackan Indian Band • Siska Indian Band • Upper Similkameen Indian Band • Lower Nicola Indian Band • Upper Nicola Band	British Columbia
Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources)	Acadia • Bear River • Annapolis Valley • Glooscap • Sipekne'katik • Millbrook • Pictou Landing • Paqtnkek • Potlotek • We'koqma'q • Wagmatcook • Membertou • Eskasoni	Nova Scotia
Abitibi River Forest Management Inc.	Apitipi Anicinapek Nation • Moose Cree First Nation • Taykwa Tagamou Nation • Matachewan First Nation	Ontario
Boundary Waters Forest Management Corp.	Couchiching First Nation • Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Inc. (MNO) • Mitaanjigamiing First Nation • Naicatchewenin First Nation • Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation • Rainy Lake Tribal Resource Management • Rainy River First Nation • Seine River First Nation	Ontario
Miitigoog Limited Partnership & Miisun Integrated Resources Management Company	Anishnabeg of Naongashing • Naotkamegwanning First Nation • Northwest Angle #33 • Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation • Ojibways of Onigaming • Shoal Lake #40 • Wabaseemoong Independent Nation • Wabauskang First Nation	Ontario
Nipissing Forest Resource Management Inc.	Antoine Algonquin First Nation • Mattawa/North Bay Algonquin First Nation • Dokis First Nation • Nipissing First Nation	Ontario
Ondaadiziwin Forest Management Inc.	Lac Seul First Nation	Ontario
Montreal Lake Business Ventures Ltd. dba Kaskew Forest Products LP	Montreal Lake Cree Nation	Saskatchewan
Manulife Investment Management Forest Management Inc (Tomanamus Forest)	Muckleshoot Indian Tribe (Tomanamus Forest)	Washington, U.S.
Yakama Forest Products	Yakama Nation	Washington, U.S.
	TOTAL - 60+ COMMUNITIES	



FOREST CERTIFICATION FOR INDIGENOUS

COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES

SFI is North America's largest independent, third-party forest certification standard. By certifying a forest to the SFI Forest Management Standard or the SFI Indigenous Peoples and Families Module, not only are you joining a growing community that's dedicated to advancing sustainability through forest-focused collaboration, but you are becoming a part of change that promotes the recognition of Indigenous rights and builds capacity within First Nations.

Forest certification is a voluntary mechanism that promotes sustainable forest management and advances values in a structured way that supports training, capacity building, leadership reviews, and continual improvement.

SFI's Indigenous relations team is happy to meet with your organization to discuss SFI certification options and the various ways we can support your certification success.

**MEET SFI'S INDIGENOUS
RELATIONS TEAM**



60 **INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**
have certified to SFI Standards
INCLUDING
24 FIRST NATIONS IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA



THOSE ELIGIBLE FOR SFI CERTIFICATION INCLUDE:

- Indigenous land managers and tenure holders
- Indigenous (First Nation, Métis, Inuit) communities and governments
- Indigenous Economic Development Corporations and their subsidiaries
- Indigenous partnerships and joint ventures
- Indigenous entrepreneurs and family-owned businesses



BENEFITS OF SFI CERTIFICATION & JOINING THE SFI NETWORK

A benefit of SFI Certification is that it provides holistic approaches to sustainable forest management for the benefit of current and future generations, centering important values, including:

- Respect for Indigenous Peoples' rights
- Conservation of biodiversity
- Water quality and protection
- Protection of cultural and special sites
- Forest health and productivity
- Recreation and visual quality
- Protection of wildlife habitat and the promotion of species maintenance and recovery
- Restoration of land post fire and respect for cultural burns
- Community outreach and involvement
- Continuous improvement

ADVANCING FIRST NATIONS' SELF-DETERMINED PRIORITIES

- Certification can be a mechanism to advance First Nations' self-determined priorities by developing processes to address key objectives, and then training, reporting, and continuous improvement.
- Standards provide structure while enabling First Nations to develop their own processes to manage special sites, cultural values, water, or other values.
- If an element in the SFI Standard conflicts with the self-determined priorities of a First Nation, there is the possibility to issue an interpretation to clarify the intention, as SFI is always open to integrating Indigenous perspectives.

ACCESSING SFI GRANTS

- Communities that choose to be certified to the SFI Standards are given priority access to SFI and Project Learning Tree Canada funding opportunities, such as grants, wage matches, and more. See pages 10-11 for SFI grant examples.

