

Sustainable wood procurement in Cognac

CITY OF COGNAC, FRANCE

Procurement objectives

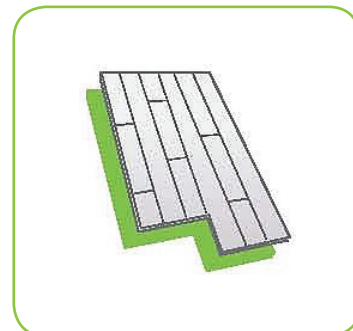
In 2005, the city of Cognac decided to replace its obsolete street furniture with wooden furniture. Analysis of the product revealed that the furniture was made from Moabi - a rare and endangered wood species, often smuggled from the Congo and Cameroon.

Since then, the City of Cognac requires compliance with certain eco-label criteria when purchasing products that are derived or contain wood. During 2010 and 2011, wood for construction, wall panels and door units have been purchased.

Background

The "Moabi experience" in 2005 created a new dynamic and the City of Cognac began trying to source sustainable raw materials.

The 2006 reform of the French public procurement law, to comply with European law, enabled the City to be more ambitious and to include environmental requirements in its calls for tenders. Sustainable procurement forms part of the Local Agenda 21 programme.



Criteria used

Sustainability criteria are included in tenders as follows.

Technical specifications:

- The wood shall originate from sustainably managed forests. The forms of verification are demonstration of having fulfilled the latest environmental criteria under the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification ([PEFC](#)), Forest Stewardship Council ([FSC](#)), [Keurhout](#), Canadian Standards Association ([CSA](#)), Sustainable Forestry Initiative ([SFI](#)) certification schemes, or equivalent.
- Tropical wood must not appear on the list of endangered species as stated by [international agreements](#).
- Purchased articles must neither be treated with creosote and pentachlorophenol (PCP) based products nor with chromium, copper or arsenic based products, although French law allows their use by derogation.
- Adhesives used for plywood must be classified E1 (formaldehyde < 8mg/100g) according to the EN 312-1 norm.

Results

Bidding companies were able to meet the various requirements included in the tendering process. The successful tenderer was a local wood provider. Sustainability criteria have not had a negative economic impact for the City of Cognac. The City actually saved 5% in purchasing costs compared to the same purchase carried out in the previous year, which did not include the sustainability requirements.

The result is that the products made from wood purchased by the City of Cognac are certified with the PEFC label, as a minimum. Plywood products comply with the EN 312-1 norm. The treatment method used on the products avoids chemical treatment. Products containing heavy metals are also not employed for wood requiring further treatment.

Despite certification not being required for door units because of the lack of certified products on the market, in practice door units purchased by Cognac are all PEFC certified.

Environmental impacts

After the construction sector, the furniture industry and paper industry are the main consumers of wood. The key environmental aspects of solid wood are mainly related to the legal and sustainable character of the originating forest management. The impacts related to uncontrolled wood logging are for example loss of biodiversity, erosion and soil degradation.

As the majority of wood used in furniture is treated, attention must also be paid to the surface treatment of wood, especially for outdoor use.

Lessons learned

The same procedure will be used for upcoming purchases of the same nature. As including sustainability criteria has proven that the City of Cognac can save money, there is no reason why this procedure should not be renewed.

The City of Cognac has been sharing this particular good practice experience with other local and regional authorities within the study group on sustainable public procurement of wood, monitored by the French regional network for the Greater West ([Réseau Grand-Ouest](#)). From now on the City of Cognac will also require that products meet the criteria from the PEFC certification scheme or equivalent when purchasing paper or printed material.

For more information, please see European GPP criteria for [construction](#), [furniture](#) and [wall panels](#).