Challenges and Weakness of Myanmar Forest Certification Sector

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Quantitative Questionnaire

Personal Information

Please respond by placing a check mark (√) in the appropriate section.

1. Name - ..... (Optional)

2. Gender

   - Male
   - Female

3. Age

   - (21 to 30 years)
   - (31 to 40 years)
   - (41 to 50 years)
   - (51 to 60 years)
   - (Above 60 years)

4. Educational Level

   - High School (Graduate)
   - Undergraduate (Bachelor's Degree)
   - Graduate (Master's Degree)
   - Postgraduate (Doctorate)
   - Other (Please specify) .....

5. Job Position/Title - .....

6. Department/Organization/Company/University - .....

7. State/Region - .....

8. What are your current responsibilities or occupation related to the forestry sector or in a field related to forestry?"

   - Specialist/Expert in Forestry/Timber Industry
   - Government staff (Please specify the department) .....
   - International Non-Governmental Organizations/Non-Governmental Organizations .....

- Civil Society Organizations
  .....
- Others (Please specify)
  .....

9. If you are a private plantation/company owner:

Plantation Name

.....

Plantation Location (Reserved/Protected Public Forest)

.....

Tree Species

.....

Year of Plantation Establishment

.....

Plantation Area (in acres)

.....

10. How much experience do you have in the forestry sector or in a field related to forestry?

- Under 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 6 years
- 7 to 10 years
- More than 10 years
- Other (Please specify) .....

11. Are you aware of the "Myanmar Forest Certification Committee", an organization currently carrying out forest certification efforts in Myanmar?

- Yes
- No

12. Are you familiar with the Myanmar Criteria and Indicators for Forest Management Certification Standard (2020) developed by the Myanmar Forest Certification Committee?

- Yes
- No

13. Have you attended any courses/workshops/basic level awareness trainings related to forest certification?

    - Yes
    - No

14. Is your current role or the field you are working in related to forest certification?

    - Yes
    - No

Forest Certification

1. Do you understand that Forest Certification is beneficial for sustainable forest management?

    - I do not understand.
    - I understand a little.
    - I moderately understand.
    - I mostly understand.
    - I fully understand.

2. Can Forest Certification Certificates reduce deforestation in Myanmar?

    - I completely agree.
    - I agree.
    - I moderately agree.
    - I slightly agree.
    - I completely disagree

3. Among the factors that primarily cause deforestation in Myanmar, which factors make it more difficult to obtain Forest Certification Certificates? (You can answer more than one.)

    - Illegal logging.
    - Agricultural expansion.
    - Urban development.
    - Natural disasters.
    - All of the above-mentioned factors.
    - Other (Please specify) .....

4. In your opinion, how does Forest Certification impact biodiversity conservation in Myanmar?

    - Significantly positive impact.
    - Moderately positive impact.
    - Neutral impact.
    - Negative impact.

- Indeterminate.

5. In your opinion, how can Forest Certification resolve environmental conservation issues/problems in Myanmar?
   - It can resolve them very well.
   - It can moderately resolve them.
   - It can slightly resolve them.
   - It cannot resolve them.
   - It cannot resolve them at all.
6. Do you believe that Forest Certification Certificates are protecting the natural forests and mangrove forests, which are traditionally preserved by local communities/indigenous people living in Myanmar?
   - I completely agree.
   - I agree.
   - I moderately agree.
   - I slightly agree.
   - I completely disagree
7. Do the relevant government organizations provide adequate support and guidance for the Forest Certification processes in Myanmar?
   - I completely agree.
   - I agree.
   - I moderately agree.
   - I slightly agree.
   - I completely disagree
8. Rate the level of collaboration among relevant government departments, non-governmental organizations, private companies, and local communities in conducting Forest Certification-related activities in Myanmar.
   - It is extremely good.
   - It is good.
   - It is moderate.
   - It is poor.
   - It is very poor.
9. Do the relevant government departments allocate sufficient financial resources for Forest Certification activities in Myanmar?
   - More than sufficient.

- Sufficient.
- Insufficient.
- Very insufficient.
- Indeterminate.

10. In implementing standards and guidelines for Forest Certification in Myanmar, are technology and workforce insufficient?

    - I totally agree.
    - I agree.
    - I moderately agree.
    - I slightly agree.
    - I do not agree at all.

