



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA*

COUNTRY OVERVIEW TO AID IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUTR

*This overview does not consider Hong Kong SAR, Macao SAR or Taiwan (Province of China)



LAND AREA:	942 million hectares ¹
FORESTED AREA:	208.3 million hectares ² 22.1% of total land area ²
FOREST TYPE:	5.6% primary ² 56.5% naturally regenerated ²
FOREST OWNERSHIP:	39% state owned ³ 61% owned by local communities ³
PROTECTED AREAS:	144.6 million hectares ⁴ 13.5% of forests found in Protected Areas ²
VPA STATUS:	No VPA currently ⁵ Bilateral Coordination Mechanism established in 2009 ⁶

ECONOMIC VALUE OF FOREST SECTOR:

USD 125 billion in 2011⁷
1.7% of the GDP in 2011⁷
7th highest exporter of EUTR products in 2016 by weight (kg)⁸
Highest exporter of EUTR products in 2016 by value (USD)⁸

ANNUAL DEFORESTATION RATE:

None⁹
0.8% gain of forest area annually 2010-2015
Globally top largest net gain of forest area 2010-2015⁹

CERTIFIED FORESTS:

FSC certification: 988 thousand hectares (2018)¹⁰
PEFC certification: 5.7 million hectares (2017)¹¹
Domestic forest management certification: 0.7 million hectares (2014)²

CHAIN OF CUSTODY CERTIFICATION:

FSC certification: 6146 CoC certificates (2018)¹⁰
PEFC certification: 289 CoC certificates (2017)¹¹

MAIN TIMBER SPECIES IN TRADE:

Natural forests (pre-logging ban): Faber's fir (*Abies fabri*), birch (*Betula* spp.), Chinese weeping cypress (*Cupressus funebris*), Chinese fir (*Cunninghamia lanceolata*), dragon spruce (*Picea asperata*), Sikang pine (*Pinus densata*), Chinese red pine (*Pinus massoniana*), Yunnan pine (*Pinus yunnanensis*), oak (*Quercus* spp.)¹²

Plantations: Chinese fir (*Cunninghamia lanceolata*), Chinese weeping cypress (*Cupressus funebris*), *Eucalyptus* spp., Dahurian larch (*Larix gmelinii*), American pitch pine (*Pinus elliottii*), Chinese red pine (*Pinus massoniana*), Chinese pine (*Pinus tabulaeformis*), poplar (*Populus* spp.), oak (*Quercus* spp.), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)¹²

CITES-LISTED TIMBER SPECIES:

46 species: *Aquilaria grandiflora*, *A. sinensis*, *A. yunnanensis*, *Dalbergia assamica*, *D. balansae*, *D. benthamii*, *D. burmanica*, *D. candanensis*, *D. cultrata*, *D. dyeriana*, *D. fusca*, *D. hainanensis*, *D. hancei*, *D. henryana*, *D. hupeana*, *D. jingxiensis*, *D. kingiana*, *D. millettii*, *D. mimosoides*, *D. obtusifolia*, *D. odorifera*, *D. peishaensis*, *D. pinnata*, *D. polyadelphia*, *D. ramosa*, *D. rubiginosa*, *D. sacerdotum*, *D. sericea*, *D. sissoo*, *D. stenophylla*, *D. stipulacea*, *D. tonkinensis*, *D. tsoi*, *D. volubilis*, *D. ximengensis*, *D. yunnanensis*, *Taxus chinensis*, *T. cuspidata*, *T. fuana*, *T. sumatrana*, *T. wallichiana* (all Appendix II), *Fraxinus mandshurica*, *Pinus koraiensis*, *Podocarpus neriifolius*, *Quercus mongolica* and *Tetracentron sinense* (Appendix III)¹³

RANKINGS IN GLOBAL FREEDOM AND STABILITY INDICES:

Rule of law index ¹⁴ 3 rd quarter 75/113 in 2017	Corruption perceptions index ¹⁵ 2 nd quarter (score: 41) 77/180 in 2017	Fragile states index ¹⁶ 3 rd quarter 89/178 in 2018 (Inverse scoring system)	Freedom in the world index ¹⁷ 4 th quarter 73/83 in 2018
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LEGAL TRADE FLOWS

In 2015, China exported EUTR-regulated products to 212 different countries and territories, totalling 25.1 billion kg, of which 11.6% was exported to the EU-28. The United States was the largest single importer by value in 2015 (Figure 1a). Exports of EUTR-regulated products mainly consisted of paper products (HS48*) by both weight and value (Figures 1b and 1c). Exports were also dominated by fibreboard (HS4411), plywood (HS4412) and wooden furniture (HS940350 and HS940360). Domestic consumption exceeded production in 2014 for logs, sawnwood and veneer (Table 1), reflecting China's role as a main producer of finished timber products. The majority of EUTR-regulated products imported into the EU from China in 2015 were imported by France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Figures 2 and 3).

