

“Wood for Transitional Shelter: The urgent provision of transitional shelters poses a greater danger to Haitian forest and environment” – Rapid Environment Assessment, Haiti Earthquake Response, USAID, March 2010



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Sourcing of timber for transitional and permanent shelters is a key environmental issue related to the Haiti Recovery Program. Overall impacts of the recovery actions need to be considered to ensure the recovery efforts are truly beneficial to the long term well-being of the affected communities and do not increase vulnerability of other non-affected communities. Therefore, it is imperative that organizations show due diligence in their efforts to identify legal and responsibly managed timber sources.

While preliminary estimates indicated that 30,000m³ of timber would be required for the construction of over 100,000 transitional shelters (REA, USAID, 2010), revised estimates indicate 50,000m³ of timber is needed for 125,000 transitional shelters.

The high demand for timber poses a potential threat to the already fragile Haitian environment but also poses a regional threat to Dominican Republic, Caribbean, Central and South American environments and communities.

Given the high demand for timber, **IASC Haiti Shelter Cluster** in partnership with **Timber For Haiti Alliance (TFHA)**, a coalition of environmental agencies that include **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)** and **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** provide this introductory guidance note on better practices for timber procurement to support the agencies working on Haitian recovery efforts.

This note highlights the areas of concern and possible support mechanisms for procuring legal and environmental and socially responsible timber. **IASC Haiti Shelter Cluster** and **TFHA** in partnership with the **WWF Global Forest & Trade Network (GFTN)** can provide a practical framework and advice for eliminating illegal or “unwanted” timber and assist in identifying legal and responsible timber supply chains. We understand that timber procurement for transitional shelters will be ongoing and thus initiating new legal and sustainable supply chains can balance the level of urgency with the desire to “do no more harm”.

Why legal timber?

The global trade in illegal timber is a multi-billion dollar business with estimates that 8-10 per cent of global production and trade of timber products is illegal, with illegal logging making up 60-80 per cent of all logging in some of the most valuable and threatened forests in countries such as Peru and Brazil. Illegal logging promotes corruption and deterioration of the rule of law, eliminates revenue and ecosystem services for local communities, removes critical habitat for endangered species, reduces government revenue and causes forest degradation and deforestation. Degradation and deforestation reduce biodiversity, disrupt water cycles, increase soil erosion, harm livelihoods, and release 15 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

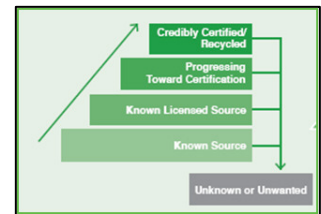


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Unfortunately one the Western Hemisphere’s most egregious examples of rampant deforestation and its negative impacts is Haiti. With less than 1 per cent of original forest cover Haiti suffers from deforestation impacts including soil erosion and deadly landslides. With an increase in immediate demand from emergency recovery efforts there could be acceleration in Illegal logging, trade, and the associated negative impacts. Increasing deforestation and unsustainable felling of trees either in Haiti or other forests can shift some of the environmental impacts from the Haiti earthquake to other communities and regions, increasing the vulnerability of these communities to future disasters due to increased erosion, flooding and landslides. Hence, organizational procurement policies and actions should not be made only based on least cost or availability but should include efforts to practice due diligence to identify and procure legal and responsible timber sources.

GFTN believes that it is possible to ensure that costs are minimized whilst acting responsibly in the sourcing of timber-hundreds of companies around the globe practice and achieve these objectives. The GFTN works with companies to progress through a “stepwise approach” to eliminate unknown/unwanted wood from their supply chains and increase the amount of legally sourced and credibly certified forest products.



The Lacey Act

While the Lacey Act does not apply in Haiti, considering the large proportion of timber supplied by US based companies, it is a useful tool when requesting suppliers to provide legal material. In 2008 the US Congress amended the US Lacey Act to eradicate trade in illegally sourced forest products. The Lacey Act prohibits the import of plants or plant products- including timber and wood products- that are illegally sourced from any US state or foreign country. Illegally sourced includes a plant or plant product that is taken, harvested, transported or exported in contravention of an underlying law in any foreign country or US state.

How do you identify legal timber in Haiti?

The simplest way to avoid buying illegal timber is to buy only certified timber. If purchasers can buy certified timber, the risk of trading in illegal timber will be minimal, or at least greatly reduced. Most forest certification standards require independent verifiers to confirm that the forest harvesting is legal. Auditors will have made sure there is no evidence of significant breaches of the law. There are many

What to specify: “FSC / PEFC / SFI/CERTFOR/CERFLOR/CSA certified wood with a valid Chain of Custody certificate”

What evidence you need to see: A copy of the Chain of Custody certificate with the consignment, or associated with the consignment, from a registered certification body.

Examples:
 SGS–CoC-000000
 SW-G/COC-000000
 BVC-PEFC/COC-0000

How to check it is correct: The certifying body that issued the certificate or the certifying organization have web based databases of who has a certificate and what it covers.

