

Connecting communities to markets

Tool

Purpose:

- To help market independently certified community forest products, locally, nationally and internationally
- To influence buyers' procurement policies to purchase community forest products.

Activities:

Understand market rhythms The success of any business depends on understanding and adjusting to the buyer-seller market rhythms. Markets work in local rhythms, according to culture, education, trading practice, technology, and scale, among other factors.

Research the possibilities and choose the best options

- 1 **Where and what to sell.** Understand how potential buyers make their purchases and invest in communication.
 - Identify potential buyers
 - Understand how and where buyers make their purchases
 - Verify what buyers' requirements are
 - Know what products they offer to final consumers
 - Check if they are willing to accept your new products
 - Develop good product design
 - Identify secondary buyers
 - Implement product marketing

Keep in Mind

- ★ "Try to make what you can sell, don't try to sell what you can make"
- ★ In any business it's important to address:
 - product quality
 - process quality
 - social and environmental impacts
 - scale
 - credit and profitability
- ★ Value-added products are replacing raw products in the international wood trade arena. This is a good way to find new markets.
- ★ Niche markets usually pay more for certified products than commodity markets, but purchase lower quantities.



2 Product Marketing. Develop a good marketing strategy.

- Develop promotional materials like leaflets, packages, labels, flyers
- Invest in customer service (train your vendors)
- Inform the buyer about the products and delivery details
- After delivering the product, contact the buyer to check if satisfied with the product, then correct possible mistakes

Promote awareness. Make the buyers understand that a community's work rhythm is very different from a company's. Promote flexibility, such as in the use of alternative wood species.

Create commercial and lobby networks. Develop associations among communities and search for institutional support to sell your products. Work together with NGOs to lobby companies to improve their purchasing policies.

Differentiate your product. Use the "product from community" factor and certification as tools to add value and credibility to your products, so they are more attractive to buyers who value social-environmental issues.

Make the changes certification requires. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification contributes to forest planning and control of waste, leading to higher process efficiency and better quality products.

Further information

Find full tool and other related tools and resources at: www.policy-powertools.org

or contact: IMAFLORA, imaflora@imaflora.org

Other relevant information can be found at: www.imaflora.org

Certified suppliers and buyers www.certifiedwood.org

Tropical forest management practices www.imazon.org.br www.manejoflorestal.org.br
(Portuguese/English)

Global forest and trade network www.panda.org/forestandtrade (English)

★ Certification does not replace quality, price and delivery requirements. Buyers use it to make a final decision when the above items are equal between two or more products.

★ If you want to trade alternative species, ask yourself why buyers should consider your species instead of traditional ones.

★ Agents and brokers can be useful for new sellers.

★ In many countries there are organisations that support small and medium enterprises. Use them to improve your market access.

★ FSC-certified community forest products are very rare and prized. Use this in your marketing strategy, especially for city consumers.



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