

**THE NETHERLANDS
NATIONAL MARKET REPORT 2009**

**PRESENTED TO
THE SIXTY-SIX SESSION OF
ECE/TIMBER COMMITTEE
12 – 16 OCTOBER, 2009
GENEVA**

Institute for forestry and forest products, Probos
Netherlands' Paper and Board Association, Royal VNP
Netherlands' Timber Trade Association, VVNH
Ministry of agriculture, nature and food quality

1 GENERAL ECONOMIC TRENDS AFFECTING THE FOREST INDUSTRIES SECTOR

Dutch economy: Historical shrinkage of Dutch economy

Just like in other European countries the Dutch economy is in a deep recession. Since the second quarter of 2008 the production is shrinking and this shrinkage has also been increasing since. Cumulative the level of production will in 2010 be 5¼% lower than in the year 2008. Which had an exceptional high production. The economy is expected to shrink with 4¾% in 2009 and GDP is expected to decrease by ½% in 2010.

Especially the export suffered severely, because the relevant world trade is expected to decrease by 15¼%, an amount that has never been seen before. But also the consumers are spending less than in the year before. The sharp decline of production will inevitably result in an large increase in unemployment.

Little willingness to invest

The growth in production of 2,5% in 2008 is followed by a decrease in 2009 of 6¾%. As a result companies are not willing to invest in their production capacity. Next to that the criteria for credit granting are more stringent than they were the year before. These factors result in a decrease in the expected business investments of 14¾%. Although the production is expected to decrease with only ¾% in 2010, the investments will still decrease with 13% in 2010.

Much lower inflation

The lower oil price (61 dollar per barrel in this prognoses), compared to last year, is reflected in lower fuel prices and is in that way influencing inflation a lot. In July 2009 gas- and electricity prices are reduced considerably, resulting in an inflation that is evidently lower than the yearly average. On a yearly basis the inflation in 2009 will be 1% and in 2010 1¼%.

Unemployment reaches eighties level

The labour market is suffering severely from the low level of production. The number of vacancies is decreasing rapidly since the last quarter of 2008 and the level of unemployment is above 3,8%. It is expected that in 2009 5½% of the Dutch labour force is unemployed. In the year 2010, when the decrease in production will really effect the employment, the unemployment is expected to increase to 9½% on average. Which almost equals the levels in 1983 and 1984. According to a confidential forecast of the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) that is not officially published yet, the unemployment might be lower in 2010 (8%).

Export growth declines sharply

This year, export (re-exports included) is reduce by a sixth, compared to last year. Whereas domestically produced exports decreased by 2% last year, they will decrease by as much as 17¼% this year. In 2010 exports are expected to be on the same level as in 2009.

2 POLICY MEASURES INFLUENCING TIMBER TRADE AND MARKETING

a. National Guideline for the Assessment of Certified Wood Products

In relation with the discussions on the labelling act the Dutch government took the initiative in 2002 to set up a guideline for the assessment of certified wood products based on the Dutch standards for sustainable forest management. Wood and wooden products brought on the Dutch market which fulfil the standard could be provided with a special mark. At the end of 2005 there was an agreement about the content of the national guideline. However the environmental organisations could not agree with the proposed organisational structure and withdrew from the process. The ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment (VROM) then decided to continue its work as it needed assessment criteria for green public procurement of timber.

Six certification systems were tested by the Equivalence Assessment Board (6 independent experts). It appeared that none of the systems were fully compatible with the Dutch criteria. The main reason for this was that criteria were too detailed and complex.

The Board recommended setting up an improved and simpler set of criteria that will be solely used for the purpose of *public timber procurement*. After an extra round of consultation-meetings with relevant stakeholders in May 2008 the Timber Procurement Assessment System (TPAS) was finalised and sent to Parliament on June 24th 2008.