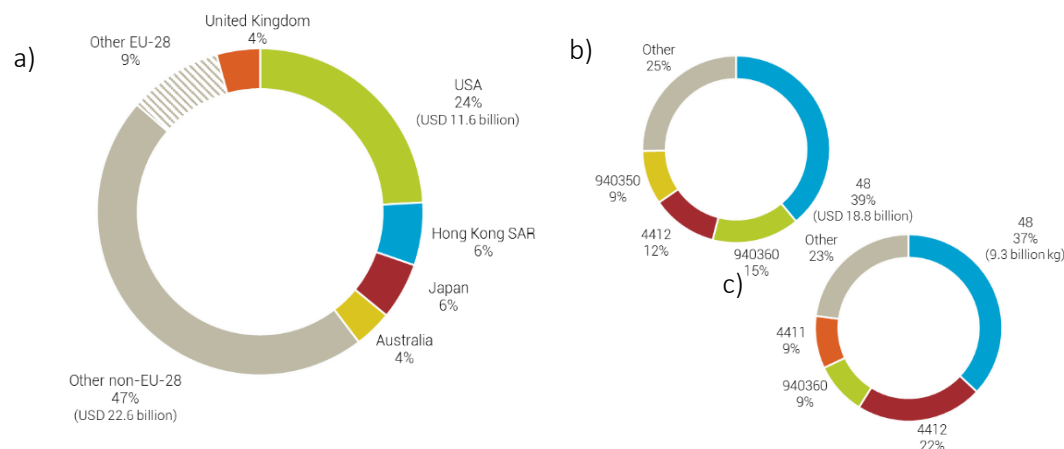


Figure 1: a) Main global markets for EUTR products from China in 2015 in USD; b) main EUTR products by HS code exported from China by value in USD in 2015; and c) main EUTR products by HS code exported from China by weight (kg) in 2015¹⁹.

Table 1: Production and trade flows of main timber products in China in 2015¹².

	Production (x 1000 m ³)	Imports (x 1000 m ³)	Domestic consumption (x 1000 m ³)	Exports (x 1000 m ³)
Logs (industrial roundwood)	338 106	53 704	391 752	58
Sawnwood	68 410	27 365	95 352	423
Veneer	3033	1168	3887	315
Plywood	104 146	1086	93 887	11 345

***Key to HS codes:** 4403 = rough wood; 4407 = sawn wood; 4411 = fibreboard; 4412 = plywood and veneered panels; 4418 = joinery and carpentry wood; 47 = wood pulp; 48 = paper and paper products; 940350 = wooden bedroom furniture; 940360 = other

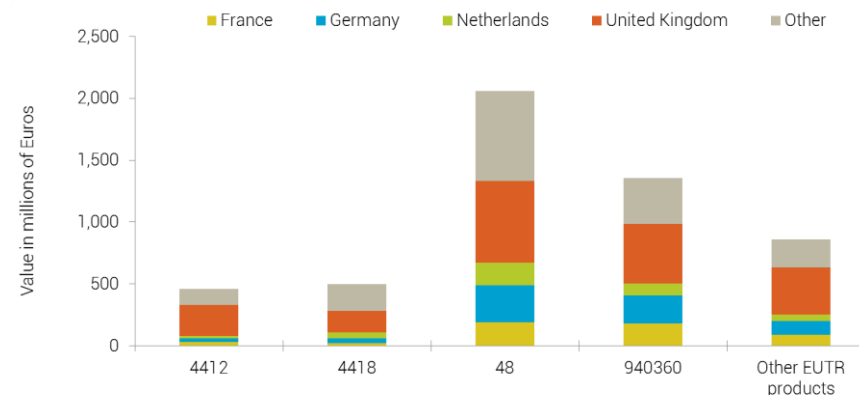


Figure 2: Value of EU imports of EUTR products from China to the EU in 2015 by HS code. Produced using data from EUROSTAT¹⁸.

