



PEFC

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Your Guide to PEFC Project Sourcing Certification

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A practical framework to demonstrate responsible sourcing and traceability of forest and tree-based materials in construction projects.

Decarbonising construction with wood from sustainably managed forests and controlled sources

Wood can play an important role in lower carbon construction, particularly as governments and markets increase their requirements around climate performance, sustainable procurement, and supply chain transparency. The construction sector remains one of the world's largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, and urgent shifts in how buildings are designed, procured, and delivered are critical to achieving global climate goals.

Building and construction work is responsible for 34% of global energy consumption and 37% of energy-related CO₂ emissions, including upstream power generation.

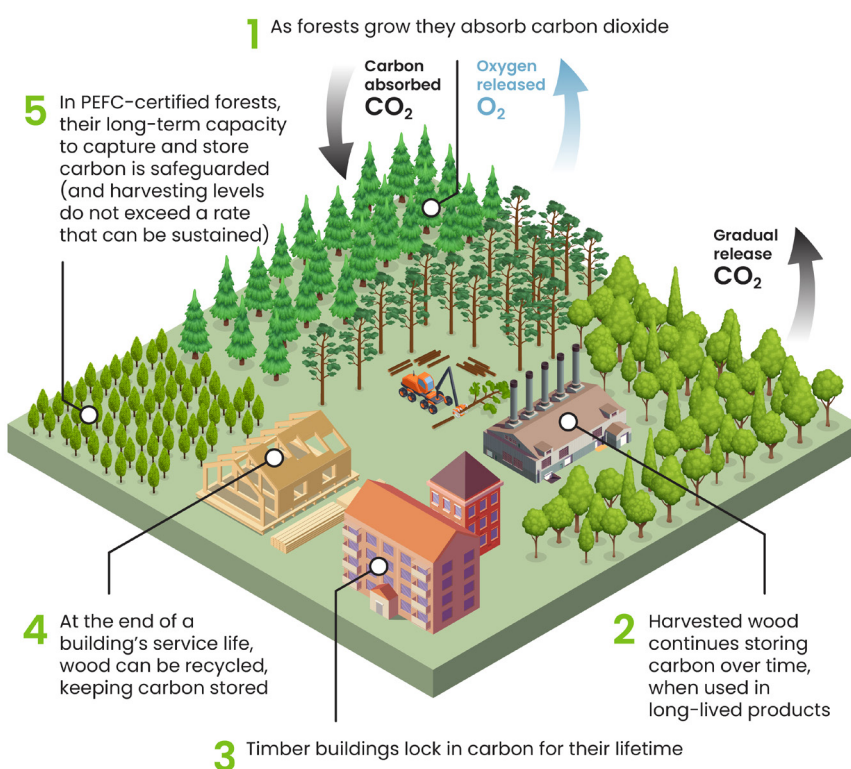
Source: United Nations Environment Programme (2024). Global Alliance for Buildings & Construction, Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction 2024/2025.

It is widely known that as they grow, trees absorb carbon from the atmosphere, which is then locked away in the timber they produce.

Used well, certified forest and tree-based materials can support circular design for deconstruction principles, store carbon in long-lived products such as buildings, and help reduce reliance on more emissions-intensive materials.

International climate frameworks increasingly recognise sustainably sourced wood, certified under schemes such as the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), as part of the solution for lowering embodied carbon in the built environment.

The carbon cycle in PEFC-certified forests



Shifting to sustainably sourced bio-based materials, including timber, could cut embodied emissions in the sector by up to 40% by 2050.

UNEP & Yale Center for Ecosystems + Architecture / GlobalABC, 2023¹

¹ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/un-plan-promises-massive-emission-cuts-construction-sector-most>

What is PEFC Project Sourcing certification?

PEFC Project Sourcing certification is an independent, third-party system that helps organisations demonstrate that forest and tree-based materials used within a project are responsibly sourced, traceable, and supported by verifiable evidence.

It allows builders, architects, designers, developers and creatives around the world to demonstrate and communicate their commitment to responsible forestry.

They are able to do this through verified project declarations and the authorised use of the PEFC trademarks, without overstating performance or scope.