The Timber Procurement Assessment Committee is responsible for the assessment of certification systems according to TPAS. The Procurement Criteria are structured into 3 categories: Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), Chain-of-Custody and Logo Use (CoC) and Development, Application and Management of certification systems (DAM). In addition, TPAC has developed a matrix for so-called meta-systems: Procedure on Acceptance of Certification Systems by a meta-system (PAC) like PEFC international.

To enable TPAC to make more thorough assessments of certification systems all stakeholders are invited to share their knowledge and opinions on the functioning of certification systems on an Internet forum www.tpac.smk.nl. The staff of certification systems is also invited to participate and provide additional information where necessary. Following the wrap-up of the forum discussion, TPAC reports back how the comments have been taken into account in the final assessments of the certification systems. These forum reports can be downloaded from the TPAC website.

The following systems have been assessed by TPAC and are conform the TPAS criteria:

- FSC International - final judgement: Conform (November 2008)
- PEFC Germany - final judgement: Conform (November 2008)
- PEFC Finland - final judgement: Conform (November 2008)
- PEFC Sweden - final judgement: Conform (July 2009)

Currently TPAC is assessing PEFC International which will be finalized after PEFC finalizes its revision in December 2009. Next to PEFC international PEFC Belgium, PEFC Austria and MTCS are also being assessed.

b. Public procurement in the Netherlands

The Netherlands is in the process of developing its public procurement policy on wood-based products. The policy will address the purchasing of all wood-based products for the Dutch government in order to secure the procurement of products that come from sustainable managed and legally harvested forests. In 2010 all timber procured by central government should come from a sustainable source. If sustainably produced timber is not available, timber from a legal source will be accepted. Municipalities and provinces are aiming respectively at 75% and 50% of their purchases being sustainably produced by 2010.

For legal timber the Dutch government has decided to use the UK (CPET) criteria legal timber and accept FSC, PEFC, CSA, SFI, MTCC, SGS TLTV and in future FLEGT licences as proof of legality. For sustainable timber the government will use the criteria laid down in the Timber Procurement Assessment System. To support public buyers a campaign has been set up under the name: "timber: growing towards 100% green procurement". The campaign consists of a website (www.inkoopduurzaamhout.nl), a hotline, brochures with model documents and training courses about timber procurement.

c. Combating Illegal Logging and related trade

The relation between global deforestation and activities in The Netherlands continued to hold on the public debate. Especially about international trade and its relation with so called non trade concerns like environment and social conditions. In this discussion timber trade plays an important role. The government likes to start a discussion on how to do justice to non trade concerns and finally to publish a policy document on trade and sustainable economic development.

The Netherlands urged again the need to continue the battle against illegal logging and related trade in several international forums, such as the EU and through the EU during the COP-9 of the CBD.

It called upon the European Commission to its commitment by conducting the proposed Extended Impact Assessment with a view to assessing the available options for halting the imports of illegally harvested timber and to develop a coherent and WTO-proof set of legal measures that further the trade in legally harvested timber and that thwart the imports of illegally harvested timber into the EU.

At the Government-to-Government Level the Netherlands government supports the European Commission in its development of Voluntary Partnerships and the associated Legality Assurance Systems. Several countries have opened formal negotiations with the European Commission. The Netherlands supports the VPA negotiations in Malaysia and Ghana. At the beginning of September 2008 Ghana concluded a bilateral Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the EU.

In the framework of supporting the negotiations for a VPA Malaysia a market study has been carried out to assess the market chances for FLEGT licensed timber, especially from Malaysia. At present there is little evidence of willingness to pay a price premium for FLEGT VPA licensed timber. 33% of interviewed companies said they would pay no price premium for licensed timber on grounds that legally verified should be the standard price. 45% said they would pay a premium of 1 to 6%. 19% said they would pay a premium of 7 to 10%. Only 3% said they would pay greater than 10%. Several recommendations were made to create additional market incentives.

Concerning government procurement policies governments should consider to make unambiguous statements of intent to accept FLEGT VPA licenses as sufficient evidence of conformance to central government procurement policies.

