Sustainable Biomass Program Certification
Service information

Sustainable Biomass Program (SBP) certification demonstrates your commitment to deliver or source legal and responsible woody biomass.

SBP certification covers woody feedstock from the forest through the biomass producer to the final energy producer. It focusses on sustainability requirements in the forest, carbon data collection and chain of custody control. Where possible, SBP builds on standards and processes developed by the FSC™ and PEFC schemes for certification of responsible forest management.

Note: To engage in SBP certification, you must hold a valid FSC or PEFC certificate. You may obtain FSC or PEFC certification and SBP certification through a dual audit.

Who is behind the SBP system?
The Sustainable Biomass Program (SBP) is a not-for-profit organisation originally established by leading European biomass energy producers. Its purpose is to set standards that allow biomass sector companies to demonstrate compliance with regulatory, including sustainability requirements related to woody biomass used in energy production.

The Accreditation Services International (ASI) approves certification bodies that certify biomass sector companies. SBP certifiers must hold either FSC or PEFC accreditation. Learn more at https://sbp-cert.org

Which certification standards apply to my company?
Depending on the type of company, five 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 are also three instruction documents namely 5A, 5B, and 5C that define the requirements and options for the collection of energy data, as well as the use of the SBP Data Transfer System (DTS).

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 unless the material carries one of the following claims: FSC or PEFC certification claims or claims from the schemes recognised by PEFC, FSC Controlled Wood or PEFC Controlled Sources claims, or reclaimed material claims under the FSC, PEFC or SBP systems.
- 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 the 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.

The following standard applies to energy producers only:
- The SBP Standard 6 *Energy and Carbon Balance Calculation* describes how energy producers must use the data received from its suppliers to calculate the final energy and carbon balance of the material.
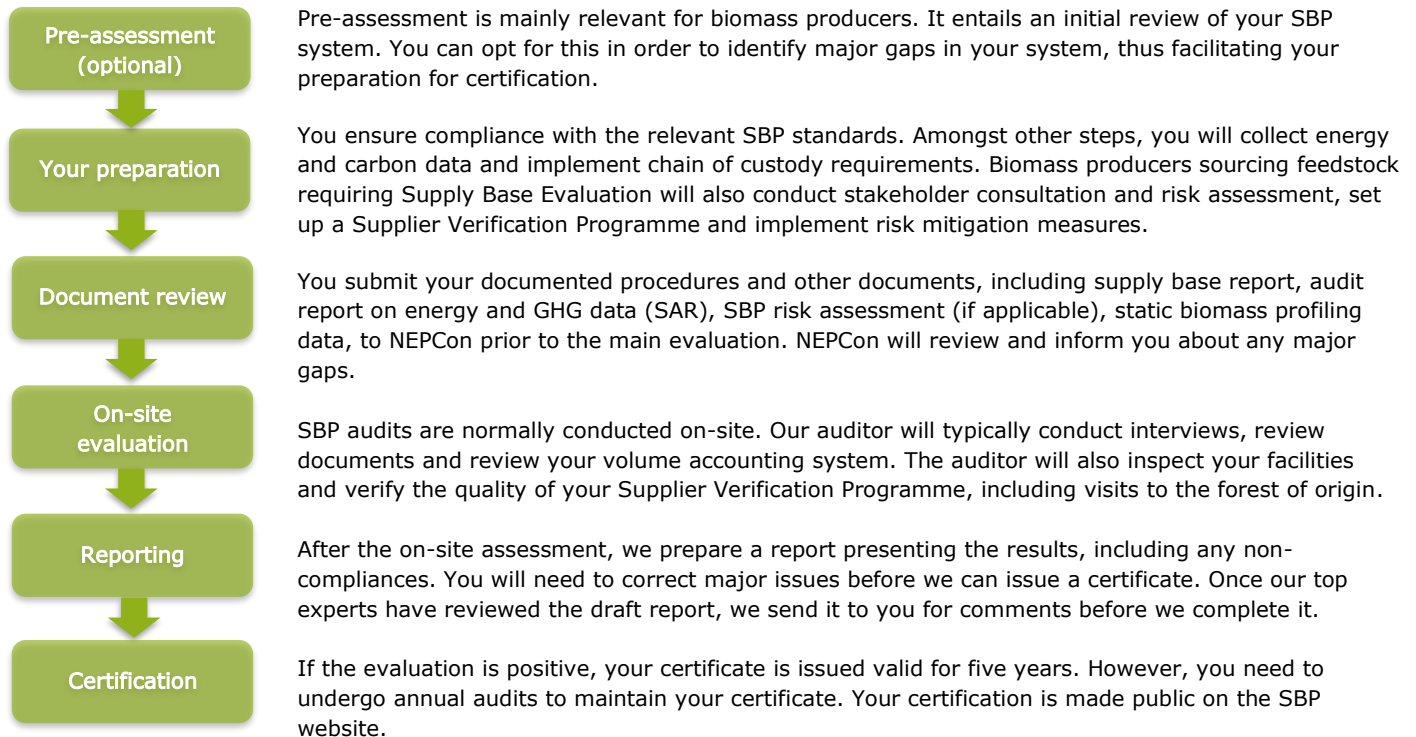
Which claims and trademarks can I use?

As an SBP certificate holder, you may use the claims *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 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 on the *SBP fee* at https://sbp-cert.org/sbp-framework/fee-schedules

The certification process

Pre-assessment (optional)

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.

Your preparation

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.

Document review

You submit your documented procedures and other documents, including supply base report, audit report on energy and GHG data (SAR), SBP risk assessment (if applicable), static biomass profiling data, to NEPCon prior to the main evaluation. NEPCon will review and inform you about any major gaps.

On-site evaluation

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 verify the quality of your Supplier Verification Programme, including visits to the forest of origin.

Reporting

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.

Certification

If the evaluation is positive, your certificate is issued valid for five years. However, you need to undergo annual audits to maintain your certificate. Your certification is made public on the SBP website.

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 certificate?

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.