

Congo Basin milestone: PASQUET brings FSC certified African hardwood to international markets

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The French forestry company PASQUET Group has achieved FSC certification for its forest management concession in Cameroon. In a country rife with illegal logging and high deforestation rates, the new certificate demonstrates a positive trend in responsible forest management. Furthermore, the company is successfully tracking the FSC timber to its newly certified timber trading operations in France for export to international markets including Spain, France, the United Kingdom.

On October 9, 2008, PALLISCO – a subsidiary of PASQUET Group – achieved FSC certification for its concession in Cameroon. The PALLISCO certificate is the fourth FSC certificate issued in Cameroon for forest management. Located in the Congo Basin in Africa, the forests of Cameroon are home to indigenous peoples and endangered species; they also provide essential ecosystem services to local and global communities.

"The process of working towards certification has required a change in mentality by everyone in the company," said Mr. Vincent Pelé, Certification, Environment and Communication Manager at PALLISCO-CIFM told the UK Department for International Development (DFID). "We've all had to buy into a new vision and a new way of operating."

After four years of hard work, the company achieved FSC certification that encompasses six forest management units and spans an area of 341'708 ha which, at the date of issue, is also the largest certificate in the country.

"We are proud to manage the largest FSC certified forest in Cameroon and to actively participate in conserving the Congo Basin forest massif," said Mr. Pelé.

After assessing the social and environmental impacts of their logging operations, PALLISCO implements a series of activities to mitigate its potential impacts. Amongst others, these include enhancing Reduced Impact Logging practices; conducting ecological surveys; and consulting with local NGOs and local stakeholders on the multiple uses of the highly valuable species such as the Moabi tree.

"Our commitment to responsible forest management embraces involvement of the local population, particularly the Pygmies, in our decision-making process," explains Pelé. As a result, indigenous peoples' rights to use forest resources are being respected and Pygmies are able to collect non-timber forest products (NTFPs) from the concession areas for their personal use. The company is also working with local NGOs to build capacity for communities around their concession areas.

"We made a firm commitment to work transparently and to take into account the constructive advice of forest sector stakeholders such as Greenpeace and Les Amis de la Terre (Friends of the Earth)," says Mr. Pelé.

Forest management according to FSC's internationally recognized standards ensure that the natural forest complexity is maintained and social issues considered, while securing long-term supplies of forest products. FSC certified forests deliver environmental services to local and global communities including clean air and water, and contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Following chain of custody certification of PASQUET's CIFM subsidiary in Cameroon and SCBT in France, the company is offering 26 different product species as pure FSC certified, including Sapelli, Avous, and Moabi. "The FSC label gives us international recognition and our customers the opportunity to act responsibly with regard to their own supply sources," says Pelé.

Further information on PALLISCO here (in French).

Some of the latest information on illegal logging in Cameroon:

Resource Extraction Monitoring (REM): Progress in tackling illegal logging in Cameroon

www.rem.org.uk or www.observation-cameroun.info

Department of International Development (DFID): Crime and persuasion – Tackling illegal logging, improving forest governance

Based on: PALLISCO-CIFM press release 17/10/08

Cameroon	
Total forest area	21'245'000 ha
% land area	45.6 %
Annual change in forest cover (2000-2005)	-220'000 ha ; -1%

FAO State of the World's Forests 2007



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Certificate holder	PALLISCO
Certificate number	BV-FM/CoC-832214 Group certificate
Area	341'708 ha
Certified on	October 9, 2008
Country	Cameroon

FSC certificate database www.fsc-info.org