
Consultation on: Green Economy Policy Agenda (GEPA)

From: Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association of NZ

To: MFAT GreenTrade@mfat.govt.nz

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association of NZ (WPMA) is a not-for-profit Incorporated Society representing members throughout New Zealand operating within the wood products sector. This includes sawmills, pulp and paperboard producers, engineered wood product manufacturers and affiliated businesses.
- 1.2 WPMA is supportive of the priorities outlined within the Green Economy Policy Agenda (GEPA). As a key point the wood processing and forestry sector are major components that sit at the intersection of climate mitigation, circular economy, regional development, and nature-positive growth. Hence, the wood products industry is well aligned with the GEPA priorities and is in a position to provide a solution for actively advancing GEPA.
- 1.3 WPMA reasons that under brand New Zealand we have a leading story to tell as to the value our wood products and timber used in construction play in addressing climate change and sustainability challenges. Not only would GEPA open commercial benefits for New Zealand, but it will also send a strong environmental message to our trading partners.
- 1.4 Increased export in wood products will assist in growing the wood processing industry, with value added wood products encouraging greater onshore processing of logs, more employment in our regions, and increasing our global contribution to embodied carbon storage.

2. Discussion

Outlined are ways in which wood products can support GEPA priorities.

2.1 Low-Emissions, Climate- Positive Development

Wood products, for example CLT, LVL, glulam) store carbon for the lifetime of the products. Substituting wood for steel or concrete reduces emissions as wood in mid-rise and high-rise construction has a much lower embodied carbon footprint.

This matters to GEPA as it directly supports emission reduction targets and accelerates the shift to low-carbon materials.

2.2 Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency

NZ wood products are renewable, sustainably produced, recyclable and biodegradable. Residues can be used for bioenergy and biochemicals, for example. Wood products can also be reused or remanufactured.

This matters to GEPA because it reduces waste, keeps materials in circulation, and supports circular business models.

2.3 Environmentally Positive and Sustainable Land Use

In New Zealand our forests are sustainably managed delivering multiple ecosystem benefits, such as biodiversity protection and carbon sequestration. This aligns with the GEPA principles as to investment in sustainably produced wood products.

2.4 ACCTS Agreement – how GEPA complements

- i. The ACCTS Agreement is particularly important to WPMA in that it classifies wood as an environmental good (supports GEPA priorities) and highlights the important role wood plays globally in meeting our net zero carbon emissions 2050 goal. This has the potential to open up new opportunities for New Zealand wood product exporters, which is supported.
- ii. As per the National Interest Analysis (NIA) ACCTS text, this sets an important commercial precedent for New Zealand exporters in the long term with products such as timber and wood used in construction being tagged as environmental goods. The wood products on the list account for a majority of New Zealand's global environmental goods exports.
- iii. We are supportive of wood products classification as environmental goods based on the evidence that they contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation, pollution prevention and control; the sustainable use, protection or restoration of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems; the transition to a circular economy; the sustainable development objectives of the Parties; and other wider environmental goals.

- iv. Countries are in a race to seize the benefits, and the opportunities wood provides in the transition to a net-zero world. The potential for New Zealand wood products to reduce the carbon footprint of the built environment and drive the growth of a sustainable and prosperous wood industry is immense.
- v. With an increase in wood processing the biproducts of wood, such as adhesives, paints, polymers, advanced packaging, refined carbon, textiles and plastics will also be able to be developed. All of this is aligned with the GEPA principles and will not only benefit our economy but will also support our future climate change goals in a sustainable manner.
- vi. As a summary, GEPA, which is more aimed at stimulating demand and investment, complements the ACCTS Agreement in setting base line rules for 'Green Trade'. Together GEPA and ACCTS can provide a base for a more ambitious framework for climate-aligned trade in those countries that are willing to be involved.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 Wood products offer a practical pathway for advancing GEPA priorities, particularly in the shift toward low-emissions, climate-positive development. By storing carbon over their full life cycle and replacing high-emissions materials such as steel and concrete, engineered wood products like CLT, LVL and glulam directly contribute to national and global emissions-reduction goals. Their role in decarbonising the built environment positions them as important materials in the transition to a low-carbon economy.
- 3.2 Beyond emissions reduction, New Zealand's wood products sector strengthens circular economy outcomes and supports sustainable land use. Renewable, recyclable and biodegradable wood products keep resources in circulation while sustainably managed forests deliver biodiversity protection, carbon sequestration and broader ecosystem benefits. These characteristics align strongly with GEPA's emphasis on resource efficiency, environmental integrity and long-term sustainability, reinforcing the wood processing sector's importance in future-focused economic development.
- 3.3 Together, GEPA and the ACCTS Agreement create a mutually reinforcing framework that elevates wood as a globally recognised environmental good and expands opportunities for New Zealand exporters. By establishing clear rules for green trade and stimulating investment in low-carbon materials, these agreements position New Zealand to lead in the growing global market for climate-aligned products. With increasing wood processing capability and the emergence of high-value bioproducts, the sector is well placed to support both economic growth and national climate



goals, demonstrating the significant contribution wood can make to a net-zero future.

The Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association

About us:

The Wood Processors and Manufacturers Association (WPMA) is a voluntary funded industry association with a strong focus on promoting wood as the heart of a future zero-carbon economy. Our members are leaders in the New Zealand wood industry converting harvested logs into a wide range of products including sawn lumber, pulp, paperboard, panels, laminated products, mouldings, and engineered wood, through to the development of bioenergy solutions. Total sales of industry products both domestically and globally in 2025 were approximately \$5.2 billion. The industry employs close to 30,000 staff, mostly in the New Zealand regions.

<https://www.wpma.org.nz/>

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