



# CHAPTER 1

## The Emergence and Evolution of Forest Certification

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### **Introduction**

Forest certification is often touted as a voluntary or private governance instrument as it provides an opportunity for environmental, social and economic stakeholders to participate in decision-making and policy development regarding forest management (1,2). The operational functionality of the instrument is contingent upon the characteristics of certification scheme. Certification is primarily designed to offer confirmation that that certain attributes of a product, such as quality, safety or production process, have been achieved. As consumer concerns shifted towards the environmental and social consequences associated with their purchasing decisions, the concept of certification expanded to encompass various aspects such as organic agriculture or farming, fair or ethical trade, and social accountability (3). Nowadays, consumer markets are abundant with a wide range of products, such as foods, fishery products, coffee and forest products, that carry various environmental and/or social labels, are abundant in the consumer markets. Consumers and buyers have become increasingly knowledgeable about the operations of various certification schemes and what their logos represent.

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growth forests, the implementation of a mixed-product strategy, the inclusion of small-forest owners, the traceability of the chain-of-custody, and the cultivation of genetically modified trees.

For the majority of disputes, NGOs opt to remain within the forest certification system in order to exert influence over the future development of the system (2). In 2018, Greenpeace International, a founding member of the FSC, decided to end its membership due to concerns regarding the perceived ineffectiveness of forest certification, specifically in relation to controlled wood and FSC Mix labels (49).

Critics of forest certification frequently raise concerns regarding the persistent issues of deforestation and forest degradation, particularly in tropical regions. One prevalent criticism is that the distribution of certified forests implies that a significant portion of them were already being managed with varying degrees of sustainability. Consequently, it is argued that forest certification has achieved limited success in attaining its original objectives. Certain reformative measures should be implemented to ensure that forest certification continues to serve as an effective tool for promoting sustainability.

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