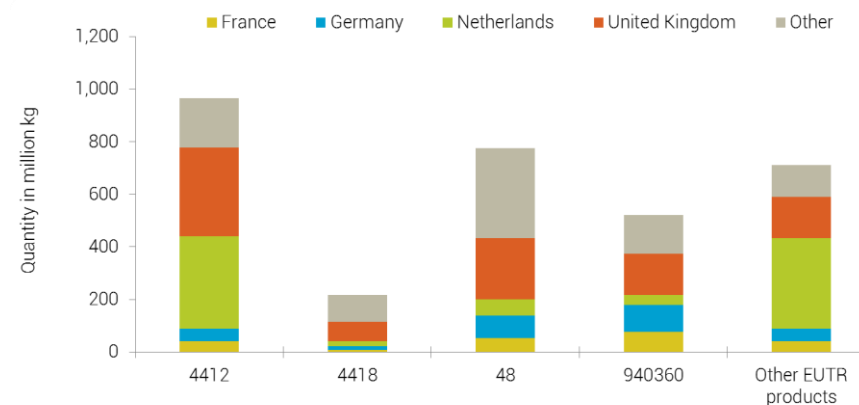


Figure 3: Quantity of EU imports of EUTR products from China to the EU in 2015 by HS code. Produced using data from EUROSTAT¹⁸.

Imports into China in 2016 of EUTR-regulated products totalled 36 billion USD, from 153 different countries and territories (Figure 4a). Imports of EUTR-regulated products mainly consisted of wood pulp (HS47), sawn wood (HS4407) and rough wood (HS4403) by both weight and value (Figures 4b and 4c).

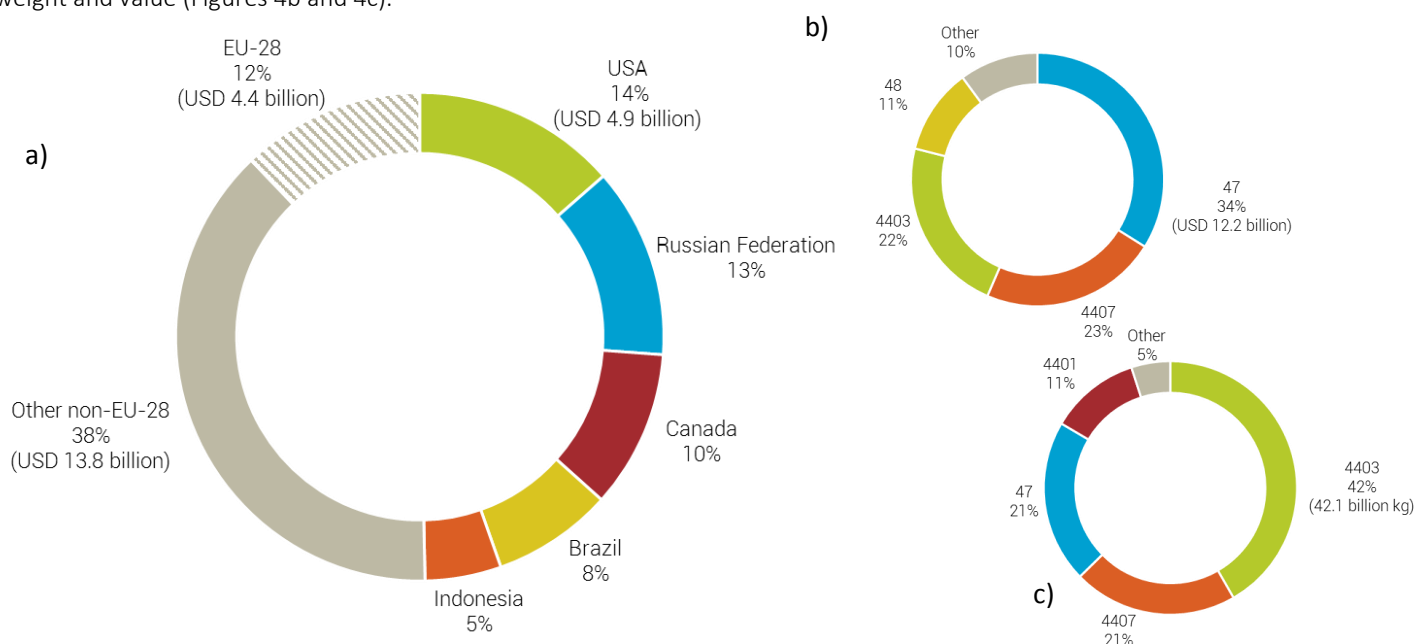


Figure 4: a) Main global markets for EUTR products imported into China in 2016 in USD; b) main EUTR products by HS code imported into China by value in USD in 2016; and c) main EUTR products by HS code imported into China by weight (kg) in 2016¹⁹.