GAINING MARKET ACCESS AND REPRESENTATION

- Gain greater market access through mills and supply chains, as many retailers and brands only sell certified products.
- Enhance credibility through independent third-party audits and measurable indicators.
- SFI is also happy to work with certified Indigenous communities and businesses to showcase their products and elevate their work through our communication channels, at tradeshow and events, and more.

63% OF CONSUMERS
SURVEYED HAVE
HEARD OF SFI

93% OF CONSUMERS WHO
HAVE HEARD OF SFI
TRUST SFI

Source: ERM Shelton Global Eco Pulse® 2024



BUILDING CAPACITY

- Create job opportunities to support community forest management.
- Implement mechanisms to train community members on all the different values that need to be managed and supported when responsibly managing a forest.
- Engage youth and get them excited about careers in the forest.



PROJECT LEARNING TREE CANADA

PLT Canada is an initiative of SFI committed to advancing environmental education, forest literacy, and career pathways, using trees and forests as windows on the world.

PLT Canada offers wage match funds, mentorship, skills training, and career advancement and networking opportunities for Indigenous young adults, as well as professional development, activities, and resources to engage youth in learning about the environment. Learn more about PLT Canada offerings on pages 22-23.



SUSTAINABLE
FORESTRY
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PROJECT
LEARNING
TREE
CANADA

The K'ómoks First Nation and Qualicum First Nation jointly manage the working forest of Rosewall Forest Tenure Holdings Ltd. In 2018, the Nations collaborated with TimberWest to pilot the SFI Indigenous Peoples and Families Module.





PAST SFI GRANTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Since 2010 SFI has invested in Indigenous priorities by supporting Indigenous-led community projects. Some examples include



shíshálh
NATION

A series of SFI Community Grants for the shíshálh Nation have supported traditional educational opportunities for shíshálh Nation members to identify, conserve, and map cultural and medicinal plants. The culturally important plant

cards are a tangible, community-created training resource that will enable field-based forestry personnel to more fully recognize and respect the shíshálh Nation's traditional knowledge and relationships with the land.



PENTICTON INDIAN BAND

A recent project of the Penticton Indian Band, supported by an SFI Conservation Grant, is working to link Indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge through enhanced riparian

management. The project collected empirical data and sylx cultural data on the relative health and abundance of sylx values and water quality parameters in streams (known as cecwixa in nsylxc n) and their associated riparian areas in managed tenures when compared to other areas.

INDIGENOUS TRIBAL ELDERS TRAINING YOUTH TO PROTECT CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

Partners: Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Adams Lake Indian Band, Bonaparte Indian Band, Neskonlith Indian Band, Simpcw First Nation, Skeetchestn Indian Band, Spltasin First Nation, International Forest Products Limited, West Fraser Timber Company Limited, BC Timber Sales

HEILTSUK CULTURALLY MODIFIED TREE DATABASE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

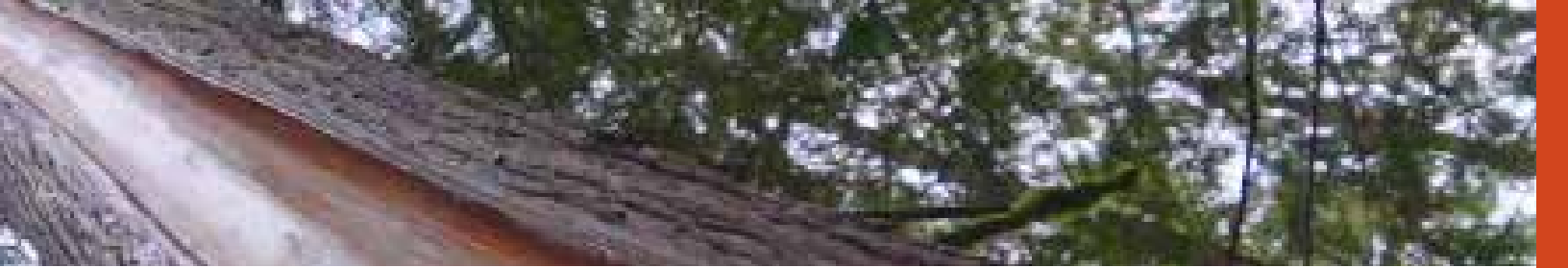
Partners: International Forest Products Ltd., Ministry of Forests Lands

CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT PLANT REGENERATION POST-HARVEST IN THE SPLATSIN TERRITORY

Partners: Yucwmenlúcwu, B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Ecora Engineering and Resource Group Ltd., Mountain Labyrinths Inc., Sicomous Model Forest, Tolko Industries Ltd.

