

# Policy & Procurement – be prepared

**NICK MOSS FROM THE CENTRAL POINT OF EXPERTISE ON TIMBER PROCUREMENT (CPET) HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABLE TIMBER PROCUREMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, PUBLIC SECTOR TIMBER PROCUREMENT POLICIES AND THE ROLE OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN INCENTIVISING SUSTAINABLE TIMBER PROCUREMENT.**



**ILLEGAL AND** unsustainable logging threatens to deplete and severely degrade vital forest resources which are of enormous importance to biodiversity, indigenous communities and national economies. More recently it has also become clear that forests play a vital role in climate change mitigation with deforestation accounting for up to 20% of

annual global emissions of carbon dioxide.

As the world's fourth largest importer of timber products, the UK has the responsibility and capability to ensure that the timber it uses comes from legal and sustainable sources. With the UK public sector accounting for about 30% of all timber consumption in the UK, public procurement policies play a central role in incentivising changes in practice and

management at the forest source.

The UK government has recognised the importance of this issue and since 2000 has had a timber procurement policy in place.

## **The UK Government Timber Procurement Policy**

The UK government timber procurement policy requires that central government departments, ►

executive agencies and non departmental bodies procure timber products originating from:

- Legal and sustainable sources;
- FLEGT licensed timber or equivalent sources<sup>1</sup>.

The policy has been developed by the Department for environment, food and rural affairs (Defra), and applies to all timber products including paper, furniture and timber used in construction. Recycled products are also accepted under the policy. The policy is mandatory for central government departments, executive agencies and non departmental public bodies (NDPB's). Local authorities and other autonomous publically funded bodies are strongly encouraged to adopt sustainable timber procurement policies in line with government policy.

Evidence of meeting these requirements can be demonstrated through the provision of 'Chain of custody' certificates from forest certification schemes by the supplier. These demonstrate that the forest from which the timber has been sourced is managed sustainably and legally and that that same timber has then been passed along the supply chain. A variety of schemes have been assessed and 2 such schemes have been found to meet the UK government's legality and sustainability criteria, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). Additionally, suppliers can provide alternative evidence which demonstrates that the timber supplied meets government legality and sustainability requirements.

### Government Buying Standards

The policy is also part of the UK government's wider initiative to facilitate the implementation of sustainable procurement across the public sector. For central government, Defra has developed a set of sustainable specifications for a range of commonly-purchased products, such as IT equipment, white goods and paper called the 'Government Buying Standards'. The Government Buying Standards (GBS) are comprised of both a set of mandatory minimum standards at the market average level and best practice specifications. The timber procurement policy is included in GBS for paper, furniture and wood used in construction and by meeting the policy, you can ensure that you are meeting the timber component of the GBS.

### CPET

In order to facilitate and aid in the implementation of the UK government timber procurement policy and sustainable timber procurement policies, Defra established CPET.

CPET provide advice and guidance, assess evidence of compliance with the policy, and support implementation across the public sector. CPET run regional workshops, a website and an enquiry hotline which is available for public sector buyers and their contractors and suppliers free of charge. The workshop

## 2020 VISION

FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) is an EU initiative to support countries to address illegal logging and poor governance. 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 early 2011, after which more detailed guidance will be available on the CPET website.

and the website cover a range of themes around the timber procurement policy and its implementation. This includes guidance on responsible purchasing, model contract requirements, and definitions and types of evidence that are available and how you check them.

In the construction sector, timber is a key building material and is used extensively in a wide range of permanent and temporary site works. As a large buyer of timber products in the UK, the construction industry have a huge influence on the type of timber that is demanded and incentivise the supply of sustainable timber products. By demanding sustainably produced timber, contractors are giving a clear signal of the market demand which filters down the supply chain and translates into incentives for managers to invest in sustainable forest management.

At the UK level there is increasing incentive to supply and utilise legal and sustainable timber products in public sector construction projects. In central government, there is a mandatory requirement, but increasingly Local Authorities are taking account of the environmental and social impacts of the timber products which they procure. For instance, CPET, WWF and the Timber Trade Federation (TTF) are working with Local Authorities to help to implement sustainable timber procurement policies which promote sustainable and legal forest management. Together we provide advice and assistance to Local Authorities to implement a timber policy through responsible purchasing.

It is now increasingly easy for construction companies to procure timber from sustainable source and certified products are readily available. A recent study commissioned by the Timber Trade Federation demonstrated that the volume of certified timber products on the UK market rose from 65% to nearly 85% between 2005 and 2009. So construction companies should have no problems in sourcing the timber and for many product categories there is for the majority of timber and wood products used no associated additional costs.

There are further incentives for construction sector contractors to carefully analyse their supply chain from an EU level. Recent legislation has been passed which bans the placing of

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illegally harvested timber and timber products onto the EU market. The "Timber Regulation" will come into force in 2012 and essentially it will become illegal to trade illegally harvested timber. This will be especially important when sourcing from outside the EU and will require companies at the first point of entry into the EU to conduct an appropriate level of due diligence.

There is now a growing trend for construction projects to procure timber from sustainable forest sources. The Olympic Delivery Authority has a strict timber procurement policy and demands that all timber that enters the Olympic site must meet UK Government timber procurement policy as detailed in CPET guidelines. Further to this a variety of Local Authorities now comply with UK government policy. Most notably Durham County Council which has successfully implemented a sustainable timber procurement policy which it is rolling out across the North West region.

### Next Steps

As vital forest resources are depleted there is a growing need to increase demand for timber products from sustainable sources. The construction industry has a large part to play in increasing the demand for sustainable timber through its purchasing policies. Although it is required to comply with the timber procurement policy on government construction projects, construction companies should also consider extending their scope to include all public sector and private projects, creating a massive incentive to manage and maintain forests worldwide in a sustainable manner. **TTC**

**If you are interested in finding out more about the UK government timber procurement policy or sustainable timber procurement then please contact CPET on 01865243766 or email, [cpet@proforest.org](mailto:cpet@proforest.org) or visit the website at [www.cpet.org.uk](http://www.cpet.org.uk).**