11. In your opinion, is there a need for workshops or training sessions to improve understanding of Forest Certification standards and processes among forest owners (Forest Department, Myanmar Timber Enterprise) and related stakeholders?

    - I totally agree.
    - I agree.
    - I moderately agree.
    - I slightly agree.
    - I do not agree at all.

12. In the process of Forest Certification in Myanmar, is there participation from local communities and indigenous people?

    - There is significant participation.
    - There is moderate participation.
    - There is average participation.
    - There is little participation.
    - There is no participation.
    - Other. (Please specify) .....

13. In Myanmar, is there a lack of understanding among stakeholders regarding Forest Certification?

    - I totally agree.
    - I agree.
    - I moderately agree.
    - I slightly agree.
    - I do not agree at all.

14. Is Forest Certification necessary to improve the livelihood activities of local communities?

    - It is extremely necessary.
    - It is moderately necessary.
    - It is somewhat necessary.
    - It is slightly necessary.
    - It is not necessary.

15. How would you rate the strictness of Myanmar's standards compared to international Forest Certification standards? (To comply with/adhere to standards and guidelines)

    - Very strict.
    - Moderately strict.
    - Somewhat strict.
    - Not strict.
    - Not strict at all.

16. Are the standards, laws, guidelines, and regulations developed for Forest Certification in Myanmar effective and comprehensive?

    - Very effective and comprehensive.
    - Moderately effective and comprehensive.
    - Somewhat effective and comprehensive.
    - Somewhat effective but lacking.
    - Neither effective nor comprehensive.

17. How frequently should the standards, laws, guidelines, and regulations for Forest Certification in Myanmar be revised to ensure alignment with current international practices?

    - Annually.
    - Once every two to three years.
    - Once every four to five years.
    - No need for updates.
    - Indeterminate.

18. Identify the main reasons for finding non-compliances between the actual practices and the standards developed by Forest Certification in Myanmar during audits. (You can answer more than one.)

    - Weakness in documentation and record-keeping.
    - Land-related issues.
    - Environmental impact assessment related issues.
    - Changes in forest land and establishment of new plantations.

- Reassessment of management systems within the organization/company.
- All of the above-mentioned reasons.
- Other. (Please specify) .....

19. Do you believe that the Forest Certification process will be aligned and compatible with Myanmar's forests?

- I totally agree.
- I agree.
- I moderately agree.
- I slightly agree.
- I do not agree at all.

20. Do you agree that the current monitoring and evaluation practices in Myanmar's forestry/timber sector are adequate?

- I totally agree.
- I moderately agree.
- I somewhat agree.
- I slightly agree.
- I do not agree at all.

21. Do you believe that the standards for Forest Certification in Myanmar are consistent with the current monitoring and evaluation practices in the forestry/timber sector?

- There is complete consistency.
- There is moderate consistency.
- There is some consistency.
- There is little consistency.
- There is no consistency at all.

22. How would you rate the availability of information regarding forest resources and management in Myanmar?

- It is excellent.
- It is good.
- It is average.
- It is poor.
- It is not available at all.

23. Do you believe that the relevant departments, organizations, and companies in Myanmar have comprehensive information available to verify the legality of timber and forest products originating from the country's natural forests and plantations?"

- Completely comprehensive.
- Moderately comprehensive.
- Somewhat comprehensive.
- Not comprehensive.
- Not comprehensive at all.

24. How important do you think the availability/completeness of information is in the Forest Certification process?

- It is extremely important.
- It is important.
- It is normal.
- It is slightly important.
- It is not important at all.

25. The challenges and obstacles Myanmar encounters in adhering to the forest certification standards established by international organizations such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

- I totally agree.
- I agree.
- I moderately agree.
- I slightly agree.
- I do not agree at all.

26. Do you believe that there is a high demand in international markets for Forest Certification Certificates for timber and forest products from Myanmar?"

- It is very high.
- It is moderate.
- The demand is low.
- There is no demand.
- Indeterminate.

27. What do you consider to be the primary motivations for organizations or timber companies to obtain Forest Certification Certificates? (Multiple answers are acceptable.)

- Access to international markets. (Market Access)
- Strengthening sustainable forest management.
- Environmental conservation.
- All of the above.
- Other (please specify).

