

evidensia

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Evidence typology

The typology below elucidates the range of evidence examining the outcomes and impacts of voluntary sustainability standards and related corporate commitments, used as a framework for the resources included in 'evidensia'. The typology includes syntheses papers (BLOC 1), empirical studies (BLOC 2), monitoring reports (BLOC 3), Modeling studies (BLOC 4), descriptive information (BLOC 5), and briefings or opinions (BLOC 6).

The medium used to present the evidence described in the typology is the written report, often published in a peer-reviewed journal but sometimes published as a technical report, book chapter, or in the grey literature. These written reports – which we refer to as “primary resources” – are often linked to derivative “secondary resources,” such as webinars, blog posts, briefing papers, infographics or podcasts. Both primary and secondary resources are hosted on the 'evidensia' platform.

BLOC 1: SYNTHESIS PAPER

- Studies that synthesize the results of multiple individual studies to characterize a discrete body of literature
- The Bloc 1 sub-categories are distinguished by the differential use of *a priori* transparent, repeatable, systematic methodologies, including evidence search processes and quality and inclusion screens
- Bloc 1 studies may enable generalization at a broader level (i.e., across multiple commodities, geographies, or standards systems) than for individual studies, depending on the depth, breadth, and findings of the studies included in the synthesis.
- *Evidensia includes Bloc 1 studies published in the last ten years*

Evidence type

1.1 Synthesis paper – systematic review with meta-analysis

A study that collates, critically appraises, and synthesizes all available studies relevant to a question (systematic review) and synthesizes datasets from individual papers, reports, etc., to draw conclusions that hold for broader geographic regions or time periods. Key requirement: meta-analysis

1.2 Synthesis paper – systematic review

A study that collates, critically appraises, and synthesizes all available studies relevant to a question. Key requirement: compliance with an established systematic review protocol

1.3 Synthesis paper – literature review

A study that comprehensively reviews primary sources (generally individual studies from Bloc 2 categories). Key requirement: a comprehensive literature search, with a clear articulation of the criteria used for eligibility screening (i.e. the eligible population, intervention(s), comparison/study type(s), and outcome(s) (PICOs)).

BLOC 2: EMPIRICAL STUDY

- Empirical studies that interrogate the relationship between interventions and outcomes (i.e., studies have explicitly defined independent and dependent variable[s])
- Study conducts primary or secondary empirical data collection
- Generalizability of results may be possible, contingent on the study design, methodology, sampling frame, statistical approach and results interpretation.
- *Evidensia includes Bloc 2 studies published in the last ten years*

	Studies with counterfactual thinking				Studies without counterfactual thinking
	Studies that use quantitative/statistical tools to draw inferences (includes mixed method designs)			Studies that use qualitative tools and methods to draw inferences	
	Covariates considered through a randomized control trial (RCT)	Covariates considered through matching (quasi-experimental)	Covariates not considered		
Data collected before and after an intervention	<p>2.1 Empirical study– RCT</p> <p>Outcomes compared in treatment and control group, before and after an intervention, with random assignment to each group.</p>	<p>2.2a Empirical study – with matched control, data collected before and after intervention</p> <p>Outcomes compared in treatment and control groups, before and after an intervention with covariates considered through matching.</p>	<p>2.3a Empirical study – control not matched, data collected before and after intervention</p> <p>Outcomes compared in treatment and control groups, before and after an intervention with no consideration of covariates.</p>	<p>2.4 Empirical study – qualitative</p> <p>Empirical, observational description of the cause and effect of an intervention without a sample-based measure of change or difference.</p>	<p>2.5a Empirical study –no control, data collected before and after intervention</p> <p>Outcomes examined in a treatment group only, before and after an intervention.</p>
Data collected post-intervention	<p>N/A - Not possible to conduct a RCT post-intervention</p>	<p>2.2b Empirical study – with matched control, data collected post-intervention</p> <p>Outcomes compared in treatment and control groups, at one point in time post-intervention, with covariates considered through matching.</p>	<p>2.3b Empirical study – control not matched, data collected post-intervention</p> <p>Outcomes compared in treatment and control groups, at one point in time post-intervention, with no consideration of covariates.</p>	<p>2.5b Empirical study –no control, data collected post-intervention</p> <p>Outcomes examined in a treatment group only, at one point in time post-intervention. Descriptive profile with no generalizability.</p>	

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BLOC 3: MONITORING REPORT

- Examines performance of program participants, based on monitoring data that is routinely and systematically collected on an intervention, production unit, area of land, supply chain, sector, etc.
- Reports data from a single point in time or tracks performance over time
- Data in Bloc 3 are collected by the staff or representatives of voluntary standards systems (VSS) or related supply chain initiatives
- *Evidensia includes all Bloc 3 reports that are part of a series; standalone reports are included if published in the last 3 years.*

Evidence type

3.1 Monitoring report – basic

Includes basic scope and characteristics of program participants

3.2 Monitoring report – performance

Includes basic scope and characteristics of program participants, plus one or more of:

- a) participant compliance with criteria of the standard
- b) participant adoption of practices addressed in the standard
- c) participant performance against outcome-level indicators

3.3 Monitoring report – collective

Includes participant performance against cross-VSS/VSS-like indicators (e.g. ISEAL Common Indicators)

BLOC 4: MODELLING STUDY

- Studies that combine empirical information with secondary data to assess patterns, infer broader impacts, or evaluate scenarios for future application of such tools
- This bloc includes a wide range of studies; the following is intended to capture several known types but is not necessarily exhaustive
- *Evidensia includes Bloc 4 studies published in the last ten years*

Evidence type

4.1 Modeling study – patterns at a large scale using context variables

Studies that relate the distribution, characteristics, or observed outcomes of VSS or related supply chain initiatives to context variables (e.g., land use, deforestation, or poverty) at large scale to assess implications for policy or practice.

4.2 Modeling study – extrapolating impacts at a broader scale or on other dependent variables

Studies that use empirical information about VSS or related supply chain initiatives (e.g., standards requirements or observed outcomes in particular places) to model or extrapolate impacts at a broader scale or on other dependent variables.

4.2a Modeling study – two scenario comparison

Studies that use empirical information about VSS or related supply chain initiatives (e.g., standards requirements or observed outcomes in particular places) to model or extrapolate impacts of two scenarios at a broader scale or on other dependent variables.

4.2b Modeling study – one scenario examination

Studies that use empirical information about VSS or related supply chain initiatives (e.g., standards requirements or observed outcomes in particular places) to model or extrapolate impacts of a single scenario at a broader scale or on other dependent variables.

4.3 Modeling study – future scenario or potential effects

Studies that use empirical information or assumptions about VSS or related supply chain initiatives to evaluate possible future scenarios.

BLOC 5: DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Evidence type

5.1 Descriptive information – contextual and operational

Information about different tools, what they contain, and how they work. This category includes summaries of the nature and content of different standards, policies and approaches.

Evidensia includes type 5.1 resources published in the last five years

5.2 Descriptive information – field learning, stories and situations

This section includes learning from the implementation of a system, scheme or tool. This includes:

- Project reports that describe courses of action and/or outcomes but do not evaluate project effectiveness against a set of criteria
- Descriptive case studies

Evidensia includes type 5.2 resources published in the last three years

5.3 Descriptive information – theoretical studies or conceptual explorations

Theoretical studies that explore conceptual dimensions of VSS and VSS like tools.

Evidensia includes type 5.3 resources published at any point in time

BLOC 6: BRIEFING OR OPINION

Evidence type

6.1 Other resources - methodological papers

Includes recommendations to researchers

Evidensia includes type 6.1 resources published at any point in time

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6.2 Other resources - thought leadership pieces

Evidensia includes type 6.2 resources published in the last two years

6.3 Other resources - synthesis products

Synthesis products that combine multiple data and information sources in a manner that is not comprehensive and/or balanced.

Evidensia includes type 6.3 resources published in the last two years

evidensia features and evidence typologies inclusion				
	Online library	Knowledge matrix	Geo map	Visual summaries
Bloc 1: SYNTHESIS PAPER				
1.1. Synthesis paper – systematic review with meta-analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.2 Synthesis paper – systematic review	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.3 Synthesis paper – literature review	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bloc 2: EMPIRICAL STUDY				
2.1 Empirical study– RCT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.2a Empirical study – with matched control, data collected before and after intervention	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.2b Empirical study – with matched control, data collected post-intervention	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.3a Empirical study – control not matched, data collected before and after intervention	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.3b Empirical study – control not matched, data collected post-intervention	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
2.4 Empirical study –qualitative	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
2.5a Empirical study –no control, data collected before and after intervention	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
2.5b Empirical study –no control, data collected post-intervention	Yes	No	No	No
Bloc 3: MONITORING REPORT				
3.1 Monitoring report – basic	Yes	No	No	No
3.2 Monitoring report – performance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

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3.3 Monitoring report – collective	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Bloc 4: MODELING STUDY				
4.1 Modeling study – patterns at a large scale using context variables	Yes	No	No	No
4.2a Modeling study – two scenario comparison	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4.2b Modeling study – one scenario examination	Yes	No	No	No
4.3 Modeling study – future scenario or potential effects	Yes	No	No	No
BLOC 5: DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION				
5.1 Descriptive information – contextual and operational	Yes	No	No	No
5.2 Descriptive information – field learning, stories and situations	Yes	No	No	No
5.3 Descriptive information – theoretical studies or conceptual explorations	Yes	No	No	No
Bloc 6: BRIEFING OR OPINION				
6.1 Other resources - methodological papers	Yes	No	No	No
6.2 Other resources - thought leadership pieces	Yes	No	No	No
6.3 Other resources - synthesis products	Yes	No	No	No