

SDC 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts

Thompson, Joshua; University of Minnesota
thom7120@umn.edu

Authors: Zoe Masterpole, Joshua Thompson, Sara Zaghoul

Title: Evaluating the Process of Forest Certification in Sumatra



Our presentation will explore the early and final steps of the value chain through the lens of forest-product certification and the relevant stakeholders. We aim to understand how programmatic interventions like certification can be introduced for maximized, positive impact. Certification schemes are one of the many ways that the private sector can work to ensure sustainable production patterns, as per SDG 12. Our team has researched how various certification schemes -- such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification -- affect stakeholders along the supply chain. Our presentation will explore the research methodology and conclusions about the various limitations, risks, and benefits of forestry-product certification, especially as it relates to major corporations looking to act more responsibly. This summer, we will conduct an evaluation of the effects of certification on smallholder forestry producers in Indonesia. Our research team will explore the early stages of the forestry supply chain for two months in the Lampung region of Sumatra. Farmers in this region grow acacia wood, which is used in furniture and packaging products in North America. Other regional forestry crops grown include coffee and rubber. Our aim is to understand the livelihoods of these smallholder farmers and analyze how their livelihoods are potentially subject to change with certification. This analysis will show the unique relationship between consumers, retailers, and producers across the globe, and how the trend of certifying commodities is changing lives. This project was initially developed in a partnership between an NGO and a major forestry product retailer. This retailer is currently working on getting smallholder forest producers in Lampung, Sumatra FSC-certified. We will be conducting an evaluation of those cooperatives in Lampung. This opportunity is a chance to evaluate a certification process while it is in the nascent stages in order to ensure that formative changes are addressed properly by the NGO and that all stakeholders' livelihoods involved are being considered before the process is scaled up.