



Impacts of voluntary forest management certification:

Evaluating complex settings of legal and negotiated standard requirements.

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FSC was established to promote...

- **environmentally appropriate,**
 - **socially beneficial, and**
 - **economically viable**
- management of the world's forests.**



How do we know ?

Forest management is an intervention in forest ecosystems.

FSC standards strive to minimize negative impact on the ecosystem and on social issues while guaranteeing financial viability.

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Annual audits & public certification reports for each of the ~ 1300 certified forests (170 Mio ha, 80 countries):
Follow-up on **CARs**.

Research: **Case studies** & reports that on many occasions such benefits could be realized through FSC certification.

Challenges for impact assessment?

Reality check / demand driven:

FSC would like to achieve a more consistent and conclusive level of measuring, monitoring and evaluating its global environmental, social and economic impacts.

Challenges (I) for research design / generalization:

Forests are diverse: boreal/tropical, primary/secondary, geology and climate,

Forest management issues are diverse: legal and social setting; ownership / management tenure / traditional rights; size, intensity and goals of management; ...

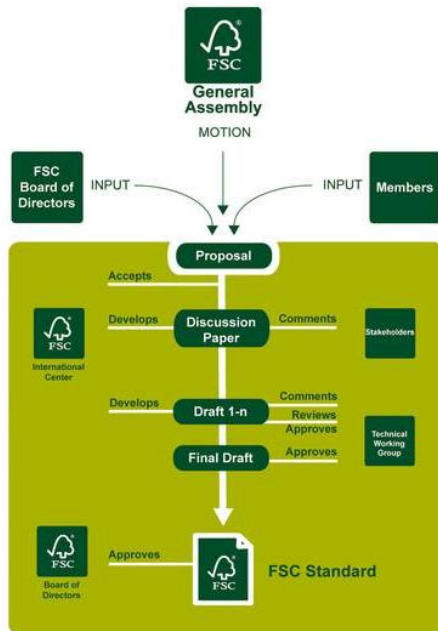
M&E Challenges (II)

Counterfactuals?

Compare certified forest with

- unmanaged, untouched forest / biodiversity conservation area?

Hypothesis: What does FSC claim to achieve; stakeholder engagement in Standard negotiations ...



“As the FSC engages in the standards review process, it faces several conflicting goals which it cannot simultaneously maximize.”

M&E Challenges (II)

Counterfactuals?

Compare certified forest with

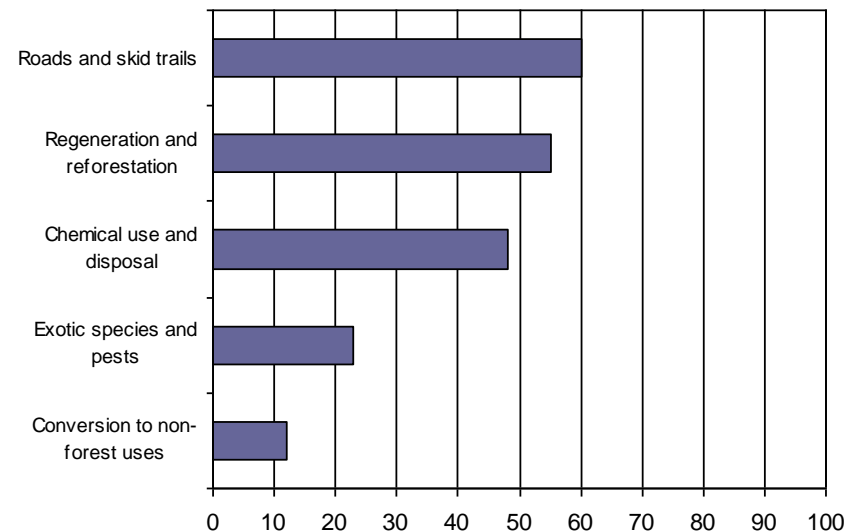
- managed forests with similar conditions?

- before / after certification?

→ attribution gap: What happened due to certification requirements? (E.g. law enforcement)

→ Due to learning/copying..., and how do we know?

E.g.: Analysis of 129 FM certificates with 2099 CARS in 21 countries: **Main improvements:** Biodiversity and fm planning!





FSC standards

- **strive to minimize negative impact** on the ecosystem and on social issues while guaranteeing financial viability;
- **require adherence to intern., national and local laws, legislation, treaties,**
 - ? soft law enforcement (are legal requirements the baseline?)
- **are developed in multi-stakeholder processes to balance ecological, social, financial interests.**
 - ? Not exactly the same in different countries
 - ? Are all relevant stakeholders engaged?

Other challenges:

- Are the CBs / auditors on the same level?
- Are national standards comparable?
- What happens after certification?
- What are unknown risks (e.g. fraud, market shifts), what are unintended impacts (e.g. competitors, law adaptations) of certification?
- How much can be demanded for M&E from certificate holder?
- Is FSC's intended impact clear for evaluators?

Potential areas of research / Research needs

In forestry & through standard development & consultation:

Social: rights and empowerment

Social: workers' conditions

Environmental effects

Economic / Socio-political impacts

Impact on plantation management

FSC's governance structure

Bigger picture: influence on policy makers, on other schemes

Problematic: Specialists with a too narrow focus.



