

# The UK Government Timber Procurement Policy

The UK government has recognised the pressures placed on our forest resources and has had a timber procurement policy since 2000. This policy requires that all timber and wood derived products procured originate from:

- **Legal and sustainable sources, or**
- **FLEGT licensed or equivalent sources**

Recycled products are equally accepted.

The policy is mandatory for all central government departments, executive agencies and non departmental bodies. Universities, colleges and other publicly funded autonomous organisations are encouraged to adopt sustainable timber procurement policies

## Legality and Sustainability

Definition of "legal" and "sustainable" within the context of the UK Government procurement policy.

Central government departments, their executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies are now required to procure timber and wood-derived products originating from either:

- legal and sustainable, or;
- FLEGT-licensed or equivalent sources, or;
- recycled timber

### Definition of legal and sustainable

#### Legal sources

For UK Government procurement, legal timber and wood-derived products are those which originate from a forest where the following requirements are met:

- The forest owner/manager holds legal use rights to the forest.
- There is compliance by both the forest management organisation and any contractors with local and national legal requirements including those relevant to:
  - Forest management;
  - Environment;
  - Labour and welfare;
  - Health and safety;
  - Other parties' tenure and use rights
- All relevant royalties and taxes are paid
- There is compliance with the requirements of CITES.

## Sustainable sources

For the purpose of the UK Government timber procurement policy, sustainable timber and wood products must come from a forest which is managed in accordance with a definition of sustainable that meets the requirements set out below:

### Content of the definition

- The definition must be consistent with a widely accepted set of international criteria defining sustainable or responsible forest management at the forest management unit level.
- The definition must be performance-based, meaning that measurable outputs must be included.
- Management of the forest must ensure that harm to ecosystems is minimised.
- Management of the forest must ensure that productivity of the forest is maintained.
- Management of the forest must ensure that forest ecosystem health and vitality is maintained.
- Management of the forest must ensure that biodiversity is maintained.
- The process of defining 'sustainable' must seek to ensure:
  - No single interest can dominate the process;
  - No decision can be made in the absence of agreement from the majority of an interest category.

From April 2010, application of the timber procurement policy includes certain social criteria. The social criteria must not be included in technical specifications for procurement of timber and wood-derived products, but only in recommended contract conditions. The social criteria that are included in model contract conditions are noted below for information purposes, as contractors may be required by contract conditions to provide evidence of compliance, for example through certification schemes.

### Social criteria

- Management of the forest must have full regard for:
- Identification, documentation and respect of legal, customary and traditional tenure and use rights related to the forest;
- Mechanisms for resolving grievances and disputes including those relating to tenure and use rights, to forest management practices and to work conditions; and
- Safeguarding the basic labour rights and health and safety of forest workers.

The details on the legality and sustainability definitions and the requirements which have to be met are provided in the following document: *UK Government Timber Procurement policy: Definition of legality and sustainability*.

If requested, suppliers must be able to provide evidence to the Government that the wood or wood products they supply are from legal and sustainable sources. **Note that for a source to be considered sustainable the legality criteria also have to be met.**

In order to assist procurement personnel and suppliers, the government has identified two types of evidence that will demonstrate the legality and sustainability of timber and timber products:

- Category A : Certification of materials under one of the approved schemes
- Category B: All other forms of evidence, for example audit statements, government documentation or supplier declarations.

## **FLEGT**

Information on FLEGT - Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade, the EU action plan.

### **What is FLEGT?**

FLEGT stands for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade. The EU FLEGT Action Plan sets out a programme of actions that forms the European Union's response to the problem of illegal logging and the trade in associated timber products. FLEGT addresses illegal logging, links good governance in developing countries with the legal trade instruments and influence offered by the EU's internal market.

The Action Plan includes the following key components:

1. Support to Producer Countries
2. Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs)
3. Public Timber Procurement Policies
4. Private Sector Initiatives
5. Investment safeguards
6. Additional Options for legislation
7. Conflict timber

For further information please refer to the European Commission FLEGT [Briefing sheets](#) published at the [illegal-logging.info](http://illegal-logging.info) website.

### **FLEGT and the UK Government's timber procurement policy**

A key component of FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) is a licensing system between producer partner countries and the EU. The licensing system will prove that the timber exported from that country is legal and meet a number of other requirements. Once the licensing system is up and running, no export from the partner country to the EU will be permitted unless it is accompanied by a FLEGT licence.

From April 1 2009, the UK Government timber procurement policy demands, that all timber and wood-derived products must be from independently verifiable legal and sustainable sources or FLEGT-licensed timber only.

Currently there is no FLEGT-licensed timber available in the market and therefore further detailed guidance on requirements to FLEGT-licensed timber will follow from CPET as it becomes available

## Recycled Products

A description of "recycled products" in the context of the UK Government timber procurement policy



**Recycled timber** is defined as recovered wood that prior to being supplied to the Authority had an end use as a standalone object or as part of a structure. The term "recycled" is used to cover the following categories:

1. Pre consumer recycled wood and wood fibre or industrial by products (from furniture production for example). Sawmill co-products fall within the category of virgin timber and not recycled.
2. Post consumer recycled wood and wood fibre (recycled paper for example) and drift wood. CPET shall be contacted if claims of drift wood are made.
3. Reclaimed timber which was abandoned or confiscated at least ten years previously. Evidence of the timber being harvested more than 10 years ago is required and CPET shall be contacted.

In order to meet the UK Government's timber procurement policy, the material must be (a) either legal and sustainable timber or FLEGT-licensed or equivalent timber or alternatively (b) 'recycled timber'; or (c) a combination of (a) and (b).

Documentary evidence and independent verification also apply to recycled timber, but focus on the previous timber use rather than the forest source. Recycled timber shall be supported with evidence tracing the timber back to the previous use