

Hello,

ATIBT, as part of its Fair & Precious programme to promote certified tropical timber, is initiating a series of 3 opinion pieces that will be released to the media in the coming weeks. These opinion pieces aim to demonstrate the practical value of the work being carried out by certified concessionaires in tropical forests around the world. The second of these op-eds is presented here.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to publish it as an exclusive.

Best,

XXXX

Certified logging companies are instrumental in the protection of tropical forests but are not recognised enough as being environmentally valuable – they should be.

By Benoît Jobbé-Duval

If we look at the world's tropical ecosystems, certified forestry companies that practice sustainable foresting are model actors, even if they remain relatively unknown. These companies, certified 10 to 12 years ago by the FSC* - and some of them more recently by the PAFC** - represent a little more than 5.1 million hectares, or 11.5 % of the 45 million hectares devoted to the forestry industry.

As valuable economic actors, these forest concessions are remarkable for several reasons, whether it be the provision of services to local people, such as education and sanitation, or protecting the local fauna and its habitat.

Unfortunately, these companies are not successful in conveying the added value of their actions in the protection of certified tropical wood. The costs generated by their commitment to this level of RSE, which is very demanding, is far from being written off by the revenue generated by the sale of the raw material.

Yet, if we think about it, the sale of certified wood allows a part of the costs generated by offering these "eco-services" to be delivered by these companies. In my mind there is no doubt that these forestry companies are part of the conservation effort and that they contribute to reaching most of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (see below).

If we want to increase the hectareage of certified forests, which at the moment is drastically insufficient, and to certify more companies, it is necessary to balance the economic model of certified concessions. To do so, it is fundamental that the funding dedicated to conservation, whether it is private or public, supports the certified companies and those which are willing to get the certification. It is a difficult riddle to solve, but not impossible if the States and the biggest companies in the world finally decide to play ball.

17 goals to save the world

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) show us the way to reach a better and more sustainable future for all of us. They meet the global challenges we are currently facing,

especially in terms of poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice. These goals are interconnected and, in order not to leave anyone out, it is important to reach them all by 2030. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/fr/objectifs-de-developpement-durable/>

* **Forest Stewardship Council** – The Forest Stewardship Council is an environmental label aimed to ensure that wood production or products made from wood respect procedures that guarantee sustainable foresting. <https://fr.fsc.org/fr-fr>

** **Pan European Forest Certification** – The Pan European Forest Certification is a private forestry certification that promotes a sustainable foresting. PEFC is the first system of forestry certification in terms of certified forestry surface and the first source of certified wood in the world.
<https://pefc.org/>



Benoît Jobbé-Duval is the Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Technical Association (ATIBT), an association founded in 1951 and whose mission is to serve the tropical timber industry, from the forest to the final consumer. For more information:
<https://www.atibt.org>
<https://www.fair-and-precious.org>