



Office buildings in Wood!

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Wood: innovative, durable, renewable and certifiable

Forest certification is the proof point for sourcing green building materials responsibly, says *Kathy Abusow*, president and CEO of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

Wood is one of the oldest construction materials known to humankind, yet we are still learning about its potential as an innovative building product. When harvested responsibly, wood is arguably one of the best tools architects and engineers have for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and storing carbon in our building materials. The building industry must seek innovation in the fundamental materials that we choose to build with.

The idea of creating taller wood buildings is catching on around the world. The nine-storey *Stadthaus* building in London shows how a tall wood building can be a viable alternative. Meanwhile, there are proposals to build a 10 to 12-storey building in Melbourne, Australia, and a 17-storey building in *Kirkenes*, Norway.

SFI and Sustainability

SFI (Sustainable Forestry Initiative) is a proof point for sustainability. While these innovations in green building are undeniably exciting, many of wood's positive attributes depend on whether the forest resource is renewed. Third-party forest certification standards, like SFI, offer a proof point that the forest has been managed according to multiple environmental, social and economic values – today and into the future.

Increasingly, global brands, including construction and building companies, are focused on avoiding risk when it comes to procuring forest products by making commitments to avoid deforestation and illegal logging. Products certified to SFI standards are an obvious solution for any organisation focused on a low-risk and steady supply of forest products and more input from responsible sources.

Growing recognition means growing market access

As *Ralph Waldo Emerson* said: "the creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn." And as Michael Green suggested during his remarks at the SFI conference, certification is that acorn.



Forest certification holds the promise of a future where the global community has addressed deforestation and illegal logging, and takes pride in purchasing forest products derived from a responsibly managed renewable resource.

We can already see this future taking shape. In September 2014, following a rigorous assessment, SFI was recognised by BREEAM for its ability to allow the construction industry to source forest products responsibly. BREEAM, the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method, is the world's foremost environmental assessment method and rating system for buildings. Worldwide, more than a quarter of a million buildings have certified BREEAM assessment ratings and over a million have registered for assessment.

BREEAM also recognises the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), a global umbrella organisation for the recognition of forest certification programmes. In turn, PEFC also endorses SFI.

BREEAM and PEFC's recognition of SFI joins the growing list of standards and organisations that continue to recognise the merits of all forest certification programmes – organisations like the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the Sustainability Consortium, GreenBlue and the National Association of State Foresters.

Green building tools that recognise SFI include the international Green Construction Code, Built Green Canada and the ANSI-accredited Green Building Initiative's Green Globes standard. And the UK's Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET) has confirmed the SFI programme meets its government's requirements for legality and sustainability.

Products that are certified to SFI standards are sold in more than 120 countries. Forests certified to the SFI Forest Management Standard cover more than 100 million hectares, stretching from Canada's boreal forest to the Southern United States.

Sustainable forest products are the right choice for forests and for our shared future

The rise of tall wood buildings is an exciting development, which builds on a foundation of sustainability promoted by certification systems like SFI and PEFC. For more than 20 years, SFI has played a leading role in conserving forests across North America and in strengthening the vital link between healthy forests, responsible purchasing and sustainable communities. The decisions you make about sourcing timber for projects in the UK gives you a voice in this community and a way to have a meaningful impact on the future of our forests.

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