The key issue in creating future market incentives for FLEGT VPA licensing is to ensure that illegal wood is effectively blocked from the EU and other high value wood markets.

Last year a study has been finalized on further implementing the custom regulations necessary to receive FLEGT timber from FLEGT partner countries. The study provides a description of the institutions involved in timber import and an overview of import procedures and related documents in the Netherlands in the framework of the European Union Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). The report includes recommendations with respect to streamlining import procedures and electronic document handling.

At the Business-to-Business level the NL Government continued to provide financial support to the two Tropical Trade Action Plans that have been initiated by a number of European timber trade federations.

3 DEVELOPMENTS IN DUTCH FOREST PRODUCTS MARKETS SECTORS

a. Wood energy

The consumption of sustainable energy in The Netherlands in 2008 has increased: 3.4 percent of the Dutch energy supply originated from sustainable sources. The Dutch government has set goals for 5 percent sustainable energy in 2010, increasing to 20 percent in 2020.

With 2.9% biomass is still the greatest source for sustainable energy. It is mainly used in waste incineration units, co-firing in energy plants and as fuels for road transport.

Due to the commercial sensitivity, Dutch companies are rather reluctant to provide information concerning the use of biomass fuels. The availability of data has reduced significantly over the past years. The fuels can be generally categorized as wood pellets/wood chips, agricultural residues, residuals from the food and snack industry, bio-oil and animal waste. Imports of biomass have risen dramatically over the past years. In 2005 and the first half of 2006 it was estimated that 80% of the power plants generated electricity from imported biomass, mostly wood pellets, clean agricultural residues and palm oil. No real data are available for the input of woody biomass.

Last year the ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality has made an agreement with different branches in the agricultural industry to realize the production of 200 PJ sustainable energy in 2020. As a part of this agreement the Dutch forest industry together with the ministry is planning all kind of actions to stimulate the input of biomass from forestry, landscape plantations and from nature conservation areas. Industry and government agreed to have 36 PJ from domestic biomass in 2020.

b. Round wood

In 2008 the removals from the Dutch forests were 9% higher as in the year before and reached a volume of 1,1 mln. m³ under bark. Consumption of coniferous sawlogs in the Netherlands decreased with 13,5 %, consumption of non-coniferous sawlogs was at the same level.

The Netherlands is a small net exporter of round wood: more than 135.000 m³ was exported.

c. Certified forest products

The last monitoring of certified products on the Dutch market has taken place for the year 2005. For 2006, 2007 and recently for 2008 the Netherlands Timber Trade Association has made inquiries amongst her members, who are importing sawn wood and panel products. Also the FSC organisation is monitoring the consumption of FSC products on the Dutch market in 2007. The results of all these studies show an increase amount of certified wood products on the Dutch market.

Because of new agreements with different organisations to buy FSC wood and also the Green Public Procurement Policy of the Dutch government the market is expecting an increase in certified wood products. Both the labels FSC and PEFC have recently set up new rules to include (controlled) wood of proven legal origin in their systems. How to deal with this controlled wood will be one of the question within the wood sector.

d. Sawn softwood

The total imports of sawn softwood in the Netherlands has been reduced by 10% between 2007 and 2008. This resulted in a slight decrease of the stock. The reduction in the building volume and the decrease in the production volume within the packaging industry are thus already visible.

In the last two years the imports of sawn softwood from Germany were increasing and Germany was even competing with Sweden to become the most important sawn softwood supplier for the Netherlands. In 2008 however the imports from Germany decreased with 18% (123,000 m³) although the imports from Sweden increased with 6%. The imports from Finland also show a large decrease of 27% which equals an amount of app. 100,000 m³. Consequently Russia has become the third supplier of sawn softwood for the Netherlands.

After the prosperous developments during the years 2006 and 2007 and the decrease in 2008 the prospects for 2009 and 2010 are also not very promising although a recovery in 2010 is expected. Economic growth for The Netherlands for 2009 is predicted – 4.75%.

