Regulation and certification
Perspectives from a social researcher

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Goals of regulation/certification

Public vs private, PEFC vs FSC, formal vs informal – all have a shared goal:

Sustainable, responsible forest management

What isn't always shared is the vision of what that looks like, and who can be trusted to achieve it.

Nature of forest management means it is highly subject to contestation and 'alternative facts' – long timeframes, complex systems, cultural and social symbolism associated with forests and forest-dwelling species.
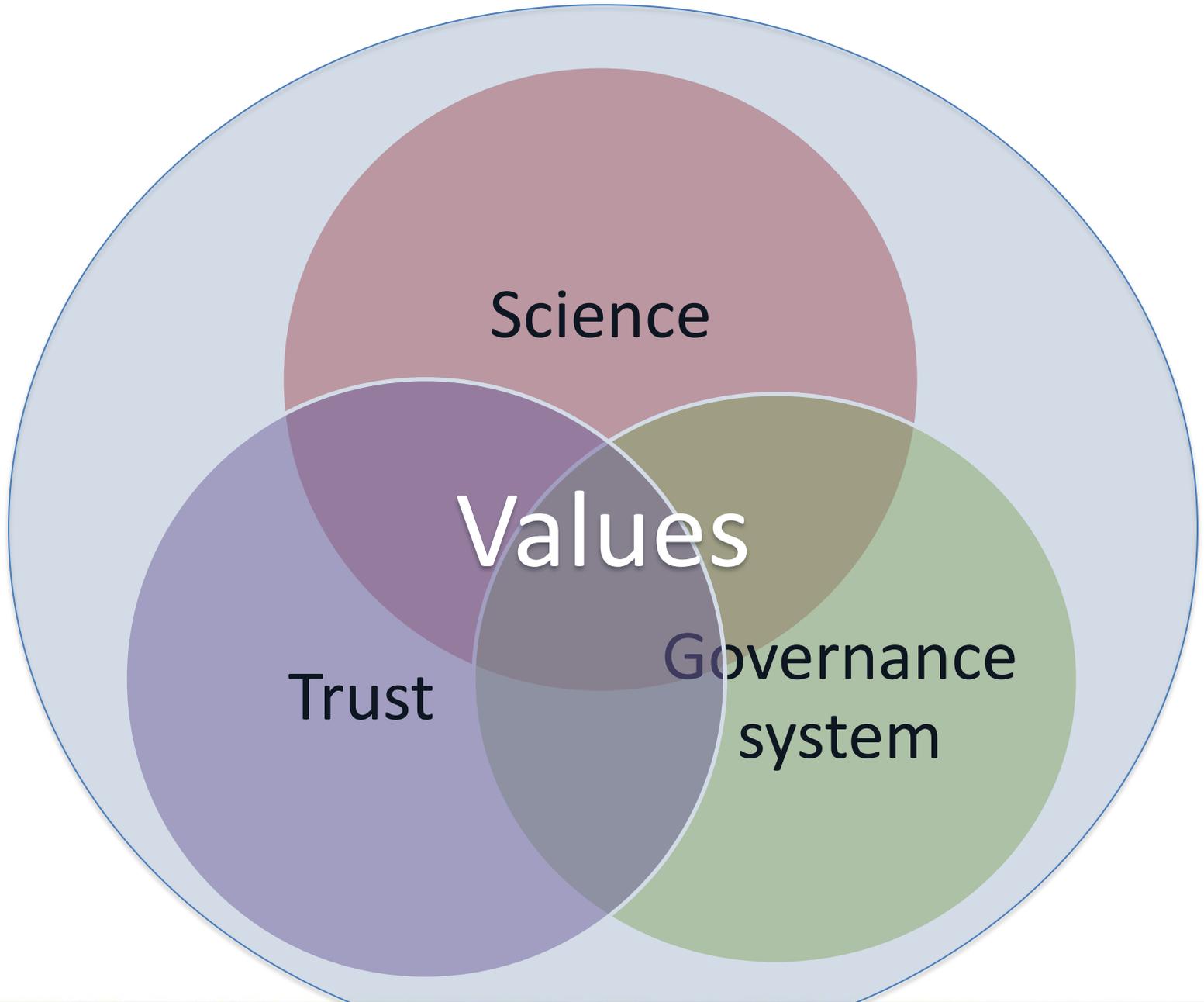
What does success of forest regulation and certification look like in a post-truth world?

- **Shared objectives**

  Requires dialogue about the values different stakeholders hold as important, which are shared and which are not.

- **Shared understanding of the science**

  Requires dialogue (amongst more than just the scientists) about types of evidence, methods, data collection, considered adequate

- **Trust in the governance process**

  Is there independence? Rigour of auditing, monitoring, governing? Good complaint processes? Action when wrongdoing is found? Do we trust the regulators (public or private)?

None of this will be achieved unless <u>most</u> stakeholders trust that their views are represented in discussions about regulation/ certification processes.

Sidebar: Not all stakeholders need or want to be directly involved – but all need to trust that their views are being represented.

Successful, stable regulation/certification requires dialogue and engagement

Regulation (public and private) succeeds when both supporters and critics of the industry trust regulators to do their job well.

Trust requires dialogue. Dialogue takes a long time. It achieves change slowly. It is frustrating.

When it works, it can go a few steps to overcoming decades of conflict. It can help improve market access. It can increase trust in the industry and its products. It can improve reputation of those involved in the industry. It can provide more stability of management and a better chance of achieving long-term forest outcomes.