PEFC Project Sourcing certification is designed for organisations and projects of all sizes and can be used for a wide range of project types, including:

- commercial and office buildings (new build or refurbishment)
- residential projects (private and social housing)
- public buildings and community infrastructure (schools, recreation facilities)
- transport and civil infrastructure (stations, airports, ports)
- residential and commercial fit-outs
- temporary structures, art installations and exhibitions
- renovation and retrofits

Features

- Works for both one-off projects and multi-project portfolios.
- Supports multiple contractors with shared procurement responsibility.
- Provides a pathway to certification for small to medium sized enterprises, using a group certification system.
- Supports chain of custody certified supply chains.

DID YOU KNOW?

PEFC Project Sourcing certification has been chosen for high-profile projects for almost 20 years. The system has been applied to a diverse range of projects since 2008, from large scale international projects to highly specialised heritage restorations.

Notable examples include the London 2012 Olympic Park and the award-winning pavilion in Singapore's largest Buddhist temple.



© Olympic Delivery Authority

The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) achieved PEFC Project certification for the London Olympic Park, honouring its commitment of making the London 2012 Olympic Games the greenest games ever.



© Fabian Ong Photography

The pavilion in the Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery was completed in December 2022. One of its most striking features is its intricate facade, which used PEFC-certified mass timber.



PEFC: A global system for independently verified forest certification

Protecting forests and biodiversity is more urgent than ever. Deforestation and forest degradation continue at alarming rates, accelerating biodiversity loss and undermining global climate objectives.

Forests play a critical role in climate mitigation by absorbing and storing carbon, but only when they are managed responsibly.

“Wood-based construction materials are sourced from forests managed according to best practices in sustainable forest management... maximising the carbon storage potential of wood is part of a global framework endorsed at COP30.”

COP30 PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE TIMBER CONSTRUCTION, BELÉM, BRAZIL (2025)²

PEFC is the most widely implemented forest certification system in the world and one of the largest global sources of sustainably certified forest products.

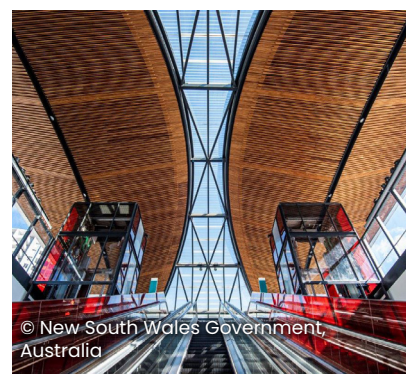
Globally, almost 300 million hectares of forest are managed in accordance with PEFC's internationally recognised Sustainability Benchmark, by over 1 million forest owners. This provides assurances that forests are being managed to meet stringent environmental, social, cultural, and economic requirements, supported by independent, third-party auditing and certification.

This framework underpins PEFC Project Sourcing certification and helps architects, builders, manufacturers, and procurement professionals around the world to access certified forest and tree-based materials for a wide range of applications, providing consistency from forest management through to project delivery.

Certified wood is regularly specified for a variety of projects, from mass timber and structural elements to engineered components and fit-out products, as well as temporary items that are used during the construction phase. Specifying certified materials helps reduce procurement and reputational risks by delivering responsible sourcing claims that are supported by evidence and independent audits.

Certifying projects around the world

PEFC Project Sourcing certification has been applied to more than 60 projects in 12 countries. These include new builds, retrofits, refurbishments, fit-outs, as well as temporary structures and exhibitions, in both public and private sector developments across diverse regulatory and market contexts.



© New South Wales Government, Australia

Sydney Metro North West station was the first public transport project of its kind in the southern hemisphere to achieve PEFC Project certification.



© Shigeru Ban Architects

The Mount Fuji World Heritage Centre demonstrated the use of certified wood in a culturally significant public building. Built with local Japanese cypress wood, the striking latticework structure resembles Mount Fuji upside-down.

² <https://builtbn.org/principles-for-responsible-timber-construction/>

How does PEFC Project Sourcing certification work?



© PEFC International

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore is Asia's largest mass timber building and achieved PEFC Project certification in 2022.



© UTE Pavilion Initiatives

El Faro (The Lighthouse), built for the Zaragoza Expo in 2008. El Faro was the first construction project in the world to achieve PEFC Project certification.

The PEFC Project Sourcing standard allows the use of a range of forest and tree-based inputs, including PEFC certified material, other certified material³, recycled material and material from controlled sources. However, for a project to be considered PEFC certified, at least 70% of the forest and tree-based material used must be from PEFC certified sources. Organisations wishing to become certified should take the following steps:

1. Determine the scope of the project

The first step is for the organisation to determine which forest and tree-based materials used in the project will be included within the project scope.

