

## Appendix A: Field Research and Interviews

To identify the factors that have influenced the rise of transnational eco-certification in China, I mainly draw on original data collected during intensive fieldwork in the country plus a few interviews in Europe. The field research in China was carried out from 2015 to 2017 during four series of trips to more than a dozen sites. During my fieldwork, I conducted a total of 106 semi-structured interviews with practitioners who have worked in China and who represent different stakeholders in the field of eco-certification or voluntary sustainability standards. These stakeholders include but are not limited to: certification programs (i.e., private standard-setting organizations), transnational and domestic NGOs, Chinese and other government agencies, industry associations, certification bodies, research institutes, and businesses. To arrange interviews, I first contacted transnational certification programs working on the chosen commodities. Once an initial contact was established, I followed up with organizations collaborating on the relevant programs in China and with major certified companies. The list of interviewees was further developed based on a snowballing strategy. Additionally, to get opinions on eco-certifications from a wider group of Chinese stakeholders, I also interviewed major companies that have not adopted relevant transnational standards as well as leading experts in each industry, including researchers and auditors. The insights provided by uncertified companies were helpful in establishing counterfactuals to understand what incentives were lacking to support eco-certification.

The average length of these interviews is around 70 minutes.<sup>1</sup> Interviews with stakeholders usually started with a question about the growth of eco-certification in China, then moved on to the major opportunities for and challenges to increasing uptake, and finally asked about the role of the

Chinese government and industry associations in the relevant processes. Interviews with firm representatives were conducted either with companies' general managers and chief executives, or with managers responsible for eco-certification or corporate social responsibility. In the interviews, I began with each firms' history and core business, then moved on to their sustainability strategy and experiences with certification, and finally finished with challenges in implementing transnational standards (for uncertified firms, I tested their knowledge about different certification programs and asked about their willingness to get certified). Through these questions, I tried to probe firms' incentives for joining a given certification program and to discover the key agents driving their participation. In addition to stakeholders in China, I also conducted, in person and by Skype, interviews with senior officials at the headquarters of most certification programs covered by this study to learn about their strategies in China and the challenges to increasing uptake. I sometimes asked them to compare China with other emerging markets.<sup>2</sup> To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, all interviews were codified for references, and I list below the date, location, and description of interviewees without disclosing their affiliations.

Moreover, for each of the three cases studied in this book, I attended at least one stakeholder meeting in China to observe discussions on the key issues in the relevant sectors and establish contacts with practitioners. These meetings enabled me to collect key information about each sector, as well as documents from some major firms. I also made several visits to production sites. In April 2017, with the help of a Chinese NGO, I visited several fish farms in Hainan (a major aquaculture production region) and talked to farmers. In July 2017, I visited tea farms in East China (Anhui, Jiangxi, and Shandong provinces) and interviewed their farm managers. Although I did not conduct ethnographic research, these visits helped me understand the relevant production processes and challenges for Chinese producers in adopting eco-certification standards.

**Table A.1**

List of interviews

No.	Code	Interviewee	Date	Location	Format
1	NBJ01	China representative, a transnational certification program	7/6/2015	Beijing	In person
2	NBJ02	China representative, a transnational certification program	7/7/2015	Beijing	In person
3	GBJ03	Director of International Cooperation Division, a national government agency	7/8/2015	Beijing	In person
4	NBJ04	Local project manager, a transnational NGO working on sustainability standards	10/16/2015	Beijing	Skype
5	NUK01	Global business director, a certification program	4/12/2016	London	In person
6	NUK02	Global communication official, a transnational NGO working on sustainability standards	6/2/2016	London	In person
7	NNL01	Project manager, a certification program	6/22/2016	Amsterdam	In person
8	NNL02	Official on China affairs, a certification program	6/22/2016	Amsterdam	In person
9	NNL03	Project manager on palm oil, a transnational development NGO	6/28/2016	Utrecht	In person
10	RBJ05	Researcher on oil crops, a Chinese research institute	7/5/2016	Beijing	In person
11	RBJ06	Researcher on sustainable consumption, a Chinese university	7/11/2016	Beijing	In person
12	RBJ07	Expert on sustainability governance, a think tank affiliated with a Chinese ministry	7/12/2016	Beijing	In person
13	NBJ08	Director on market transformation, a transnational environmental NGO	7/18/2016	Beijing	In person
14	BBJ09	Senior manager, a consultancy company specialized in corporate sustainability	7/19/2016	Beijing	In person
15	GBJ10	Director, Cereals and Oils Department, a Chinese trade association	7/20/2016	Beijing	In person

