



SBP Annual Activity Report to the European Commission

Sustainable Biomass Program
sbp-cert.org

April 2024

For further information on the SBP certification system and to view the full set of documentation see www.sbp-cert.org

Annual Report to the EU Commission effective from 01 May 2024

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1 Background

On 26 September 2022, the European Commission (the Commission) took the Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/1657¹ recognising the SBP voluntary scheme as compliant with the requirements of Directive (EU) 2018/2001². Pursuant to Article 3 (b) of the Implementing Decision, SBP is required to submit an annual report to the Commission pursuant to Article 30(5) of Directive (EU) 2018/2001.

1.1 Article 30 (4) of Directive (EU) 2018/2001

The Commission shall require that each voluntary scheme on which a decision has been adopted under paragraph 4 submit annually by 30 April a report to the Commission covering each of the points set out in Annex IX to Regulation (EU) 2018/1999. The report shall cover the preceding calendar year. The requirement to submit a report shall apply only to voluntary schemes that have operated for at least 12 months.

The Commission shall make the reports drawn up by the voluntary schemes available, in an aggregated form or in full if appropriate, on the e-reporting platform referred to in Article 28 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999.

1.2 ANNEX IX to Regulation (EU) 2018/1999

VOLUNTARY SCHEMES IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE COMMISSION HAS ADOPTED A DECISION PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 30(4) OF DIRECTIVE (EU) 2018/2001

The report on voluntary schemes in respect of which the Commission has adopted a decision pursuant to Article 30(4) of Directive (EU) 2018/2001, to be adopted biennially by the Commission together with the State of the Energy Union report pursuant to point (e) of Article 35(2) of this Regulation, shall contain the Commission's assessment of, as a minimum, the following:

- a) the independence, modality and frequency of audits, both in relation to what is stated on those aspects in the scheme documentation, at the time the scheme concerned was approved by the Commission, and in relation to industry best practices;
- b) the availability of, and experience and transparency in the application of, methods for identifying and dealing with non-compliance, with particular regard to dealing with situations or allegations of serious wrongdoing on the part of members of the scheme;
- c) transparency, particularly in relation to the accessibility of the scheme, the availability of translations in the applicable languages of the countries and regions from which raw materials originate, the accessibility of a list of certified operators and relevant certificates, and the accessibility of auditor reports;
- d) stakeholder involvement, particularly as regards the consultation of indigenous and local communities prior to decision making during the drafting and reviewing of the scheme as well as during audits and the response to their contributions;
- e) the overall robustness of the scheme, particularly in light of rules on the accreditation, qualification and independence of auditors and relevant scheme bodies;
- f) where available, market updates of the scheme, the amount of feedstocks and biofuels certified, by country of origin and type, the number of participants;
- g) the ease and effectiveness of implementing a system that tracks the proofs of conformity with the sustainability criteria that the scheme gives to its member(s), such a system intended to serve as a means of preventing fraudulent activity with a view, in particular, to the detection, treatment and follow-up of suspected fraud and other irregularities and where appropriate, number of cases of fraud or irregularities detected;

¹ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2022/1657/oj

² https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?toc=OJ:L:2018:328:TOC&uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.328.01.0082.01.ENG

- h) options for entities to be authorised to recognise and monitor certification bodies;
- i) criteria for the recognition or accreditation of certification bodies;
- j) rules on how the monitoring of the certification bodies is to be conducted; and
- k) ways to facilitate or improve the promotion of best practices.

2 The Sustainable Biomass Program

2.1 Our purpose

SBP is a not-for-profit, voluntary certification scheme designed for biomass used in energy production. Respected scientific advisory bodies and policy makers worldwide recognise biomass to energy as a renewable technology with a significant role to play in reducing carbon emissions and meeting challenging climate goals.

Through our credible and robust certification scheme, assuring responsible practice in feedstock sourcing, SBP is the promise of good biomass and is an integral part of the solution for tackling climate change.

Our purpose is to facilitate the economically, environmentally and socially responsible use of biomass enabling climate goals to be met.