As a consequence the Dutch wood traders expect that the consumption of sawn softwood this year will decrease with the same percentage (10%) as last year and for 2010 a decrease of 2% is expected.

Table 2
Key facts of the Dutch sawn softwood market

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
	X 1000 m ³								
Domestic Production	247	168	149	164	175	176	180	184	159
Net Imports	2,770	2,450	2,229	2,230	2,245	2,116	2,348	2,325	2,259
Stock Change	-25	-25	-91	9	26	139	-70	26	-32
Apparent Consumption	3,042	2,643	2,469	2,385	2,394	2,431	2,458	2,535	2,450

Sources: National Statistics (CBS) / Netherlands's Timber Trade Association (VVDH) / Probos

e. Sawn hardwood

In the hardwood market the consumption decrease a little with 4,5 %. In the non-tropical hardwoods there was a decrease in consumption of 2%. The tropical hardwoods decreased with 6%.

Due to continuing stock reductions the consumption of hardwoods will also decrease in the year 2009. The tropical hardwood imports might show an increase in import volume in 2010, but this is due to the fact that the stocks have reached such a level in 2009 or during 2010 that they have to be restocked. The temperate hardwood consumption is expected to decrease further in the year 2009 and depending of the housing starts also in 2010. This wood is mainly used for interior purposes and for that reason it is at the end of the investment cycle. This results in a continuing decrease of consumption in the year 2010.

Table 3
Key facts of the Dutch sawn hardwood market

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
	X 1000 m ³								
Domestic Production	143	100	109	105	98	103	86	87	84
of which tropical	40	23	25	22	19	19	19	20	18
Net Imports	634	532	431	533	534	492	511	492	469
of which tropical	405	327	277	347	377	359	381	370	349
Apparent Consumption	777	632	540	638	632	595	597	579	553
of which tropical	445	350	302	369	396	378	400	390	367

Sources: Probos, National Statistics (CBS)

f. Pulp and paper

Two paper plants in The Netherlands are using fresh fibres for the production of newsprint and for board for folding boxes. The fresh fibres are produced from poplar and Norway spruce. Both production plants consume also recovered fibres.

Table 4 shows an increase in the use of TMP chips since 2000. During the last three years the input of chips was stable, but in 2008 the input has increased again. Most of the TMP chips are imported from the European sawmill industries.

Table 4

Fibre furnish of the Dutch paper and board industry

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
	X 1000 m ³ round wood equivalents under bark							
Round wood	165	159	161	117	104	95	99	95
Chips	170	160	174	194	203	188	194	261
Market pulp	2,856	2,935	3,148	3,308	3,452	3,304	3,076	2,456
Recovered paper	7,540	7,710	7,725	7,735	8,001	7,625	7,498	7,257
Total fibre input	10,731	10,967	11,208	11,354	11,760	11,212	10,574	9,713

Source: Probos, Royal VNP

Economic status of the Dutch paper and board industry

The financial crisis also has an impact on the Dutch paper and board industry. Production of paper and board decreased 8% compared with 2007 (table 5). The main reason for this drop in production was the closure of Stora Enso Berghuizer Papierfabriek, Favini Apeldoorn B.V. and Favini Meerssen B.V. during 2007. If the figures are adjusted for the closure of these mills the decrease in the total production of paper and board is only 2%. The turnover decreased in the same period with 15,5% to EUR 1,828 billion.

In 2008 Royal VNP started a program to reduce energy consumption in 2020 with 50%. This challenge in the sector is translated to the individual companies by relating energy savings with reduction of CO₂-emissions, cost efficiency, international competition and re-use of raw materials. During 2009 a new energy agreement will be signed between the paper and board industry and the government. The aim of this agreement is to increase the use of energy from sustainable sources and to improve the chain efficiency with the aim to increase the overall energy efficiency.

In recent years as a result of improving labour productivity the number of employees in the industry in the Netherlands fell from around 5,700 (2005) to 5,100 (2006) and has stabilized in 2007 and 2008 around 4,300. This refers to personnel operating the paper and board producing machinery. The indirect functions and support services amounted to around 800 employees (2006).

