
Forest Certification: Do Governments Have a Role?

**UNECE/FAO Policy Forum
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Introduction

- **Perhaps answer a different question:**
 - **How does certification play a role as a tool for governments to address SFM?**
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What is the relevance of certification for forest owners, timber producers, and managers?

Forest Certification in the United States is:

- a reflection of the diversity of forestland tenure, resource use and governance structures
 - a contemporary tool for SFM that reflects resource trends in forest management and wood market demands
 - a complement to the existing state and local forest management and conservation guidelines
 - an additional tool for filling the gaps of enforcement and public acceptance of production forest management and its outputs – e.g., adherence to domestic governance requirements and international laws
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Forest Certification Serves Key Groups Differently

Wood suppliers	Environmental marketing, protecting market access and communicating standards – less attractive for price-takers
Buyers/consumers	Information on the environmental impact of purchases – raises questions on current forest management
Retailers/wholesalers	Environmental stewardship, corporate leadership, and price-point differentials - increased handling costs and liabilities
Communities/engos	Additional means to influence the accounting of forest management
Public agencies	Ranges from a soft policy instrument to direct investment in SFM – landowners' conflicts over use rights

Certification and Related Developments in the United States

- *Article X of Lumber Code of the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1930s (eventually found unconstitutional), with forest practices rules
→ private sector, voluntary use towards forest conservation*
 - Tree planting efforts from 1940s
 - Public discourse on forests to validate good management, build public confidence and reflect changing paradigms in 1980s
 - Private, voluntary forest-specific certification in the 1990s
 - Sub-national government forest-specific certification efforts
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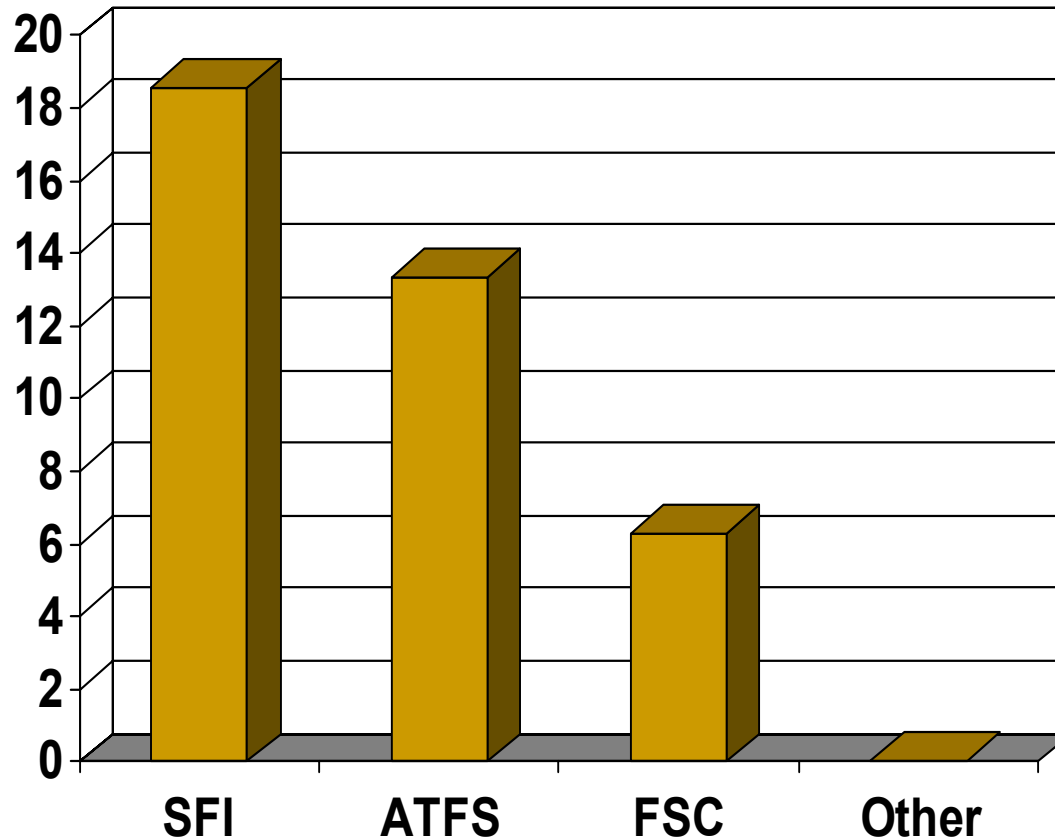
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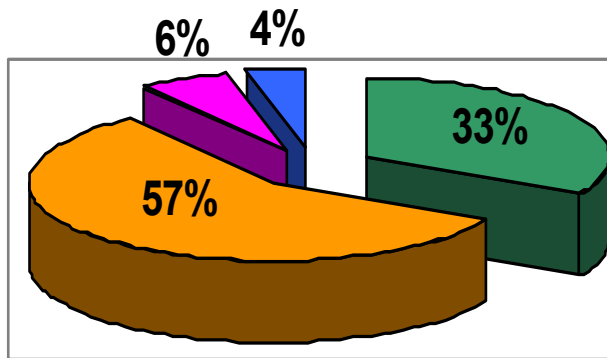
Forest-specific certification, by system, the United States (million ha), 2005



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Proportion of 3rd-party, Forest-specific Certified Land in the United States, by Ownership



- Private (small, individual)
- Private (industrial)
- State, county, military and academic
- Tribal and communal

Sources: *Green Tag Forestry* (June 2003), *FSC-US* (July 2004), *SFI*[®] (February 2004) and *ATFS*[®] (June 2003).

