

PRESS RELEASE

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EU import of tropical timber can positively impact an additional 12.5 million ha tropical forests.

A new report [Tropical Timber Market Data report](#) published by IDH, The Sustainable Trade Initiative estimates that between 25% and 32% of the primary tropical timber products imported into the EU28 is sourced from certified sustainably managed forests. This figure is estimated using an ‘*exposure to certification*’ methodology due to lack of data on certified products.

The report makes three key recommendations;

- Urgent need for **improved data** availability and transparency from certification systems, governments and the certification bodies,
- National timber trade **federations to increase monitoring** imports of certified materials,
- Public sector and private sector **purchasing policies need to be implemented** to drive an increase in certification.

The research independently conducted by Probos (Netherlands) and Global Timber Forum (GTF) covered seven main importing countries Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany and Spain who together represent approximately 90% of the EU28 primary tropical timber product import by volume. The concentration of imports in these seven countries provides a strong lever for change. A shift towards sourcing sustainable timber is a positive driver to support the retention of the world’s tropical forests.

Probos Director Mark van Benthem commented *‘If the EU28 sourced 100% verified sustainable, it could positively impact an additional 11.7 to 13.4 million hectares of tropical forest. It can also have significant carbon benefits, based on the assumption that certification will prevent premature re-entry logging in the areas it covers. EU trade in certified primary tropical timber products has the potential to mitigate 55 to 88 million metric tons of CO₂ a year’.*

In order to achieve the above impacts and beyond, it is important all stakeholders play their role, Nienke Sleurink, Programme Manager at IDH added, *‘This reports highlights more can be done by European buyers. Greater promotion about sustainable tropical timber is critical to counter the narrative that all tropical timber is bad and encourages countries with low sustainable sourcing rates to now prioritise sustainability’.*

GTF’s Director George White further acknowledges that the EU cannot act alone; *‘All efforts to support tropical producers in responsible forest management must unify in recognition*

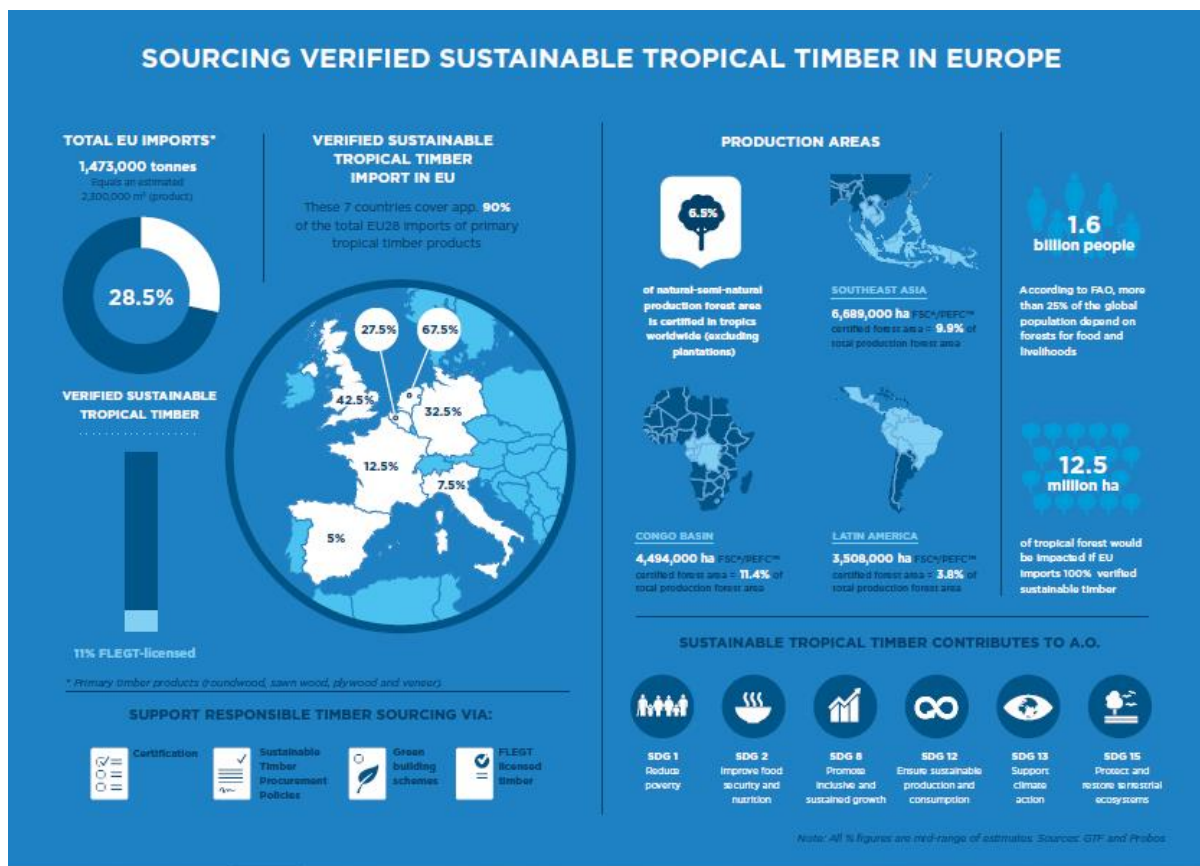
that increasingly tropical timber supplies domestic and regional markets. We want to see efforts by donors, scheme managers and policy makers focused on SMEs and smallholders to enable them to engage in responsible trade to address both deforestation and poverty reduction’.

IDH’s Nienke Sleurink concluded that the report “supports the ‘EU Communication (2019) on Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World’s Forests’, by urging the top importing and consuming countries in the EU to recommit to 100% sustainable tropical timber”.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Research was undertaken from 2018 to 2019 using 2018 trade data
2. The ‘exposure to certification’ methodology is based upon an analysis of forest and trade data. It considers the share of certified forests compared to the total productive forest area in the producer country, and then projects this share onto the export data of the producer country in question.
3. Overview diagram below (and attached):



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