This can include both temporary and permanent materials.

2. Set up the project sourcing system

Before procurement of materials that are included within the proposed scope of the PEFC certified project begins, the organisation establishes a project sourcing management system in accordance with the PEFC Project Sourcing standard (PEFC ST 2102).

This includes:

- Defining roles and responsibilities.
- Identifying project members (contractors) who may also be procuring materials.
- Identifying who the suppliers of the forest and tree-based material will be.
- Establishing procedures for receiving, recording, and verifying documentation and certification claims.
- Establishing control measures at the project site to ensure that all materials that will be included within the project scope are traceable, identifiable and are not mixed with any other forest and tree-based materials that will not be included in the project scope.

3. Implement the system and collect evidence

Throughout the duration of the project, the organisation must implement the sourcing controls

and review the effectiveness of the management system.

This includes managing records, reviewing and calculating the certified material content and where non-certified material is used, applying due diligence processes to avoid materials from controversial sources.

4. Engage a certification body

An independent, accredited PEFC certification body is engaged to audit the project sourcing system and its implementation. This includes an initial audit, ongoing verification during the project, and a final audit on project completion. For organisations operating multi-project certification, audits continue annually on an ongoing basis, focusing on the management system and how it is applied consistently across multiple projects.

5. Certification and communication

Following a successful initial audit, certification of the management system will be granted. The project itself may also be recognised as an 'applicant project', allowing the organisation to communicate that a project sourcing management system is in place.

Once the project is completed and the organisation passes a final audit, the project will be listed as a completed project on the PEFC database. The organisation is then eligible to publicly communicate verified responsible sourcing for the project using the PEFC trademarks.

³ A supply declared as certified against a forest certification system (other than PEFC endorsed), which addresses the activities covered by PEFC's definition of controversial sources.

What are the benefits of PEFC Project Sourcing certification for your organisation?

PEFC Project Sourcing certification helps your organisation demonstrate responsible sourcing with confidence and verify supply chain traceability across a wide range of project types and scales.

Independent assurance and traceability

An independently audited framework for traceability, procurement controls, and due diligence helps organisations demonstrate that forest and tree-based materials are responsibly sourced and supported by evidence.

Public transparency and reporting

Certified projects are listed on PEFC's public database ([pefc.org/find-certified](https://www.pefc.org/find-certified)), increasing transparency and giving clients, investors, and stakeholders public visibility of verified project sourcing outcomes.

Access to a global, certified supply base

With almost 30,000 companies holding PEFC Chain of Custody certification across more than 90 countries, PEFC supports one of the world's largest networks of certified supply chains, helping project teams source materials reliably across regions and markets.

Communications and access to the PEFC trademarks

The PEFC trademarks provide a clear and trusted signal of responsible sourcing.

Associating projects with PEFC allows organisations to align their brand with an internationally recognised forest certification system and to communicate verified sustainability commitments to the market.

Flexible pathways supported by practical tools

PEFC Project Sourcing certification is designed to reflect how projects are delivered. It supports one-off projects, multi-project portfolios, and group approaches for SMEs.

It also allows multiple contractors with procurement responsibilities to work within a single, project-level sourcing system.

Where subcontractors do not hold their own PEFC Chain of Custody certification, they may operate under the scope of the certified management system under PEFC Project Sourcing certification.

Recognition of other certification schemes

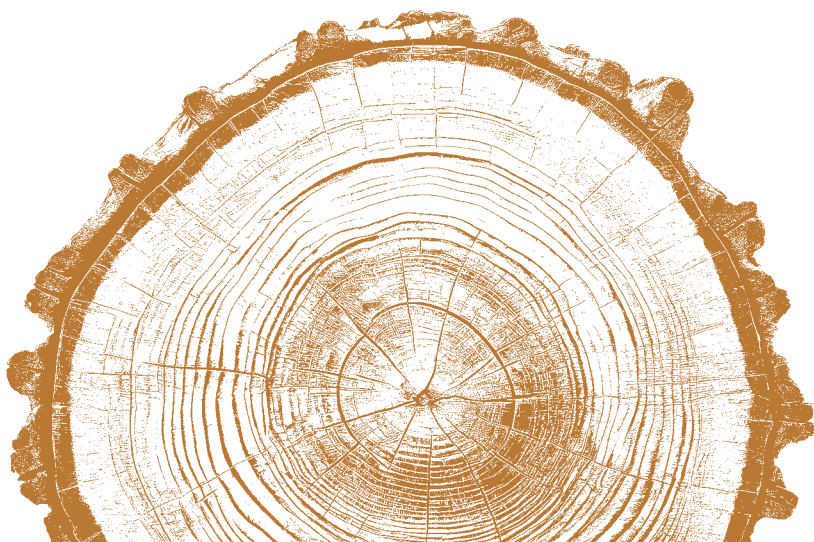
To reflect current supply chains and provide the greatest possible flexibility to users, the requirements recognise and allow the use of material from other forest certification schemes, providing they align with PEFC's definition of controversial sources.



