

Indicator 24 – Certification



- Forest certification is a voluntary, market-based instrument that gives buyers of forest products assurance that the products come from well-managed forests. The requirements for certification support sustainability, but certification does not in itself guarantee sustainable forest management.
- British Columbia is a North American leader in forest certification.

STATE 
good

TREND 
mixed

INFORMATION 
adequate

Questions about forest certification

24-1 What is the area of B.C.'s certified forest operations?

24-2 How much area is certified under each standard?

24-3 How much of the timber harvest is certified under each standard?

24-4 How much of each tenure type's harvest is certified?

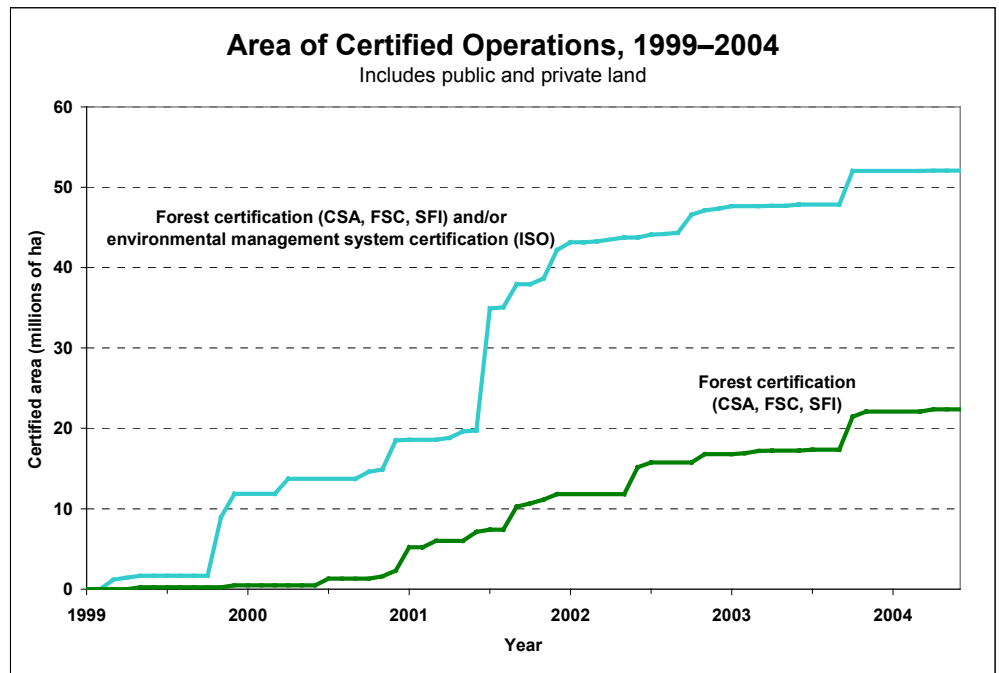
➤ What does this indicator tell us about sustainable forest management?

Related indicators

- Some major customers of the B.C. forest industry (see Forest products) have purchasing policies that favour certified products. This puts pressure on industry to become certified to maintain market access.
- Certification may require changes in forest practices (see Silviculture) and stakeholder involvement (see Public involvement).
- Government and industry may respond to overlap between legal requirements and certification requirements for forest management and auditing by streamlining procedures and sharing costs (see [Law](#)).

Indicator 24-1

What is the area of B.C.'s certified forest operations?



- To earn forest certification, a forest operation must receive independent, third-party verification that it is well managed according to a certification standard or set of requirements.
- Three forest certification standards are used in B.C.: [CSA](#), [FSC](#) and [SFI](#). They address environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainable forest management (SFM), so they are often referred to as SFM standards or SFM certification.
- In early 1999, no forest operation in B.C. was certified. By June 2004, the area certified under the forest certification standards increased to 22 million ha (28% of the province, excluding protected areas and areas converted for agricultural, urban or other development).
- The [ISO](#) standard for certification of environmental management systems, although not specific to forestry and less demanding than forest certification, is often used as a foundation for SFM standards. Including ISO, the area certified by 2004 increased to 52 million ha (65% of the province, excluding protected areas and converted areas).
- In 2004, B.C. accounted for 39% of the area certified in Canada under SFM standards, and 37% of the area certified when ISO is included.