CULTURAL AND MEDICINAL PLANTS PROJECT (SHISHALH NATION)

Partners: A&A Trading Ltd., Capacity Forest Management, Tsain-ko Forestry Limited Partnership, BC Timber Sales, Interfor Corporation



BREAKING INTO VOLUNTARY CARBON MARKETS

Many carbon registries require forest certification as a strict condition, while others strongly recommend it, especially for projects involving improved forest management.

Forest certification not only adds credibility and trust to carbon offset projects, but makes them more attractive to buyers and investors in the voluntary carbon market.

SFI CLIMATE SMART FORESTRY PROGRAM

SFI has funding to support the development and implementation of Indigenous-led climate smart forestry practices and strategies thanks to a \$4.7 million grant from Environment and Climate Change Canada, of which \$2 million is direct flow-through funding to First Nations. SFI is offering funding to learn from, develop, and implement climate smart forestry practices in First Nation managed forests.

- In this 3-year program (2024-2027), SFI aims to demonstrate measurable carbon and other co-benefits, such as increased biodiversity and habitat protection, through on-the-ground projects that employ improved forest management practices, various adaptation and mitigation strategies including use of fire, and restoration as part of a landscape approach. These projects will also contribute to the reduction of Canada's net greenhouse gas emissions using climate smart forestry practices. We welcome all BC First Nations to participate in the ECCC Climate Smart Forestry program.
- These grant opportunities can support the BC First Nations Forestry Council's collaboration and Traditional Knowledge values.



**based on the outcome of collaborative work by SFI with Natural Resources Canada and other partners, published in Sothe et al. 2021*

THROUGH THE ECCC CLIMATE SMART FORESTRY GRANT, SFI HAS AWARDED 5 BC FIRST NATIONS FUNDING:

- **Lhoosk'uz Dené Nation**
- **Tsay Keh Dene Nation**
- **Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation**
- **Quatsino First Nation**
- **Nazko First Nation**

SFI FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

CERTIFICATION SOLUTIONS FOR FORESTS OF ALL SIZES

There are five SFI standards, two of which are applicable for First Nations who are managing land. This guide is geared towards supporting understanding of these two standards; however, if you have a wood production facility such as sawmill and would like to be able to label your products, please reach out to our team to learn more about the SFI Fiber Sourcing and SFI Chain of Custody Standards. Additionally, if you have an urban forest in your area, please reach out to learn more about SFI's Urban and Community Forest Sustainability Standard.



“Certification puts checks and balances in place for others to measure a company’s ability to be sustainable from an environmental perspective, but with SFI, it’s not just environmental, there’s considerations for First Nations values, and more.”

**CHIEF LINDSAY TIGHE, GENERAL MANAGER,
STUWIX RESOURCES JOINT VENTURE**



SFI FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

The SFI Forest Management Standard promotes sustainable forestry practices based on 13 Principles, 17 Objectives, 41 Performance Measures and 141 Indicators. These requirements include

measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and forests with exceptional conservation value.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

To be eligible to certification under the SFI Forest Management Standard, a forest must:

- Exceed 20,000 hectares under active management for timber production*;
- Be under the management of a resource professional, such as a forester;
- Undergo independent audits by a competent and accredited certification body.

*Large, volume-based tenures are also eligible for certification.



SFI INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND FAMILIES MODULE

The SFI Indigenous Peoples and Families Module offers a pathway for small Indigenous community and family forests to obtain a leading, globally recognized third-party forest certification using

requirements that are tailored to their unique needs. The module is built from the SFI Forest Management Standard, but scaled down to focus on requirements that are more relevant to land managers with smaller tenures, making it more accessible for individuals or smaller organizations.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

To be eligible to certification under the SFI Indigenous Peoples and Families Module, a forest must:

- Be in Canada;
- Not exceed 20,000 hectares under active management for timber production**;
- Be under the management of a resource professional, such as a forester;
- Undergo independent audits by a competent and accredited certification body.

**Small, volume-based tenures and group certifications of multiple small forest tenures are also eligible for certification.

HOW TO CERTIFY TO THE SFI STANDARD

WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO GETTING CERTIFIED?

STEP 1: Determine which SFI standard (SFI Forest Management Standard or SFI Indigenous Peoples and Families Module) is right for your organization.

STEP 2: Complete and submit the SFI PARTICIPATION APPLICATION FORM (found at forests.org/how-to-certify). Certification bodies cannot issue an SFI certificate to an organization that does not have an approved application.