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- Third-party forest management (FM) certification emerged in the 1990s as a tool for assessing and communicating the environmental and social performance of forest operations. Today forest certification or elements of it are directly or indirectly required in a number of national forestry or procurement policies.
- Forest management is an intervention in forest ecosystems. The Forest Stewardship Council's standards (FSC), developed in multi-stakeholder processes, strive to minimize the negative impact on the ecosystem and on social issues while guaranteeing financial viability. As of November 2012, FSC has certified more than 1.170 FM companies (with 168 Million hectares) in 79 countries.
- Methodological questions of counterfactuals, regional and time scales are challenging, when forest management interventions following certification requirements are to be compared with forest under conservation status or with conventionally managed forests.
- From auditors' perspective it is reported, that forest certification e.g. serves as "soft" forest law enforcement: due to annual audits foresters tend to adhere to the relevant laws and regulations. The evaluators' challenge would be to overcome the attribution gap: Is forest management in alignment with legal requirements because of the law or because of the additional control mechanisms? Another challenging research question is whether the quality of stakeholder consultations in negotiating national indicators for forest management and in certification processes is sufficient. Certain stakeholders require stronger reflection of their interests in the standards, which challenges the FSC system for better communication e.g. of certification impacts and of the multi-stakeholder concept. Are all relevant stakeholders identified and engaged?
- The paper shows the need for individual researchers' and evaluation teams' assessments of interventions' impacts on forest ecosystems, as well as of related public consultation processes.
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- Key words: Certification, forest management, environmental impact, stakeholder process

Summary of findings from WWF, RA

- Improved fm planning: inventories, monitoring, eval.;;
eg: permanent sample plots
- Improved silvicultural techniques; e.g. introduction of RIL
- Introducing biodiversity conservation measures, incl.:
 - improved riparian and aquatic management
 - improved treatment of sensitive sites and HCVFs
 - improved treatment of threatened & endangered species
 - prohibition of GMOs and of avoidable use of toxics.

**WWF: “FSC has led to improvements ...
across all 6 countries in**

- **implementation of H&S legislation:**
 - **provision of better equipment & training**
 - **use of safety procedures**
 - **properly qualified forest workers**
 - **formal job training increased.**
- **Employment of local people favored.**
- **Rural development strengthened through involvement & participation of neighbors, local stakeholders & communities in forest planning & decision making.”**

NELSON Forest Peoples Programme 2006

“particularly in Kabo concession, CIB is implementing a wide range of far-reaching measures designed to comply with FSC Criteria under P2 & 3.

Implementation P2&3 by CIB represents a significant advance in the protection of indigenous peoples’ rights in the Rep. of Congo and the region generally, and sets a new high standard for forestry in the Congo Basin.”

Cashore, Auld & Newsom 2004

“The influence of the FSC on SFM is not simply through its own rule development, but also on the impact it has had on the way competing programs develop their decision making processes and their procedural and substantive rules (...).”

Carey & Guttenstein 2008

“In Bolivia, the government recognizes FSC standards to protect its threatened tropical forests and improve natural resource management in its forest sector.

In Canada, (...) specify the FSC standard in their public procurement policies.

China has integrated FSC standards in its National Forest Strategy.

Denmark, Japan, New Zealand, Bolivia* and Guatemala* governments accept FSC as proof of sustainability & legality for timber in their public procurement policy.

(* standard is not named.)

Putz, Romero & Medjibe 2012

“The use of improved FM techniques under FSC standards, therefore, constitutes a mechanism to reduce emissions from tropical production forests while preserving ecological integrity. In recognition of this synergy, achieving and maintaining FSC certification should make FMUs eligible for payments under a REDD + scheme that recognizes the roles of conservation, sfm, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.”

Rainforest Alliance ...

“FSC certified operations with higher % of plantation area tend to have significantly larger strict reserve areas”

(FSC Principle 10.5)

Trans-boundary forest conservation

WWF Malaysia (2007):

**Deramakot forest reserve - part of the
“Heart of Borneo” secures forest corridor**

- **for peoples socio-economic benefits**

AND

- **large tracts of forests for conservation of
Borneo’s pygmy elephants, rhinos and
orangutans.**

Maya Biosphere Reserve

Fire incidences from 1998 to 2007

in FSC concessions: from 6.5 % to 0.1%

Rest of the reserve: 7 - 20% .

Aver. annual deforestation rate btw 2002-2007:

in FSC concession significantly lower than
within protected areas where harvesting of
wood and NTFP is prohibited!

General: Measuring the progress of the implementation of FSC Global Strategy goals

- ***Environmental and social impacts of FSC certification on:***
 - **Old growth forest protection, Biodiversity conservation,**
 - **Added values for certificate holders,**
 - **Plantation management and overall environmental and social effects of plantations,**
 - **Benefits to indigenous peoples and local communities,**
 - **Wider issues (avoided deforestation, water sources etc).**
- Tools: e.g. analysis of CAB reports, of existing literature, research „on demand“,**