



Timber Trade Federation
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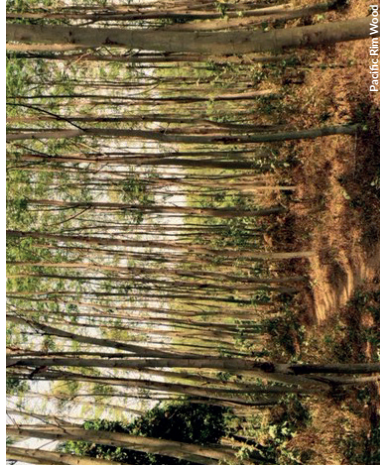
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Will the FLEGT initiative restore the joinery sector's faith in the sustainability of tropical hardwoods?

The joinery sector has rightly protected its reputation by insisting on working with timber that is certified as sustainably-grown through one of the widely accepted schemes such as those run by Forest Stewardship Council® or PEFC™. The sector has somewhat lost faith in tropical hardwoods over time. Yet with the advent of FLEGT licensing, is now the moment to reconsider using such materials? The supply chain for door blanks from Indonesia highlights the transformational change in recent years.

FLEGT stands for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade. The process starts with a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), under which the producer country puts in place a Timber Legality Assurance Scheme which satisfies the demands of EUTR on legally and sustainably sourced timber entering Europe. The FLEGT mechanism also ensures that the economic benefits of trade in legal and sustainable timber are returned to the relevant people in producer countries.



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Decade of change

After more than a decade of reform in its forest supply chains, Indonesia was the first producer country to meet European standards on legal harvesting, and the sustainable re-growth of its forest resource, under its VPA agreement with the EU. It was thus awarded the ability to licence its products under FLEGT. Door blanks, manufactured from tropical hardwood materials in Indonesia, and designed for specific performance criteria, are now making inroads into the UK market.

"Back in the early 2000s I remember engaging with Greenpeace on their concerns over Indonesian timber," says Shaun Hannan, director at Pacific Rim Wood Ltd. "There was a definite need for change," he continues. "The Indonesians are very switched on and recognised that if they fulfilled European market demands across the board, from environmental sustainability to legal harvesting, but also in the areas of product quality and performance, they would generate economic benefits and improve their reputation. The first Indonesian FLEGT licensed plywood and door blanks arrived in the UK in November 2016," Shaun Hannan relates.

"As a timber agency business, we took the decision long ago to work with the Indonesians not only on reform but also on transformation of their approach to European and global markets," Shaun Hannan continues. "We worked with our supplying mills to look at the types of products most likely to succeed on the basis of design and quality, as well as on strict adherence to standards on everything from glue bond performance to product testing. The result is that a range of products is now available, of which Flamebreak™ 30- and 60-minute BWF Certified-approved hardwood door blanks are one."

Fast-growing species

Flamebreak™ door blanks comprise a hardwood laminated core made from *Falcata (Paraserianthes falcata)*, with front and back plywood faces made from Meranti. "Falcata is a fast-growing species, ready for harvest in 8-9 years," Shaun Hannan continues. "Its special properties include its lighter weight and lower density, which means it peels easily as a veneer and machines well. It also means that the resulting fire door can be lighter in weight, which is useful factor in healthcare settings and multiple-occupancy buildings.

"Falcata also has other benefits at local producer level. It is grown as a canopy tree, enabling the small farmers supplying the mills to gain a second crop from the land underneath. Common crops grown beneath Falcata trees include ginger, coffee and cocoa. It therefore returns multiple benefits to local communities," Pacific Rim's Shaun Hannan reveals.



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Aligning with markets

Meranti from Indonesia has an even face, is abundant as a material and takes coatings and stains well, making it ideal for the joinery sector. It also has a number of colouring variations aside from the familiar red: yellow, white and even pink Meranti is available. The combination of two abundant species with Pacific Rim Wood's concentration on quality throughout the manufacturing process, and a product development regime aligned directly with UK market needs, means that Indonesian products such as Flamebreak™ door blanks offer a responsible and reliable choice for the UK joinery manufacturing sector.

"With the safeguards put in place through FLEGT it is certainly worth considering FLEGT-licensed Indonesian timber products," Shaun Hannan affirms.

For his work in transforming supply chains, Shaun Hannan received a Primaduta Award from Indonesia's government.



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