

Promoting legal and sustainable timber: The role of public procurement policy

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Introduction

- Use of government's purchasing power in market to achieve public policy objectives – examples as far back as 19th century
- Voluntary EU Green Procurement Policy process 2008
- SDG 12.7 (2015): 'Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities'
- Public procurement policy used to promote sustainable timber since 1970s – aim to improve the protection of forests and biodiversity; now to mitigate climate change
- FLEGT Action Plan, 2003, stimulated development within EU – relatively easy early step that could be taken

Public procurement policy: timber

- Public sector major purchaser of timber products:
 - Paper and packaging
 - Furniture (office, street, park)
 - Timber for construction and maintenance (social housing, schools, hospitals ...)
- Product-specific data generally lacking, but is clear significant impact in some sectors, e.g.:
 - UK office furniture, 30–50% purchased by public sector
 - Harbour and flood defences
- Also can have knock-on effects (20–40%?)

Timber procurement policies

- 2008: 9 countries with timber procurement policies
- 2014: at least 26 countries (19 in EU)
- 2016: at least 33 countries (22 in EU), including those in development
- Many examples of regional and local governments, some with stricter requirements
- Major public projects (e.g. London Olympics)

Objectives and criteria

- Mostly aiming to purchase legal and sustainable timber
- Some aim for legal, encourage sustainable
- Some countries develop own criteria for ‘legal’ and ‘sustainable’
- Some use certification scheme criteria
- Voluntary EU Green Procurement Policy process
 - Common criteria, now 21 product groups

National timber procurement policies

(Blue: EU. *Italics: voluntary policy.* Not all policies cover all product categories.)

- ‘Comprehensive’ criteria-based:
 - Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, UK
- ‘Simpler’ scheme/document-based:
 - Australia, Austria, China, *Finland*, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, *Latvia*, Lithuania, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, *Sweden*, Switzerland
- EU GPP-based:
 - Bulgaria, Cyprus, *Czech Republic*, *Estonia*, Malta, Slovenia
- Under development:
 - Chile, Colombia, *Croatia*, Ghana, Indonesia, Ireland

Satisfying the criteria

- Main challenge is to make it easy for government buyers to ensure products meet criteria
- Criteria generally satisfied through certification schemes
 - So market impact may be similar whatever the criteria
 - Though also note impact on certification schemes
- Some use wider range of evidence
- Several recognise FLEGT licenses, some as evidence of 'legal' (including GPP), some as evidence of 'legal and sustainable', some as own criterion

Impacts

- Impact on penetration of certified timber products
- UK:
 - 2008 study: certified products 80% of market (domestic and imported) – up from 55% in 2005
 - 2010 study: identified TPP as one of drivers
- Netherlands:
 - Timber: 13% (2005) – 34% (2008) – 66% (2011) – 74% (2013)
 - Paper: 33% (2011) – 47% (2013)
- 2011 ETTF survey: public sector and commercial big buyers main drivers for demand for certified products
- 2015 FLEGT evaluation:
 - Most member states identify TPPs achieving results, including creating awareness and changes in the timber industry, increasing demand for certified timber
 - Though generally no systematic enforcement or monitoring

Conclusions

- Timber procurement policies are useful tools in helping to steer the market
 - Can be developed and introduced relatively quickly
 - Send signal to market, reinforce other actors
- Support for buyers necessary: guidance, promotion, communication (e.g. CPET, TPAC)
- Appear to have impact in terms of increasing market share of certified (FSC and PEFC) products
- Comprehensive criteria-based policies have advantages
 - Positive impact on schemes themselves
 - More difficult to draw up, but plenty of models
- Useful lessons from timber for procurement policy for other products (e.g. palm oil, cocoa)

Thank you

Research Paper

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