

FLEGT-licensed timber will help importers meet the due diligence requirements of the EU Timber Regulation

1. What is a FLEGT licence?

A FLEGT licence is a licence issued by a timber-producing country that has a Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the European Union. The licence verifies that the timber is legal.

2. When will FLEGT-licensed timber be available in Europe?

Experts working on the EU's FLEGT Action Plan expect the first FLEGT-licensed timber to be available to European operators in 2014. Countries with a Voluntary Partnership Agreement are setting up systems that verify their timber is legal. When those systems are in place and independent auditors have checked them, the countries will issue FLEGT licences.

3. How will FLEGT licensed-timber help EU timber importers meet the requirements of the EU Timber Regulation?

When available, FLEGT licensed timber will help operators in the European Union meet the due diligence requirements of the EU Timber Regulation. FLEGT-licensed timber is considered legal under the regulation so no further due diligence measures are required. Even before FLEGT-licensed timber is available, the definitions of legal timber established in the Voluntary Partnership Agreements between the EU and timber-producing countries are a useful reference for assessing and mitigating risk.

4. How will buyers of FLEGT-licensed timber contribute to the fight against illegal logging?

When operators in the EU buy FLEGT-licensed timber they not only comply easily with the EU Timber Regulation. They also help combat trade in illegal timber and help ensure the sustainable management of tropical forests.

5. What is the EU FLEGT Action Plan?

The European Union adopted the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan in 2003 to combat illegal logging, which has serious environmental, economic and social consequences. The Action Plan includes several measures that work together to stop the demand for illegal timber and reduce the supply of illegal timber. Two important measures are Voluntary Partnership Agreements and the EU Timber Regulation. For more information on the EU FLEGT Action Plan, visit http://www.euflegt.efi.int/portal/home/flegt_intro/flegt_action_plan/.

6. What is a Voluntary Partnership Agreement?

A Voluntary Partnership Agreement is a bilateral treaty between the European Union and a timber-producing country. Under this agreement, the timber-producing country agrees to control and license its timber exports as legal, and the EU agrees to accept only licensed imports from that country. These agreements are underpinned by strong systems for ensuring timber legality. For more information on Voluntary Partnership Agreements, visit http://www.euflegt.efi.int/portal/home/vpas/the_goal/.

7. What is the EU Timber Regulation?

The EU Timber Regulation establishes that no illegal timber or timber products can be sold in the EU. Under the regulation, the EU prohibits operators in the EU from placing illegally harvested timber and products derived from illegal timber on the EU market. The regulation came into force on 3 March 2013.

The EU Timber Regulation establishes that operators that place timber on the EU market for the first time must exercise due diligence to minimise the risk of illegal timber entering the market. This applies to timber harvested in the EU as well as imported into the EU. Timber is considered legal when it is harvested following the laws of the country of origin. The regulation applies to timber and a wide range of timber products including furniture, paper and sawn wood. For more information on the regulation, visit <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eutr2013/>.

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