Some 1.6 billion people — more than 20% of the global population — depend on forests for food and livelihoods.

Forests regulate water supplies and climate, are the source of many medicines, and help prevent floods and droughts.

But 12 million hectares of tropical forests were lost in 2018...

Illegal timber trade is an environmental crime.

It is worth up to USD 152 billion annually.

More than three times the value of illegal extraction and trade in minerals.

Illegal logging is often linked with:
- Corruption
- Civil conflict and violence
- Human rights violations
- Organised crime

Transparency requires:
1. Improved access to information
2. Capacity to analyse data
3. Better communication of decisions

Transparency enables:
1. Meaningful participation of all stakeholders to hold governments and industry accountable
2. Eliminating unfair competition and business practices
3. Combatting corruption in decision making and investments

Disclaimer: This factsheet has been produced with the assistance of the European Union and the Governments of Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The contents of this factsheet are the sole responsibility of the EU FLEGT Facility and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of funding organisations.
Shining a light on forests and the timber trade

The EU Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) is the EU’s response to the problem of illegal logging.

Negotiations of these FLEGT agreements promote transparency and stakeholder involvement.

FLEGT enables people to participate in and influence decision-making processes.

Civil society organisations act as watchdogs monitoring forestry operations and law enforcement activities.

Countries engaged in FLEGT processes are making their forest sector information public:

- Ghana’s Timber Transparency Portal gives real-time information on logging permits, companies, and timber exports.

- In Cameroon, observers relay information about illegal activities to authorities, enabling sanctions to be imposed.

- In Indonesia, observers upload complaints on a public portal. The Ministry of Environment and Forestry reports follow-up actions on that same portal.

Information on:

- Laws and regulations
- Planning and forest allocation
- Forest management
- Production and trade
- Revenues and taxes
- Law enforcement

Ghana’s Timber Transparency Portal gives real-time information on logging permits, companies, and timber exports.

In Cameroon, observers relay information about illegal activities to authorities, enabling sanctions to be imposed.

Indonesia provides the EU access to its FLEGT licence database to allow for verification.

References at euflegt.link/ref-transparency