



SUSTAINABILITY & LEGALITY OF OUR PRODUCT

Our clients often ask us if our wood is sustainably harvested. Since deforestation and illegal logging practices are a global issue, we fully understand the question. Below follows a detailed explanation of the process, from extraction in the forest to exportation of our wood, ensuring sustainability and legality of our practices.

Costa Rica has protected reserves and parks; 35% of its territory is untouchable. There is no "white cut" or concession in Costa Rica, only selective cutting on private land. As a result, any tree, even one in your backyard, must get an authorization or permit to be cut.

Stage one: Extracting the wood; checks, balances and paperwork.

A landowner who wants to cut a few trees on his property must start by asking for a study by a private Forestry engineer. This study is then presented to the MINAE (Ministry of Forestry), who on its turn, sends their own engineer and reviews which trees they will authorize to cut. Those trees will be marked.

By rule, a landowner can be authorized to cut up to a maximum of 3 trees per hectare (2.5 acres) of farmland. In some cases, this number can be higher. For example, if the landowner is in special area, highly populated with trees. This helps to maintain the health of the forest.

After the study is done by the MINAE, the owner of the land gets his license to cut.

Once the authorized trees are cut, the landowner calls the ministry again to review the land. All trees cut (or fallen) are reviewed by GPS. Cutting even 1 tree more than supposed to, results in a jail sentence of 3 to 5 years and confiscation of wood, trucks and all other assets of the landowner by the police.

Once the MINAE has reviewed and approved what the landowner has cut, they will give him yellow tags, called GUIA, for each log the landowner wants to remove from his property. When all of the logs have tags, they can be transported to a sawmill. The GUIAs

are only valid for 2 weeks, which means transport of the wood has to take place within this time frame. If the landowner fails to do so, he must re-apply for a GUIA at the MINAE. This system is put in place so MINAE can perfectly control the wood movement in the country.

Movement of untagged logs is prohibited. If caught with untagged logs on the road, the cargo and truck will be confiscated and the transporter will be subject to time in jail. In addition, logs can only be transported between 5:00 am and 9.00 pm. Any truck trying to transport wood at night is arrested. Costa Rica has special police unit designated to check all trucks moving during the night.

When the logs arrive at the sawmill, the transporter hands the GUIA over to the owner of the mill, who will do a mandatory inventory check.

From this moment on, an inspector from MINAE can pay the sawmill a visit at any time to take the GUIA back and match them with the original permit to cut. On average, inspections take place one or two times a week for all sawmills.

The MINAE reviews the new tagged logs and marks all these with their own logo (hammer the logo) after which they remove the tags, preventing them to be used multiple times.

In the event MINAE finds a log without their signature logo mark or new untagged logs, the sawmill gets shut down immediately and all wood present at that time gets confiscated.

Stage two: Exporting wood; more paperwork.

Anyone exporting wood from Costa Rica must be able to show a Certificate of Origin.

Without a certificate of Origin, customs will not allow the wood to leave Costa Rica.

In order to obtain this, the exporter has to gather the following:

- License to cut given by MINAE to the owner of the land,
- The GUIA which is the authorization to move the wood,
- Mill invoices (to avoid small mill cutting in the forest)
- A kiln dryer license.

The exporter then needs to arrange an inspection by MAG (Ministry of Agriculture), who will review all above mentioned paperwork. Only if all paperwork is in order, will MAG make a Certificate of Origin.

With this very strict system in place, the Costa Rican government has made it virtually impossible to move illegal wood. It also safeguards sustainability and the system which has made Costa Rica a world leader in environmental conservation.