

Take the First Step to Responsible Forestry

SCSglobal
SERVICES
Setting the standard for sustainability



Healthy forests are not only essential for the long-term sustainability of forest resources, but for the many ecosystem services they support, such as soil retention, carbon sequestration, flood protection, habitat health, and water filtration and quality. A variety of certification programs and labels have emerged to drive responsible forest management and support markets for products derived from well-managed forests.

SCS Global Services helps forest landowners and managers achieve certification by undergoing a third-party audit to verify adherence to one (or both) of the following standards:

Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®)

As a founding member of FSC, SCS Global Services has unparalleled experience auditing against FSC requirements globally and has been continuously accredited since FSC's inception in the 1990s, with 19 million acres currently certified.



Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®)

SCS Global Services provides third-party certification to the SFI Forest Management Standard and enables certified organizations to benefit from leveraging the larger SFI community which is committed to improving forestry practices, education, and workforce training throughout North America.

Certification Process and Timeline

- 1. Application:** The applicant completes and submits the SCS Global Services application form. Upon reviewing the application, SCS Global Services prepares a proposal, including a suggested audit plan, timeline, and quote. The applicant authorizes work to proceed by signing a Work Order.
- 2. Stakeholder Consultation:** The SCS Global Services assessment team conducts stakeholder consultations to acquire outside input regarding the applicant's management performance in relation to the standard.
- 3. On-Site Audit:** The SCS Global Services assessment team conducts an on-site audit to assess forest conditions and to determine if the applicant's management system is in conformance with the standard. The team tours representative forest tracts as well as facilities where timber is handled, and interviews key staff to confirm understanding of and adherence with standard requirements.
- 4. Assessment Report:** The SCS Global Services assessment team prepares a report detailing the results of the assessment. The report is reviewed by the applicant for accuracy.
- 5. Peer Review:** For most operations, the evaluation report is submitted for independent peer review to validate the appropriateness of the team's analytical methodology and conclusions.
- 6. Certification Decision:** The SCS Global Services certification committee reviews the evaluation report and decides whether or not to approve certification. If granted, a certificate is issued for a five-year period, subject to annual surveillance audits. Any conditional Major Corrective Action Requests (CARs) identified by SCS must be closed prior to certification.



What Program is Best for You?

Characteristic	FSC	SFI
Geographical Scope	International	US and Canada
Ecological Protection	Requires conservation of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs); limits clearcutting	Promotes biodiversity and limits clearcut size (maximum of 120 acres in the US)
Chemical Use	Strongly discouraged; integrated pest management required; some banned chemicals	Discouraged but allowed; promotes best practices in chemical use
Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)	Prohibited	Permitted under controlled conditions
Species Diversity & Native Species	Must maintain or restore natural species composition	Encourages diversity; requires reforestation with native or appropriate species
Wildlife Habitat	Explicit protection of rare, threatened, endangered species and habitat	Protection required, but more flexible in approach
Water & Soil Protection	High standards for riparian buffer zones and soil conservation	Requires BMPs (Best Management Practices) for water quality and erosion control
Climate Change Mitigation	Explicitly addressed -encourages maintaining carbon storage and resilience	Recognizes climate benefits of sustainable forestry, less prescriptive
Public Reporting	Database maintained on https://fsc.org/en/fsc-public-certificate-search	Database maintained on https://www.sfidatabase.org/