With a build time of just 2 years, Mayr-Melnhof Holz's CLT factory in Leoben, Austria became the world's first PEFC-certified construction project for an industrial building of this size. 11,500 m² of wood from PEFC-certified forests was used in its construction.



Austria's Mühlal Kindergarten was the first PEFC-certified school building. Delivered by Mayr-Melnhof Holz, it provided all the well known biophilic attributes of wood to the building occupants.



Contribution to green building rating systems

Around the globe, projects aim for green building ratings that require evidence of responsible materials sourcing and supply chain transparency.

Globally, most major green building and responsible procurement systems recognise PEFC certification, along with other forest certification schemes, as a credible means of demonstrating responsible sourcing and traceability of forest and tree-based materials.

Certified products that are supported through PEFC Project Sourcing certification controls can help organisations with:

- Ensuring compliance with customer sourcing policies, due diligence and internal purchasing requirements.
- Material traceability for sustainability reporting, supported by independent verification of sourcing claims.
- Streamlining documentation workflows and records across project teams, contractors and suppliers.

PEFC Project Sourcing certification helps project teams organise and verify sourcing information for forest and tree-based materials, supporting the material disclosure and responsible sourcing evidence required by green building rating systems and sustainable procurement frameworks.

Green building schemes such as BREEAM, LEED, DGNB, Nordic Swan and CASBEE recognise PEFC-certified materials. PEFC-certified wood is also recognised in Built by Nature's Principles for Responsible Construction Implementation Framework.



© SGEC/PEFC Japan
In 2025, Shelter Co. Ltd was awarded SGEC/PEFC Project certification for the Takinoue Town National Health Insurance Clinic.



© PEFC Italy
The Giuseppe Bianchi shelter, a welcome refuge for hikers and climbers in the Italian Alps, was completely renovated in 2018, using locally sourced PEFC-certified white fir wood.



© PEFC UK



© Hufton & Crow/Bennetts Associates

Completed in 2026, London's Timber Square development is a pioneering, mixed-use development using PEFC-certified CLT. The scheme comprises a refurbished and extended former 1950s printworks, now known as the Print Building, retaining 80% of its original structure, and the new 15-storey Ink Building. The design team – led by Bennetts Associates – opted for a hybrid structural system, combining steel and timber. The Ink Building is now one of the largest CLT projects in Europe.



This development by Siges Massivholzbau, comprises 80 apartments. 3,000 m³ of wood, partly sourced from local PEFC-certified forests, was used in its construction, making it one of the largest multi-story wooden residential buildings in Salzburg, Austria.



The Urban Woods is a 10-storey, low-carbon, residential development constructed entirely of CLT panels. Demolition wood and discarded pallets, all sourced locally in the Netherlands, were used to manufacture the CLT.



The Wood Technology Association boarding school in Kuchl, Austria, used over 1,000 m³ of CLT, supplied by Mayr-Melnhof in its construction.

PEFC's Mission

PEFC's Mission is to promote sustainable forest management through independent, third-party certification. We do this by:

- Ensuring that forests are managed sustainably, balancing environmental, social and economic needs.
- Providing a credible certification system that verifies wood and forest products come from responsibly managed forests.
- Promoting responsible supply chains through Chain of Custody certification so that businesses and consumers can trust certified products.
- Supporting owners of small forests by offering accessible and practical standards.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PEFC PROJECT SOURCING CERTIFICATION AND HOW TO APPLY IT TO YOUR NEXT PROJECT, CONTACT YOUR NATIONAL PEFC MEMBER

treee.es/pefcnationalmembers

OR VISIT

treee.es/pefc-construction



About PEFC

PEFC is a leading forest certification system, dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management. We empower forest owners, communities, and businesses to adopt responsible practices through trusted, third-party certification.

Further information – www.pefc.org