STEP 3: Develop your management procedures to meet the SFI Standard's requirements, train individuals in their roles, and implement your processes.

STEP 4: Prepare for an audit. Ensure your operations meet the SFI standard's requirements and contact a third-party accredited certification body to schedule an audit. You may also consider having a pre-audit to show your organization where there may be gaps and where you currently do not meet requirements in the Standard.

STEP 5: Get audited (3-5 days). The certification body you select will audit your operations and determine if you meet the SFI Standard's requirements. Your auditor will register your new certificate with SFI.

STEP 6: Sign a SFI Trademark License Agreement. This will allow you to use the appropriate SFI label on your products and in promotional items.

STEP 7: Use SFI trademarks. SFI will provide the necessary artwork to use the SFI promotional and on-product labels and any certification statements to support your certification and trademark use.

You as the applicant are responsible for reaching each of these milestones, but SFI has resources ready to assist your organization for Steps 1, 2, and 3. See more information on the costs of certification and ways to reduce costs in the next section.

HOW IT WORKS

- **Standards:** Certification organizations, like SFI, develop standards to advance sustainable forest management, covering environmental, social, and economic topics.
- **Audits:** Independent certification bodies conduct annual audits to verify that forest management practices meet the established standards.
- **Labeling:** Certified forests and products are labeled to inform consumers and provide knowledge that products are sourced from sustainably managed forests.

THE SFI FOOTPRINT

150+ MILLION HECTARES CERTIFIED TO THE SFI FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD

AND MILLIONS MORE POSITIVELY INFLUENCED BY THE SFI FIBER SOURCING STANDARD





AUDITING AND REPORTING

WHAT IS AN AUDIT?

Third-party independent audits are a cornerstone of SFI's standards. Audits verify that all the requirements set out in the SFI Standard and supporting documents are appropriately met.

Independent and accredited certification bodies conduct audits of forest operations. Certification bodies must be independent, objective, and qualified. Depending on the SFI Standard in question, these auditors must have completed an accreditation program through one or more of the following independent, international accreditation bodies: the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB) or the Standards Council of Canada (SCC). A list of approved certification bodies can be found at forests.org/IndependentCertificationBodies.



BC-based certification bodies who can conduct audits include PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), KPMG and Intertek. For the full list of qualified certification bodies check out this QR Code.

Auditors evaluate planning, procedures, and processes in the forest or in the mill to check that they conform to SFI requirements. A certificate for forest management is issued only after the independent certification body determines a specific operation conforms to the relevant SFI requirements. This process is the same for all SFI Standards.

SFI-certified organizations must provide a public audit summary to SFI following an audit to the SFI Forest Management Standard. They must submit the summary, to be posted on the SFI website, before they can make any public claims or statements about the audit. These public audit summaries must be prepared by the independent certification body.

HOW OFTEN DO I HAVE TO GET AUDITED?

SFI-certified organizations must undergo annual audits, over a five-year cycle to check that the standard requirements are being met. In year 1, the initial certification audit is conducted. In years 2, 3, and 4, surveillance audits are conducted. In year 5, a recertification audit is conducted.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN AUDIT?

An audit has four stages:

STAGE 1: The certification body conducts an off-site evaluation of documents, such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), policies, and records, that your organization has developed as evidence of conformance to the SFI Standard/Module.

STAGE 2: The certification body conducts an on-site audit by having conversations with your staff and contractors and going into the forest to better understand your forest management operations. This stage consists of:

Office audit—opening meeting, interviews with staff, review of GIS systems, review of harvest and silviculture records, internal audit results, etc.

Woods audit—assessment of active and completed harvest, reforestation, and road/trail construction activities; assessment of measures to protect water quality and quantity and to conserve biological diversity; interviews with contractors to assess their understanding of their responsibilities regarding the applicable harvest, silviculture, or road construction plan.

Closing meeting—auditors present and explain results. If there are any outstanding issues, auditors will outline a timeline to address them.

STAGE 3: The certification body reports issues, reaches closure for all audit findings.

STAGE 4: The certification body issues your SFI certificate.



HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET CERTIFIED?

The time it takes to prepare for a certification audit depends on what processes you currently have in place, and whether new ones need to be created to meet the SFI Standard's Principles, Objectives, Performance Measures, and Indicators.

HOW DO YOU PREPARE TO GET CERTIFIED?

