

Introducing PEFC Project Sourcing Certification

Demonstrating responsible sourcing and traceability in construction

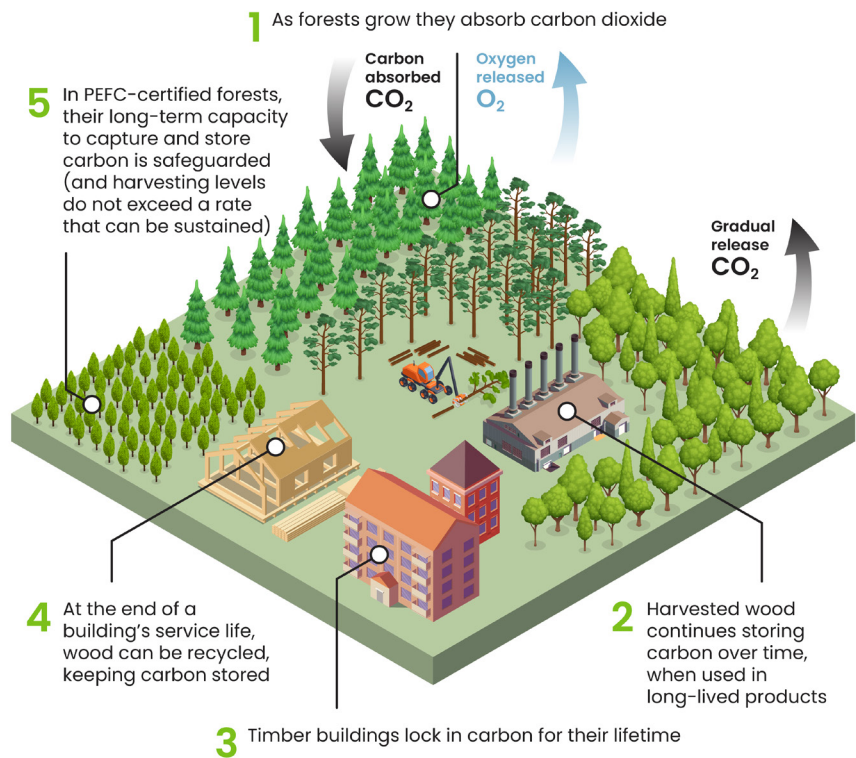
Buildings and construction currently account for around 37% of energy-related CO₂ emissions globally... urgent shifts in the way we build are crucial.

UNEP / Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, 2025

Wood is uniquely positioned to help decarbonise the construction industry. As one of the world's largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, the built environment must rapidly evolve to meet global climate goals. Using timber and other forest-based materials from sustainably managed forests and trees outside forests can help reduce embodied carbon across projects, while supporting circular design and renewable material use.

As they grow, trees absorb carbon from the atmosphere, which is then locked away in timber. When this timber is incorporated into a building, it stores the carbon throughout the building's life. Using timber in place of more carbon-intensive materials such as concrete and steel can further reduce embodied emissions.

The carbon cycle in PEFC-certified forests



According to UNEP and Yale Center for Ecosystems + Architecture, a shift to properly managed renewable bio-based materials (such as timber, bamboo and biomass) could lead to emissions savings of up to 40% in the buildings and construction sector by 2050 in many regions.

UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Yale Center for Ecosystems + Architecture report – Building Materials and the Climate: Constructing a New Future

What is PEFC Project Sourcing certification?

PEFC Project Sourcing certification is an independent, third-party system based on chain of custody standards recognised around the world.

The standard provides a structured framework to verify that forest and tree-based materials used in a construction project are responsibly sourced, traceable, and supported by documented evidence. It enables built environment professionals to:

- Demonstrate responsible procurement of timber and other forest-based materials.
- Verify supply chain traceability through independent audits.
- Use the globally recognised PEFC trademarks to communicate verified sustainability commitments.

PEFC's Project Sourcing requirements also provide companies with a range of certification options. Organisations may obtain certification for an individual project or apply a continuous certification system if they want to include multiple projects.

Certification may be issued to a single legal entity or to multiple, linked entities. Smaller organisations can also participate through a group certification model.

What qualifies as a certified project?

The standard offers flexible certification pathways. Organisations can opt to have individual projects certified or operate under a multi-project sourcing certification, covering several builds.

The requirements allow the use of a range of forest and tree-based inputs, including PEFC certified material, other certified material, recycled material and material from controlled sources. However, for a project to be considered PEFC certified:

- the forest and tree-based material sourced for the installed components under the project scope must collectively include at least 70% PEFC certified content;
- and,
- each installed component under the project scope must include at least 70% of certified content from PEFC certified material and/or other certified material that is eligible to become PEFC controlled sources.

Example:

Component 1
1500 m³ of cross laminated timber (CLT)
100% PEFC certified

Component 2
200 m³ Window frames
Other certification schemes 70%

Each installed component has over 70% certified content so overall, the project has over 70% certified content.

How it works

1. Determine the project scope

The organisation first determines which forest and tree-based materials used in the project will be included within the certification scope. This can include both temporary and permanent materials.

2. Establish the project sourcing system

Before commencing procurement, the organisation needs to set up a management system in accordance with the requirements of the PEFC Project Sourcing standard, defining roles, sourcing processes, control of materials at the project site, and documentation retention.

