



Forest certification

The New Zealand plantation forest estate is covered by two voluntary certification standards administered by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

Forests provide us with clean water, fresh air, biodiversity, recreation and help combat global warming. They also provide food, medicine and important natural resources, such as timber and paper. If managed responsibly, forests and plantations benefit forest people and the global community. However, in some countries as much as 80% of the timber is harvested illegally. This often involves violation of human rights and felling of protected forests.

Both FSC and PEFC certifications ensure that timber used doesn't come from protected forests to produce certified products. This includes ensuring that species are protected and not used for production or go towards deforestation, and there is no negative impact on the local communities.

1. FSC



FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not for profit international organisation (<https://uk.fsc.org/>) established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. It provides standard setting, trademark assurance and accreditation services for companies and organisations interested in responsible forestry. Products carrying the FSC label are independently certified to assure consumers that they come from forests that are managed to meet the social, economic and ecological needs of present and future generations. FSC maintains representation in more than 45 countries including New Zealand and Australia.

Currently the management of over 1 million of the 1.8 million hectares of plantation forest in New Zealand is FSC certified.

Contact FSC Australia and New Zealand

Address: 552 Victoria St, North Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3053

Contact: info@au.fsc.org

Website: www.anz.fsc.org

FSC Forest Stewardship Standard for New Zealand (NZ FSS)

FSC has developed the FSC Forest Stewardship Standard for New Zealand (NZ FSS) which targets the most pressing issues in New Zealand forestry today, including living wage requirements; better protection of waterways, addressing issues related to erosion, and establishing culturally appropriate means of communication with Māori communities affected by forestry operations.

<https://www.anz.fsc.org/fsc-forest-stewardship-standard-for-new-zealand-nz-fss>

2. PEFC



The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) <https://www.pefc.org/> is an international, non-profit, non-governmental organization which promotes sustainable forest management through independent third-party certification. It is considered by some as the certification system of choice for small forest owners.

The origins of PEFC can be traced back to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, where the concept of sustainable forest management was first introduced. The summit resulted in the adoption of Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which human impacts on the environment. This led to the creation of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which was established in 1993 to develop standards for responsible forest management and to provide certification for forests that met those standards.

However, by the late 1990s, concerns were raised about the FSC's ability to meet the growing demand for certification, particularly in developing countries where the costs of certification could be prohibitive. In response, a group of European forest owners and managers, led by the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), began working on an alternative certification system that would be more accessible and affordable for small and medium-sized forest owners.

The result was the creation of PEFC in 1999, which was initially called the Pan-European Forest Certification Council. The organisation's main goal was to develop a certification system that was flexible and could be adapted to different forest types and management practices, while still meeting rigorous environmental, social, and economic standards.

Its 48 endorsed national forest certification systems represent more than 280 million hectares (690×106 acres) of certified forests. This makes it the largest forest certification system in the world, covering about two-thirds of the globally certified forest area. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Responsible Wood

Responsible Wood <https://www.responsiblewood.org.au/> is the National Governing Body for PEFC in Australia and manages the PEFC New Zealand scheme on behalf of the New Zealand Forest Certification Association (NZFCA).

Responsible Wood is an Australian not-for-profit that sets for Australia and New Zealand globally recognised forest certification system standards for managing forests sustainably.

AS / NZS 4708 Sustainable Forest Management standard

AS/NZS 4708:2021 – Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is a trans-Tasman standard which provides common benchmarks for sustainably managed Australian and New Zealand forests. To download the latest standard visit www.responsiblewood.org.au .

3. What's The Difference Between FSC And PEFC?

Both FSC and PEFC are focused on protecting forests and ensuring end users get the responsibly sourced timber they requested. However, the way the organisations work differs slightly.

Choosing FSC certified timber or PEFC certified timber ensures you are backing companies committed to sustainable and responsible forest management.

More than fifty certification programmes exist worldwide but of these, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) are the two better known.

Choosing wood products from PEFC or FSC certified forests is an important factor in sustainable architecture. By doing so, you're ensuring that not only is your design environmentally friendly and ethical – but so are your materials at every step along the supply chain.

FSC is a standards development organisation, creating specific standards or benchmarks that forest managers and owners need to follow in order to earn certification. PEFC is not a standards development organisation, but a mutual recognition agency. They endorse standards and certification schemes that have been developed through multi-stakeholder processes and tailored to local conditions. In New Zealand and Australia, the peak governing body for PEFC is Responsible Wood.

FSC and PEFC are almost the same but some wood users specify one or the other according to perceived differences. Both PEFC and FSC are both reputable and very similar certifications – indeed, the UK Government states that both meet its requirements for responsibly sourced timber.

FSC is a global certification system that defines ten principles of responsible forest management for a manager or owner to follow. This enables specifiers to purchase wood from identifiable, well-managed forests. As a benchmark, any FSC standard has to be interpreted at national level in order for it to be implemented within local forests.

PEFC similarly describes itself as an international organisation dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management (SFM) through independent third party certification. However, PEFC is not a standards agency but a mutual recognition scheme. It not only focuses on the ethical aspects of SFM but also the processing of timber, resulting in a larger emphasis on the supply chain than FSC.

While both are committed to the same cause, the primary difference between the certifications is their origins. Initially, the FSC scheme was developed for tropical environments and not suited for forests in Europe and North America. This led to the introduction of PEFC in the late 1990s, to facilitate SFM certification in Europe.

PEFC now accounts for over 264 million hectares of certified forests and its certifications system is recognised in over 30 countries. Meanwhile, FSC has certified forests in over 80 countries with 7% of the world's forest area (180 million hectares) carrying the FSC certification.