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international certification systems that provide value as a form of legal compliance such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC), Certfor (Chile), and Cerflor (Brazil). These systems can assist agencies in identifying legal supply chains. Around a quarter of all wood in the international market place is certified under such a scheme – therefore availability is likely to be good, especially for non-demanding specifications.

For many agencies involved in shelter procurement this option may not be realistic due to cost, limited volume, or time constraints. However, programs like GFTN can support a progressive improvement of procurement processes, helping clean up supply chains of illegal or controversial sources.

If you cannot specify and receive certified wood, at the very least you need to be able to answer **two basic questions**:

1) "Is the source legal?"

Where was the forest of origin? Was the quality of the forest management such that all timber coming from this forest had the right 'legal' quality? Do I have the proper documents to ensure this is the case?

2) "How did it get here?"

Was the quality and traceability of the supply chain such that no illegal timber was introduced and the legal quality was not subsequently diluted? For example, although a finished wood product may be coming from a low risk region like North America there is a chance that the raw material has originated from an unwanted or illegal operation or has been mixed with other illegal or unwanted material. Hence, chain of custody and ideally verification of legal origin are critical to identifying legal timber sources. Chain-of-custody is crucial in answering the question, "How did it get here?"

What to specify: "Wood product that was legally harvested and legally traded"

What evidence you need to see:

- (a) A copy of a Chain of Custody certificate with the consignment, or associated with the consignment, from one a certification organization; OR
- (b) A legal verification statement issued by a third party; OR
- (c) A statement from the wood supply company stating that they bear all responsibility for the origin and legality of the product and that they have made strenuous efforts to ensure that the consignment is completely legal in respect to harvesting and shipment.
- (d) Ask if the company supplies the US market and is aware of the Lacey Act.

How to check it is correct:

- (a) The certifying body that issued the certificate or the certifying organization have web based databases of who has a certificate and what it covers.
- (b) Printed copy of the statement and details of what the verification covered with contact details.
- (c) Copy of the statement signed by the CEO of the supplying company.
- (d) If the company is aware of the Lacey Act they are likely to be more diligent than those that are unaware.

Products or practices that are of higher risk:

- Products that are not: certified, salvaged or reclaimed, have chain of custody, or documentation about the legal right to harvest, payment of taxes and royalties, right to sales and export, and legality of transport.
- Products where the source forest is unknown despite efforts to identify it.
- Products offered significantly below going market rate.
- Cash only or lower price for products without documentation.
- Suppliers unable or unwilling to provide documents as requested.
- Documentation that is invalid or suspect (whiteout, xerox copies, etc).
- Unusual sales methods or practices.
- Inability or unwillingness of suppliers to answer routine questions.
- Suppliers who are not aware of or who cannot comply with the US Lacey Act.

In partnership with TFHA, **WWF Global Forest & Trade Network** can assist agencies by introducing regional and international suppliers that are already credibly certified or working to be certified.



WWF Global Forest & Timber Network (GFTN) is WWF's initiative to eliminate illegal logging and drive improvements in forest management while transforming the global market place into a force for saving the world's valuable and threatened forests. First established in 1991, it is the world's longest-running and largest forest and trade program of its kind- providing assistance to hundreds of companies in more than 30 countries around the world.

How can GFTN assist humanitarian agencies?

GFTN can assist you with finding suppliers from within the region who are certified or working to be certified and are able to support humanitarian agencies in meeting their requirements. The GFTN offers a framework to understand, assess and transition your supply chain, technical trainings along with practical advice and on-the-ground knowledge.

For more information contact:

- Environmental Advisor, Haiti Shelter Cluster: shelterhaiti2010.tech2@gmail.com; (509) 3492 1338
- WWF GFTN: www.panda.org/gftn

Helpful websites:

- Information on the Lacey Act
 - o APHIS (http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/lacey_act/index.shtml)
- Information on Illegal Logging
 - o Chatham House (<http://www.illegal-logging.info/>)
- Information on Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
 - o (<http://www.unep-wcmc.org>)
 - o (<http://www.iucnredlist.org>)
- To check if a certification is valid – if in doubt please contact the certification body directly
 - o FSC (<http://info.fsc.org/>)

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- PEFC (<http://register.pefc.cz/search2.asp>)
- SFI (<http://64.34.105.23/PublicSearch/MainSearch.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>)
- Cerflor (http://www.inmetro.gov.br/qualidade/cerflor_empresas.asp)
- Certfor (http://www.certfor.org/certificacion_productos.html)
- Responsible Sourcing Guides
 - GFTN Guide to Legal and Responsible Sourcing (<http://sourcing.gftn.panda.org/>)
 - WRI Sustainable Procurement of Wood and Paper-based Products (http://www.sustainableforestprods.org/files/forestguide/Full_procurement_guide_v1.1_final.pdf)
- Additional Organizations – Not exhaustive
 - Rainforest Alliance (<http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/>)
 - The Forest Trust (<http://www.tft-forests.org/index.php>)
 - TRAFFIC (<http://www.traffic.org/>)
 - Tropical Forest Foundation (<http://tropicalforestfoundation.org/>)