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**Table A.1**  
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No.	Code	Interviewee	Date	Location	Format
16	BBJ11	Manager, Department of oils and oilseeds, a Chinese commodity trading company	7/22/2016	Beijing	In person
17	NBJ12	China representative, a certification program	7/22/2016	Beijing	In person
18	ABJ13	National strategic account manager in China, a global auditing company	7/26/2016	Beijing	In person
19	ABJ14	Marketing executive in China, a global auditing company	7/26/2016	Beijing	In person
20	NBJ15	Project consultant in China, a transnational NGO working on sustainability standards	7/26/2016	Beijing	In person
21	IBJ16	Country office manager on sustainable consumption, a United Nations program	7/27/2016	Beijing	In person
22	IBJ17	Deputy head of the Economic and Commercial section, first secretary, embassy of a European country in China	7/27/2016	Beijing	In person
23	RBJ18	Director of the Centre for Forestry Policy on Climate Change, a research institute affiliated with a Chinese ministry	8/10/2016	Beijing	In person
24	NBJ19	Project manager on market transformation, a transnational environmental NGO	8/11/2016	Beijing	In person
25	GBJ19	Official on sustainability standards, a think tank affiliated with a Chinese ministry	8/12/2016	Beijing	In person
26	AQD01	Business manager in China, a global auditing company	8/14/2016	Qingdao, Shandong	In person
27	NBJ20	Project leader, an international development project funded by a European country	8/17/2016	Beijing	In person
28	NBJ21	China Representative, a certification program	8/17/2016	Beijing	In person
29	BBJ22	Sustainable sourcing manager, a multinational food company	8/18/2016	Beijing	Phone

**Table A.1**  
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No.	Code	Interviewee	Date	Location	Format
30	NBJ23	Project consultant in China, a certification program	8/18/2016	Beijing	In person
31	AQD02	Food department manager and lead auditor in China, a global auditing company	8/20/2016	Qingdao, Shandong	In person
32	RBJ24	Researcher on forest certification, a research institute affiliated with a Chinese ministry	9/5/2016	Beijing	Phone
33	IBJ25	Project manager on sustainable development, embassy of a European country in China	9/8/2016	Beijing	Skype
34	IBJ26	Head of the Political Section, embassy of a European country in China	9/8/2016	Beijing	Skype
35	NMA01	Global communication director, a certification program	10/12/2016	Kuala Lumpur	Skype
36	ICH01	Program manager on trade promotion, a European government	11/2/2016	Bern	In person
37	GCH02	Chinese diplomat experienced in affairs in international trade and sustainability standards	12/7/2016	Geneva	In person
38	NMA02	Former secretary general, a certification program	2/15/2017	Kuala Lumpur	Skype
39	GCH03	Independent consultant and former official of a Chinese ministry	3/1/2017	Geneva	In person
40	BBJ27	Business manager, a seafood trading company	3/10/2017	Beijing	In person
41	RSH01	Researcher on sustainable seafood, a Chinese university	3/13/2017	Shanghai	In person
42	NSH02	Founder and director, a Chinese environmental NGO	3/13/2017	Shanghai	In person
43	NSH03	China representative, a certification program	3/14/2017	Shanghai	In person
44	NSH04	Asian business development director, a certification program	3/14/2017	Shanghai	In person
45	RBJ28	Senior researcher, a research institute affiliated with a Chinese ministry	3/16/2017	Beijing	In person

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**Table A.1**  
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No.	Code	Interviewee	Date	Location	Format
46	NBJ29	Project official on climate change and fisheries, a transnational environmental NGO	3/17/2017	Beijing	In person
47	NBJ30	Project official in China, a transnational NGO working on sustainability standards	3/20/2017	Beijing	In person
48	GBJ31	Deputy chief economist, a Chinese industry association	3/20/2017	Beijing	In person
49	GBJ32	Program manager in the International Cooperation Department, a Chinese industry association	3/21/2017	Beijing	In person
50	NQD03	Food safety expert, independent consultant	3/22/2017	Qingdao, Shandong	Phone
51	GBJ33	General manager, a Chinese auditing company	3/23/2017	Beijing	In person
52	GBJ34	Director of the Quality and Standard Research Center, a research institute affiliated to a Chinese ministry	3/27/2017	Beijing	In person
53	NBJ35	Project consultant on sustainable food	3/28/2017	Beijing	In person
54	NBJ36	Expert on sustainability standards	3/29/2017	Beijing	In person
55	NBJ37	Project official on seafood certification	3/29/2017	Beijing	In person
56	ANJ01	Auditor, research fellow, a Chinese auditing company and research institute on organic standards	3/31/2017	Nanjing, Jiangsu	In person
57	BZJ01	General manager, a fishing company	4/5/2017	Yuhuan, Zhejiang	In person
58	GZJ02	Director of fisheries, a county government	4/5/2017	Yuhuan, Zhejiang	In person
59	GZJ03	Director of the Agricultural Technology Extension Centre, a county government	4/6/2017	Yuhuan, Zhejiang	In person
60	GZJ04	Party secretary, a fishing town in East China	4/6/2017	Yuhuan, Zhejiang	In person
61	NHN01	General secretary, a local Chinese business association	4/10/2017	Haikou, Hainan	In person

