

## Sustainable procurement of wood products in Barcelona

BARCELONA CITY COUNCIL, SPAIN

### Procurement objectives

The City's policy on timber (see 'Background') makes it compulsory for municipal departments, districts and agencies to ensure that all wood products purchased stem from sustainable forestry. Since 2004, Barcelona has ensured wide implementation of the policy and a large share of the wood purchased by the Municipal Funeral Service Enterprise, the street benches procured by the Parks and Gardens Department, and the new beach stands are all made from [FSC](#) certified wood. Sustainable timber procurement actions from 2004 to 2008 have covered numerous purchases totalling 4,673 cubic metres of wood.

### Background

The City of Barcelona has increasingly included sustainability considerations in its purchasing practices since 2001. These practices have been driven by and form a part of the [City's Local Agenda 21 policy and goals](#). Barcelona's Responsible Policy on the Procurement of Timber (July 2004) was enacted in response to its wish to decrease the city's environmental impact by contributing to the rational management and sustainable use of forest resources. Pressure from NGOs lobbying against illegal timber was also a contributing factor.



### Criteria used

According to Barcelona's Timber Policy (from 2004), timber must originate from forests that have sustainable forest management procedures in place, such as preservation of biodiversity, control of tree diameters and harvest control. The policy explains the preference of meeting the criteria of more demanding certification schemes in terms of sustainability, such as those provided by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), or equivalent. Other less demanding certification schemes are given secondary preference; followed by bidders that show commitment to sustainable forestry and start to implement measures through a declaration. These requirements are applied in the **Award** stage, but can also be included as **Technical Specifications**, depending on the level of awareness and commitment of the respective departments.

In order to avoid illegal logging, certificates of country of origin are always requested. This requirement is included as part of the **Technical Specifications**.

### Results

The City's timber policy led to the creation of an internal committee composed of representatives from all stakeholder departments, with the aim of monitoring municipal timber purchases and applying the local policy. Training and technical support for municipal employees involved in timber procurement is provided by [Barcelona's Sustainable City Programme](#) upon demand.

At times, the public tendering process has resulted in problems with finding suppliers who meet sustainability prerequisites. Chain of custody certificates have proven difficult to obtain, in some cases. Internal tracking of the actions achieved has also proven difficult, impacting on monitoring actions.

### Environmental impacts

The process established for monitoring timber procurement by the City Council includes an estimation of the total volume and the certification of the timber acquired, together with information on country of origin. According to the information received from the different municipal departments involved, approximately 76% of the timber acquisitions tracked from 2004 to 2008 presented a sustainable forest certification (FSC or other) or were in process of certification, which meant that the main impacts on forests – such as biodiversity and ecosystems, but also on local communities - were curtailed.

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### Lessons learned

Barcelona's actions on sustainable timber were the first of its kind in Spain and have provided inspiration to many other local authorities. They have also opened a new window of opportunity for producers and distributors of products made from sustainable wood.

Implementing a policy on sustainable timber procurement in a large public administration has highlighted the shortcomings of not having an adequate monitoring system in place. Wood forms part of a wide range of products and services making it difficult to keep track of – both from an organisational and procurement point of view. This particular issue, combined with the extensive and complex value chain behind every piece of wood and its derivatives, creates a further complexity for purchasers and end of chain suppliers.

Barcelona's future efforts will be focused on actions that expand the knowledge of sustainable wood and forestry certifications among all actors involved in these activities from the City Council, and also among suppliers.

For more information, please see European GPP criteria for [construction](#), [furniture](#), [paper](#) and [wall panels](#), and [Barcelona's Sustainable City Programme](#).