



SOCIAL IMPACTS

Have forests been sustainably managed?

Excerpts from the report: *Sustainable Procurement of Wood and Paper-based Products: Guide and Resource Kit*

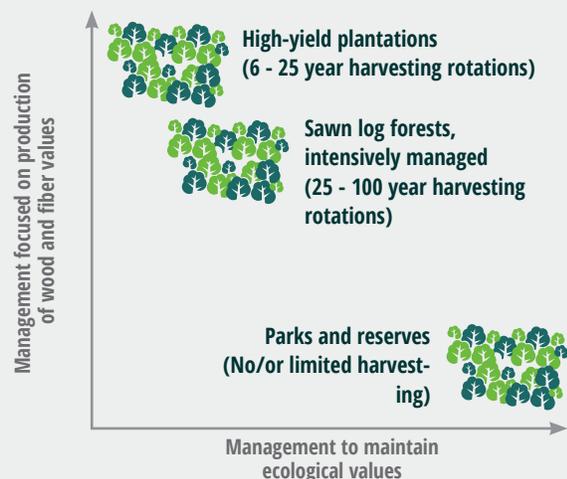
Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is a management regime that integrates and balances social, economic, ecological, cultural, and spiritual needs of present and future generations (United Nations, 1992). Essential aspects of SFM include:

- **Economic** – the capacity of the forests to attract investment and support economically viable forest uses in the present and the future is undiminished.
- **Social** – the rights of indigenous and local communities are respected and protected; forests workers are healthy, safe, and their rights are protected; local communities benefit economically from forest managements; and, sites of religious, spiritual, historic, archaeological and aesthetic and recreational value, are preserved.
- **Environmental** – forest use protects biodiversity (ecosystems, species, genes and ecological processes and the capacity to maintain ecosystem processes and services such as watershed protection, pollination, protection against mudslides, aesthetic beauty, carbon storage, etc.

There are various approaches, positions and definitions of what SFM means and what specific management measures it requires. SFM standards can be different for different types of forests, and forest certification schemes define SFM through their respective standards. There are two major umbrella forest certification schemes: the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

Forests are naturally dynamic ecosystems. Natural processes (e.g., fire, flood, wind, earthquakes, plagues and diseases) affect the composition and structure of all forests. Anthropogenic influences also change forest ecosystems, often in more dramatic and permanent ways. It is important to distinguish two different types of significant forest change, which are sometimes confused: land-use change and forest conversion.

CONCEPTUAL TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL VALUES



Areas managed intensively and exclusively for wood or fiber production (y-axis) will generally have fewer ecological values; forest areas managed exclusively for their ecological values (x-axis) will provide less economic value. Graphic based on Dyck (2003).

Forest Management and Forest Land Use Change

The United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines deforestation as “The conversion of forest to another land use or the long-term reduction of the tree canopy cover below the minimum 10 percent threshold” (FAO, 2001). Deforestation occurs when forest areas are transformed to other land uses such as agriculture, human settlements and infrastructure.

Forest conversion happens when a natural forest is transformed into a highly cultivated forest, often with introduced tree species and control of the hydrological and nutrient regime with a focus on wood production.



Factors to Consider About Sustainable Forest Management

- Forest land can be sustainably managed without being certified by a forest certification system. Producers may not pursue forest certification if they perceive the costs of the process as outweighing the price/premium offered for certified products.
- “Legally harvested” does not necessarily mean “sustainably produced” or “sustainably managed” because laws are sometimes insufficient to guarantee SFM, or are inadequately enforced.

For more information on these issues and to download a copy of the guide, Sustainable Procurement of Wood and Paper-based Products: Guide and Resource Kit, visit www.sustainableforestproducts.org.

For more information, please contact sustainableprocurementguide@wri.org.



E-mail: info@wbcsd.org
Web: www.wbcsd.org



E-mail: info@wri.org
Web: www.wri.org



For a complete list of references, please visit www.SustainableForestProducts.org/references

This document is for information purposes only. This document does not constitute legal advice. The views expressed do not necessarily represent the decisions or the stated policy of WBCSD, WBCSD members, or WRI. Citing of trade names or commercial processes does not constitute endorsement.