

Activities to combat illegal logging and the illegal import of associated timber products:

By the EU and Dutch authorities:

Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade, or FLEG(T): During the G8 summit (Okinawa, 2000) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development [WSSD] (Johannesburg, 2001) preparatory measures were implemented for the various regional processes, namely: East Asia FLEG (2001), Africa FLEG (2002), Russia FLEG (2004) and EU FLEGT (2003).

FLEGT in the European Union: Since the WSSD 2001, the EU has given priority to combating illegal logging. In July 2004, the Commission presented its draft regulations and mandate proposal to the Member States. The regulations come into force in 2005.

Role of the Dutch ministries? The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management & Fisheries (LNV) is the 'initiator', while the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning & the Environment (VROM) 'organises' the debate on sustainability and public tenders. The ministries of Foreign Affairs & Development Cooperation, of Justice, and of Finance devote attention to their own fields of policy within FLEGT.

The FLEGT action plan:

- combats illegal logging and the associated trade in timber products.
- bases its approach on bilateral *partnerships* between the EU and major producers.
- is focused on the potential partners: Brazil; Russia; Indonesia; Malaysia; Ghana; Cameroon, Gabon, and the Congo.

The partnerships comprise:

- a voluntary system of permits, which prevents the import of illegal timber within the EU.
- financial and technical assistance for partner countries in promoting good forestry management throughout the sector and the transparency of the harvest, with a view to boosting trade and testing the legality of the product.

The EU and producing country will have to agree upon: The definition of legality (the regulations and the checks throughout the entire chain); Which authority is to issue the export declaration; How it is checked by Customs in the EU and what sort of independent checks are performed.

The proposed regulation: prescribes the check procedures to be applied by EU Customs and the reports on the measures implemented. The Member States determine the domestic organisation of these procedures and the punishment in the event of an offence.

Why should countries participate? As a result of improved management in the forestry sector and focus on the EU: - Increased income from the trade in timber and timber products; - Preferential access to a reliable quality market for timber and timber products; - Reduction of the social and ecological effects of unregulated forestry; - access to additional Development Cooperation resources.

By the Netherlands Timber Trade Association (VVNH) and others:

The VVNH code of conduct (as of 1 January 2004) prescribes: '*NTTA members shall exclusively bring timber on the Netherlands market in conformity with current legalisation*'.

This is based on the legislation and regulations of the country of origin. The VVNH members are subjected to a broad range of checks to establish compliance with the code of conduct, in view of the fact that the VVNH sanction regulations remain open to all.

A brief list of VVNH activities in 2004:

- The VVNH members have asked their foreign suppliers to endorse the VVNH legality statement >> FAILURE to sign means that the VVNH will issue advice NOT to do trade.
- Basic documents have been drawn up for Brazil, Indonesia, Cameroon, Malaysia and Russia.
- All the instruments utilised to distinguish between illegal and legal timber have been listed and made available ('Toolbox for legal verification and timber tracking').
- All Indonesian suppliers have been checked for legality, and currently participate in the EU / VVNH project (also consult Activities 2005 - 2010).
- Commissioned by the VVNH, Keurhout's (the gatekeeper for sustainable forestry management certificates) Board of Experts developed the verification protocol for 'demonstrably' legal timber. This enables the assessment of legality claims and the provision of 'demonstrably' legal timber.

VVNH activities 2005 - 2010: In November 2004, the EU awarded funds to a European project. Together with their British and Belgian counterparts, and with the assistance of the European Hardwood Federation (UCBD) and the European Timber Trade Association (FEBO), Indonesia, Malaysia, Cameroon and Gabon have launched projects aimed at the provision of demonstrably legal timber.

Sources and documents: www.vvnh.nl; www.keurhout.nl; www.illegal-logging.info.

State of affairs concerning sustainable forestry & timber production

(Platform Hout in the Netherlands, 21 Feb. 05)

Table 1. Number of hectares of forest certified for sustainable forestry in accordance with various systems, and the number of Chain of Custody (CoC) certificates.

