

Rabobank's position on Forestry

Rabobank Group

Our aim

Sustainability is one of the four core values of Rabobank Group, next to Respect, Integrity and Professionalism. We aim to contribute to the sustainable development of society in economic, social and ecological terms. In order to cope with risks related to global environmental change and resource scarcity, it is essential that supply chains become sustainable. Companies face a number of sustainability challenges. This implies that sustainable solutions need to be integrated in their daily business. Sustainable resource management will be key for the long term viability of their business. In our view sustainability is not an option but a condition for future prosperity. This implies that sustainability issues need to be integrated in daily business and that positive and negative impacts as a result of our clients' activities on society and on the environment throughout the supply chain need full consideration in our decision making processes.

Rabobank aims to positively affect the overall sustainability of the operations of our clients. Our clients in the forestry sector have to deal with sustainability issues in their business operations. We want

to contribute to the realization of a sustainable forestry supply chain by *client assessment* and *client engagement*. The assessment of how our clients deal with material issues will be guided by our Code of Conduct and the Forestry Supply Chain Policy we have drawn up for this specific purpose; the policy is a supplement to the CSR section of our credit manual. It has been designed to support sustainable practices, sustainability being defined in economic, social and ecological terms. The philosophy behind the policy is 'positive engagement' (meaning constructive dialogue) with clients to identify and resolve CSR issues, thus enabling Rabobank Group entities to positively influence clients in CSR issues and avoid any risks to Rabobank. So, the engagement idea is to solve CSR related problems in partnership with the client and to meet challenges for the future.

This approach will enable Rabobank to gradually exclude certain undesired operational practices and to motivate clients whenever possible to work towards realizing more sustainable business operations. The forestry policy embraces some binding conditions between the bank and the clients based on material issues we have determined in the forestry sector.

Scope of our Forestry supply chain policy

Our Forestry Supply Chain Policy applies to all commercial banking services such as credit facilities, project finance, advisory services and trade finance provided by Rabobank in the wood sector. The policy provides conditions for assessing companies involved in growing and harvesting of timber in industrial tree plantations and forestland, in temperate, boreal and tropical zones. Downstream companies (e.g. traders, wholesale wood suppliers, charcoal-, pulp and paper industry, retailers) will be assessed on how they take their responsibility in the supply chain.

Simplified overview of the forestry supply chain



Material issues

Wood is produced in different ways and under different circumstances. Rabobank acknowledges that sustainability issues vary accordingly and moreover that regional and local differences can occur, depending on the economic, environmental and social contexts. Taking this into account issues generally associated with wood production, include:

- deforestation of primary forests in temperate, boreal and tropical zones resulting in irreversible negative impacts on the environment;
- disturbance of preserved or protected areas;
- conversion of natural habitats resulting in loss of biodiversity;
- timber trade from illegal or unknown origin;
- timber from endangered species and timber trade that fuels violent armed conflicts;
- profound disputes over land tenure and land use;
- poor treatment and violations of the rights of indigenous people and local communities;
- large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions and related climate change impact, due to forest fires, forest or peatland disturbance or clearance;
- Soil and water erosion/pollution.

Rabobank's 'conditions for investments' for upstream and downstream companies

Our Forestry Supply Chain Policy includes 'conditions for investments' for upstream and downstream companies based on the identified material issues as mentioned above. These conditions relate to (1) certification, (2) legality, (3) protection of preserved areas, (4) deforestation, (5) sustainable forest management, (6) burning, (7) endangered species, (8) human rights, (9) social and environmental impact assessment and (10) prior consultation.

Rabobank requests a company with regard to:

- certification to certify the company and the wood products of the company according to the FSC scheme or one of the PEFC national certifications schemes;

If certification is not yet fully accomplished, Rabobank will request a company with regard to :

- legality to show the legality of the operations and comply with all applicable local, national and international ratified laws and regulations;
- protection of preserved areas not to operate in national or international legally-protected or preserved areas and areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values;
- deforestation to refrain from deforestation of primary forests or wetlands in temperate, boreal and tropical zones;
- sustainable forest management to adopt practices that avoid negative impacts on the environment;
- burning: to avoid all uncontrolled and illegal use of forest fires for clearance;
- endangered species to refrain from harvesting and trading of timber from endangered species that are protected under CITES without the necessary permits;
- human rights to work in accordance with the Human rights guidelines as described in the Human Rights policy of the Rabobank Group¹;
- social and environmental impact assessment (SEIA) to undertake a SEIA prior to establishing new plantings or operations;
- prior consultation to involve affected stakeholders before establishing new operations (process of free, prior, and informed consultation).

Rabobank believes that downstream companies play an important role in the sustainable forestry supply chain. The extent to which downstream companies can exercise influence on sustainability issues depends among other things on their role and their impact in the supply chain. Therefore, Rabobank recommends companies to have a purchasing policy in place that pays attention to the sustainability issues for wood production and the conditions for investments as mentioned for the upstream companies. In addition, we advise a company to progressively increase the volume of wood entering its supply chains that is sourced from FSC-certified Forestry units or one of the PEFC national certifications, as a proportion of the total volume of wood entering its supply chains and to set up a documented traceability system.

¹ The Human Rights Policy is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the four fundamental labour norms expressed in the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)..

Monitoring progress in sustainable management

Rabobank is aware that the process of implementing sustainable management standards and practices is challenging and takes time. We accept that some clients are more advanced than others, as long as clients are able to show significant progress in implementing environmentally and socially responsible management practices and responsible purchasing. If we have reason to believe the client does not comply with the abovementioned conditions or shows insufficient progress in integrating sustainability measures in daily operations, we will engage with the client to achieve the desired improvements within an arranged time frame.

Engagement practices to contribute to improvements

There is no single, globally applicable sustainable management solution. As issues can vary widely from one region to another, improvements towards sustainability can vary accordingly. Nonetheless, sustainability principles can be applied across different regions and climates. Rabobank is convinced that a sustainable forestry industry can be achieved through the use of new technologies and improved management techniques in combination with attention being paid to working and labour conditions. Rabobank chooses therefore to adopt an active and positive engagement approach to contribute to improvements in the sector.

For example, we will encourage upstream companies to be *transparent* on their current production and their plans to increase the production of sustainable produced wood (FSC certified) or downstream companies to be transparent on the current sourcing and plans to increase sourcing of sustainable produced wood among other things. We will also encourage companies to deploy *good practices* such as - among other things -, adopting good agricultural, social and environmental management practices, which contribute to and enhance biodiversity and soil conservation, the maintenance of water and air quality, initiating forest restoration programmes and reforestation on degraded or marginal land or improving the livelihood, yield and sustainability performance of local communities.

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