



Food and Agriculture  
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# Forest Products Annual Market Review 2018



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The text below is an excerpt from the UNECE/FAO Forest Products Annual Market Review. The full document of the Review can be found here: [www.unece.org/forests/fpamr2018](http://www.unece.org/forests/fpamr2018).

The excerpt was developed in cooperation with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc. (SFI) ([www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org)) a PEFC endorsed certification scheme ([www.pefc.org](http://www.pefc.org)).



## The contribution of forest certification to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

### Sustainable forest management and the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030

The UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, agreed to by world leaders in 2015, establishes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that countries should strive to achieve (mostly by 2030). FAO's "State of the World's Forests 2018" (FAO, 2018) confirms that forests and trees, when managed sustainably, provide a wide range of beneficial products and services and thereby contribute in numerous ways to meeting the 17 SDGs. Well managed forests and trees provide the elements necessary for human life – air, water, food and shelter. Forest management also contributes to sustainable development by supporting economic opportunities.

### Forests are broad-based enablers for many SDG targets

Forests and their sustainable management have significant positive impacts on 28 specific targets in a subset of ten crucial SDGs, especially SDG 6 (clean water), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 15 (life on land). There are also important connections between forests and SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production) (FAO, 2018).

Forest certification standards constitute a set of periodically updated requirements agreed to by diverse stakeholders, and compliance with those requirements is verified by third-party auditing. Forest certification, therefore, is a tool for assessing sustainable forest management.

### Forest certification is an important sub-indicator for SDG 15

Forest certification is addressed most directly in SDG 15, the aim of which is to "protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss".

Target 15.2 includes promoting the sustainable management of all types of forests, with "forest area under independently verified forest management certification schemes" one of four approved sub-indicators for assessing indicator 15.2.1 ("progress towards sustainable forest management"). The sustainable management practices required to maintain compliance with forest certification programmes can reduce habitat destruction and biodiversity loss (target 15.5), address invasive species (target 15.8) and support the integration of ecosystems and biodiversity values into planning and development processes (target 15.9) (FAO, 2018).

### Forest certification in the UNECE region

Forest certification is used in markets for traditional paper and wood-based products. It is also increasingly applied in the provision of a broad range of bioeconomy products, such as biologically based textiles, plastics, chemicals and energy, and ecosystem services such as water quality, carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation. The uptake of forest certification has been strong in the UNECE region, which hosts 85% (about 365 million hectares) of the forest area certified globally (UNECE, 2018). About one-third of the global industrial roundwood supply in 2016 originated in certified forests (UNECE/FAO 2017).

## Forest certification and SDG targets

Although forest certification is referred to specifically in SDG target 15.1, there is evidence that forests and their sustainable management enable the achievement of other SDG targets associated with economic development, social inclusion and biodiversity conservation.

Target 6.6 – “by 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes” – is supported by best management practices and requirements for water-quality protections, which are addressed in certification programmes.

The responsible achievement of target 7.2 – “by 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix” – is supported by a commitment to the sustainable harvesting (as prescribed by forest certification) of forest-based biomass used for renewable energy.

Several targets of SDG 12 are connected to the work of forest certification programmes in areas such as managing natural resources sustainably and efficiently (target 12.2); encouraging companies to adopt sustainable practices (target 12.6); and promoting sustainable public procurement practices (target 12.7 and indicator 12.7.1). Certification programmes track forest products through production and manufacturing to end-consumers via chains of custody, helping inform consumers about sustainable development (target 12.8). Forest certification organizations can be characterized as verification service innovators (target 12.6).

Forest certification includes the auditing of compliance with laws addressing legal rights to harvest, harvesting activities, and other relevant environmental and social regulations. It is supportive of SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and especially SDG target 16.3 on promoting the rule of law. Forest certification can help reduce corruption and bribery (SDG target 16.5).

The stakeholder consultation processes that certification schemes have used for standard setting, and their processes for the periodic review and updating of standards, mean that forest certification also supports the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions (target 16.6) while providing opportunities for inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making (target 16.7).

## FORESTS & FOREST CERTIFICATION LINKS TO SDGs



Forest certification programmes are based on a commitment to stakeholder dialogue and cooperation to ensure sustainable, positive outcomes. They provide, therefore, many strong, positive examples of public, public-private and civil-society partnerships, thereby contributing to target 17.17. Such partnerships operate locally, regionally and internationally.

## UNECE countries provide crucial support for forest certification as a tool of the SDGs

Many government procurement programmes in the UNECE region use forest certification to help ensure the legality and sustainability of wood products. They have important roles to play in achieving the SDGs by showing how forest owners, other stakeholders and society at large can work together to obtain long-term economic, social and environmental benefits.