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Presentations	Session 8.1	<i>Small-scale forest policy and institutions: review and cases from the Global South.</i>

*Abstract Session 8.1 – Local institutional interplay and international forest certification: Insights from FSC implementation in Vietnam.*

Given that forest land and the biomass production it supports are limited, sustainable forest management is needed that sustains and improves their contribution to the local, national and international economy. Of the attempts obtaining this objective, forest certification has emerged as a non-state-market driven (NSMD) governance mechanism. In Vietnam, plantation forests serve as an important source of raw material for the wood-based industry. The Vietnamese government has worked with forest certification, particularly Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) program since the late of 20th century. Yet, little is known about the implementation of this certification as a mechanism of multi-level environmental governance.

This paper adopts qualitative research method with process-tracing approach to analyze the drivers and outcomes of FSC certification scheme in Vietnam regarding institutional and governance implications. Evidence was collected from March to June 2018 and from April to August 2019. We conducted 40 in-depth interviews with individuals involved in timber production, timber product processing and export, governmental and non-governmental organizations. The findings were validated through direct observations and in group discussions.

The results demonstrated different views of respondents in terms of their motivation and willingness to engage in FSC certification scheme. While this certification might serve as a powerful instrument for promoting the sustainable forest management, its implementation outcomes highly depended on the local practices. Further findings indicated the emergence of private governance in the socialist institutional system given the crucial roles of NGOs and private actors in the application and enlargement of FSC certification in Vietnam. More concerns on local stakeholders including multi-level coordination were delineated.

Keywords: voluntary forest certification, local actors, private governance, Vietnam

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