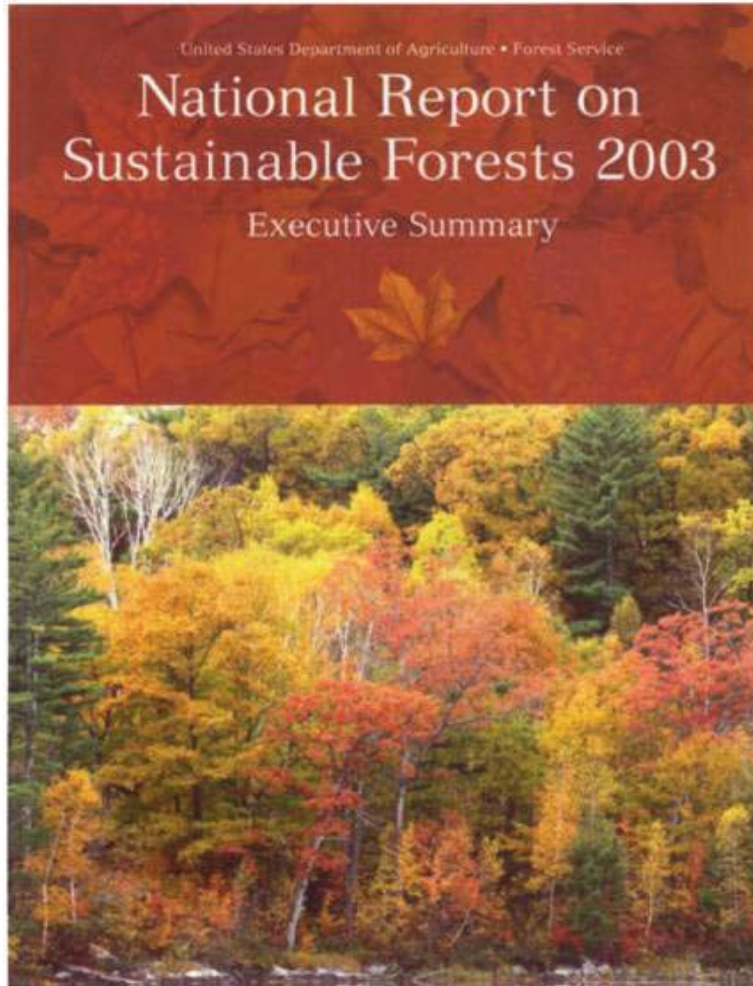
SFM Activities, Tools and Approaches in the United States

- ❑ *Collective laws, regulations, directives for natural resources management*
 - ❑ Criteria and indicators initiatives – federal and state assessment of forest trends
 - ❑ National Forest Sustainability Roundtable of stakeholders, including by federal, state, county and local government participation
 - ❑ State level best management practices and sustainable management by private landowners
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One Indication of Progress



First U.S. national report on sustainable forests

C&I principles are part of the guidelines for national forest planning

Forest Service Research & Development addressing such issues as how to measure C&I

Over 25 States have produced reports using portions of the C&I framework

University curricula are reflecting principles of C&I

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Current Policy on Forest Certification of National Forests

- The United States believes it is appropriate for countries to build capacity to assess and develop the legal and institutional frameworks as the foundation for SFM; *inter alia*, the development of best management practices.
 - The USDA Forest Service does not, itself, seek private 3rd-party certification of National Forests, nor act as a standard-setting or accreditation body for forest certification
 - The Forest Service does not favor, nor show preference for, any one forest-specific certification system
 - Non-public entities can elect to bear the cost of certifying NF lands from which they source raw material, with access to public information and data, as needed
 - Two National Forests have had outside groups certify portions of their forest areas – Alleghany NF and Pisgah NF
 - Currently gathering information to assess the potential benefits and costs of the possible application of third-party certification to portions of the National Forest System lands
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Federal Regulations on Environmental Management Systems

- **Executive Order 13148 of 2000 on environmental management systems (EMS) for federal facilities**
 - **2005 Forest Service Planning Regulation for EMS conformance with ISO 14001 standards in land management process**
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In Conclusion

- **Implementation of E.O. 13148 and 2005 planning regulations under the National Forest Management Act**
 - **Complete forest-specific certification assessments (tests) of FS requirements aligned with SFI and FSC**
 - **Continued assessment of certification issues with regards to federal responsibilities and roles in sustainable forest management**
 - **Evolution and implementation of criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management and conservation of forest resources on national and sub-national levels**
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