

CSA SFM User Group

CSA Sustainable Forest Management – Involving all Canadians

In 1995 the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers produced a national framework of criteria and indicators to define what is meant by Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in Canada. This framework is based on international criteria for good forest management and is used to help track the nation's progress in achieving it. It addresses important Canadian forest and sustainability values including biological diversity, ecosystem condition and productivity, soil and water, role in global ecological cycles, economic and social benefits, society's responsibility and aboriginal community concerns.

Around the same time the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) was asked to develop a voluntary standard to provide organizations with a system for continual improvement of their sustainable forest management (SFM) programs. CSA has a rich history as a leading developer of standards and codes. It was chartered in 1919 and has developed over 3000 standards for various industries. The resulting CSA SFM System adopted the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) national criteria and elements and uses local public advisory committees to develop indicators and targets for each element that are adapted to local conditions. This active and engaged public participation process is unique to the more common forest certification standards and reflects the Canadian forest situation where more than 93% of forests are publicly owned.

The CSA SFM Standard was first published in 1996 following more than a year of extensive public participation and development by a Technical Committee. One quarter of the Technical Committee was comprised of forest producers, while the remainder were scientists, academics, and representatives of government, aboriginals, labour unions, consumers and environmentalists. The CSA SFM standard has been maintained in an open public process by the Technical Committee and was first reviewed and revised in 2002. A second review and revision to the standard was completed in March, 2009.

The Newly Revised CSA Standard (CSA Z809-08)

A volunteer Technical Committee drafted changes to the standard based on new information, input from companies and public advisory groups, and feedback from other interested parties. Interests represented on the Technical Committee include forestry academics and researchers, forest companies, environmental groups, consumers, labour unions, Aboriginal people, government regulators, and the general public. A draft of the standard was circulated for public review and comment. The CSA Technical Committee reviewed each response and revised the draft standard based on the comments received.

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The group used feedback from Aboriginal organizations, resource documents and expert advice, to shape the standard's expectations related to Aboriginal interests. The group also recognized the importance of aboriginal rights in Canadian society by specifically naming Aboriginal peoples in the makeup of the Technical Committee. The Committee is now composed of a balanced matrix with 4 categories, as follows:

- Aboriginal Peoples, Governments, & Regulatory Authorities
- Academic & Professionals
- Environment & General Interest
- Producer Interest

The Standard continues to recognize the significance forests have for Aboriginal peoples, and specifies that efforts must be made both to incorporate their special knowledge into the planning process, and to understand Aboriginal rights and title and incorporate them into forest management plans.

Key Requirements of the CSA Standard Related to Aboriginal Interests

Key requirements of the CSA Z809-08 Standard related to Aboriginal Interests in CSA certified forests are:

- Understand and comply with the current legal requirements related to Aboriginal rights and title, and treaty rights
- Clarification that Aboriginal people can participate in CSA public consultation processes and the development of forestry plans without prejudice to Aboriginal title and rights, and treaty rights.
- Understand Aboriginal forest values, knowledge, uses -- and incorporate them into forestry plans.
- Use of Aboriginal knowledge to identify and manage culturally important resources and Values
- Respect for traditional Aboriginal forest values and uses identified through the Aboriginal input process
- Promotion of capacity development and meaningful participation of Aboriginal communities
- Levels of Aboriginal participation in the forest economy

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Detailed Requirements for Recognizing and Involving Aboriginal People

The CSA standard includes specific requirements that recognize the unique relationship that Aboriginals have with forests in Canada. For an organization to become or retain CSA certification, independent third party auditors annually evaluate the following performance measures:

Public Participation requirements Section 5.2 (c) – *demonstrate through documentation that efforts were made to contact and encourage affected and interested communities, including Aboriginal communities, to become involved in the SFM public participation process.*

One of the fundamental requirements of the CSA standard reflects the Canadian forest situation where over 93% of forests are publicly owned. The standard demands an active and engaged local public and specifically extends to involvement by Aboriginal communities.

Core indicator 1.4.2 – *Protection of identified sacred and culturally important sites.*

The new standard makes the distinction that the management of sacred sites and values may be different than that needed for other Aboriginal rights such as hunting, fishing, and gathering. Because of their sensitive nature, management may be similar to that needed for protected areas and sites of special biological significance. It requires that efforts are made to protect sensitive information that is shared. As referenced in Annex C of the standard, this can be achieved through the development of information sharing agreements or other mechanisms that allow for the protection of shared information.

Criterion 5 – Discussions with local public advisory groups must occur on specific sustainability topics including the benefits for local communities and Aboriginal people (cultural, spiritual, economic, health etc.)

Core indicator 5.2.4 – *Level of aboriginal participation in the forest economy.*

This indicator requires that efforts are made to measure Aboriginal participation in the forest economy. Potential targets would include the number of working agreements, joint ventures etc. with First Nations and the number/proportion of forest tenures and/or harvest volume assigned to First Nations.

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Criterion 6 – Discussions with local public advisory groups must occur on specific sustainability topics including the development of working relationships with willing Aboriginal communities and/or people.

Core indicators

6.1.1 – *Evidence of a good understanding of the nature of Aboriginal title and rights*

6.1.2 – *Evidence of best efforts to obtain acceptance of management plans based on Aboriginal communities having a clear understanding of the plans*

6.1.3 – *Level of management and/or protection of areas where culturally important practices and activities (hunting, fishing, gathering) occur*

These three indicators reflect the need to comply with the law regarding aboriginal title and rights and treaty rights, and make efforts to meet with Aboriginal communities to facilitate an understanding of management plans and incorporate management for aboriginal rights and other values. The focus here is understanding of title and rights including treaty rights, which includes an understanding of traditional territories within the Defined Forest Area and values/areas associated with aboriginal rights as defined by *Sec. 35 of the Constitution Act* - hunting, fishing, gathering (sustenance foods, berries, medicines).

Core indicator 6.2.1 – *Evidence of understanding and use of Aboriginal knowledge through the engagement of willing Aboriginal communities, using a process that identifies and manages culturally important resources and values*

This indicator requires a demonstration of efforts made to engage and develop a process for information exchange to promote the sharing and use of Aboriginal knowledge and facilitate management of aboriginal values in the SFM plan. Use of Aboriginal knowledge, where available, is encouraged to identify and manage for culturally important resources and values (areas or a broader set of values perhaps not associated with hunting, fishing, gathering activity or site, i.e. archaeological sites and other culturally important areas).

Core indicator 6.4.3 – *Evidence of efforts to promote capacity development and meaningful participation for Aboriginal communities*

The indicator requires evidence that efforts are being made to the support participation of Aboriginal communities in the Sustainable Forest Management process.