To help prepare you for an audit, reach out to SFI, your regional SFI Implementation Committee, other First Nations holding a certification, and consultants who specialize in supporting First Nations build capacity to achieve certification, such as Capacity Forest Management.

Another time and cost saving measure is getting a pre-audit to show your organization where there may be gaps and where you currently do not meet requirements in the Standard. Knowing if there are gaps will help you with developing the necessary documents, implementing the required practices, or conducting the appropriate training. A pre-audit can also determine if your organization would benefit from the services of a certification consultant to give your organization the best chance of a successful audit. Finally, a pre-audit will help to make your organization's staff more comfortable with the audit process.



"SFI forest certification provides another tool to managing social, economic and environmental impacts of forestry in First Nation's territory. In addition, SFI certification addresses Indigenous interests and is an essential tool to promote awareness of responsible forest stewardship to First Nation communities ensuring that Indigenous cultural, spiritual, environmental and community

values are being considered in forest management decisions."

MIKE BECK, RPF
CAPACITY FOREST MANAGEMENT LTD

HOW TO REDUCE COSTS

Partnering with an existing SFI-certified organization or an SFI Implementation Committee can help shorten the certification process by leveraging their knowledge and experience. SFI can help connect you with the right organizations in your region.

Here are some ways to reduce audit cost:

- Schedule your audit with a nearby SFI-certified organization to save on costs such as travel and accommodations.
- Consider if including your organization's forest management in the scope of a neighbouring organization's forest management certificate is an option, so they can pay for the audit.
- Join with nearby First Nations under a group certificate to share costs.
- Make use of technology to ensure that onsite audit time focuses on 'in the woods' operations. Sometimes documentation review and interviews can be done using platforms such as Zoom or Teams, reducing auditor travel costs.





HOW MUCH DOES THIS COST?

The full cost of utilizing the SFI Standard, joining the SFI Implementation Committee, and having an audit to the SFI Standard varies from organization to organization. It includes a licensing fee to use the SFI Standard, an annual fee to join the SFI Implementation Committee, and an audit fee paid to an accredited certification body.



WHAT ARE THE SFI INC. ANNUAL FEES?

SFI-certified organizations pay an annual fee to SFI which funds the many programs that SFI-certified organizations can take advantage of, such as market access initiatives; standards development; and our conservation, community, and education work.

SFI will inform your organization of your annual fee amount before your initial certification audit. Indigenous organizations certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard typically pay \$1,100-\$2,000 in annual fees; however, it is dependent on the organization’s net sales.

ANNUAL NET SALES TIER (\$)	TIER FEE MULTIPLIER (PER \$ THOUSAND)	MAXIMUM POTENTIAL FEE (\$) PER TIER
0 – 5 million	N/A	Flat fee \$1,100
>5 – 50 million	0.250	\$12,350
>50 – 200 million	0.220	\$45,350

As your net sales grow so does the maximum potential fee, however the tier fee multiplier decreases.

For net sales greater than \$5 million, locate your applicable tier. Your fee would be the Maximum Potential Fee from the tier before, plus the Tier Fee Multiplier times your net sales above this tier.

For example, if your net sales were \$5.1 million, your fee would be calculated like this:
 $\$1,100 \text{ (Maximum Potential Fee from the previous tier)} + [0.250 \text{ (Tier Fee Multiplier)} \times \$100 \text{ (net sales above the lower tier in thousands)}] = \$1,125 \text{ US Dollars.}$



WHAT ARE THE SFI IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE FEES?

Organizations certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard and SFI Indigenous Peoples and Families Module must also participate in and pay dues to SFI Implementation Committees in the province(s) or region(s) where they operate. In BC, certified organizations join the Western Canada SFI Implementation Committee, whose dues in 2025 are \$750 or \$1,000 depending on the area certified. The regional SFI Implementation Committees offer a forum for information sharing about local forestry operations and responding to questions about forestry practices on SFI-certified lands. These grassroots groups also contribute to local initiatives, including community outreach and education. This is unique to SFI, and a benefit enjoyed by any land managers who wish to participate in knowledge exchange.

SFI is happy to work with communities if cost is a barrier to getting certified. Please reach out to our team for more information.



WHAT ARE THE AUDIT FEES?

Audit fees are paid directly to a certification body. Audit fees can vary widely and are based on each organization's unique operations and scope. For budget purposes, you can expect to pay approximately \$1,600 – \$1,750 per person/day. Auditor expenses (accommodations, travel, food, etc.) are in addition to this and are typically billed at cost.