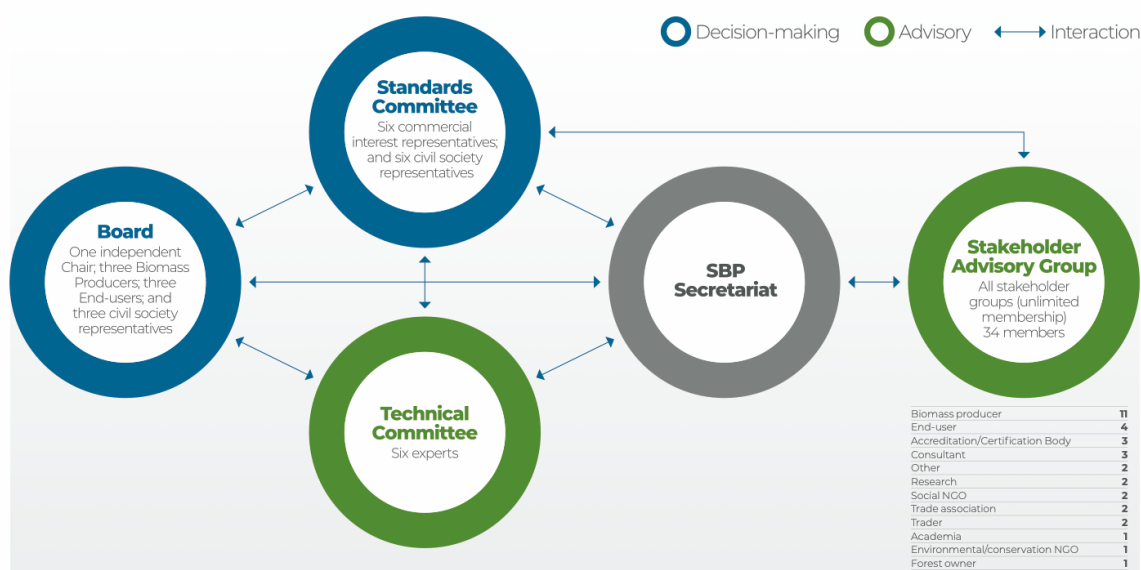
Our values are the guiding principles that we use to manage our operations and our relationships with stakeholders. Our four values are: Integrity; Credibility; Transparency; Inclusivity.

Our Theory of Change is the link between our strategic objectives and our purpose, throwing the spotlight on how what we do will deliver our intended impact and ultimately our purpose. We have identified three impact pathways, spanning the short to medium and long term: Our Standards; Data and information; the bioeconomy.

2.2 Our governance

SBP recognises the value and benefit of good governance and our governance arrangements³ bring together all our stakeholder groups. Outside of our governing bodies, we take every opportunity to encourage stakeholders to get involved in the work we do.

Figure 1 – Governance structure



³ <https://sbp-cert.org/about-us/how-we-operate/>

2.2.1 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the key governing body of SBP, determining our strategy and objectives, and approving the annual business plan and budget.

The Board comprises an independent Chair and nine seats filled with an equal split between the interests of Civil Society, Biomass Producers and End-users. Each Board member serves in a personal capacity representing their particular stakeholder interest group, and not their affiliated organisation. Each member has been chosen for his or her knowledge, integrity, expertise and support for SBP's purpose.

2.2.2 Standards Committee

The Standards Committee is responsible for all decision-making concerning standards-setting and the provision of views, advice and recommendations on the operation of SBP to the Board, other Committees and the Secretariat.

The Standards Committee is a representation of stakeholders, with the membership split equally between those representing Civil Society and those representing commercial interests.

The members of the Standards Committee have been chosen to reflect diverse experiences, geographies and interests in relation to the work of SBP.

2.2.3 Technical Committee

The role of the Technical Committee is, amongst other things, to provide advice to the Board on technical and scientific functions, including but not limited to certification and accreditation criteria and methodologies.

The Technical Committee is a representation of specialist expertise across the disciplines encompassed by the Standards, including forest management, feedstock processing, biomass distribution, as well as knowledge of auditing, certification and/or accreditation processes and procedures.

The members of the Technical Committee have been chosen to reflect the necessary specialist knowledge and to ensure balance across regional geographies.

2.2.4 Stakeholder Advisory Group

The role of the Stakeholder Advisory Group is to provide a platform for stakeholder input and advice to support the work of the Standards Committee in the development, implementation and maintenance of Standards and related documents. As well as other relevant activities towards furthering SBP's development as a biomass certification scheme and making SBP an efficient and effective organisation.

The number of members of the Stakeholder Advisory Group is unlimited, although only one representative from each organisation/institution is permitted to join the Group.

2.2.5 SBP Secretariat

The day-to-day running of SBP is carried out by the Secretariat. SBP is a virtual organisation registered in England and Wales.

The Secretariat is supported by ad-hoc Working Groups of subject-matter experts. The Working groups are overseen by the Secretariat. They are established when needed and can be recommended by the Board of Directors, SBP Committees or the Secretariat. They are phased out when their goals have been achieved.

2.3 Our progress to date

2.3.1 Multistakeholder organisation

Since its inception in 2013, SBP has developed and grown in scale and recognition. During 2018, a comprehensive governance review was undertaken culminating in the introduction of multi-stakeholder governance arrangements from January 2019, bringing together stakeholder groups representing civil society interests, biomass producer interests and those of biomass end-users. The involvement of a range of interest groups at Board and Committee level fosters dialogue, decision-making and implementation of solutions to common goals.

