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# Sustainable Timber Procurement: Where does your timber come from?



Help for universities, colleges and their contractors and suppliers





Illegal and unsustainable logging are drivers of deforestation. Deforestation and forest degradation are responsible for about a fifth of all carbon emissions and thus a major contributor to climate change.

Properly managed timber is the world's most renewable building material as well as the most commonly used. However in many countries with valuable forests, these resources are diminishing fast, due to the practice of illegal and unsustainable logging and the greater profitability of competing land uses such as palm oil. In 2008, WWF estimated that 16 to 19% of all timber imports in the UK derive from alleged illegal or suspicious sources.

The 2006 Stern Report concluded that deforestation accounts for more than 18% of all global carbon emissions, more than the entire transport sector. The report also advocated that protecting the world's forests is of paramount importance to mitigate climate change.

Additionally, millions of people around the world depend on forests for their livelihood – providing the basic needs of a home, food, water and ways to generate an income. Globally, the UK is the 4th biggest net importer of timber products, so our choices have impacts across the world!

## Universities and Sustainable Timber Procurement

In recent years there has been a clear need for universities to consider their environmental impact and reduce their carbon footprint. Universities recognise the importance of the choices they make in buying products and the impacts on environmental and social aspects throughout the world. Many already buy fair trade products and have sustainable procurement policies.

There are simple steps to responsible timber purchasing which means your university can reduce its environmental footprint and make a significant contribution to protecting the world's forests and the local communities they support! Buying timber doesn't need to cost the earth.

The Central Point of Expertise on Timber procurement (CPET) has been established to aid the UK public sector and publicly funded bodies such as universities to implement sustainable timber procurement policies in line with UK government policy.

Universities and other publicly funded organisations are encouraged to adopt sustainable timber procurement policies covering all timber and timber derived products such as furniture, construction timber, and paper.







Evidence is needed to provide assurance that the source is legal and sustainable. This requires checks in the whole supply chain, from the forest, through to sawmills and traders.

## 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:

- Either 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.

CPET, with support from WWF's Global Forest and Trade Network in the UK (GFTN-UK) and the Timber Trade Federation (TTF), can help universities to implement a timber policy and reduce their environmental impact through responsible purchasing.

## How can universities and colleges reduce their impact on forests?

- **Step 1** Issue a clear policy stating that your institution aims to purchase only legal and sustainable or recycled timber and timber products. (You can write your own policy or simply adopt the UK Government policy.)
- **Step 2** When purchasing, always ask for legal and sustainable forest products, and make suppliers and contractors aware of your policy.
- **Step 3** Check and record basic information on whether your purchases meet your policy.

We believe these three steps are effective in eliminating illegal and non sustainable timber from the UK market and create an incentive for sustainable forest management worldwide.

For more information and support, visit the CPET website:  
[www.cpet.org.uk/universities-and-colleges](http://www.cpet.org.uk/universities-and-colleges)



CPET provides free of charge support and training to help you implement your policy and ensure compliance.

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\* FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) is an EU initiative to support countries to address illegal logging. A key component of FLEGT will be a licensing scheme between producer partner countries and the EU which verifies legal origin of timber. FLEGT licensed timber is expected to become available by the end of 2011, after which more detailed guidance will be available on the CPET website.





**Implementation of the policy does not have to be difficult or expensive and makes a world of difference.**

**Myth 1** Finding products from legal and sustainable sources is hard and they are always more expensive.

In all sectors and in all product groups, the availability of verified legal and sustainable products is high. Latest reports show that the proportion of certified sustainable products (such as those certified by FSC and PEFC) available to the UK supply chain is now close to 85%. The majority of timber used in the UK is softwood, most of which is certified with marginal or no premiums. In the vast majority of cases, requesting legal and sustainable timber should therefore add no extra cost for buyers. Only for specialist timber products or where the risk of sourcing illegal timber is high can an additional cost be incurred.

**Myth 2** It requires a lot of work and resources.

For university and colleges the first steps are simple. Make sure that your contractors and suppliers are aware of your policy. You can copy model requirements, which can be found on the CPET website, and include them in tenders and contracts. It is up to contractors and suppliers to provide evidence of compliance with your policy and CPET support is also available to them free of charge. Evidence provided to you can, if time or technical expertise to assess it is not available, simply be forwarded to CPET and the response from CPET referred to when accepting the evidence or requesting further evidence from suppliers.

**Myth 3** It doesn't really make a difference.

With the UK being the world's 4th largest net importer of timber and with public sector procurement accounting for about a third of all timber purchases, implementation of the public timber procurement policy plays an important role in tackling illegal logging and deforestation. By creating a demand for legal and sustainable wood, the policy creates an incentive for sustainable forest management, which helps maintain biodiversity, mitigate climate change and benefits the livelihood of local communities. Although your order may seem small, it is widely agreed that a strong and consistent demand for legal and sustainable timber products is contributing towards real changes in the way forests are managed.

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