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## FAO-EU FLEGT PROGRAMME SUCCESS STORY

### Colombia: stakeholders unite to support legal timber

*Intersectoral Pact for Legal Timber has helped introduce concept of "legal timber" into everyday vocabulary of Colombians*

#### KEY FACTS

**Colombia** is the first country in Latin America to introduce an Intersectoral Pact for Legal Timber (PIML, its initials in Spanish), which has become a model for the region. The PIML was launched in 2009 with 24 organizations and, eight years later, includes 70 public and private sector organizations. This pact has stimulated discussion and action on legal timber – wood from legal sources that is extracted, traded and used.

Work to establish legal timber been led by the Colombian Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS, its acronym in Spanish) together with civil society, local communities and the private sector. The initiative is supported in part through financial and technical contributions by the FAO-EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Programme.

The PIML contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals, promoting the sustainable use of natural resources to eradicate poverty and eliminate hunger.

**Colombia** is one of the few countries that has preserved 50 percent of its forests, which are home to rich biodiversity. There is also ample opportunity for greater forest planting: Colombia today has 511 000 hectares of forest planted and the potential to plant 24 million hectares. But the country must also contend with significant challenges posed by illegal harvesting and trafficking of wood, which threaten flora and fauna in the forests, including timber species with high commercial value.

#### What does this Intersectoral Pact for Legal Timber mean for the various actors in Colombia's forest chain?

According to Alejandra Ospitia, Director of the Colombian National Federation of Wood Industries (FEDEMADERAS, its acronym in Spanish), the pact has helped

#### WORKED FOR

local communities, Afro-descendant and indigenous people, small and medium-sized businesses, and government officials.

#### WORKED TO

support the Government of Colombia with tools and procedural guidelines to ensure that timber that is extracted, transported, traded and used comes exclusively from legal sources.

#### WORKED WITH

Ministry for the Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), Risaralda Regional Autonomous Corporation, National Federation of Wood Industries and World Wide Fund for Nature.

#### AT A GLANCE

## WORKED THANKS TO

European Union, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Department for International Development of the United Kingdom.

## FAO-EU FLEGT Programme

The FAO-EU FLEGT Programme works with many international partners to help implement the European Union's FLEGT Action Plan to combat illegal logging and associated trade. Since 2008, the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme has supported over 200 projects in 40 countries throughout Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia to improve forest governance and promote the legal timber trade.



## Related links

Intersectoral Pact for Legal Timber  
<https://pactomaderalegalcolombia.weebly.com>

Colombia Efficient Purchasing Policy  
<https://www.colombiacompra.gov.co>

## In collaboration with



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introduce the concept of legal timber into the Colombian vocabulary. "This was the start of bringing about change in society, because before there were companies that felt that doing things legally was a threat and business owners were afraid of regulations," Ospitia says.

Before the timber legality pact, she says, there was very little dialogue among the various players along the forest chain. Now, however, cooperation has improved to the extent that some FEDEMADERAS meetings are held at police headquarters.

Rubén Guerrero, Forestry Coordinator for MADS, believes that the new legality pact will ensure that expectations and requirements from everyone involved in the timber business – including communities affected by illegal logging and deforestation – will be heard.

Already, Colombia has included the PIML in the interdepartmental agendas of the Ministries for Agriculture and Rural Development; Housing, City and Territory; Trade, Industry and Tourism; Mines and Energy; National Defence; and Transport.

## Technical advice on forest control and governance

The FAO-EU FLEGT Programme has provided technical and financial support to the PIML to improve control, transparency and monitoring mechanisms of forest products. To this end, the programme collaborated on refining two free, online, downloadable applications: Cubimadera and Especies Maderables. The first helps users to determine the volume of wood being used, transported and traded; the second application has expanded the number of identifiable timber species to 100 from 75.

The programme also helped with review and revision of the Guidelines for Responsible Timber Purchasing in Colombia, within the framework of the Colombia Efficient Purchasing policy, which sets out the goals for public-sector purchases.

The FAO-EU FLEGT programme has also supported development of an advisory scheme for strengthening forest monitoring and control capabilities. This scheme succeeded in training more than half of the country's environmental authorities in measuring timber volume; protocols for reviewing, evaluating, monitoring and controlling management plans; transporting and trading forest products and industries; guidelines for the responsible purchase and use of timber; recognition schemes for legal origin; promotion of sustainable forest management; and the manual of good environmental practices for forest industries.

The programme also supported 30 forestry companies in incorporating a 'verification of legality' principle and a gender equality approach into their business policies. These companies had also participated in exchange meetings and business roundtables.

## Beyond just a signature

Today, the organizations and associations that participate in the PIML have included the pact's agreements in their work plans. This is vital, says Guerrero of MADS, because it steps beyond a simple declaration to incorporate codes of conduct relating to responsible acquisition and purchase of timber into daily business practices.