3. Implement controls and collect evidence

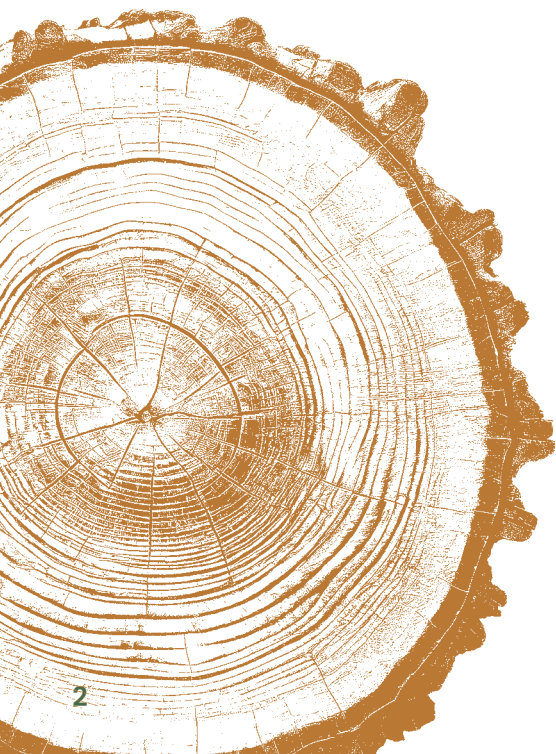
Throughout the project, PEFC certified materials and other eligible inputs are tracked and verified through due diligence checks to ensure that any non-certified inputs do not come from controversial sources.

4. Complete an independent audit

An independent, PEFC recognised certification body audits the organisation to ensure they have established the right processes to responsibly source and track forest and tree-based materials. For an individual project, audits take place at the beginning and completion of the project. If the project lasts longer than 18 months, an additional audit may be required. For multiple projects, an audit is conducted at the start of each project, with annual surveillance audits to confirm that requirements continue to be met throughout the project's duration.

5. Achieve certification and recognition

Under PEFC Project Sourcing, a commitment to responsible sourcing can be communicated while a project is still under construction. Once an applicant project appears on the PEFC website, approved PEFC trademark messages may be used. On completion, an independent audit confirms whether the project can be recognised as a completed certified project and listed on PEFC's public database.



Why choose PEFC Project Sourcing certification?

Independent assurance and traceability

An audited, transparent framework verifies procurement controls, ensuring credibility in responsible sourcing claims.

PEFC certification offers confidence to clients, regulators and investors that forest and tree-based materials have been sustainably sourced.

Public transparency and market recognition

Certified projects are listed publicly, strengthening your ESG reporting and market reputation. This independent confirmation demonstrates leadership in sustainable construction.

Access to a global certified supply chain

With almost 30,000 PEFC-certified companies in over 80 countries, sourcing certified materials is simple and practical, even across complex, multi-country supply chains.

Project flexibility

The certification system adapts to project realities, from one-off builds to multi-project portfolios. It supports group certification and enables multiple contractors to work under a single, certified management system.

Alignment with green building ratings

PEFC certification supports evidence-based responsible sourcing, recognised across major rating systems such as BREEAM, LEED, DGNB, and CASBEE. Certified materials help streamline documentation for sustainable procurement and material traceability requirements.

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 forestry certification schemes, provided they align with PEFC's definition of controversial sources.

Confidence in sustainable sourcing

Protecting forests and biodiversity is an urgent global challenge. The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) operates the world's most widely implemented forest certification system — covering nearly 300 million hectares of sustainably managed forest. Its standards ensure forest ecosystems are managed to the highest environmental, social, and economic benchmarks, audited independently by third parties. This global assurance underpins the reliability and reputation of PEFC-certified materials used in construction.

Certified wood is now standard in high-performance design, from structural mass timber to interiors and fit-outs. Specifying PEFC-certified products can help businesses:

- reduce reputational and procurement risk
- meet government and client sustainability requirements
- contribute to verified reductions in embodied carbon



Ritz Carlton, Fari Island, Maldives
Kerry Hill Architects
Photo credit - © Christopher Cypert

“PEFC Project Sourcing certification gives us a practical framework to demonstrate that the timber we procure and install is traceable and responsibly sourced. For complex hospitality projects, where multiple species, origins, and manufacturers are involved, the independent audit trail removes ambiguity and gives clients confidence that sustainability claims are backed by evidence, not marketing.”



KEVIN HILL,
MANAGING DIRECTOR
NAUTILUS INNOVATION



Why your choices matter

Deforestation and forest degradation drive biodiversity loss and weaken global climate resilience. By choosing PEFC-certified materials, your business is demonstrating its support for sustainable forest management.



© Andrew Phelps

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

“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 global framework endorsed at COP30.”

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

Build responsibly – choose PEFC

PEFC Project Sourcing certification gives construction professionals a clear, credible pathway to demonstrate sustainable sourcing and help achieve positive environmental outcomes.

LEARN MORE AT

treee.es/pefc-construction

OR EXPLORE CERTIFIED PROJECTS ON

treee.es/findcert

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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 independent, third-party certification.

Learn more at www.pefc.org