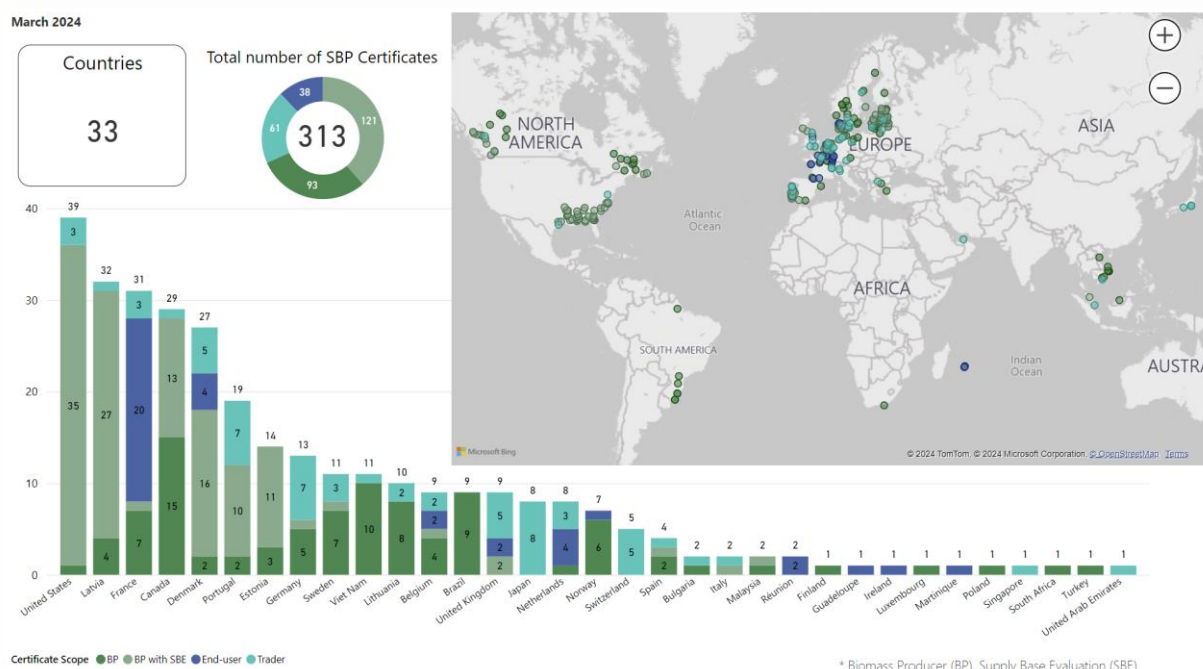
The transition is in line with best practice as demonstrated by leading sustainability standards and aligns with the principles of codes of ISEAL, a recognised global membership association for sustainability standards.

2.3.2 Leader in its sector

The first point of certification in SBP certification scheme is the Biomass Producer (BP), which is a producer of wood pellets and/or chips. SBP claims accompany the biomass along the supply chain through certified operators – traders and/or End-users.

As of 31 March 2024⁴, there were 313 SBP Certificate Holders across 33 countries demonstrating the sustainability of biomass used by industrial, large scale energy producers. In 2023, close to 80% of the industrial pellets consumed in geographic Europe carried the SBP claim, making it the leading certification solution chosen by operators.

Figure 2 – Map of SBP Certificate Holders (March 2024)



As of 31 March 2024, 192 SBP Certificate Holders have REDII in their certificate scope. The up-to-date status can be viewed in the Certificate Holder database on the SBP website (<https://sbp-cert.org/certifications/certificate-holders/>) by setting the filter to "Includes REDII".

⁴ For real time figure visit <https://sbp-cert.org/about-us/facts-figures/>

2.4 SBP certification scheme

2.4.1 Introduction

SBP specialises in the biomass market where we have the expertise to succeed and realise our ambition to be the biomass certification scheme of choice. SBP is focused on delivering a certification scheme that meets our stakeholders' needs and has the desired and intended outcomes that benefit climate, nature and society.

SBP maintains a robust, credible and consistently applied certification scheme for woody biomass, whilst ensuring it reaches a higher level of excellence.

Some countries in Europe have already implemented biomass sustainability requirements, mainly through legislation. Since 2022, the European Union has also introduced sustainability requirements for the use of woody biomass, in line with the recast EU RED (REDII). The SBP certification scheme not only enables organisations operating in those biomass markets to demonstrate compliance with legal and sustainability requirements, but further it provides an off-the-shelf biomass sustainability standard for emerging markets.

Use of a certification scheme that bridges international markets brings efficiency benefits and consistency between Biomass Producers, Traders and End-users and facilitates trade.