KEY RISKS FOR ILLEGALITY

COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION:

China does not currently have dedicated legislation in place prohibiting the import of illegal timber products^{20,21}. The Regulation on the Implementation of the Forestry Law (2000) requires that timber cannot be sourced without harvesting permits (in the case of timber produced in China) or “other evidence of legal origin”, but it does not define what would constitute such evidence²⁰.

BRIBERY INCIDENCE:

11.6% of firms experienced at least one bribe payment request in 2012²².
Based on data collected on behalf of the World Bank across a range of sectors.

ILLEGAL HARVESTING OF SPECIFIC TREE SPECIES:

Rosewood (especially *Dalbergia* spp.) is in high demand in China²³ and one of the main groups of species reported in illegal timber trade in China^{24,25}.

PREVALENCE OF ILLEGAL HARVESTING OF TIMBER:

Domestic illegal logging was cited as an ongoing problem in China in 2012²⁶.
China has been cited as probably the largest importer of illegal origin timber products globally^{27,28}. An estimated 17% of imports into China of timber-based products had a high risk of illegality in 2013²³.

RESTRICTIONS ON TIMBER TRADE

China has a complete ban on commercial logging in all natural forests since 2017²⁹.

No EU³⁰ or UN³¹ sanctions on timber exports or imports.

COMPLEXITY OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN

China is a major importer of timber that is processed into timber and paper products in China for re-export, with timber from multiple sources often mixed during processing³².

Illegal trade

China is one of the world’s largest importers, consumer and exporter of wood-based products²¹, with almost half of the wood and wood fibre processed in the country sourced through imports³³. The top 10 supplier countries of logs and sawn wood to China 2011-2015, based on Global Trade Atlas data, were reported to be the Russian Federation, Canada, New

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Zealand, the United States, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Australia, Solomon Islands, Chile and Indonesia, with non-tropical timber producers dominating the list³³.

Many Chinese forestry companies operate abroad, especially in the Russian Federation, Africa (including Gabon, Zambia, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Republic of the Congo and Cameroon), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Peru and Guyana³⁴. While the proportion of imports of timber and paper products that are likely to be from illegal sources was believed to have declined between 2000 and 2013, the actual volume of such imports has increased, due to the overall growth in timber and paper imports over the period²¹. China has been cited as probably the largest importer of illegal origin timber products globally^{27,28}. An estimated 33 million m³ of roundwood equivalent (RWE) of illegal timber and paper-sector products were imported into China in 2013, increasing from 17 million m³ RWE in 2000^{21,23}. Field investigations conducted since 2004 indicate that illegal timber has entered China from globally distributed producer countries, including Lao PDR, Indonesia, Myanmar, Russian Federation, Mozambique and Madagascar, as well as coming from China itself²⁸; Myanmar especially has been the subject of global scrutiny into the overland flow of illegal timber into China^{35,36,37}. However, there is currently no legislation in place prohibiting the import of illegal timber products²¹, impeding the ability of Chinese law enforcement to take action on shipments of suspected illegal timber.

China's role as the main global processor of timber into timber and paper products means that imports from China account for an increasing proportion of illegal imports into consumer countries, with highly processed products (such as furniture) more likely to contain illegally-sourced timber²³. Between 2005 and 2015, more than 2 million m³ of RWE of potentially illegal timber is estimated to have entered into the EU from China in the form of EUTR and non-EUTR products³³.

In 2013, imports from the Russian Federation (logs and sawnwood) and Indonesia (sawnwood and wood pulp) were indicated to be the two main sources of China's timber and paper imports with high risk of illegality²³. However, since 2013, Indonesia has exported timber to China with Indonesian Verified Legal (V-legal) licence documents, which constitute a proof of legality under Indonesian law³⁸, and on 15 November 2016, Indonesia began issuing FLEGT licences to verify legality of timber exported to the EU³⁹. From the Russian Federation, volumes of Mongolian oak logged for export to China exceeded the authorised logging volumes 2004-2011 by two to four times⁴⁰; China also imports over 95% of the valuable hardwoods exported from the Russian Far East, where 50-80% of precious hardwood cut is estimated to have been harvested illegally, according to a report by the EIA⁴¹. Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands are also becoming increasingly important sources of likely illegal timber products due to their increased volume of timber-based exports^{21,23,28}. Papua New Guinea was the fourth largest source of rough wood (HS 4403) imports to China in 2015 by weight¹⁹; links have been made between illegally granted Special Agriculture and Business Leases in Papua New Guinea and import of logs harvested from land with such leases into China⁴². A 2018 report on illegal logging in Papua New Guinea cautioned that imports of 'high risk' timber from PNG could damage China's trade relations with EU and US buyers of Chinese timber products⁴³. Timber stocks in the Solomon Islands have been severely over-harvested, with log export volume increasing rapidly 2002-2014⁴⁴. Corruption among logging companies and government officials in the Solomon Islands was reported to have contributed to excessive logging^{45,44}.

