



## Sustainable Timber Action

### Using the power of public procurement to support forests and their communities

#### Procurement and forests: What is the link?

Deforestation and forest degradation dramatically affect forest ecosystems and both local and international economies. Forest degradation, a lack of social concerns for wood workers and indigenous peoples, poverty and emigration are interlinked with corruption and illegal logging. Consumer countries directly contribute to the problems mentioned by purchasing timber and other forest products without ensuring that they are socially and environmentally sourced. Imports of illegally logged timber by the EU are estimated at 30 million cubic metres per year, that is, between 16 and 19 per cent of all wood and related products imported by the EU every year ([WWF, 2008](#)).

The public sector is a major purchaser of wood for a number of uses: building and civil construction, office and outdoor furniture and office stationery (paper). Public authorities purchase about 15 per cent of the timber and paper sold in Europe. They have the purchasing power to create a shift towards more sustainable purchasing practices and to influence the timber and timber-based products market. Evidence shows that public sector practices can have an effect on suppliers' preferences, suggesting that they tend to prefer to also supply the same products to private customers. One estimate suggested that government procurement could achieve market leverage of up to 25 per cent (compared to about 10 per cent for direct purchases) when knock-on effects such as these are included ([Brack and Buckrell, 2011](#)).

#### What is Sustainable Timber Action about?

Sustainable Timber Action aims to increase public awareness in Europe about the human and environmental issues caused by deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (chiefly Latin America and Africa), and about the impact of unsustainable consumption and production of forest products (such as timber) on climate change, biodiversity and people dependent on forests.

Action will focus on addressing how public authorities, particularly local authorities in Europe, purchase and consume forest products for their cities or administrations. The promotion of sustainable forest management - such as the practice certified by the Forest Stewardship Council - and fair trade community and small holders certified forest products in public procurement policies and practices will be central.

Sustainable Timber Action is an international project co-funded by the European Union ([Programme Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development](#), managed by EuropeAid) and is formed on the basis of a partnership between eight European organisations.

It is a 30 month long project running from the beginning of April 2011 to the end of September 2013.

#### What actions are planned?

Sustainable Timber Action will address these issues and offer solutions through the following activities:

- **Guidance for public procurers** through the development of a toolkit on how to set up public procurement policies and purchasing practices for fair and sustainable forest products

- **Guidance for producers and buyers** on how to integrate fair trade and forest management certification to improve their management and trade practices in a fair and sustainable manner
- **Mobilising public support for fair and sustainable forest products through a series of awareness-raising and training sessions** directed at public sector employees, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the timber sector and universities. The events will be held in Estonia, Hungary, Romania, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Spain. Quarterly newsletters, conferences, press work, an engaging website and videos addressing the most important issues will serve to broaden outreach activities
- **Engaging stakeholders** in Europe and in timber producing countries through North/South twinning actions, organised dialogue between SMEs and local authority purchasers, and advocacy actions directed at European policy makers

### How can my organisation get involved?

Any public authority committed to sustainable public procurement is welcome to take part in the project activities. Opportunities are as follows:

- Contribute to the development of guidance and collection of good practice – share your knowledge and experience about timber procurement with us
- Lacking the know-how of how to get your organisation's purchasing practices in order - interested in hosting a training workshop for your public procurers?
- Supplier and producer engagement (SMEs and larger companies) is at the heart of our activities – interested in hosting an event to further demonstrate your commitment to fair and sustainable forestry management?
- Is your public administration (city or public body) interested in showcasing your achievements in this area? Why not host an international event to help raise awareness and build momentum in the efforts to promote sustainable forestry?
- Are you a fair trade organisation? Why not promote timber that is sustainable and fair trade?

#### Sustainable Timber Action Consortium

[ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability](#) (Project Coordinator)

[National Association of Local Authorities in Italy](#)

[Fundación Comercio para el Desarrollo](#) (COPADEV) (Spain)

[Forest Stewardship Council](#) – Italy (FSC-Italy)

[City of Madrid](#) (Spain)

[City of Miskolc](#) (Hungary)

[Municipality of Rakvere](#) (Estonia)

Romanian Energy Agencies Federation (FAREN)

#### More information:

Contact [simon.clement@iclei.org](mailto:simon.clement@iclei.org) from ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability or visit [www.sustainable-timber.eu](http://www.sustainable-timber.eu) (online from October 2011)



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