

Preface

Voluntary Standard Systems (VSS) are a promising and rapidly evolving concept with considerable potential to promote ‘green economy’. They encompass the three pillars of sustainability—social, environmental and economic aspects, and consequently they can be considered as a tool, which makes sustainable development visible. Currently, VSS are becoming a significant element in international trade and in the promotion of sustainable development strategies, especially in the context of globalised markets and supply chains.

This book is divided into five parts, which provide a comprehensive overview of the current VSS concepts and contains numerous examples of their implementation in different sectors of the economy. Part I introduces the concept and nature of VSS and discusses various issues related to their functioning. Part II highlights the difference between formal and private standards, their complementary characteristics and their co-functioning. Part III places VSS in the broader context of global development issues and challenges, including development policy and international sustainability commitments, progress towards achieving, green economy, and meeting climate protection targets. Part IV presents a representative selection of case studies to aid in demonstrating their wide range of applications and effectiveness in contributing to development objectives. Part V closes our publication with discussion of the current challenges related to the development of VSS and the future outlook.

The completion of this volume leaves us indebted to many people. First of all we wish to thank all authors from across the globe for their valuable article contributions, which made possible the preparation of this comprehensive publication. We are very grateful to David J. Smyth for his help in preparing this volume and for the excellent work on proofreading of all chapters and authoring introductions. We also wish to express our gratitude to Tania Wang and Bradlie Martz-Sigala for their assistance in the initial stages of preparing the manuscript.

We hope that practitioners within the field of standards application, the wider business community and policy makers, in addition to academic researchers, teachers and students will find the enclosed material valuable in their respective work and research endeavours.

Eschborn, Germany
Cottbus, Germany
Eschborn, Germany
Cottbus, Germany
September 2013

Carsten Schmitz-Hoffmann
Michael Schmidt
Berthold Hansmann
Dmitry Palekhov

Voluntary Standard Systems

A Contribution to Sustainable Development

Schmitz-Hoffmann, C.; Schmidt, M.; Hansmann, B.;

Palekhov, D. (Eds.)

2014, XVI, 459 p. 40 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-642-35715-2