Some factors that affect the time and cost needed for an audit:

- Size of the tenure/licenses under your organization's forest management plan
- Number of staff and forest operations contractors
- Complexity of your operations and if there are any components that are higher risk (e.g., biodiversity, water values, forest health)
- How spread out or concentrated your operations are
- Time and mode of travel to your main office and operations

Your organization can contact an SFI-accredited certification body for true and accurate audit cost estimates.





HOW ARE SFI STANDARDS DEVELOPED?

SFI Standards are developed in an open revision process. The SFI Standards revision process ensures credibility and transparency allowing everyone to participate.

Nearly 2,300 individuals and organizations participated in webinars and/or submitted comments to develop the SFI 2022 Standards. This regular, transparent process for revision of the SFI Standards is a critical part of SFI's commitment to continual improvement. By leveraging expertise across our network through focused engagement, and by including open comment periods, SFI creates standards that are grounded in science; include diverse perspectives; and benefit consumers, communities, and ultimately forests across Canada. To achieve this goal, SFI had strong participation from a diverse group of individuals representing forest sector, brand owners, conservation groups, resource professionals, landowners, educators, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, governments, and universities. This included a workshop with over 200 participants on respecting Indigenous Peoples' rights and relationship building, as well as a workshop for Indigenous participants only. This commitment to collaboration strengthens the positive impact of our standards in addressing sustainability challenges.

During the latest revision process, enhancements to the SFI standards were made to address key sustainability challenges. While respecting Indigenous rights has been a longstanding requirement of the SFI Forest Management Standard, a training requirement was added to Objective 8. Additionally, two new objectives were added: Climate Smart Forestry and Fire Resilience and Awareness.

OBJECTIVE HIGHLIGHTS

The SFI Forest Management Standard objectives highlighted below connect with the BC First Nations Forestry Council's values of **Traditional Knowledge**, **Rights Recognition**, and **Collaboration**. In meeting the requirements of these objectives, there are opportunities for SFI-certified organizations to incorporate Traditional Knowledge in forest management practices, advance rights recognition, and collaborate with other forest sector organizations to bring about transformational change.

OBJECTIVE 8: RECOGNIZE AND RESPECT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS

SFI respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples and believes our shared quality of life improves when forests are sustainably managed for current and future generations. These shared values allow for a strong and multi-faceted link between SFI and Indigenous communities across Canada and help support certified organizations in growing meaningful forest-focused relationships within their operating areas. The SFI Forest Management Standard is aligned with Indigenous values, including rights, knowledge, and environmental considerations.

Edits were made to Objective 8 that clarify the intent toward a meaningful process relative to relationship building and rights recognition. All certified organizations must:

- Identify the Indigenous Peoples whose rights may be affected by the SFI-certified organization's forest management practices.
- Determine the specific rights that may be affected by drawing on federal, provincial, state laws, and/or treaties and agreements between governments and Indigenous Peoples, and/or the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Provide appropriate training so that all staff and contractors are competent to recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge.



SINCE 2022

43,000 PEOPLE

**WITHIN SFI-CERTIFIED ORGANIZATIONS
HAVE RECEIVED TRAINING TO
RECOGNIZE AND RESPECT INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES' RIGHTS**

**AS PER THE NEW REQUIREMENTS OF THE
SFI 2022 FOREST MANAGEMENT STANDARD**

Certified organizations with management responsibilities on public lands are now required to implement additional requirements intended to further enhance their ability to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples within their operating areas. These measures include:

- Promoting meaningful dialogue through respecting Indigenous Peoples' representative institutions and communications protocols.
- Providing opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to review certified organizations' forest management practices and forest management plans.
- Ensuring respect for Indigenous Peoples' Traditional Knowledge, including non-timber forest products and sites of spiritual, historical, and cultural importance.
- Developing additional guidance for certified organizations regarding approaches to identifying and implementing appropriate communications protocols.

SFI continues to develop tools that will assist certified organizations in training personnel and contractors, rights identification and recognition, and relationship building for the purposes of Objective 8. For example, SFI's educational initiative Project Learning Tree Canada created nine courses with Sault College on Indigenous rights and relationship building available at: forests.org/indigenous-online-courses.

