



# Sustainable Biomass Program Certification

## Smart choice for companies aiming for a greener future

### What is the Sustainable Biomass Program?

Embracing sustainability is no longer just an ethical choice; it's become a strategic imperative for businesses in today's conscientious world. The **Sustainable Biomass Program (SBP)** certification is specifically designed for large-scale energy production using woody biomass.

Sustainable Biomass Program certification is a voluntary scheme that demonstrates a commitment to delivering or sourcing legal and responsible woody biomass. SBP certification covers woody feedstock from the forest through the biomass producer to the final energy producer.

SBP has established a certification system to ensure that the sourcing of woody biomass follows legal and sustainable practices. This empowers biomass sector companies to showcase their adherence to regulations. The certification serves as a transparent framework outlining the standards and steps needed to prove this adherence effectively. It focuses on sustainability requirements in the forest, carbon data collection and chain of custody control.

Preferred by Nature is accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) to provide SBP certification to biomass producers and supply chains worldwide.

According to the current SBP certificate standard version 1, companies must hold a valid Forest Stewardship Council™ (FSC™) or the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) certificate. This can be obtained from FSC or PEFC certification and SBP certification through a dual audit. But in the case of the revised SBP standard version 2, this requirement is not applied.

### Who is behind the SBP system?

The SBP was founded in 2013 as a not-for-profit organisation, owned and fully funded by its members, with a common interest in the use of woody biomass. Now, SBP has been established as a multi-stakeholder-governed organisation.

SBP aims to support a sustainable solid biomass supply chain that contributes to a low-carbon economy. SBP does this through the [SBP certification system](#).

Its purpose is to set standards that allow biomass sector companies to demonstrate compliance with regulations including sustainability requirements related to woody biomass used in energy production.

In September 2022, SBP was officially recognised by the European Commission as a voluntary certification scheme under Renewable Energy Directive 2018/2001/EU (REDII). For more information about the REDII, please click [here](#).





## The certification process



Pre-assessment is mainly relevant for biomass producers. It entails an initial review of your SBP system. You can opt for this in order to identify major gaps in your system, thus facilitating your preparation for certification.

You ensure compliance with the relevant SBP standards. Amongst other steps, you will collect energy and carbon data and implement chain of custody requirements. Biomass producers sourcing feedstock requiring Supply Base Evaluation will also conduct stakeholder consultation and risk assessment, set up a Supplier Verification Programme and implement risk mitigation measures.

You submit your documented procedures and other documents, including supply base report and SBP risk assessment, if applicable (via [SBP Portal](#)), audit report on energy and GHG data (SAR), to Preferred by Nature prior to the main evaluation. Preferred by Nature will review and inform you about any major gaps.

SBP audits are normally conducted on-site. Our auditor will typically conduct interviews, review documents, and review your volume accounting system. The auditor will also inspect your facilities and, if a Supply Base Evaluation is part of the audit scope, will evaluate the quality of your implemented mitigation measures, including visits to the forest of origin.

After the on-site assessment, we prepare a report presenting the results, including any non-compliances. You will need to correct major issues before we can issue a certificate. Once our top experts have reviewed the draft report, we send it to you for comments before we complete it.

## Service with experience

Preferred by Nature is an international non-profit organisation working to support better land management and business practices that benefit people, nature, and climate in 100+ countries. We do this by supporting other organisations and businesses to take responsible approaches. We constantly seek to improve the systems that we work with. With 30 years of experience, we have certified and verified thousands of organisations and businesses against international sustainability standards. To date, we have certified more than 32 million hectares of forest lands and farms around the world. For more information, please visit [www.preferredbynature.org](http://www.preferredbynature.org)







## Sustainable Biomass Program Q&As

### Which certification standards apply to my company?

Depending on the type of company, six SBP standards may apply to SBP certificate holders. The following two standards apply to all SBP-certified biomass producers and traders:

- The SBP Standard 4 *Chain of Custody* controls the flow of certified material throughout the supply chain.
- The SBP Standard 5 *Collection and Communication of Data* helps you gather the required data. Only a subset of the Standard's criteria applies to traders. There is also one instruction document (5E) that defines the requirements and options for the collection of energy data, as well as the use of the SBP Data Transfer System (DTS).
- The SBP Standard 6: Energy and Carbon Balance Calculation applies to Organisations taking legal ownership of certified biomass and wishing to certify GHG emissions calculations, including the calculation of GHG emissions savings
- The following standards apply to biomass producers only:
- The SBP Standard 1 *Feedstock Compliance Standard* sets out criteria used during Supply Base Evaluations (SBE). Biomass producers need to conduct an SBE, FSC™ or PEFC certification claims that can be used to mitigate some of the risks.
- The SBP Standard 2 *Verification of SBP-compliant Feedstock* includes requirements for setting up a management system, recording harvesting sites, elaborating a Supply Base Report, establishing measures securing credibility, and setting up a system to handle comments and complaints. It also sets out requirements for conducting a Supply Base Evaluation (SBE), which may be required depending on the material that you are sourcing. SBEs normally comprise risk assessment, supplier verification and risk control.