2.4.2 Overview of the certification scheme

Our certification scheme is founded on the two principles of legality and sustainability. Those principles are broken down into criteria and again into indicators, of which there are 38 in total covering a range of requirements, including ensuring compliance with local laws, ensuring features and species of outstanding or exceptional value are identified and protected, and ensuring regional carbon stocks are maintained or increased over the medium to long term.

All the indicators are given in SBP Standard 1: Feedstock Compliance, and each has specific guidelines and reporting requirements. SBP Standard 1 sets our definition of legality and sustainability.

Our definition maps on to similar schemes, such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®), the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC™), and those schemes recognised by PEFC, such as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI®), and is based on the biomass sustainability criteria of European countries, in particular, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Biomass Producers are assessed for compliance with the SBP Standards, to verify the system they manage to ensure that the risk that the feedstock they use not being legal and sustainable is low and managed.

There are five other SBP Standards that cover how to evaluate the sustainability of the feedstock material, including requirements for stakeholder consultation and public reporting (Standard 2), how third-party verification is to be undertaken (Standard 3), the requirements for Chain of Custody (Standard 4), and energy and carbon data transfer (Standard 5).

Our certification scheme also includes other processes, such as those for dealing with appeals from Certificate Holders and complaints from any interested party.

The certification scheme was enhanced with requirements compliant with REDII. Those requirements are given in a dedicated document, *Instruction Document REDII: Bridging Requirements for Meeting REDII*⁵.

⁵ <https://sbpcert.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/SBP-Instruction-Document-REDII-Bridging-requirements-for-meeting-REDII-v1-16Nov22-FINAL.pdf>

It is important to note that SBP has decided to make REDII compliance mandatory for all SBP certified transactions, regardless of the export region (i.e., it is mandatory even when selling to non-EU countries like Japan), when using SBP Standards version 2.0.

2.4.3 Recognition of SBP scheme by the EU Commission

The SBP certification scheme covers the following types of feedstock(s)⁶: (a) ligno-cellulosic material derived from forest and non- forest land; (b) processing residues from forest and agriculture related industries (outside forest and agricultural land). Agricultural residues from agricultural land are excluded⁷. The SBP scheme covers biomass fuels (pellets and wood chips) produced from forest and non-forest ligno-cellulosic material and forest and agriculture related industry processing residues for heat and electricity production. 'Bioliquids', 'biofuels', 'biogas', 'renewable liquid and gaseous transport fuels of non-biological origin' and 'recycled carbon fuels' are outside of the scope of the SBP scheme. The SBP scheme has a global geographic coverage and encompasses the entire chain of custody.

In assessing the SBP certification scheme, the Commission found that it covers adequately the sustainability criteria laid down in Article 29(6) to (7) of Directive (EU) 2018/2001, contains accurate data on greenhouse gas emission savings for the purposes of Article 29(10) of that Directive and applies a mass balance methodology in accordance with the requirements of Article 30(1) and (2) of that Directive. This assessment does not take into account the forthcoming implementing acts, to be adopted in accordance with Article 29(8) and Article 30(8) of Directive (EU) 2018/2001, on providing guidance for demonstrating compliance with the sustainability criteria laid down in Article 29(6) and (7) of that Directive and on rules to verify sustainability and greenhouse gas emissions saving criteria and low indirect land-use change-risk criteria. The SBP scheme will therefore be re-assessed when such implementing acts will be adopted

The assessment of the SBP certification scheme found that it meets adequate standards of reliability, transparency and independent auditing and complies with the methodological requirements set out in Annex VI to Directive (EU) 2018/2001.

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32022D1657>

⁷ On January 3rd 2024 SBP received a positive assessment report to also include Trees Outside Forest feedstock to the REDII scope of the scheme. An updated text should read as following: "NOTE: Non-woody agricultural residues from agricultural land are excluded from the SBP scheme at the moment"

3 Report to the EU requirements

In the following section, we report against the requirements specified by the Commission. Reference is made to the relevant REDII scheme documents, as published on the SBP website⁸.

3.1 EU REDII scheme documents

In January 2024, SBP re-published some documents and published new documents that applicant or existing SBP Certificate Holders must use in order to achieve SBP certification. They build on pre-existing SBP scheme documents and systems (including SBP Standards 1 to 6) and contain EU REDII specific requirements, as approved by the Commission. They are:

- Instruction Document REDII: Bridging Requirements for Meeting REDII
- Instruction Document REDII: Principles for Management of REDII Scheme
- Instruction Document 6D: Methodology for the Calculation and Certification of GHG Emissions Savings for REDII
- Certification Body Audit Report Checklist
- SBP-endorsed REDII Level A risk assessment for Article 29(7) LULUCF
- SBP-recognised REDII Level A risk assessment for Article 29(6-7) Forest Biomass

The following references the content of those documents, as well as other relevant SBP normative documents.

