

Webinar on the NEPCon Sourcing Hub

Questions and Answers

7 September 2017

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Is the Sourcing Hub free to use?

Yes, everything on the Sourcing Hub is completely free and open source.

We're working on developing a database to hold all the information in the Sourcing Hub, so that some or all of the information can be downloaded via an API.

How will we keep the Sourcing Hub up-to-date?

We are very aware of the need to keep the risk assessments up-to-date.

We would like to use a risk-based approach to updating the risk assessments so that countries and legal areas where there are more risks would be updated more frequently than those where the risks are lower. We're currently seeking funding for this..

Risk assessments that we have carried out on behalf of FSC will be updated every five years, according to FSC's process.

When were the risk assessments published?

Most of the risk assessments on the Sourcing Hub have a publication date of May 2017 or August 2017. This is the date that they were made public. We have been developing all of the risk assessments over the last three and a half years, so some of the risk assessments were drafted earlier than this.

Does the Sourcing Hub give direct access to the national authorities that issue relevant documents?

The information gathering tab of each country page provides a list of documents that can be used to help verify legality.

The risk mitigation tab of each country page provides suggested ways to mitigate any legality risks.

Where possible, we have provided a link to the website of the authority that issues specific documents to help companies verify those documents.

The full risk assessment includes the names of the legal authorities for all the 21 categories of law assessed.

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Do you give the name in the local language for each of the documents that you list?

Risk assessments that have been prepared recently always include document names in the local language. For example, risk assessments from Francophone African countries always include names in French. Some older risk assessments do not necessarily include document names in the local language but we have evolved over the development of the risk assessments and recognise how useful this information is.

How do the NEPCon timber risk assessments fit in with the FSC national risk assessment process and the Australian country-specific guidelines?

This question related to three sources of information available on timber legality for people buying timber:

- The NEPCon Sourcing Hub risk assessments
- FSC's Controlled Wood risk assessments
- The Australian country-specific guidelines

The FSC risk assessments - national risk assessments and centralised national risk assessments^[1] – are used by companies to source FSC Controlled Wood. Some of the centralised national risk assessments were prepared by NEPCon. However, we believe that these risk assessments are useful to companies outside the FSC system as well as inside. We were keen for the information that they contain to be used more widely.

The Australian country-specific guidelines are provided for in the Australian Illegal Logging Prohibition Act and endorsed by both governments as a way for importers in Australia to identify legal timber from a specific country. The documents are prepared by the government of Australia and the government of the other country.

Can the resources on the Sourcing Hub support risk assessments in other sectors such as agriculture?

Yes, we hope they can. The Sourcing Hub contains risk assessments for beef, palm oil and soy. For some countries, we have done risk assessments for a number of different commodities. For example, we have risk assessments for Indonesia for timber and palm oil and for Brazil for timber, beef and soy. What we notice is that the legal requirements and risks tend to be similar for different commodities. In the future, we would like to make this generic information available to companies, to help them assess and mitigate the risk of sourcing other commodities.

Does NEPCon have its own field inspectors, given that it is a Monitoring Organisation under the EUTR?

NEPCon is divided into two wings:

- NEPCon Assurance provides auditing services. It is a Monitoring Organisation under the EU Timber Regulation.
- NEPCon (NGO) carries out sustainability projects.

It is NEPCon Assurance that is recognised as a Monitoring Organisation under the EU Timber Regulation. As part of this work, we are authorised to assist operators in EU set up their timber legality due diligence systems.

The NEPCon Sourcing Hub is a publicly funded project that has been carried out by the NGO part of NEPCon. We have engaged local experts to help carry out the risk assessment for approximately 90% of the countries. Field studies that involve monitoring of compliance have not been part of the development process for the risk assessments.

^[1] National risk assessments are prepared by partners in the country in question whereas centralised national risk assessments are prepared centrally. Ultimately, the national risk assessments will be used and centralised national risk assessment phased out.

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You recommend collecting a large number of documents. For example, your China timber risk assessment recommends that companies collect 'work permits for special occupations such as chainsaw operators'. Do you think that operators can collect so many documents?

The Sourcing Hub does not contain information about what NEPCon thinks; it contains information about what the EU Timber Regulation requires. The EU Timber Regulation says you need to have documentation to indicate compliance with the legal requirements in the country of origin. We've read the requirements of the Regulation and tried to look at how those requirements are being interpreted by the Competent Authorities.

We recognise that the list of documents that can be used to help verify legality can look long, and we acknowledge that it's not always easy to collect all of these documents. However, document collection is just one way of mitigating the risk of illegality – we also recommend other methods such as stakeholder consultation, on-site visits and timber testing. In general, you should look at your supply chain to work out what risks you need to address and what mitigation measures you need to take.

Indonesia SVLK's timber legality verification scheme has been endorsed by the EC and other stakeholders. Does the SVLK assess the well-known illegalities in Indonesia? Do FLEGT licenses set a precedent that makes it harder to address illegalities, deforestation, climate change and consumption?

Companies in EU no longer have to carry out due diligence for timber from Indonesia and therefore we have not provided a risk assessment for Indonesia on the Sourcing Hub. In other words, we have not analysed the effectiveness of the SVLK system. The country is coloured blue on the map – not the usual red-green spectrum.

Are you cooperating with the [Book Chain project](#) of Carnstone?

No, we are not, but we are happy to hear more about it.