



CASE STUDY

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF FSC-CERTIFICATION ON FOREST ENTERPRISES IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

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SNAPSHOT

KEY FINDINGS:

- FSC CERTIFICATION HAS SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ENTERPRISES THAT ADOPT IT IN RIO GRANDE DO SUL AND SANTA CATARINA. THESE INCLUDE IMPROVED ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES, COMMUNITY AND TRADE RELATIONS, AND BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR WORKERS.
- ALTHOUGH THERE ARE BARRIERS TO CERTIFICATION, NAMELY HIGH COSTS AND DIFFICULTY WITH COMPLIANCE, THE BENEFITS GREATLY OUTWEIGH THE COSTS.
- CERTIFICATION PROVIDES A PLAUSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH MASS PLANTATIONS OF NON-NATIVE SPECIES.



A 20 year-old eucalyptus plantation in Brazil. © Edward Parker / WWF-Canon

BACKGROUND

FSC certification was introduced to Brazil in 1994, and by 2008, 5.3 million hectares across 12 Brazilian states were FSC certified. Brazil boasts the highest rate of certification in both Latin America and tropical countries overall, and certified plantations amount to 48 per cent of Brazil's total forested area. As of 2008, 53 per cent of these plantations were FSC-certified.

About 1 million hectares (37 per cent) of the forest plantations are reserved for conservation and therefore contain strictly native vegetation. More than 200 companies that work within this area have certification for the chain of production and marketing of wood items.

THE PROBLEM

The impact of certifying forestry plantations is a highly debated subject. Much of the plantations in Brazil are made up of non-native, fast growing species such as eucalyptus and pine, and are used to fuel Brazil's growing pulp and paper sector. In 2008, states such as Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina had only 7.4 per cent and 23.82 percent, respectively, of their original forest intact while reforestation with pine and eucalyptus continued to increase.

This study looks into the effects of FSC certification on reforestation enterprises in the Brazilian states of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul.



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RESULTS

To conduct this study, seven FSC-certified reforestation enterprises were compared to seven non-FSC-certified enterprises. Both types had similar characteristics in terms of geographical location, total area of planted forests, and total number of workers. Each enterprise was asked questions pertaining to the following topics: environmental preservation, work safety, training and capacity building, working conditions, hiring procedures, access to education and health services, and social organization.

The study exposed both positive and negative impacts of FSC certification. The positive impacts included:

- Better wildlife protection measures—87 per cent of certified companies used protective measures against hunting, versus just 44 per cent of non-certified groups
- Greater reporting of environmental crimes—88 per cent of certified community members would regularly report crimes to inspection authorities, whereas only 55 per cent of non-certified members would
- Improved worker's quality of life
- Compliance with labor laws
- Better awareness of safety and health regulations
- Better worker knowledge on how to safely handle and discard pesticides
- More sustainable forest management

- Positive mindset on natural resource preservation
- Improved community relations
- Better access to foreign markets
- Closer client relationships
- Negative components related to FSC certification included:
 - Difficulties of complying with unrealistic federal laws
 - High costs of certification
 - Large volumes of documentation needed, which is very time consuming
 - Difficulties felt by subcontractors in complying with certification

CONCLUSION

This report proves that FSC certification made important socio-environmental contributions in forest operations in the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina. Although there are some negative aspects felt by the enterprises, the study found that certification is an effective tool to minimize the social and environmental impacts of rapid expansion of plantations of non-native species, such as eucalyptus and pine. The study highlights the importance of FSC certification within Brazilian plantations in terms of worker health and security, capacity building, use of pesticides, natural resource conservation and community relations, and proves that benefits of certification greatly outweigh the costs.



Native protected forest and commercial plantations of eucalyptus, pine and araucaria, Brazil. © Edward Parker / WWF-Canon