

Forest Certification Impacts on Community Forest Management in Brazil's Western Amazon

Gerd Sparovek¹, **Ana Carolina B. de Lima**², André Luiz N. Keppe² and Rodrigo Fernando Maule²

¹ Department of Soil Science, University of São Paulo, Piracicaba, SP, Brazil

² Entropix Engenharia, Piracicaba, SP, Brazil

This study aimed to identify Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification impacts on community forest management in the state of Acre, located in Brazil's Western Amazon. These impacts represent valuable information on the efficiency of FSC certification to conserve tropical forests and improve the socio-economic standing of local populations.

The impacts evaluated were based on differences between three FSC certified and three non-FSC certified community-based forest operations. Apart from the community forest management, these operations were similar on many aspects, such as land organization (agroextractive settlement projects) and occupation history.

The data used was based on field observations and structured interviews with community members and the private and public institutions involved. FSC certification revealed some positive impacts on aspects related to the knowledge of communities' socio-environmental rules, forest operation plans, fauna protection, fire use and waste management.

Market impacts were controversial due to recent commercial changes, such as the formation of a cooperative and wood processing development. Data collection over time is recommended to clarify these issues.

Fewer impacts than expected were recognized as direct outcomes of FSC certification. This was due to strong political, technical and financial support from private and government organizations offered to most local communities working on forest management plans and may reflect a broader influence of FSC certification at the state level.

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Contact Information: Ana Carolina Lima, Entropix Engenharia, Rua Maria Maniero, 458, Engenho Central, Piracicaba, SP, 13405124, Brazil; Phone: 019-34294526 / 011-83408929; Email: lima.acb@gmail.com