

# Contribution of forest certification to sustainable development goals

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## **Abstract:**

Over the past few decades forest certification (FSC) has evolved from a theoretical model to a concept that has gained acceptance in forestry practice worldwide. As market-driven approach, drawing on end-user concern about global environmental issues, forest certification solidified the position of specific forest policy instrument, responding to the dynamic changes in societal demands on forest ecosystems, the emergence of new stakeholders, and the complexity of global international processes. Sustainable forest management, as the ultimate goal of forest certification, contains the essence of the paradigm of sustainable development - meeting our current needs without compromising the needs of future generations. The methodological approach in this paper is based on analysis on how implementation of FSC Principles (Forest Stewardship Council) contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the 2030 Agenda. As FSC certification has been widely adopted in most of the Western Balkan countries, the analysis particularly addresses forestry realities in this region. The results show that FSC certification contributes to various SDGs through conservation and restoration of forest ecosystems, biodiversity protection, maintenance high conservation value forests and forest ecosystem services, securing freshwater supplies, improving relations with local communities and other stakeholders, better worker's rights and safety, economic growth, and job security in rural areas as well as socially responsible production and consumption. While forest certification is a significant tool for achieving the SDGs, sustainable forest management, grounded on understanding of diversity of forest ecosystem services and dynamics in society's requirements towards forests, can be an important factor in the future of sustainable development.

## **Keywords:**

Forest certification, sustainable development, forest policy