**Table A.1**  
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No.	Code	Interviewee	Date	Location	Format
62	NHN02	Program manager, a Chinese environmental NGO	4/10/2017	Haikou, Hainan	In person
63	NHN03	Founder and director, a Chinese environmental NGO	4/10/2017	Haikou, Hainan	In person
64	FHN04	Fish farmer (smallholder)	4/11/2017	Baolu, Hainan	In person
65	FHN05	Fish farmer (smallholder)	4/11/2017	Baolu, Hainan	In person
66	FHN06	Fish farmer (smallholder)	4/11/2017	Baolu, Hainan	In person
67	FHN07	Fish farmer (smallholder)	4/11/2017	Baolu, Hainan	In person
68	FHN08	Fish farmer (smallholder)	4/11/2017	Baolu, Hainan	In person
69	BHN09	Deputy general manager, a Chinese seafood company	4/12/2017	Wenchang, Hainan	In person
70	NSH05	Project consultant in China, a certification program	4/13/2017	Shanghai	In person
71	NNJ02	Project manager of the tea program in China, a transnational development NGO	4/13/2017	Nanjing, Jiangsu	In person
72	NQD04	China program manager, a transnational conservation NGO	4/14/2017	Qingdao, Shandong	In person
73	NQD05	China business manager, a certification program	4/14/2017	Qingdao, Shandong	In person
74	ABJ38	General manager, a Chinese auditing company	4/16/2017	Beijing	In person
75	NBJ39	Project consultant in China, a certification program	4/18/2017	Beijing	In person
76	BNJ03	Owner of a tea farm	6/14/2017	Nanjing, Jiangsu	In person
77	GNJ04	Chief engineer, a research institute on aquatic products affiliated with a provincial government	6/19/2017	Nanjing, Jiangsu	In person
78	NNJ05	Program manager, a transnational development NGO	6/19/2017	Nanjing, Jiangsu	In person

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**Table A.1**  
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No.	Code	Interviewee	Date	Location	Format
79	RHZ01	Director of the center on plant protection, a research institute affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences	6/20/2017	Hangzhou, Zhejiang	In person
80	RHZ02	Director of the Organic Tea R&D Center, a research institute affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences	6/22/2017	Hangzhou, Zhejiang	in person
81	RHZ03	Researcher, Organic Tea R&D Center, a research institute affiliated to the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences	6/22/2017	Hangzhou, Zhejiang	In person
82	NBJ40	Project manager on oil crops in China, a transnational development NGO	6/26/2017	Beijing	In person
83	BBJ41	Chairperson, a Chinese agricultural service company	6/26/2017	Beijing	In person
84	GBJ42	Deputy secretary-general, a Chinese industry association	6/27/2017	Beijing	In person
85	NFZ01	Project manager, a Chinese environmental NGO promoting sustainable seafood	6/30/2017	Fuzhou, Fujian	In person
86	BAH01	Chairperson, a large Chinese tea company	7/3/2017	Huangshan, Anhui	In person
87	BAH02	Manager on quality control, a large Chinese tea company	7/3/2017	Huangshan, Anhui	In person
88	BAH03	Factory manager, a large Chinese tea company	7/3/2017	Huangshan, Anhui	In person
89	BAH04	Investor in tea farms	7/3/2017	Huangshan, Anhui	In person
90	GAH05	Director of the Agricultural Commission, a county-level government agency	7/4/2017	Huangshan, Anhui	In person
91	GAH06	Official on tea affairs, a county-level government agency	7/4/2017	Huangshan, Anhui	In person
92	BAH05	Chairperson, a Chinese tea company	7/4/2017	Huangshan, Anhui	In person
93	BAH06	General manager, a Chinese tea company	7/5/2017	Xiuning, Anhui	In person
94	BWY01	Founder and chairperson, a Chinese tea company	7/6/2017	Wuyuan, Jiangxi	In person



**Table A.1**  
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No.	Code	Interviewee	Date	Location	Format
95	FWY02	Farm manager, a Chinese tea company	7/6/2017	Wuyuan, Jiangxi	In person
96	BWY03	Factory manager, a Chinese tea company	7/6/2017	Wuyuan, Jiangxi	In person
97	BWY04	Director of the Export Department, a Chinese tea company	7/6/2017	Wuyuan	In person
98	BWY05	Vice-general manager, a Chinese tea company	7/6/2017	Wuyuan	In person
99	BWY06	Founder and chairperson, a Chinese tea company	7/7/2017	Wuyuan	In person
100	BRZ01	Production manager, a Chinese tea company	7/10/2017	Rizhao	In person
101	BRZ02	General manager, a Chinese tea company	7/11/2017	Rizhao	In person
102	ICH04	Project consultant, a United Nations agency	8/2/2017	Geneva	In person
103	NIT01	Chief executive official and founder, a certification program	8/22/2017	Milan	Skype
104	NUK03	Chief executive official, a certification program	9/20/2017	London	Skype
105	NNL04	Project manager, a certification program	11/2/2017	Utrecht	Skype
106	NUK04	Project manager, a transnational NGO	3/16/2018	Sterling	Skype