3.2 Independence, modality and frequency of audits

SBP Certification Bodies need to comply with the requirements of SBP Standard 3. If a Certification Body audits Certificate Holders with REDII in their certificate scope they shall follow additional requirements defined in the SBP Instruction Document REDII: Bridging requirements for meeting REDII.

3.2.1 Independence

The SBP certification scheme has defined a third-party audit system which relies on independent accredited Certification Bodies to carry out conformity assessment, and issue and manage certificates of conformity.

Standard 3 Principle 5 Accreditation requirements define the rules for Certification Bodies (CBs) working with SBP:

5.1 For the evaluation of the BP's management systems, CBs shall be accredited by either Accreditation Services International (ASI) or a National Accreditation Body to provide FSC® or PEFC Forest Management certification.

5.2 For CoC certification, CBs shall hold valid FSC®, PEFC, or SFI CoC accreditation. The scope of the accreditation (supply chain or forest management) shall be equivalent to the applicable scope for SBP certification (supply chain or BP's management systems evaluation).

5.3 CBs shall operate SBP certification in compliance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.

5.4 For certification against SBP Standard 5: Collection and Communication of Data and SBP Standard 6: Energy and Carbon Balance Calculation, additional requirements may be found in Instruction Document 5A and relevant country specific Instruction Documents relating to Standard 6.

⁸ <https://sbp-cert.org/documents/standards-documents/redii-documents/>

The list of accredited Certification Bodies is available on the SBP website: <https://sbp-cert.org/certifications/accredited-certification-bodies/>.

3.2.1.1 Accreditation rules

In September 2021, the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) and SBP signed a Memorandum of Understanding to secure their commitment to cooperate in an independent, third-party program to accredit Certification Bodies in accordance with all relevant international standards and SBP certification scheme requirements. ANAB is part of the IAF MLA (<https://iaf.nu/en/recognised-abs/>).

The purpose of the MoU is to assess the competence of Certification Bodies against the requirements of the international standard, ISO/IEC 17065:2012 *Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services* and SBP requirements as defined in the SBP Certification Scheme.

The MoU ensures that ANAB monitors and oversees Certification Bodies assuring continuous compliance with ISO/IEC 17065:2012, ANAB accreditation requirements and the SBP certification scheme. Monitoring of Certification Bodies is undertaken via annual office audits, surveillance and reassessment and annual witness assessments.

ANAB-accredited Certification Bodies that do not demonstrate compliance with ANAB accreditation and/or the SBP certification scheme requirements may be subject to sanctioning in accordance with relevant clauses in ISO/IEC 17011 as well as ANAB policies and procedures, which stipulate possible suspension and eventual withdrawal of accreditation, based on outstanding non-conformities or violations of ANAB policies.

ANAB might carry out appeals/complaints between ANAB/SBP and accredited Certification Bodies in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011.

In addition, each accredited Certification Body needs to sign a Trade Mark Licence Agreement (TMLA) with SBP. This TMLA agreement requires CBs to comply with all relevant SBP normative requirements (including SBP REDII normative documents), regulations and laws.

This means that Certification Bodies agree that Member States can supervise the operation of Certification Bodies including getting access to the premises of economic operators where requested as set out under Article 30(9) of the Directive. Certification Bodies failing or unwilling to comply with the requirements shall be respectively excluded from participating in and conducting audits under voluntary schemes.

3.2.1.2 Modality of audits

Principle 6 of SBP Standard 3 v1.0 requires that Certification Bodies shall implement all relevant requirements of either FSC-STD-20-001 or PEFC Annex 6, Certification and Accreditation Procedures or SFI 2010-2014 Section 9 Audit procedures and auditor qualification and accreditation, depending on the system implemented by their clients.

The basic principles to be followed by the Certification Bodies are captured in Section 7, which states that an SBP certificate issued by a Certification Body provides a credible assurance that there is no major failure in conformance with the requirements of the applicable SBP Standard across the entire scope of the certificate.

To achieve this, the Certification Body shall employ or have access to a sufficient number of personnel to cover its operations related to the certification schemes and to the applicable Standard and other normative documents (Standard 3, Section 8 – Competence). The Standard requires that the audit team has the necessary knowledge and experience to evaluate against SBP Standards. This is complemented by Section 9.4, Competence Management of SBP Instruction Document REDII Bridging requirements. In particular,

9.4.5 The auditor shall have the appropriate specific skills necessary for conducting the audit related to the scheme's criteria.

a) Land use criteria (Supply Base Evaluation): Experience in ecology, natural science, forestry, silviculture or similar.

b) GHG criteria (GHG emission calculation at the End-User level): A minimum of two years' experience in biofuels life-cycle assessment, and specific experience in auditing GHG emission calculations following the RED/REDII calculation methodology. Relevant experience in depending on the type of audits to be conducted by the individual auditor.