Information

- Certified areas include lakes, alpine areas and other non-forest land within certified forest management units.
- Certified areas are well documented and publicly available.

Sources: [Canadian Sustainable Forestry Certification Coalition](#), [MoF](#)

Related maps: none

Detailed information: <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/sof/>

Related international and national indicators:

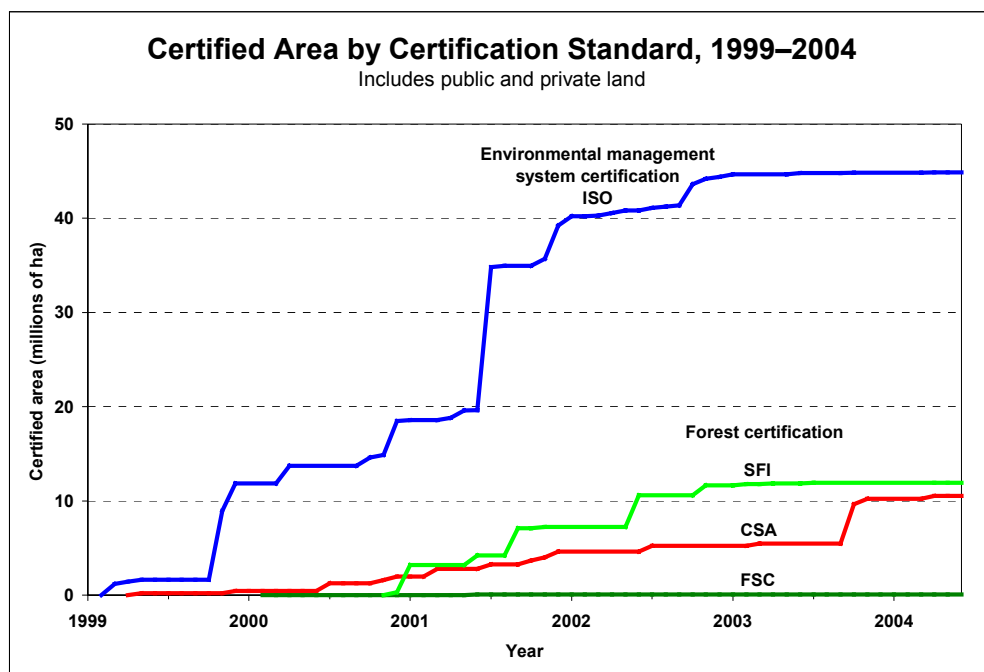
MP (1999) none

CCFM (1995) none

CCFM (2003) none

Indicator 24-2

How much area is certified under each standard?



- Each certification standard's breadth of influence across the land base is apparent from the area certified under the standard.
- B.C.'s first forest certification was under the SFM standard developed by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). Almost 11 million ha are now CSA certified. CSA has process requirements consistent with those of ISO, and on-the-ground performance requirements related to national forest values and local objectives established with public participation.
- Next was the international Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standard that is widely supported by environmental NGOs and First Nations. The preliminary standard for B.C. has detailed process and performance requirements. About 0.1 million ha are now FSC certified.
- The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) standard developed in the U.S. followed. It also has both process and performance requirements. Almost 12 million ha are now SFI certified.
- About 45 million ha are certified under the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standard. It requires operators to meet or exceed all environmental regulations and to establish processes to ensure continual improvement. It does not set specific performance criteria.

Information

- Certified areas include lakes, alpine areas and other non-forest land within certified forest management units.
- Certified areas are well documented and publicly available.

Sources: [Canadian Sustainable Forestry Certification Coalition](#), [MoF](#)

Related maps: none

Detailed information: <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/sof/>

Related international and national indicators:

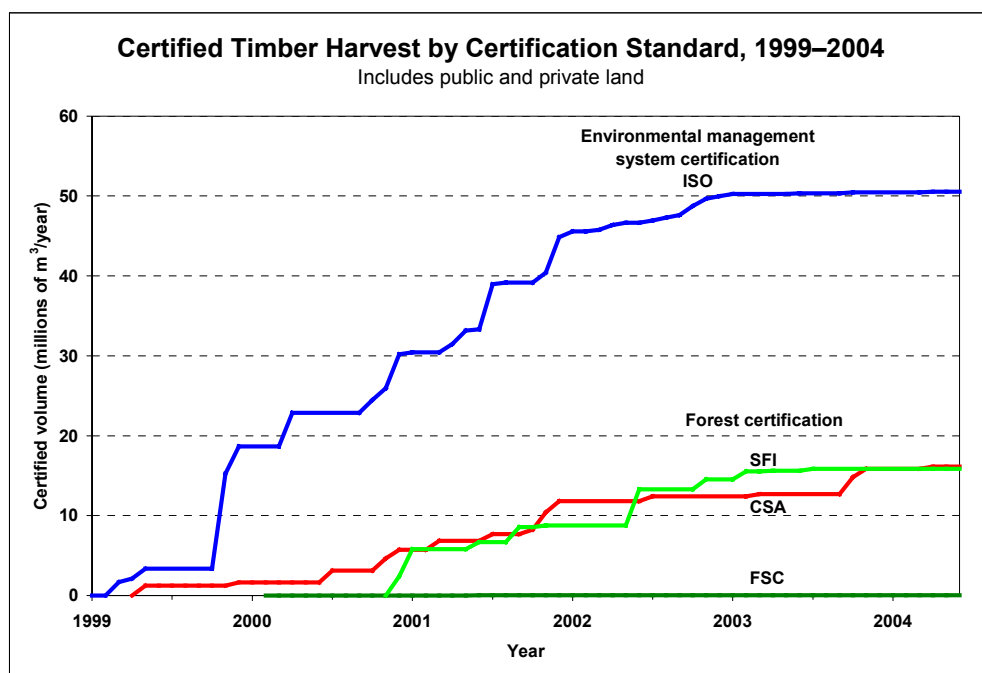
MP (1999) none

CCFM (1995) none

CCFM (2003) none

Indicator 24-3

How much of the timber harvest is certified under each standard?



- Each certification standard's importance to B.C.'s forest products is apparent from the volume of timber harvested under the standard.
- By June 2004, operators with forest certification accounted for 32 million m³/year, or 38% of the sum of government-set allowable annual cuts (AACs) and the average harvest from private land not subject to AACs.
- The CSA certified volume increased to 16 million m³/year.
- The FSC certified volume was 0.04 million m³/year.
- The SFI certified volume increased to 16 million m³/year.
- Most operators certified under CSA or SFI are also ISO certified. The total volume certified under one or more standards increased to 55 million m³/year, or 65% of the sum of AACs and private land harvests.
- The ISO certified volume increased to 51 million m³/year.
- In June 2004, B.C. accounted for 48% of Canada's timber harvest volume certified under SFM standards (CSA, FSC and SFI) and, with ISO included, for 44% of Canada's certified volume.
- Further increases in certification are anticipated under all standards.

Information

- Volumes are based on government-set AACs of forest management units or portions of them, and an estimate for a private land unit.
- Certified volumes are well documented and publicly available.

Sources: Canadian Sustainable Forestry Certification Coalition, MoF

Related maps: none

Detailed information: <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/sof/>

Related international and national indicators:

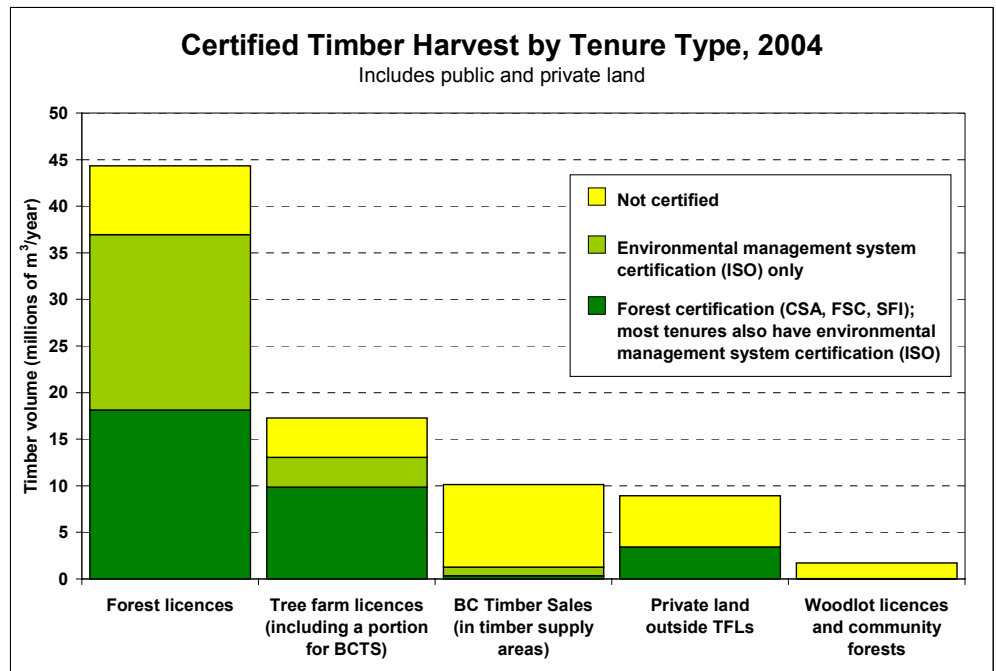
MP (1999) none

CCFM (1995) none

CCFM (2003) none

Indicator 24-4

How much of each tenure type's harvest is certified?



- Becoming certified is more important to some operators than to others.
- Forest licences (mostly long-term, volume-based tenures), tree farm licences (long-term, area-based tenures) and private land outside TFLs collectively account for over 80% of the provincial timber harvest. They have the highest rates of certification (respectively, 41%, 57% and 38% under SFM standards, and 83%, 76% and 38% when ISO is included). Large operators manage most of the forest under these tenure types. They have a strong incentive to maintain market access by achieving the certification favoured by their buyers. Also, the Forest Products Association of Canada is requiring its members to have all their forest operations certified under an SFM standard by the end of 2006.
- Short-term tenures sold by the government's BC Timber Sales (BCTS) to small operators on public land account for about 13% of the provincial timber harvest. The rate of certification for these tenures in timber supply areas is 3% under SFM standards and 13% when ISO is included.
- The cost of obtaining certification is a significant disincentive for most holders of small woodlot licences and community forest agreements, but certification is a matter of principle to some. These tenures have low rates of certification: 0.4% under SFM standards, 0.7% including ISO.
- Increased certification is anticipated in all tenure types.

Related international and national indicators:

MP (1999) none
CCFM (1995) none
CCFM (2003) none

Information

- Volumes by tenure type can be derived from publicly available data.

Sources: CSFCC, MoF's [Certification](#), [Apportionment](#)

Related maps: [Forest Management Units](#)

Detailed information: <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/sof/>

Indicator 24 – Certification

What does this indicator tell us about sustainable forest management?



State

Forest certification is a voluntary, market-based instrument that provides buyers with assurance that a forest is well managed and meets the requirements of a certification standard. Some markets now favour forest products from certified forest operations.

Forest certification under the CSA, FSC and SFI standards is evidence of rigorous, systematic efforts to manage forests well, but does not guarantee sustainable forest management. Opinions differ about the merits of these standards, but all operators certified under them are clearly supporting and working towards sustainable forest management.

B.C. is a leader in forest certification in Canada and North America: 28% of the relevant land base and 38% of the total provincial harvest are certified. Including the ISO standard for environmental management systems, 65% of the relevant land base and 65% of the harvest are certified.

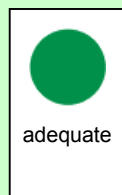


Trend

Over the past five years, substantial forest areas and harvest volumes have been certified under two SFM standards (CSA and SFI) and under the ISO standard for environmental management systems. Only a small area and volume were certified under the FSC's SFM standard. Over the next few years, certification of additional areas and volumes is anticipated under all standards.

Rates of certification differ substantially among tenure types. This is in large part due to differences in incentives for, and costs of, certification. It does not necessarily indicate differences in quality of forest management.

Information



The Canadian Sustainable Forestry Certification Coalition monitors certified areas and volumes for all of Canada and publishes its data, including a report for B.C. only. The MoF also monitors certified areas and volumes for B.C. and reports data publicly. Certified areas and volumes by tenure types are not tracked explicitly, but can be derived from publicly available data.