System	No. of hectares certified				No. of CoC certificates	
	The Tropics	Moderate Regions	The Netherlands	Total	Total	The Netherlands
PEFC	-	57,784,126	-	57,784,126	1,924	2
FSC	6,000,000 ¹	45,320,494	110,631	51,320,494	3,601	228
MTCC	4,741,093	-	-	4,741,093	13	-
Other ²	-	81,400,000	-	81,400,000	-	-
Total	10,741,093 ¹	184,504,620	110,631	195,245,713	5,538	230

Internationally: Since 2000, the area of certified forest has increased by 175%; from 70.9 to 195.2 million ha. Brief descriptions of the various certification systems relevant for the Dutch market follow below.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has already certified over 51 million hectares of forest in 62 countries. There are also many developments taking place, such as the rapidly increasing area of FSC certified forest in Russia, and the initiatives that have been launched to guide companies in the Congo basin towards FSC certification. The World Bank and WWF coalition promote sustainable forestry in keeping with FSC standards. This coalition's objective is not only to ensure the protection of 100 million hectares of forest, but also to secure the sustainable management of a further 200 million hectares by the end of 2005. Although the coalition has made no further comment concerning the system, FSC is currently the only one that complies with the requirements. The Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN), which comprises 22 FTNs operating in almost 30 timber producing and consuming countries in four continents, assists in matching the supply of and demand for (FSC) certified products. For further info: www.fsc.org and www.panda.org/forestandtrade.

¹ Approximate figure, including plantations.

² Consists of the North American systems: CSA (32.9 million ha); SFI (38.0) and ATFS (10.5, devoid of third-party checks).

Around two years ago, the PEFC changed its name and simultaneously diverged from its focus on Europe. It now operates as a global certification system. The PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes) has approved 17 certification systems in the same number of countries, thus creating 58 million hectares of PEFC certified forest in largely moderate climates. Substantial numbers of other systems, originating from timber producing countries that are interesting to the Dutch market, have been submitted to the PEFC for approval. The countries involved include the USA (SFI and CSA), Russia, Malaysia (MTCC), Gabon (PAFC Gabon), Canada (CSA) and Brazil. For further info: www.pefc.org and www.pefc.cz.

As the Netherlands' major supplier of sawn tropical timber, Malaysia has its own certification system, known as the MTCC (Malaysian Timber Certification Council). Until just recently, only a few government-owned companies were certified, although the first private forestry firm has since been awarded a certificate. For further info: www.mtcc.com.my.

Governmental Initiatives: Within the context of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), the European ministers endorsed a resolution in Helsinki in 1993. This resolution prescribes the General Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe. Europe therefore already has its own criteria and indicators for sustainable forestry management, which might also serve as a basis for (European) assessment criteria. The British government recently assessed five certification systems, for the purposes of its own purchasing policy. According to this assessment, only FSC and CSA offer sufficient guarantees of sustainability and legality. The PEFC is currently undergoing the final stage of testing. The MTCC apparently offers sufficient guarantees with regard to legality. The Danish government's policy on the import of tropical timber accepts FSC and describes MTCC as a certificate that offers a sound guarantee of legal forestry management, aiming for sustainability.

Brief description of the situation in the Netherlands: Over 110,000 hectares of forest – i.e. approx. one third of the Netherlands' total area of woodland – is FSC certified. And this area is continually expanding, thanks to the group certification of the *Unie van Bosgroepen* (Union of Forestry Groups). The 230 CoC certificates consist mainly of FSC and two PEFC certificates. And the number of CoC (group) certificates is still rapidly increasing, particularly in the relatively untapped construction sector. And further substantial FSC and PEFC CoC group certification of some 30 forestry companies is about to proceed. According to a survey performed in 2004, some 770,000 m³ roundwood equivalents of FSC construction timber was available on the Dutch market in 2003. This volume is equivalent to around 11%, as opposed to a meagre 4% in 1999.

Although there are also PEFC, MTCC, CSA certified timber and Keurhout approved certificates on the Dutch market, no recent import figures are currently available. Furthermore, Keurhout's Board of Experts has already approved some 40 million hectares of certified forest, in accordance with the minimum statutory requirements (LNV 1997). For further information, please consult www.vvnh.nl and www.keurhout.nl. In 2004, the Dutch government decided to use timber produced using sustainable sources wherever possible, but at least demonstrably legal timber to meet its own needs. It also opted to review the minimum requirements for sustainable forest management and timber certification, as formulated in 1997. A broad Supervisory Committee is to lay down these requirements in an evaluation guideline (BRL) for the evaluation of individual certificates. Steps are also being taken to establish a test protocol (TP) that will describe the system of the test procedure for certification systems, which is to be carried out by a body yet to be appointed.