9.4.6 Chain of Custody criteria (all certificate holders): Experience in mass balance systems, supply chain logistics, book-keeping, traceability, data handling or similar.

SBP has developed an official training course for auditors. The training course covers topics about biomass sector, SBP history and purpose, SBP normative framework, Data Transfer System and REDII requirements including GHG calculations, and is delivered as a blended course, partly as recorded online webinars in the SBP online training portal (<https://sbp.talentlms.com/>) and partly as live sessions using MS Teams or live courses. Several training courses are scheduled every year. To successfully accomplish the training course auditors must pass a written exam. Only those auditors who have successfully passed the SBP official training course may carry out SBP audits.

Additionally, SBP carries out bi-annual SBP Certification Body Forums where various technical topics are discussed, experiences benchmarked and interpretations provided. When standards change or calibration needs arise, SBP organises additional sessions on the relevant topics. The SBP Secretariat provides technical support to Certification Bodies and ANAB by explaining the requirements, if needed.

Operators working with the SBP certification scheme sign a contract with their Certification Body (Section 13, Standard 3). The contract clearly indicates that the operator must comply with and continue to comply with all the Certification Body's conditions and terms for maintaining, renewing and re-issuing of the certificate, including but not limited to the full implementation of any actions required to correct minor non-conformances that were identified prior to the issue of the certificate.

To verify compliance, the auditor(s) shall perform the evaluation of an adequate and appropriate sample of sites and records, and interviews with a sufficient number of affected stakeholders, in order to verify that management systems (documented or undocumented) are working effectively and consistently, under the full range of conditions present in the area under evaluation or visit the physical site(s) of each operation selected for evaluation in order to observe the applicable Chain of Custody system.

In addition, the Certification Body shall conduct a stakeholder consultation during the main audit and at each re-certification (Section 9 Standard 3).

3.2.1.3 Frequency of audits

Standard 3 defined the frequency of audits. The Certification Body shall carry out a surveillance audit to monitor the Certificate Holder's continued conformance with applicable certification requirements, at least annually (i.e. every 12 months). For certificates with a duration of five years, at least four surveillance evaluations shall take place before the certificate expires. The Certification Body shall carry out one or more annual on-site visits for all BP certificate holders.

This is supported by the SBP Instruction Document REDII: Bridging requirements for meeting REDII, which states:

9.3.1 The certificate validity shall be five (5) years.

9.3.2 Initial evaluations shall always be conducted onsite.

9.3.3 The Certification Body shall ensure that a re-evaluation is conducted prior to the expiration date of the certification for any organisation seeking to maintain their certification status beyond the expiration date.

3.3 Management of Non-conformities and complaints

3.3.1 Non-conformities

Section 9.8 of SBP Instruction Document REDII: Bridging requirements for meeting REDII defines the rules for the management of non-conformities. Non-conformities identified during an audit shall be classified as critical, major and minor.

Critical non-conformities shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) non-compliance with a mandatory requirement of Directive (EU) 2018/2001, such as land conversion which contravenes Article 29(3), (4) and (5) of that Directive;*
- (b) fraudulent issuance of proof of sustainability, for example, intentional duplication of proof of sustainability to seek financial benefit;*
- (c) deliberate production of wastes or residues, for example, the deliberate modification of a production process to produce additional residue material, or the deliberate contamination of a material with the intention of classifying it as a waste.*

In the case of critical non-conformities, the operator shall not be issued with a certificate or shall see their certificate immediately withdrawn by the Certification Body.

Major non-conformities shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) systematic problems with mass balance or GHG data reported for example, incorrect documentation is identified in more than 10% of the claims included in the representative sample;*
- (b) the omission of an economic operator to declare its participation in other voluntary schemes during the certification process;*
- (c) failure to provide relevant information to auditors for example, mass balance data and audit reports.*

In case of major non-conformities, the operator shall not be issued with a certificate or shall see their certificate immediately suspended or withdrawn if the operator does not remedy the non-conformity within 90 days from the notification.

A non-conformity that has a limited impact, constitutes an isolated or temporary lapse, is not systematic and does not result in a fundamental failure if not corrected, shall be considered to be a minor non-conformity.

In case of minor non-conformities, the operator shall remedy the non-conformity within one year from the notification.

3.3.2 Complaints

SBP takes any complaints extremely seriously. To address these in a transparent, credible and robust manner, SBP has published a complaints procedure, which is available on our website (<https://sbpcert.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/SBP-Complaints-procedure-v1.1-Jan19-FINAL.pdf>).

The procedure applies when any person or organisation expresses dissatisfaction to SBP relating to its activities, the activities of an SBP Certification Body or an SBP Certificate Holder. It encourages disputes to be resolved by discussion and negotiation or mediation. The formal SBP procedure should be seen as a last resort.

