

# TTAP News

December 2008 – Issue 8

**ttap** timber trade  
action plan

[www.timbertradeactionplan.info](http://www.timbertradeactionplan.info)

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the eighth and last edition of the TTAP newsletter of this year! This issue highlights the worldwide predominance of debates about changing EU legislation and the US Lacey Act and also the severe impact of the financial crisis on the global timber industry.

Whether you are a Timber Trade Federation member, TTAP partner or interested stakeholder, we hope TTAP News will be a useful resource for you. Please feel free to share this newsletter with your colleagues.

We wish you all Merry Christmas and Happy Reading!

The TTAP Team

## About TTAP:

TTAP is an EU-funded project driven and co-funded by the Belgian (FBCIB), Dutch (VVNH) and UK Timber Trade Federation (UK TTF) to assist wood suppliers in tropical countries produce verified legal timber.

We currently advise and support timber companies based in Asia, Africa, and South America as well as engage in timber trade policy initiatives in the European Union.

### Quick Links

[www.timbertradeactionplan.info](http://www.timbertradeactionplan.info)

[www.tropicalforesttrust.com](http://www.tropicalforesttrust.com)

### Consumer Country Partners

[FBCIB](#)

[UK Timber Trade Federation](#)

[VVNH](#)

[Le Commerce du Bois](#)

[UCBD](#)

[FEBO](#)

### Producer Country Partners

[Malaysian Timber Council](#)

[IFIA](#)

### Contact Details

**Timber Trade Action Plan (TTAP)**

Email: [ttap@tropicalforesttrust.com](mailto:ttap@tropicalforesttrust.com)

Phone: +41 (0)22 367 94 42

Fax: +41 (0)22 367 94 41

## Latest News - Europe: FEBO welcomes the EU proposal against illegally-harvested timber

The European Timber Trade Association (FEBO), a partner of TTAP, and the Representation of the State of Hessen to the EU organized a Parliamentary Evening on 10 November to discuss the EC proposal against illegally-harvested timber and the issue of wood marking and labeling.

Dr. Rudolf Luers, CEO of the German Timber Trade Federation GD Holz, welcomed the EC's proposal but raised some questions regarding the implementation of the proposal that remained unanswered. *"The timber industry would like to know more about the eventual role timber trade federations could play as monitoring organizations and how harmonization of due diligence systems could be promoted"*, he said.

As regards wood marking and labeling, FEBO announced cooperation with the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI Bois) to develop a federation agreement on the issue of marking and labeling of wood, wood products and surfaces. The goal of this agreement is to provide consumers clear and concise information to guide them in the jungle of innumerable wood products.

TTAP was asked to participate in the meeting, to hear views of FEBO members and in particular from the German timber industry and to provide feedback on potential support and solutions for the industry to meet the EC proposed legislation, provided through TTAP.

## Latest News - Indonesia:

## How Indonesia deals with changing international timber trade legislation

On 10 December, TTAP participated in the workshop “Changes in International Timber Trade Legislation”, hosted by the Embassy of the United States of America and the Delegation of the European Commission to Indonesia in collaboration with the Ministry of Forestry and the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia. The seminar elucidated the importance of legal timber products and how the international legislation will be beneficial for Indonesia’s forests.

While the passage of the international legislation is a landmark step, it is far from the end of the story. The effective implementation of these provisions will require good regulations and long-term engagement by government agencies, civil society and the private sector.

The event provided an opportunity for open discussion and information exchange. As legislation enters into force and regulations roll out over the coming year, it is expected that the dialogue will continue among stakeholders regarding implementation guidelines and protocols.

## Latest News - China:

## Chinese timber trade federations increasingly engaged in the debate about changing market requirements

The China-US Combating Illegal Logging & Associated Trade Bilateral Forum and the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation hosted a workshop on timber and timber products trade policies on 6-7 December in Beijing. The event aimed to raise awareness about changing market requirements such as the US Lacey Act and the upcoming EU legislation, and saw the participation of several Chinese timber trade federations, unlike at previous meetings where timber trade associations were underrepresented. This shows that Chinese timber trade associations are increasingly engaged in the debate about changing market requirements.

TTAP becoming well-known amongst Chinese industry as a tool to achieve legality verification and to face the challenges of changing market requirements, the TTAP China team is increasingly being asked to attend conferences and present TTAP to the Chinese industry.



Picture: Zhixing Deng (TTAP China) presenting TTAP

## Latest News - Brazil:

## Government plans to cut deforestation and improve energy efficiency

On 1 December, the Brazilian government unveiled a plan to cut the deforestation of the Amazon by 70 percent over the next decade. It is the first time ever Brazil has officially set a target for reducing deforestation. According to Environment minister Carlos Minc, Brazil intends to use the plan to increase contributions to the Amazon Fund, established to provide incentives for the preservation through conservation sponsorships. In addition to cutting deforestation, the plan aims at improving energy efficiency, encourages alternative energy sources and wants to increase by 20% waste recycling in urban areas by 2015.

TTAP hopes that this plan will contribute to encourage timber companies to work towards legality by eliminating illegal timber from their supply chain, thereby contributing to the reduction of deforestation. TTAP has a growing program in Brazil to support companies move towards verified legality.



