



Illegal Logging and Related Trade

Introduction

The global trade in roundwood, paper, furniture, and other products originating from illegally extracted timber is a multi-million dollar industry. **Illegal logging and related trade occurs when timber is harvested, transported, processed, bought or sold in violation of national or sub-national laws.** Although generally portrayed as a problem in tropical forests, illegality also occurs in developed countries and economies in transition. Illegal logging takes place in many countries on a small scale and may have limited impact on the environment or society in general. However, in a significant number of countries, illegal logging is a major problem that poses a serious threat to forests, communities, and wildlife. Illegal logging has a particularly devastating effect on biodiversity because the perpetrators often deliberately target remaining high-conservation-value forests, including protected areas, which contain the highly valuable hardwood species that have been overexploited elsewhere. Illegal logging also affects human communities through loss of natural forest resources and sometimes through intimidation and violence. The hundreds of millions of dollars of tax revenues lost around the world as a result of illegal logging and related trade also has a wider social impact.

WWF believes that illegal logging is part of a larger problem that includes issues of forest governance and corruption. These extend far beyond some individuals violating resource-management laws and are a shared responsibility between producers, traders, buyers and consumers of timber and wood products. WWF uses the term “illegal logging and related trade” to include both large and small-scale timber theft and a variety of issues such as transfer pricing, breaching tax rules, any illegal aspects of timber sourcing including “laundering” of timber in re-exporting countries, circumvention of concession agreements and gaining access to forest resources or trade in forest products through bribery or corruption. Poor governance and poor forest management can lead to increased access to, and unsustainable utilisation of, forests and an increase in other illegal activities such as illegal mining, bushmeat hunting and unauthorised clearing for new settlements.

WWF is working with partners, international organisations and governments to:

- Strengthen enforcement of existing laws and promote improved administration. Where necessary encourage and participate in amendment or drafting of new legislation and strengthening of implementation
- Promote independent monitoring and auditing schemes such as that provided by the Forest Stewardship Council for forest management and tracking wood products from the forest to the end user
- Encourage consuming countries to provide aid and technical assistance to producing countries to address the root causes of illegal logging (including poverty alleviation)
- Support the WWF Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN) linking of producers and buyers committed to achieving and supporting responsible forestry
- Work to build human resource and institutional capacity to plan and manage the forest estate (protected areas, production forests and community-managed forests)
- Promote the mapping of High Conservation Value Forests (HCVFs) and management activities which maintain or enhance the identified HCVs
- Assist the implementation of systems for the verification of legal compliance, especially in countries where certification will take some time to develop
- Promote and encourage the use of public procurement to specify timber and wood products from legal and sustainably managed forests
- Support the adoption and implementation of voluntary bilateral trade agreements and, where applicable, legislation on buying country level to support voluntary commitments and ensure effectiveness of demand side measures
- Raise awareness of the social and economic impacts of illegal logging and forest crimes amongst key audiences: governments, business, industry, investors and consumers
- Increase the use of CITES as a tool against illegal trade in threatened species
- Engage with financial institutions to ensure adequate safeguards are in place so that investments do not facilitate illegal logging, e.g. by financing processing facilities with capacity that exceeds the available legal and sustainable wood supply



Position Paper

March 2007

One of a series of position papers produced by WWF's Forests for Life Programme

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