

Get Your Forest Products Certified for Chain of Custody



End-to-End Process and Timeline

1. Application

Complete and submit the application form provided by SCS; following this, SCS will prepare a proposal including a suggested audit plan, timeline, and quote. This will be reviewed and approved by you so SCS can start working on your certification.

2. Written Procedures

Your company will be asked to create company procedures that demonstrate how certified wood or paper products will be tracked throughout your operation. SCS will provide guidance to help explain the CoC requirements.

3. Pre-Audit Assessment

An SCS auditor will review your company's procedures for thoroughness and conformance. The auditor identifies areas for improvement in the procedures prior to the audit.

4. On-Site Audit

The auditor will review your CoC procedures and documents (from receipt of inputs through final sale) while on-site, and tour facilities where certified material is handled. They will also interview key staff to confirm training in CoC responsibilities, and their understanding of the workflow for certified products.

5. Evaluation Report

Following the on-site evaluation, SCS' auditor will prepare a report detailing the results of their assessment.

6. Certification Decision

An SCS Technical Associate will validate the appropriateness of the auditor's methodology and conclusions and decide whether certification is warranted. If granted, a certificate will be 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.

7. Maintain Certification

Annual surveillance audits are required to maintain Chain-of-Custody certification. Certified companies and product offerings are listed in the official certificate holder database. Certified companies are granted permission to use trademarks for on-product and off-product applications in conformance with the appropriate trademark standard.

What Program is Best for You?

Characteristic	FSC	SFI	PEFC
Geographical Scope	International	US and Canada	International
Frequency of required third-party audits	Once every 5 years, with annual surveillance audits	Once every 5 years, with annual surveillance audits	Once every 5 years, with annual surveillance audits
Management Style	Independent, uses stakeholder consultation to develop country-specific generic indicators	Independent in the US and Mexico, endorsed by PEFC for other regions	Umbrella organization that endorses national forest certification systems
Open membership-based organization	Open, member-led organization with a member-elected leadership. Members make key organizational decisions at a triennial General Assembly	A self-appointed board exclusively governs SFI, making decisions regarding all policies and standards	The General Assembly is the highest authority and decision-making body, made up of all PEFC members, including both national and international stakeholders (alliance of national forest certification systems, NGOs, associations, companies and individuals)
Supply Chain Certifications Offered	Chain of Custody, Controlled Wood, Project Certification	Chain of Custody, Fiber Sourcing, Certified Sourcing	Chain of Custody
Annual Costs	3 fees collected: Professional, Logo access and Administration Fee (AAF)	1 fee collected: Professional fees	2 fees collected: Professional and Notification fees
Additional Adherence	FSC requires organizations to comply with core labor requirements & disclosure of financial data to auditors (for AAF calculation)	For CoC, additional financial information not required	Additional financial information not required
Logo Usage	Needs approval, SCS reviews and approves within 24 hours	Needs approval from scheme owner	Needs approval from scheme owner
Third-party certification required for all certified input claims	Yes	No	Dependent upon country's standard aligned with PEFC
Claims for 100% noncertified virgin fiber inputs	Not allowed	SFI Certified Sourcing label may be applied	-
Recycled Content	FSC counts post-consumer recycled content	SFI counts pre- and post-consumer material as recycled content	-
Public Reporting	Database maintained on www.fsc.org/en/fsc-public-certificate-search	Database maintained on www.sfidatabase.org	Database maintained on www.pefc.org/find-certified