When the complaint concerns the activity of a Certification Body or a Certificate Holder, the complaint should first be directed to the Certification Body. Should the Certification Body's process not be able to address the complaint, the SBP procedure will be actioned.

Depending on the nature, severity and scope of the complaint, it will be handled either by the SBP Secretariat (an appointed staff member responsible for the case) or a contractor (if the complaint is about a member of the SBP Secretariat). Ultimately, the CEO will provide a response to the complaint within 60 days of receipt. If all parties affected by the complaint agree in writing, a summary of the SBP complaint investigation may be published on the SBP website.

In the event of any of the parties being dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the SBP appeals procedure may be used.

In 2023, no complaints were received by SBP.

3.4 Transparency and availability

3.4.1 Scheme documents

SBP is committed to transparency and accessibility. To meet that objective, SBP has designed a website on which all necessary information is available and accessible. The website is managed by the Secretariat. Publication of documents follow the strict requirements of the Document Development Procedure (https://sbpcert.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SBP-Document-Development-Procedure-v2.0_Oct-19-FINAL.pdf), with close attention to approval of all documents.

All scheme documents are published in a dedicated section of the website (<https://sbp-cert.org/documents/standards-documents/>). All EU REDII-related documents are collated in a standalone section (<https://sbp-cert.org/documents/normative-documents/version-1/redii-documents/>).

In addition, stakeholders have access to the registry of scheme documents, kept up-to-date by the Secretariat: <https://sbp-cert.org/documents/documents-register/>.

Scheme documents also include Instruction Documents, Templates, Process Documents, and Normative Interpretations.

The official language of SBP is English. To date, documents are only available in English and only the English version can be used in case of conflict in interpreting the requirements. SBP is planning to provide translation of scheme documents on an ask and need basis.

3.4.2 Registry of certified operators

The SBP website (www.sbp-cert.org) is the repository of all information relevant to the certification scheme, including a list of Certificate Holders and their audit reports.

SBP publishes a list of organisations applying for SBP certification (<https://sbp-cert.org/certifications/applicants/>), which helps stakeholders to identify which organisations are working towards certification and through raising awareness enables stakeholders to participate in the public consultation, which is a requisite part of the certification process.

A database of Certificate Holders is also published on the SBP website (<https://sbp-cert.org/certifications/certificate-holders/>). The database has a search function allowing the user to search by name, country, certificate number, type of operation, and scope of certification. For each Certificate Holder, key information is readily available as well, including access to all audit reports.

Figure 3 – Example of the information publicly available for each Certificate Holder

Certificate Information:	Contact:	Location:
<p>Certification Body: Preferred by Nature OÜ</p> <p>Certificate Number: SBP-07-47</p> <p>Status: Active</p> <p>Date of Issue: 30 January 2020</p> <p>Expiry Date: 29 January 2025</p> <p>Certificate Type: Biomass Producer</p> <p>Certificate Scope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not include Supply Base Evaluation Includes Communication of Dynamic Batch Sustainability (DBS) Data 	<p>Lars Grindestam</p> <p>t: +46 70 552 80 02</p> <p>e: lars.grindestam@kahrs.com</p> <p>w: www.kahrs.com</p>	<p>Main Office: Dunderbergsgatan 10, Nybro, 382 30, Sweden</p> <p>Production Office: Dunderbergsgatan 10, Nybro, 382 30, Sweden</p>
Assessed & Certified in Accordance With:	CB Public Summary Report:	Supply Base Report:
<p>SBP Standard 2, Verification of SBP-compliant Feedstock, Version 1.0, 26 March 2015</p> <p>SBP Standard 4, Chain of Custody, Version 1.0, 26 March 2015</p> <p>SBP Standard 5, Collection and Communication of Data, Version 1.0, 26 March 2015</p>	<p>Main (Initial) audit (2019)</p> <p>Scope change audit (2020)</p> <p>First surveillance audit (2020)</p> <p>Second surveillance audit (2021)</p> <p>NCR-verification audit (2021)</p> <p>Third surveillance audit (2022)</p>	<p>Main (Initial) audit (2019)</p> <p>First surveillance audit (2020)</p> <p>Second surveillance audit (2021)</p> <p>Third surveillance audit (2022)</p>

Also, the SBP website lists those Certificate Holders that have been suspended (<https://sbp-cert.org/certifications/suspended-certificate-holders/>) or terminated (<https://sbp-cert.org/certifications/certificate-holders-terminated/>).

All lists are automatically updated with real-time information extracted from the various data collection systems developed by SBP.

