

Deforestation risk – Canopy Wood policy definitions

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Introduction

Buying timber from regions and countries in the tropics where there is no imminent and perceived threat of forest conversion and deforestation is not acceptable.

It is well known that in countries with significant poverty problems (Which apply to most tropical countries) there is a direct correlation between deforestation and 1 poverty and 2 accesses to forests through river ways or roads.

As such buying timber from even certified forestry operations, which potentially as a side effect opens up for access in regions or countries where access normally is very restricted, due to the necessary establishment of infrastructure, is not acceptable.

In addition, virgin tropical forests often contains unique biological ecosystems, which are best left alone and should not be disturbed.

Under the Canopy Wood code of conduct a buyer of timber should verify that deforestation is a problem nationally and/or locally in connection with timber purchases.

The buyer should also determine whether there are any reason why high deforestation rates could change in the near future for example in connection with the establishment of national parks and as well whether there in regions with relatively low deforestation rates are reasons to believe that this could worsen in the future and as well whether abandoning a sustainable forestry operation changes the relative risk of deforestation in a particular area.

Definitions

Generally timber can only be bought from countries where annual deforestation rates higher than 0.25% and regional deforestation rates in excess of 0.25% can be documented. (Likely to be revised upwards in later versions of the Canopy Wood code of conduct) unless special circumstances applied as defined in this document.

There is much discussion and debate about how to accurately determine deforestation rates and changes in deforestation rates. Generally speaking the only reliable source for deforestation rates is FAO and in the future potential data derived by the UN climate changes programs of which the frontrunner is REDD.

Users of the code of conduct should document how they have derived the applied deforestation rate and seek independent verification of the documentation.

Special situations

Countries from which it is acceptable and encouraged to buy timber from despite large regional variations in deforestation rates:

Tropical Brazil – referred to as “regional Amazonia” – all areas.

Brazil is intensely fighting deforestation. However the very large and ambitious infrastructure projects under “advance Brazil” will open up many parts of the regional Amazonian backlands and significant risks exist for additional and increased deforestation.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Congo Basin – all areas with the exception of Gabon

The 25 year civil war in DRC has ironically been an excellent “protector” of the last large and extremely important rainforest of Africa.

When the unrest in DRC eventually ends, there is a significant risk of an explosion in the current deforestation rates and setting up precedents for sustainable forestry is very important.

The same applies to Chad, Zambia, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and Congo where deforestation rates are very high already.

Indonesia – all areas except Irian Jaya

Large parts of Indonesia experience very high deforestation rates and purchases of timber is especially encouraged from Sumatra, Borneo, Jawa and Sulawesi.

Non acceptable countries and regions

The countries from which it is generally unacceptable to buy timber from are

Guyana

Gabon

Malaysia – except Sarawak (Island of Borneo)

Costa Rica

Timber can't be bought either from countries with general trade embargoes like Myanmar

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