OBJECTIVE 9: CLIMATE SMART FORESTRY

Forests play a critical role in addressing climate change and storing carbon. Given the increasing global impact of climate change, and increased understanding about the important role of forests, SFI developed a new objective focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The new objective requires certified organizations to:

- Individually or through cooperative efforts, such as the engagement of SFI Implementation Committees, identify and address climate change risks to forests and forest operations and develop adaptation objectives and strategies.
- Identify and address opportunities to mitigate effects of climate change associated with forest operations.
- Report annually to SFI on progress toward achieving climate change strategies and plans and measures to mitigate climate change associated with forest operations.
- Have a program to identify and address GHG emissions associated with forest operations within their operational control.



OBJECTIVE 10: FIRE RESILIENCE AND AWARENESS

The link between wildfires and climate is well documented. The planet is warming with many regions in Canada experiencing increased incidence of wildfire and the undesirable impacts that result. Sustainable forest management can reduce risk of these undesirable impacts of wildfire.

The new Objective 10—Fire Resilience and Awareness—elevates SFI's role in addressing wildfire to ensure the efficacy of such efforts. SFI-certified organizations must limit the susceptibility of the forests they own or manage to undesirable impacts of wildfire and raise community awareness of wildfire benefits, risks, and minimization measures.

The new objective requires certified organizations to:

- Limit susceptibility of forests they own or manage to undesirable impacts of wildfire, promote healthy and resilient forest conditions through management techniques, actions and/or policies, and support restoration of forests following wildfire damage. This includes the use of stand and landscape level management techniques, actions, and/or policies to promote forest health and resilience, such as the use of cultural burning. This objective highlights the important role that cultural burning plays in traditional land and forest management to achieve specific objectives such as cultural and language preservation, food and medicinal plant revitalization, and habitat enhancement.
- Individually or through cooperative efforts involving government agencies, SFI Implementation Committees, Project Learning Tree, or other partners, engage in efforts to raise awareness of the benefits of fire management and minimization of undesirable impacts of wildfire and take action to address these important topics.



Certified organizations can use PLT Canada resources such as the Nature of Fire activity collection to raise awareness of fire management with youth and communities.

