

SOURCING RECLAIMED TIMBER

Reclaimed hardwoods such as teak are now becoming popular as demand for timber from legal and sustainable sources increases and pricing of reclaimed timber sources proves competitive against formally certified timber. Additionally the marketing value of a 'reclaimed wood' label is proving popular for retailers and customers.

However despite the numerous potential positive impacts of sourcing legitimately reclaimed timber, without verification, there is a risk that timber from unknown or controversial timber sources may be falsely labeled as reclaimed. Verification approaches available include the FSC Recycled label and SmartWood's 'Rediscovered' program.

FSC RECYCLED

FSC allows use of the FSC recycled label for 3 types of reclaimed timber

- Post consumer wood material
- Non industrial salvaged wood
- Pre consumer wood material

Pre Consumer Wood Sources

Wood material by-products reclaimed from manufacturing process/industry source, unfit for end use, incl.

- Commercial & institutional public e.g. damaged stock/ rejected products.
- Industrial sources incl. offcuts, shavings & sawdust generated during secondary manufacture

Post Consumer Wood Sources

Material that is reclaimed from a consumer/commercial product after use, e.g.

- Commercial Pallet & crates, at the end of their useful lives
- Construction & demolition/deconstruction debris incl. doors, flooring, lumber etc
- Wood fiber/solid wood recovered from landfills & recycling stations
- Industrial packaging & administrative wastes

Non-Industrial Salvaged Wood

Lost/abandoned unprocessed timber felled for lumber or timber felled for other uses. Sources include:

- Logs/timber that sank in rivers & lakes while being transported
- Timber from orchard clearance
- Timber from conversion of agricultural to urban land, road clearance
- Urban harvested wood

Auditing Of Suppliers

FSC uses randomized audits to verify documentation and other evidence demonstrating the material meets FSC requirements.

Unacceptable Wood Sources

FSC does not allow the following sources to be used in FSC recycled products

- Offcuts/sawdust etc from virgin parent material incorporated back into original manufacturing process
- By-products from virgin parent materials, or any forestry waste, i.e. rotten, small, or unsalable wood material

SMARTWOOD REDISCOVERED

The Rainforest Alliance has developed the SmartWood 'Rediscovered Wood' program as an addition to the FSC recycled label. Rediscovered Wood definitions incl. Post Consumer wood sources listed above, but also includes Reclaimed sources such as



- Dead, fallen, diseased or nuisance trees from (sub)urban private and government properties
- Orchards where unproductive trees are cut for replacement
- Underwater salvage i.e. fallen or submerged trees carefully reclaimed from rivers and lakes

CASE STUDY - TFT Field Research

Research by the Indonesian TFT team shows that the following legal documentation needs to be produced by wood traders in the case of Post Consumer reclaimed timber from housing demolition:

1. A statement letter declaring that the owner sold the house to the trader containing information such as: owner's name, address, value of the house
2. Payment receipts
3. Letters from the Head of the villages to state the house is from the village
4. Checking Reports by local forestry staff and police (after the house is demolished)
5. Legal transport document (SKSKB) & a list of the wood (DKB)
6. Checking Reports by local forestry staff enable the issuing of the DKB & SKSKB



Figure 1 A potential source of recycled teak

Conclusion

Using this system of wood reclamation the legal requirements for recycled wood are met. However, the ages of the houses are unknown and the wood could only be traced back to the house, and not the initial wood source. There is concern that this initial source of wood could be illegal, and therefore there is a risk of laundering timber in this way- and so this is not a perfect solution.

ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL ISSUES OF RECLAIMED TIMBER SOURCING

Where products are from genuinely recovered sources, reclaimed timber sources may help reduce pressure on natural forests. Reclaimed sources may provide additional revenue to communities. However, where the reclaimed source is unverified potential risks can include

- Laundering of illegal timber through construction projects
- Laundering of illegal timber that has been temporarily 'buried'
- Displacement of households & destruction of cultural heritage

CONCLUSION

Sourcing 'reclaimed' tropical hardwoods presents several risks, where Members could unintentionally source unknown, controversial and potentially illegal tropical hardwood timber. TFT focuses on supporting forests work towards FSC certification and does not have a reclaimed material program. TFT's position is that the best way of ensuring that the timber source is genuinely reclaimed is to implement a verification program, such as those operated by either FSC or SmartWood.

TFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Where Members are sourcing significant volume of reclaimed tropical hardwood, they should

1. Ensure that reclaimed status is verified by an independent party. Members can start by asking suppliers for evidence of rights to use the timber (such as permits, deeds and/or demolition contracts)
2. Within 2 years, gain independent verification of the source as reclaimed, through a program such as FSC or SmartWood