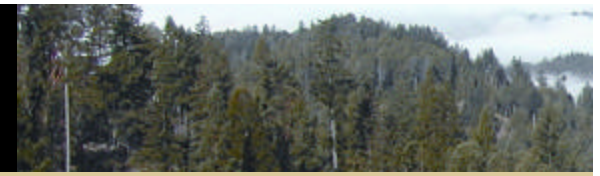


Independent Forest and Chain-of-Custody Certification Program



Based upon 13 years of leading work in forest management and chain-of-custody certification, SCS believes that the market is ready for a new, truly independent and non-aligned certification program. The SCS Independent Forest and Chain of Custody Certification Program is time tested and broadly recognized in global forest products markets. In simple terms, the protocols and standards that formed the basis of SCS's FSC-accredited certification program are now available in a program option independent from the FSC.

- Ongoing **compliance monitoring** of all certificate holders, entailing periodic surveillance audits (typically annual).
- **Continuous improvement** mechanisms designed to assure that the SCS Independent Forest and Chain of Custody Certification Program remains at the cutting edge of certification in the forest products sector.



As longstanding professional certification practitioners, SCS understands that the value of certification is intrinsically tied to the credibility of the program. The following components serve as the basis for the SCS Independent Program:

- Rigorous **certification criteria** that recognize those operations practicing exemplary forest management, as defined in terms of environmental, economic and social performance measures. For chain-of-custody certification, the standards must rigorously assure that the integrity of certified supplies is maintained throughout the value chain, from the forests of origin to final points of purchase.
- Technically competent **evaluation protocols** that *effectively, consistently and transparently* ascertain conformance with the certification criteria.
- **Written reports** that detail the findings of the expert team's evaluation and conclusions.
- Prior to rendering a certification decision, forest management certification evaluation reports are **peer reviewed** by one or more forest science experts.

When contracted by a forest management entity, SCS thoroughly evaluates the company's management program and forest conditions for potential certification as "responsibly managed." In conducting certification evaluations, the interdisciplinary teams empanelled by SCS regionalize the standards to reflect regional and case-specific circumstances and considerations. Regionalization is accomplished through various means including soliciting the perspectives of stakeholders, forestry experts that may serve as evaluation team members, or peer reviewers. Based upon input gathered about regional circumstances, the weights of relative importance applied to the evaluation criteria are appropriately modified.

A company's Independent certified status can be used in marketplace of product and public opinion to help reassure its customers and stakeholders that it is practicing a brand of forest management that merits their support. If a chain-of-custody certificate is also issued, products made of wood sourced from the certified forest can also carry the SCS Independent logo, providing point of purchase assurance as to the environmental profile of those products.

SCS INDEPENDENT FOREST MANAGEMENT

Under the SCS Independent Forest Certification program, forest management operations are evaluated against performance criteria organized into three Program Elements: Timber Resource Sustainability, Forest Ecosystem Maintenance, and Forest Administration and Stakeholder Interactions.

Program Element A: Timber Resource Sustainability

- Harvest Regulation
- Stocking and Growth Control
- Pest & Pathogen Management Strategy; Use of Chemical Pesticides
- Forest Access
- Harvest Efficiency and Product Utilization

Program Element B: Forest Ecosystem Maintenance

- Forest Community Structure and Composition: Biodiversity at the Macro-Scale
- Long Term Ecological Productivity: Biodiversity at the Site Level
- Wildlife Management Actions, Strategies and Programs
- Watercourse Management Policies and Programs
- Management of Areas of High Conservation Value

Program Element C: Forest Administration and Stakeholder Interactions

- Management Plan and Information Base
- Financial Performance
- Community and Public Interactions, Including Public Use Management
- Employee and Contractor Relations
- Compliance with Relevant Laws, Treaties, and Conventions

To achieve certification, forest operations must demonstrate strength with respect to each of the three program elements. Operationally, this is assured by a decision rule that the weighted average performance score for the three program elements must each exceed 80 points (on a 100-point scale).

SCS INDEPENDENT CHAIN OF CUSTODY

To seek SCS Independent Chain-of-Custody certification, companies must demonstrate, among other items, an auditable written tracking system that verifies the integrity of the certified product throughout the production and/or distribution process. The SCS Independent logo may also be used on manufactured wood products (both fiber-based and solid) whose composition meets the following content requirements:

- No wood (fiber and/or solid) from unacceptable sources (i.e., legality cannot be established); and
- At least 50% of the manufactured wood product, measured by weight or volume, is comprised of certified wood from qualifying sources (i.e., SCS Independent, FSC, or CSA).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about SCS's Independent Forest and Chain of Custody Certification Program, contact:

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