Picture left: Flavio Guiera (r), TTAP Brazil, carefully examining documents    Picture right: In a TTAP partner sawmill

## Latest News - Africa:

## Biso na Biso radio receives distinguished guest

Biso na Biso, which means "Between Us" in Lingala, is the first ever indigenous peoples' language radio station in the Congo Basin. Developed by the Tropical Forest Trust in cooperation with Congolaise Industrielle des Bois (CIB) and financed by the Fondation Chirac, Biso na Biso is due to start broadcasting in the New Year from Pokola in northern Republic of Congo. With testing of the equipment almost complete and the first broadcasts recorded there is much excitement amongst the local community as well as amongst TFT and CIB staff surrounding the launch of the radio.

The excitement intensified in late October when Biso na Biso was honored by an informal visit by Professor Wangari Maathai, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, founder of Kenya's Green Belt Movement and head of the UN's Billion Tree campaign.



Picture: Privat Massanga, TFT production coordinator, interviewing local community

## Latest News - IFIA:

## African timber companies adapt to the financial crisis

The Interafrican Forest Industries Association (IFIA) says timber business in the Congo Basin and West Africa are being severely hit by the financial crisis. The drop in demand for timber being unprecedented, companies start to target less affected markets such as Asia and Middle-East and freeze production while attempting to preserve their cash position.

In Central African Republic for example, the timber sector represents 50% of all exports. The first 10 months of 2008 however show a decrease of 20% in log exports and 6% in sawnwood, and 6 out of the country's 10 sawmills were shut down.

In these difficult times, timber business is particularly hit by illegal logging responsible for depressed prices. IFIA calls for reduced forest taxes in the respective countries in order to support affected companies, and asks European importers to

commit to legal and sustainable timber only and to favor products from companies making efforts to produce legal and sustainable wood. The remarkable progress in FSC certification of the last three years that happened in the Congo Basin should not be put into risk by this crisis, IFIA says.



#### Latest News - VVNH:

#### “The roots of timber” – VVNH’s policy plan for 2006 -2009

The Netherlands Timber Trade Association’s (VVNH) policy plan for 2006-2009 outlines that by the end of 2009, 75% of all timber products being imported by VVNH members should come from sustainably managed and certified forests. Figures show that approximately 42% of all timber products imported by VVNH members in 2007 were sourced from sustainably managed forests and accompanied by a chain of custody (CoC) certificate. These overall figures are promising and show that sustainable timber supply does no longer constitute a bottleneck.

With regards to Dutch consumers, there is still a lack of interest and willingness to buy sustainable timber. Increasing demand for sustainable timber though would help VVNH and its members to realise the goals of the policy plan. Therefore, all Dutch stakeholders will be asked to help increase demand.

#### Latest News – UK TTF:

#### Framework Standard for Responsible Sourcing fails to address key environmental issues

At the end of October, the UK’s Building Research Establishment (BRE) published a Framework Standard for Responsible Sourcing. The standard seeks to establish comparability on sourcing across all building materials by setting out the criteria it expects companies to implement to gain points under the standard. The large part of the standard requires companies to implement a wide range of corporate social responsibility programmes. A smaller section is devoted to good product stewardship.

UK timber trade as well as other material sectors such as steel and aluminium, have expressed concerns that the new standard is wrong in principle and incorrectly described. Despite consultations, the UK timber industry feels that the standard does not take the correct bottom up approach that timber certification follows. It also fails to address adequately the key environmental issues such as the renewability and preservation of the natural resource.

#### News in Brief:

##### • What will the future bring for GFTN China?

WWF/GFTN teams and members met on 14 November 2008 in Shanghai to project the future of GFTN China. The meeting was kicked off with a Question and Answer session about how Chinese companies could best respond to the US Lacey Act. Power Dekor, one of China’s leading flooring manufacturer, seized the opportunity to announce that they joined the GFTN China network.

The TTAP China team was invited to present TTAP as one of the best available tools to ensure legal and sustainable timber.

## • Impact of the financial crisis on the Gabonese timber sector

On 1 December, the Gabonese government invited stakeholders from the timber industry to attend a briefing about how it plans to deal with the severe impact of the financial crisis on the Gabonese timber industry. Participants in turn were asked to present their view on the challenging situation and to clarify the difficulties and problems they are facing due to the crisis.

The briefing aimed to provide the government with comprehensive information and insider perspective about the scope of the crisis on the Gabonese timber sector, in order to develop appropriate measures and economic aid packages to contain the destructive impact of the crisis.

TTAP working closely with the private sector attended the briefing in order to better know the perspectives of the timber sector in Gabon and to present its view on the impact of the crisis on the Gabonese timber industry.



## Future Events:

- 19 - 20 January 2009: 13<sup>th</sup> Illegal Logging Update and Stakeholder Consultation, Chatham House, London

## TTAP Partner Contact Details:



**Belgian Timber Importers Federation (FBCIB)**  
t: +32 (0)22194373  
e: info@boisimport.be



**Tropical Forest Trust (TFT)**  
t: +41 (0)22 367 94 40  
e: ttap@tropicalforesttrust.com



**UK Timber Trade Federation (UK TTF)**  
t: +44 (0)2078391891  
e: ttf@ttf.co.uk



**Netherlands Timber Trade Association (VVNH)**  
t: +31 (0)365321020  
e: info@vvnh.nl



**French Timber Trade Federation (LCB)**  
t: +33 (0) 144755858  
e: lecommercedubois@wanadoo.fr

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of the Tropical Forest Trust and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union. TTAP is co-financed by the Department of Nature of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

