FOREST CERTIFICATION

Québec’s forest regime is constantly evolving, and the government works hard to adjust its management methods to suit new contexts and the growing needs of local and regional communities. Under the new forest regime, the ministère des forêts, de la faune et des parcs supports the certification of public forest land under management.

WHAT IS FOREST CERTIFICATION?

Forest certification is a verification process designed to give recognition to organizations that develop and use forest resources in a specific area in accordance with the principles of sustainable forest development. These principles are defined by various forest certification systems, and each system has its own certification standards that reflect the values and, in some cases, the features of Canada’s major regions.

Certification is primarily a means of addressing the requirements of customers and markets. A certificate from a neutral, internationally-recognized body provides an assurance that the needs of the population have been considered, the practices used are of good quality, and the principles of sustainable development have been upheld.

Three forest certification systems are used in Québec, under the authority of the following bodies:
- the Canadian Standards Association (CSA)
- the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
- the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)

In the certification process, an independent body known as the “registry” checks each year to ensure that the standards have been met. The registry is accredited by the different certification systems and can issue a certificate after completion of an independent audit.
CURRENT STATUS OF CERTIFICATION IN QUÉBEC

Forest sector stakeholders are responsible for obtaining forest certification. In Quebec, most certificate holders are large forestry companies working in the public forests. On April 1, 2013, when the Sustainable Forest Development Act came into force, the Ministère introduced a discussion and collaboration mechanism with the forestry companies, allowing it to collaborate fully with those who wish to obtain or maintain certificates, to ensure that the standards are met.

In early 2013, roughly 30 million hectares of forest land had been certified by one of the three standard systems currently in use. In the public forest, roughly 85% of all productive forest areas were certified.

Many of Quebec’s forestry companies need certified fibre to maintain their presence on the market.

It is important to note that the Ministère does not favour any specific certification system, but believes certification has a role to play in sustainable forest management, as an additional assurance of the quality of management work in Quebec. Certification is also useful to the forest industry in general, as a marketing tool. Organizations that decide to obtain certification are free to select the certification system that best meets their needs, depending on their market and their situation.

For further information on forest certification, please visit the following website:

mnr.gouv.qc.ca/forets/aménagement/aménagement-certification.jsp.

2013 Version