28. How do the costs associated with obtaining Forest Certification Certificates affect the economics of timber industries, timber companies, or forest plantations in Myanmar?

- Significantly impacts.
- Slightly impact.
- Normally impacts.
- Do not impact.
- Do not impact at all.

29. Do illegal logging issues significantly hinder efforts to obtain Forest Certification?

- Extremely visible.
- Moderately visible.
- Somewhat visible.
- Slightly visible.
- Not at all.

30. Have you ever heard of any corruption or bias during the Forest Certification process?

- I have never heard of it.
- Occasionally.
- Frequently.
- Always.
- I have personally experienced it.

31. How would you rate the transparency of the Forest Certification process conducted by the current Myanmar Forest Certification Committee?

- 1-2 (No transparency at all.)
- 3-4 (A little transparency.)
- 5-6 (Moderate transparency.)
- 7-8 (High transparency.)
- 9-10 (Full transparency.)

32. What do you think are the biggest challenges in implementing the Forest Certification process in Myanmar? (You can answer more than one.)

- Lack of support from relevant authorities.
- Insufficient workforce.
- Poor collaboration with stakeholders.
- Lack of understanding among stakeholders regarding the international market requirements for forest certification.
- Insufficient financial resources for the Myanmar Forest Certification Committee.

- Need for more open discussions/training sessions.
- Economic constraints.
- External pressures (e.g., illegal logging).
- All of the above.
- Other (Please specify) .....

33. How would you suggest improving the forest certification sector in Myanmar to address its current weaknesses? (You can choose more than one.)

- Strengthening legal frameworks.
- Enhancing collaboration with stakeholders.
- Increasing transparency in the forest certification process.
- Increasing financial resources and workforce for the Myanmar Forest Certification Committee.
- Securing support from international forest certification organizations.
- Conducting more open discussions/training sessions.
- Addressing external pressures (e.g., illegal logging).
- All of the above.
- Other (Please specify) .....

34. How would you rate the current state of the Forest Certification sector in Myanmar?

- Extremely weak. (0%)
- Weak. (25%)
- Moderate. (50%)
- Good. (75%)
- Excellent. (100%)

35. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding the challenges and weaknesses of the Forest Certification sector in Myanmar?"

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Qualitative Questionnaire

1. How would you describe the current operational capacity of the Myanmar Forest Certification Committee (MFCC)? What are its main strengths and constraints?

2. What has been the impact of political transitions on MFCC's ability to function and achieve its goals?
3. How adequate are the current financial and human resources for MFCC to carry out its mandate? What additional support is needed?
4. What are the biggest challenges faced by local Certification Bodies (CBs) in Myanmar regarding accreditation, training, and maintaining operations?
5. How has the suspension of PEFC endorsement affected the motivation and capacity of CBs to pursue sustainable forest management (SFM) certification?
6. What specific barriers do CBs face in obtaining ISO 17065 and 17021 accreditations? How can these be addressed?
7. How has the reduction in certified timber exports impacted the sustainability of CBs as businesses?
8. How have international sanctions affected market access for Myanmar's timber products? What alternative markets are being explored?
9. What is the perception among international buyers and certification bodies regarding Myanmar's forest certification system post-2021(e.g., PEFC)?
10. Do you believe that Myanmar's timber can regain access to markets like the EU and US in the future? What conditions would need to change?
11. Why has Myanmar prioritized natural forests over plantations for certification? What are the implications of this approach?
12. What are the main obstacles to achieving the first certified natural forest or plantation in Myanmar?
13. How do issues like illegal logging, security concerns, and weak law enforcement affect certification efforts on the ground?
14. What role do private plantation owners play in forest certification? What challenges do they face in participating?
15. How effective are the current Myanmar standards in ensuring sustainable and legal timber production? Where are the gaps?
16. What are the common weaknesses found during audits regarding documentation, evidence, and compliance with environmental and social standards (EIA/SIA/EMP)?
17. How can the documentation and record-keeping practices among forest enterprises and CBs be improved?
18. What should be the immediate priorities for MFCC and CBs to revive the forest certification system in Myanmar?
19. How can international organizations (e.g., ITTO, PEFC) better support Myanmar's forest certification efforts without compromising principles of stakeholder engagement?
20. Which reforms are needed to strengthen forest certification in Myanmar?