42%
OF SFI-CERTIFIED
ORGANIZATIONS
ARE INVOLVED IN
YOUTH EDUCATION TO
RAISE AWARENESS
ABOUT THE



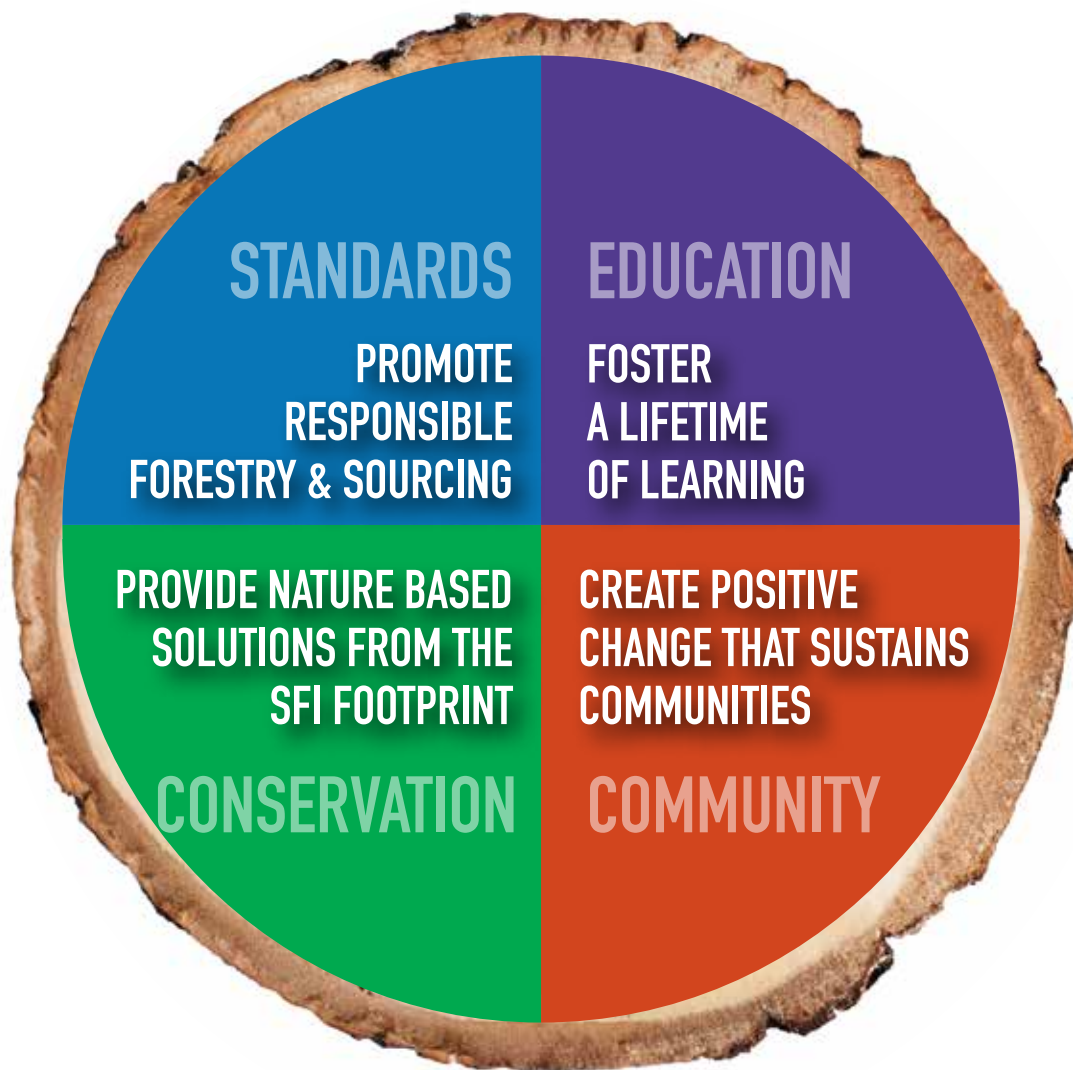
BENEFITS OF FIRE MANAGEMENT

AND TO ENCOURAGE MINIMIZING
THE UNDESIRABLE IMPACTS OF
WILDFIRE

SFI'S ROLE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

SFI'S MISSION IS TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH FOREST-FOCUSED COLLABORATION

SFI'S VISION IS A WORLD THAT VALUES AND BENEFITS FROM SUSTAINABLY MANAGED FORESTS



RESOURCES FROM PLT CANADA

Building the next generation of leadership that will take responsibility for solving environmental challenges and market needs is one of the best investments a society can make. Project Learning Tree Canada, an initiative of SFI, provides a lifetime of learning through environmental education, forest literacy, and career pathways. Find a selection of PLT Canada's programs and resources below!

GREEN JOBS

The Green Jobs program provides wage matching to employers in Canada hiring students and young professionals in Green Jobs.

GREEN MENTOR

The Green Mentor program connects students and young professionals with Green Jobs professionals.

YOUTH DELEGATE PROGRAM

The Youth Delegate program offers scholarships to students and young professionals to attend the SFI Annual Conference.

PLT CANADA HAS PLACED

1,200+ INDIGENOUS YOUTH
ACROSS **100+** COMMUNITIES
IN GREEN JOBS

SINCE 2018, PLT CANADA HAS SUPPORTED

650+ MENTORSHIP PARTICIPANTS
INCLUDING INDIGENOUS YOUNG ADULTS



"This experience has definitely helped shape me into a greater agent of change and has given me more accountability in my life."
KIANNA BEAR HETHERINGTON
PLT CANADA MENTEE



ALL AGES

A Guide to Green Jobs in Canada: Voices of Indigenous Professionals features first-person stories from 12 Indigenous leaders working in the forest and conservation and parks sectors, including 3 professionals based in BC.



CAREER PATHWAY RESOURCES



GRADES 7-12



GRADES 7-12

- *Green Jobs: Exploring Forest Careers* contains four activities and supporting resources to engage learners in actively exploring green careers.
- *Forest Quest* is an online interactive experience that helps students explore and learn about the forest and green careers in an engaging way.

Contact PLTCanada@forests.org or visit PLTCanada.org to learn more.

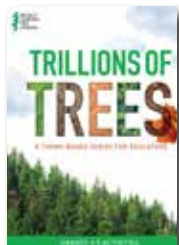
EDUCATION RESOURCES



AGES 0-6



GRADES K-8



GRADES 3-5



GRADES 6-8

- *Trees & Me: Activities for Exploring Nature with Young Children* offers hundreds of ideas for fun, hands-on experiences for families and teachers to connect children to nature.
- *Explore Your Environment: K-8 Activity Guide* includes 50 hands-on, multidisciplinary activities to connect children to nature and increase young people's awareness and knowledge about their environment.
- The *Nature of Fire* and *Trillions of Trees* activity collections invite learners to investigate the unique characteristics of different forest related issues and discover how best to plan, plant, and care for nature in their community.
- PLT Canada also offers customizable professional development, activities, and resources to engage children and young adults in learning about the environment through the lens of trees and forests.

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