Table 5
Recent developments of the Dutch paper and board industries

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Change in production in %:								
Thermo-mechanical pulp (integrated)	-2	-9	+12	-9	9	-6	-3	6
Newsprint	-4	-10	+20	-1	0	0	0	10
(Other) graphic papers	-17	-5	+2	+4	-2	+6	-9	-31***
Case materials	-5	+14	-6	+3	+5	0	-1	-5
Wrappings upto 150 gsm	-5	+2	-4	+13	0	+6	-2	2
Folding boxboard and other paper & board for packaging	-1	+5	-3	-27*)	-1	-14	-7	-4
Sanitary & household	-3	-1	-1	+4	-5	-13	5	2
Total paper & board	-5	+5	0	+4	0	-3	-4	-8
(Turnover [million Euro])	2,197	2,165	2,032	1,996	1,910	1,998	2,111	1,828
Price change of production of paper and board industries	n.a.							

Source: Royal VNP

*) Fire damage in the Mayr-Melnhof factory

***) Due to closure of 3 mills during 2007 and closure of one machine on an other production location.

4. TABLES

A. ECONOMIC INDICATORS FOR THE NETHERLANDS

Change in %, unless otherwise specified	2007	2008	2009	2010
GDP	3.5	2.25	-4.75	-0.5
Private consumption	2.1	1.5	-2.75	-1
Private gross fixed investment (excl. housing)	4.8	10.4	-14.75	-13
Exports of goods	7.3	1.2	-16.25	0.5
Imports of goods	6.8	3.9	-14	-1.5
Production, market sector	4.4	2.5	-6.75	-0.75
Consumer Price Index (inflation)	1.6	2.5	1.0	1.25
Productivity, market sector	1.8	0.8	-4.25	6
Unit labour costs, manufacturing	2.8	2.5	1.75	1.25
Labour income share, market sector, level in %	78.5	78.8	85.75	81.75
Employment, whole economy (persons)	1.6	1.5	0.75	-0.25
Employment, market sector (labour years)	2.6	1.7	-2.75	-6.5
Unemployment, level, % labour force	4.5	3.9	5.5	9.5
EMU-debt, level in % GDP	45.7	58.1	59.8	66.3
EMU-balance, level in % GDP	0.3	0.9	-4.1	-6.7

Source: CPB (Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis)

B. FOREST PRODUCTS PRODUCTION AND TRADE IN 2008, 2009 AND 2010

Table 7
Forest production and trade in 2008, 2009 and 2010

Product Code	Product	Unit	Revised	Estimate	Forecast
			2008	2009	2010
1.2.1.C	SAWLOGS AND VENEER LOGS, CONIFEROUS				
	Removals	1000 m ³	315	300	300
	Imports	1000 m ³	174	200	200
	Exports	1000 m ³	221	250	250
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	267	250	250
1.2.1.NC	SAWLOGS AND VENEER LOGS, NON-CONIFEROUS				
	Removals	1000 m ³	102	90	90
	Imports	1000 m ³	27	25	25
	Exports	1000 m ³	21	20	20
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	107	95	95
1.2.1.NC.T	of which, tropical logs				
	Imports	1000 m ³	7	6	6
	Exports	1000 m ³	3	2	2
	Net Trade	1000 m ³	4	4	4
1.2.2.C	PULPWOOD (ROUND AND SPLIT), CONIFEROUS				
	Removals	1000 m ³	237	220	220
	Imports	1000 m ³	134	134	134
	Exports	1000 m ³	171	160	160
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	201	194	194
1.2.2.NC	PULPWOOD (ROUND AND SPLIT), NON-CONIFEROUS				
	Removals	1000 m ³	144	140	140
	Imports	1000 m ³	1	1	1
	Exports	1000 m ³	1	1	1
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	144	144	140
3 + 4	WOOD RESIDUES, CHIPS AND PARTICLES				
	Domestic supply	1000 m ³	1,280	1,280	1,280
	Imports	1000 m ³	1,690	1,700	1,750
	Exports	1000 m ³	598	600	600
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	2,372	2,380	2,430
1.2.3.C	OTHER INDUSTRIAL ROUNDWOOD, CONIFEROUS				
	Removals	1000 m ³	18	18	18
1.2.3.NC	OTHER INDUSTRIAL ROUNDWOOD, NON-CONIFEROUS				
	Removals	1000 m ³	12	12	12
1.1.C	WOOD FUEL, CONIFEROUS				
	Removals	1000 m ³	50	50	50
1.1.NC	WOOD FUEL, NON-CONIFEROUS				
	Removals	1000 m ³	240	240	240

