

Formalising Domestic Timber Trade Cameroon Makes Progress



Stakeholders have taken the commitment to only make use of legally sworn wood.

■ *The advancement is the outcome of a project run by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and partners.*

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Cameroon has made advancement in formalizing its domestic timber trade, the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) has declared. The progress is said to have been recorded in the last 15 months and falls in line with the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) of EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan.

The country's move toward an increased use of legally sawn wood is thanks to a CIFOR-led year-long project christened - "Upturn in the public and private demand of legally

sawn wood in Cameroon." The project was run with the collaboration of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, National Association of Trade Unions of Wood Vendors & Associates (ANCOVA), and Center for Research and Action for Sustainable Development (CERAD). A restitution workshop for the project took place in Yaounde, Thursday February 7, 2019. A draft legal framework arising from the project has been submitted to the Prime Minister Office. It could see Cameroon become the first country in the central Africa region to use solely legally sawn wood in the execution of public contracts.

According to Hortense Motalindja of the Sub-Directorate for the Promotion and Transformation of Forest Products in the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, the government will seize the opportunity to reinforce its role as a catalyst for the respect of the legality of the type of wood used in public

contracts. "The ministry is engaged in ensuring that the domestic market is supplied with legally sawn wood," she said.

During the project, officials carried out sensitisation campaigns targeting vendor and buyers. They also rolled out advocacy strategies and carried out media campaigns. Statistics show that the country's annual national demand for timber stands at 830,000m³, but the legal supply is just 161,000m³. According to research findings by CIFOR, should small-scale production of sawn wood market in Cameroon be taken into account, total national production would equal 4.3 million cubic meters per year. This will nearly double the official figures cited by the government, the CIFOR research suggested. The CIFOR study suggests that even government finds herself making use of illegally sawn wood in the construction of public structures ■