

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF GHANA'S FOREST AND RESPONSIBLE TIMBER PRODUCTION.

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Ghana is recognised as one of the most advanced tropical African countries in established forest policy, legislation, forest inventory, management planning, and in having a National Forest Standard and principles, criteria and indicators for judging the quality of forest management and usage.

The tropical forests of Ghana contain a wide range of timber species suitable for the construction industry, decking, flooring, panels and builder's woodwork. The strength and beauty of Ghana's tropical timbers lies in its ability to withstand weight and the wondrous array of colour and grain pattern and fit at the specifier's choice.

Ghana brings to the market place legal timber species that have such attributes of intriguing grain structures, broad colour palette and natural durability fit for all architectural designs.

When it comes to exotic wood flooring, decking and all other external applications, our outstanding timbers of:

Denya (*Cylicodiscus gabunensis*),
Danta (*Nesogordonia paparifera*),
Kontan (*Uapaca guineensis*),
Bompagya (*Mammea africana*),
Kusia (*Nauclea diderrichii*),
Bodwe (*Ongokea gore*),
Wawabima (*Sterculia rhinopetala*),
and many others stand out.

These species are all medium to heavy and range between 750kg/m³ – 1000kg/m³ at 12% - 15% moisture content and are also suitable for other applications that require heavy weights in wood.

Ghana sells timber with a purpose to continue to output only legal timber from sustainable sources, adhering to the EU and International Tropical Timber Organisation principles. This means that, Ghana is working towards achieving the EU's FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) licensing and within the US Lacey ►



Act regimes and with the assurances to specifiers that, Ghana will continue to be at the forefront of the international tropical timber market place for a long time.

Ghana has a strong Forestry Commission (FC) including an overseas branch (FC London Office), a long history of forest management, and capacity for forest research. The forest industry is a large employer, much of it in the informal sector. The Ghana FC has an established approach to forest management, more especially in forest reserves.

A range of measures have been put in place to reduce illegal logging, including a Wood Tracking System (WTS) which has been successfully piloted and will receive a nationwide coverage for all productive forests sources in 2012. The WTS is designed to monitor timber from standing trees in the forest to processing facilities, or from points of imports to processing facilities and to local sale outlets and or export facilities. The process will enable the tracking of individual logs and consignments of processed wood products, and will include product labelling, physical inspections and documentary checks. The system will provide the full traceability of timber from all sources and certify the origin and legal and regulatory compliance of all timber products.

A national forest plantation development programme has been launched with the aim of developing a sustainable forest resource base that will satisfy future demand for industrial timber and enhance environmental quality. The programme is currently being implemented under three main strategies. The first of these involves the establishment of plantations by the Forestry Commission in partnership with farmers for benefit sharing, in that farmers

are allowed to plant food crops alongside taking care of the tree crops. At age of maturity the farmer, the government and the community receive their fair share of their return in investment.

The second strategy is geared towards employing people from the rural areas who live along the fringes of the forests and contract supervisors to establish industrial plantations. Hired labour is paid on a monthly basis per work done while contractors are given one year renewable contract. This second strategy is geared towards poverty alleviation and job creation sponsored by the central government with technical support from the forestry commission.

The third strategy is mainly investor focus involving huge tracts of degraded forest lands released by the forestry commission to private entities after vetting and endorsing their reforestation and business plans. The private investor earns 90% of total proceeds while the government and the community owns just 10%. This is modelled not just to attract local investment but also to attract foreign direct investment opportunities into the plantation sector of the country.

Also, Ghana has been chosen as a pilot country for up-scaled REDD+ investment through the Forest Investment Program. These among other initiatives make Ghana stand out among the pack when it comes to forest sustainability in the tropics and a place of choice for investment into the Eco-Services areas such as Eco-Tourisms, Carbon credits etc. ■