### What are the costs involved?

You will pay for the costs related to auditing, which depends on the scope of your certificate. SBP will charge you the SBP fee based on the quantity of material sold with the SBP claim. Learn more about the SBP fee at <https://sbpcert.org/documents/fee-schedule/>

### Which claims and trademarks can I use?

As an SBP certificate holder, you may use the claims of *SBP-compliant biomass* or *SBP-controlled biomass* for SBP-certified material. You can use this claim business-to-business on sales and transportation documents. Once you have signed a logo agreement with SBP, you may use the SBP logo for promotional purposes. On-product labelling is not permitted.



### What about confidentiality?

We use secure systems, and we keep your information safe and confidential. However, basic information about SBP certificates is published on the SBP website. In addition, public summaries of SBP audit reports and the supply base reports will be visible on the SBP website. Public summaries exclude confidential information.

### How do I maintain my active certification status?

You need to comply with the certification requirements to remain certified. This is verified through annual audits. You must address any non-compliances found. Non-compliances are graded as major or minor. We will normally verify your compliance with minor issues during the next annual audit. Minor non-compliances that are inadequately addressed are upgraded to major.

You must address major non-compliances within a maximum of three months, requiring an additional audit. Failure to address major non-compliances will lead to suspension of your certificate. In cases of serious non-compliance, the certificate may be immediately suspended. Note: A suspended certificate can be re-instated once you have addressed the issues.

After completing a full certificate validity period, you need to undergo re-assessment - a new full assessment - in order to stay certified.



If the result of the re-assessment is positive, a new certificate issued including the same certificate registration code as in your previous certificate.

### What is the validity of my certification?

The Sustainable Biomass Certificate is valid for five years. Annual audits during the validity period are required to maintain certification. Once the validity period ends, you need to undergo a re-assessment to renew your certificate.

### When can certification be refused?

Certification is refused when Preferred by Nature concludes that the audited company does not meet the standard's requirements.

### When is certification suspended?

Your certification may be suspended for the following reasons: 1. failure to address one or more major/critical nonconformities by the specified timeline, 2. serious breaches of the certification requirements, 3. lack of payment of applicable fees and invoices, 4. lack of willingness to plan and undergo scheduled audits. A suspended certificate may be reinstated when the company has addressed the issues that led to the suspension, and we have conducted an audit verifying compliance within the required timeline.

### When is certification terminated?

Your certificate may be terminated for the following reasons: 1. Failure to sufficiently address the issues leading to suspension within the suspension period, 2. deliberate fraud or serious breaches of the certification requirements, 3. Failure to undergo renewed assessment within the suspension period after addressing the issues leading to suspension, and 4. Failure to undergo a renewed assessment prior to certificate expiration. If a certificate has been terminated, the company needs to undergo a renewed assessment to have a new certificate issued. It is not possible to reinstate the previous certificate. After a certificate has been suspended or terminated, the company may not make any claims about conformance with the certification standard(s) and may not sell previously labelled products until certification trademarks are removed.

### Can I change the certification scope?

As a certificate holder, you may expand or change the scope of your certification in conjunction with your annual audit or in between audits. An additional audit is usually required for scope changes outside the scheduled annual/certification audits. Depending on the nature of the change, it may be either an on-site or/and desk audit.

### What are the rights and duties of applicants and clients?

To learn about Preferred By Nature's clients' rights and duties, please check the [Certification Agreement](#).

### What is the procedure for complaints and appeals?

For complaints management, all complaints and appeals will be processed using the Preferred by Nature's [Dispute Resolution Policy](#).

### What about impartiality and confidentiality?

Preferred by Nature's Quality Management System includes [several policies](#) that allow our organisation to provide assurance services credibly in compliance with accreditation requirements. These include the [Impartiality Policy](#), which ensures impartiality, transparency and independence in all of our activities, and the [Confidentiality Policy](#), describing our rigorous approach to safeguarding confidential data and information provided by our clients.