Preface

Trade instruments are increasingly being used successfully to promote the legality and sustainability of timber production in the tropics and around the world. However, the importance of local consumption and trade of timber for achieving the goals of sustainable development is only recently being recognized in the policy arena.

International agreements regarding timber and carbon trading, such as the European Union’s Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+), will have an impact on local timber production and vice versa. To date, little was known about the extent of local timber trade in tropical timber producing countries, but information from this ETFRN News shows that local timber production is significant, with profound impacts on forest resources and local livelihoods. This emphasizes the need to address the informal and local timber sector adequately within these agreements, in order for them to meaningfully contribute to more sustainable forest management and equitable socio-economic development.

Chainsaw milling, the on-site conversion of logs into lumber using chainsaws, is supplying a large proportion of local timber markets with cheap lumber. While it offers socio-economic opportunities to local people, it is very often associated with corruption and illegalities. Regulating and controlling the practice is a challenge due to the mobility of these chainsaw milling operations. With this issue of ETFRN News, Tropenbos International, together with CIFOR, wishes to contribute to the discussion on how to address the domestic timber trade effectively and equitably at international and national levels.

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