5.C	SAWNWOOD, CONIFEROUS				
	Production	1000 m ³	159	150	150
	Imports	1000 m ³	2,498	2,273	2,228
	Exports	1000 m ³	289	269	269
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	2,368	2,154	2,109
5.NC	SAWNWOOD, NON-CONIFEROUS				
	Production	1000 m ³	84	81	81
	Imports	1000 m ³	602	552	557
	Exports	1000 m ³	133	119	117
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	553	514	521
5.NC.T	of which, tropical sawnwood				
	Production	1000 m ³	18	17	17
	Imports	1000 m ³	428	385	392
	Exports	1000 m ³	79	70	70
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	367	332	339
6.1	VENEER SHEETS				
	Production	1000 m ³	0	0	0
	Imports	1000 m ³	35	32	32
	Exports	1000 m ³	9	8	8
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	27	24	24
6.1.NC.T	of which, tropical veneer sheets				
	Production	1000 m ³	0	0	0
	Imports	1000 m ³	14	13	13
	Exports	1000 m ³	0	0	0
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	14	13	13
6.2	PLYWOOD				
	Production	1000 m ³	0	0	0
	Imports	1000 m ³	635	445	445
	Exports	1000 m ³	51	50	50
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	584	395	395
6.2.NC.T	of which, tropical plywood				
	Production	1000 m ³	0	0	0
	Imports	1000 m ³	263	184	184
	Exports	1000 m ³	28	20	20
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	235	164	164
6.3	PARTICLE BOARD (including OSB)				
	Production	1000 m ³	0	0	0
	Imports	1000 m ³	760	608	608
	Exports	1000 m ³	246	220	220
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	514	388	388

0

6.3.1	of which, OSB				
	Production	1000 m ³	0	0	0
	Imports	1000 m ³	88	88	88
	Exports	1000 m ³	46	46	46
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	42	42	42
6.4	FIBREBOARD				
	Production	1000 m ³	33	33	33
	Imports	1000 m ³	464	434	434
	Exports	1000 m ³	105	99	99
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	392	368	368
6.4.1	Hardboard				
	Production	1000 m ³	0	0	0
	Imports	1000 m ³	68	68	68
	Exports	1000 m ³	5	5	5
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	63	63	63
6.4.2	MDF (Medium density)				
	Production	1000 m ³	0	0	0
	Imports	1000 m ³	304	274	274
	Exports	1000 m ³	96	90	90
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	207	184	184
6.4.3	Other fibreboard				
	Production	1000 m ³	33	33	33
	Imports	1000 m ³	92	92	92
	Exports	1000 m ³	4	4	4
	Apparent consumption	1000 m ³	121	121	121
7	WOOD PULP				
	Production	1000 m.t.	142	139	139
	Imports	1000 m.t.	1,360	1,300	1,300
	Exports	1000 m.t.	624	620	620
	Apparent consumption	1000 m.t.	878	819	819
10	PAPER & PAPERBOARD				
	Production	1000 m.t.	2,977	2,917	2,917
	Imports	1000 m.t.	3,413	3,345	3,345
	Exports	1000 m.t.	2,374	2,250	2,250
	Apparent consumption	1000 m.t.	4,016	4,012	4,012