Transparency on certification decisions is key to gaining the trust of stakeholders and demonstrating the rigour of the scheme. SBP has developed an innovative IT platform to facilitate the publication of audit reports in a consistent way. Our Audit Portal (<https://sbp-cert.org/certifications/audit-portal/>) provides all our Certificate Holders and Certification Bodies with a dedicated system to manage all SBP audit-related activities. The Portal is part of our drive to make the whole certification process smarter and more efficient. Through the use of digital tools and automation we have unlocked a host of benefits, not least the reduced level of effort required to complete and submit the various audit reports. Further benefits include improved data integrity and security, and the facilitation of impact monitoring, which will track the progress and impact made by our certification scheme. Some of the Portal's features include:

- Online SBP certification applicant registration
- An overview of all applicants
- Online forms with smart validation and automation
- Automatic form/template version control
- Access to all certificate details, audit schedules and checklists

Supported by the compulsory use of the Audit Portal, stakeholders can access all Public Summary Reports (audit reports) and Supply Base Reports (description of the system developed by the Certificate Holder in order to achieve compliance). The Public Summary Reports summarise the findings of the audit, and the Supply Base Reports include a description of the supply base, origin of the feedstock, biomass production process, volumes of production, and a summary of the Supply Base Evaluation (SBE), risk assessment and risk mitigation measures.

3.5 Stakeholder involvement

SBP is a multi-stakeholder organisation. As discussed in 2.2, the structure and governance of the organisation is based on the participation of multiple stakeholders. The multi-stakeholder principle is also at the centre of the standard-setting process, as well as the certification process.

3.5.1 Stakeholder participation in setting the SBP Standards

The standard-setting process has been developed to align with ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Standard-Setting. The various steps have been captured in the Document Development Procedure (https://sbpcert.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SBP-Document-Development-Procedure-v2.0_Oct-19-FINAL.pdf). Stakeholder participation is an important factor in developing or revising a Standard and stakeholders are encouraged to engage in the process in a meaningful way. Stakeholder engagement is captured in section 9 of the Document Development Procedure. It includes publication of the process and Terms of Reference to be followed during Standards development/revision, and how decisions are made and by whom. The process also relies on the participation of subject matter experts, and public consultation/s. The number of rounds of public consultation being dependent on the substantive nature of the comments received. In accordance with ISEAL, the first public consultation shall last at least 60 days and strive to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including under-represented, directly affected and/or disadvantaged stakeholders. A special emphasis is also given to ensure the participation of Indigenous Peoples and representatives of First Nations. The second and subsequent consultation is required to last at least 30 days. Engagement shall provide stakeholders with appropriate opportunities to contribute to the development of the sustainability standard. This shall include appropriate mechanisms and tools for engagement. After each consultation, the Secretariat shall prepare a synopsis including a summary of the comments received and details of how these have been taken into account. During any development/revision process all relevant documents will be made available via the SBP website.

3.5.2 Stakeholder participation in certified operations

Stakeholder participation does not only concern standard-setting. Each Certificate Holder, as per the requirements set in Standard 2, must proactively engage with their stakeholders.

Standard 2 defines the steps Biomass Producers must take in order to consult stakeholders. Their views must be sought during the development of the initial Supply Base Evaluation (SBE) and at the five-yearly re-evaluation. Standard 2, defines the various steps Biomass Producers are expected to follow in this endeavour. Relevant stakeholders shall be informed of the SBE at least one month prior to the end of the evaluation. Stakeholders shall be provided with adequate information as a basis for informed comment, but may not be provided with sensitive or commercially confidential information.

3.5.3 Stakeholder participation in the auditing process

Standard 3 gathers the requirements Certification Bodies must follow in order to conduct certification audits and issue certificates of conformity to organisations. Standard 3 defines the requirement to carry out stakeholder consultation, which must take place during the main audit and at re-evaluation audit (at minimum). Certification Bodies are required to identify relevant individuals and organisations interested in and affected by the operation of the applicant Biomass Producer. The Certification Body shall encourage stakeholders to submit relevant information, in order to evaluate compliance of the Biomass Producer with SBP requirements. During the audit process, the Certification Body shall review all submissions and evaluate those that are relevant. All submissions shall be recorded and the Certification Body shall document actions taken in relation to relevant submissions, and the conclusions of the Certification Body regarding compliance of the Biomass Producer with the requirements of the SBP Standards.

In addition, and as a part of the Certification Body consultation, the Certification Body shall determine if stakeholders' comments were adequately addressed by the Biomass Producer.

3.6 Market Update

By the end of December 2023, 98 companies had EU REDII in their certificate scope. Over 240,000 tonnes of EU REDII-compliant was produced and sold during 2023. In 2024 growth of volumes continued, only during first quarter over 254 000 tones were traded with SBP REDII Compliant claim. In the first quarter of 2024, these numbers saw significant growth, with over 200 Certificate Holders certified to include REDII in their scope, and over 254,000 tonnes of REDII-compliant biomass produced and sold..