CORAMEHL IN HONDURAS

CORAMEHL strives to produce and market high quality forest products from well-managed forests. Sustainability is as important as the quality of its work. Its members were inspired to acquire forest certification by the Cooperativa Regional Forestal de Colón (COATLAHL), the pioneer for FSC certification in Honduras, which was awarded one of the first FSC community forestry certificates in 1996.

The benefits of FSC certification

Ten of CORAMEHL’s member cooperatives have acquired FSC certification under the Small or Low Intensity Management initiative; the remaining two are in the process of becoming certified. There is a reason why these communities are aiming to supply high quality, FSC-certified products: they believe that it will help them reach new markets and meet the demands of the international market.

FSC-certified wood in Honduras

The Cooperativa Regional Maderas Equitativas de Honduras Limitada (CORAMEHL) is an industry umbrella for regional community forestry. It manages 20,086 hectares of broadleaf forest in the north of Honduras, in the department of Atlantis. The CORAMEHL cooperative, which comprises 12 agroforestry cooperatives, was created in response to the need to supply products (mostly wood) in volumes attractive to potential buyers. Selling in larger volumes is also favourable in negotiating fair prices and allowing forest managers to have better returns for their products.
Despite only recently obtaining their chain of custody certification, they believe that being certified means being ready for buyers who demand certified timber.

Much of the wood supplied by CORAMEHL is dry baked in a kiln. In 2014 CORAMEHL built a new drying oven with a capacity of 5,500 m³ of timber. They also trained their members in how to use the oven properly. This training has provided them with the knowledge and skills they need to optimize their drying process. This means that they now have two furnaces, meaning they can dry two different species simultaneously.

Challenges

To work the wood efficiently, CORAMEHL has to maintain saws with specific characteristics. This allows them to minimize the processing time needed to deliver dense wood cut to the dimensions requested by their customers. Maintaining these saw requires funding and training, two saws that CORAMEHL did not have. To overcome this challenge, CORAMEHL approached overseas companies for their inputs such as training and experience with equipment.

Another challenge has been a lack of political will on the part of the government to fast track the approval of documents, such as management plans, procedures and logging permits.

FACTS

Certificate Holder
CORAMEHL
Cooperativa Regional Agroforestal “Maderas Equitativas de Honduras”, Limitada

Certificate code
RA-COC-007193

Tree species
Rosita, Huesito, varillo, Cumbillo, Santa Maria, Cedrillo, San Juan Rojo, Laurel (White and Black), Paleto, Mahogany, Pochota, Louse and others.

Products:
Wood dimensioned as requested by the client, semi dry and dry baked, brushed and unbrushed.

FSC products sold per year:
20,935 pt
With the support of the Instituto de Conservacion and the Desarrollo Forestal Areas Protegidas y Vida Silvestre (the state agency responsible for the regulation of forests), this has improved, and the approval of legal documents on behalf of forestry organizations with an FSC certificate has been expedited.

CORAMEHL is now fully equipped to process and deliver high-value FSC-certified wood, but it has not yet sold this: there remains a lack of demand for FSC-certified wood in Honduras. This does not mean that certification is useless. The members see it as an investment in the future as they are now ready to meet the demand for certified wood from overseas customers from abroad. The economic benefits of FSC certification are not yet fulfilled, but CORAMEHL expects that in the future, this will create more jobs for their community members and bring an even better livelihood.

CONTACT INFORMATION
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