Import of logs has also been reported from countries with a log export ban (LEB), including Equatorial Guinea, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire²¹; this was also seen for Indonesia (which enacted a log export ban in 2001), with Chinese reported imports of Indonesian logs post Indonesia's LEB in 2001^{19,21,28}, which may be indicative of illegal trade. Although Nigeria has had an export ban on rough and sawn wood in place since 1976^{29,46}, a report by EIA found evidence of over 1.4 million "kosso" (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) logs with an estimated value of USD 300 million being stopped by Chinese customs officials upon attempted entry to China in 2016⁴⁷. In 2017, Nigerian CITES authorities issued around 4000 retrospective permits, releasing the held logs⁴⁷. EIA reported that the issuance of these permits was the result of a "grand corruption scheme" involving payments to senior Nigerian officials with alleged help from the Chinese consulate⁴⁷. In 2018, Forest Trends reported that China had imported >46 million m³ of logs from 31 countries with either full or partial LEB 2005-2016, with many of these imports considered to be in violation of the bans⁴⁸. Chinese log imports from LEB countries amounted to 20% of China's total imports of logs 2005-2016, totalling USD 16 billion, with greatest values imported from Papua New Guinea, Lao PDR and Malaysia⁴⁸.

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Timber from rosewood (*Dalbergia* and *Pterocarpus* spp.) and ebony (*Diospyros* spp.) is in great demand in China for Hongmu furniture^{24,29}, for example. Until the genera were listed in the CITES Appendices in June 2013 (*Diospyros*) and January 2017 (*Dalbergia*), 98% of exports from Madagascar of these genera were imported by China⁴⁹. The rapid rise in demand for the timber species listed in the official Chinese National Hongmu Standard has been linked to increases in illegal logging in range states²⁴ in Asia (especially countries bordering China such as Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR⁵⁰), Africa (including Ghana, The Gambia, Senegal⁵¹) and Central and South America (including Guatemala²⁵), as well as CITES compliance issues for CITES listed species⁵². In 2016, 15-20 major Chinese companies were reported as being actively involved in purchasing illegal precious timber from Madagascar²⁵.

China's timber products industry

China is a major importer of timber which is processed into timber and paper products in China for re-export; this industry is represented by a large number of processing factories (more than 100 000), many of them small and medium sized enterprises, where timber from multiple sources can be mixed, making traceability difficult³². The paper processing sector is dominated by five main companies: Nine Dragons, Shangdon Chenming, Lee & Man, Gold East Paper (APP) and Shandong Sun Paper, which together accounted for 18% of the market in 2008; Nine Dragons was the 21st largest global forest, paper and packaging industry company in 2015⁵³. The remainder of the paper producing industry consists of much smaller enterprises³². Smaller forest owners and suppliers may also transport and sell timber and timber products without the necessary licences (often transportation licences) due to the associated costs⁵⁴; additionally, some timber products, such as pre-consumer recycled sawdust, wood chips and furniture waste, which are processed into further timber products, do not require transport licences⁵⁴. Both of these factors hamper supply chain traceability.

China's forestry management and legislation

Forest management is supposed to follow a five year plan set out by the State Forestry Administration³². Each Province or state farm is assigned a yearly operating quota, which is then distributed between each operating licence holder³². The Natural Forest Protection Program, which covers the conservation and regeneration of natural forests, is the legislation governing China's current natural forest logging ban²⁶. It is important to note that since this ban in 2017, availability of Chinese hardwood species, such as Mongolian oak, is likely to have reduced, as large scale plantations of the species have not yet matured⁵⁵. Species mis-declaration may therefore become a potential issue. Plantations supply the majority of domestically consumed logs¹². China has also introduced its own certification scheme for forests, the "China Forest Certification Scheme", launched in 2010³² and endorsed by PEFC in 2014⁵⁶.

The Chinese government published a draft timber legality verification scheme (TLVS) in 2011²¹. Chinese timber industry associations have also now developed their own legality standards and frameworks⁵⁷. As part of this, the China National Forest Products Industry Association (CNFPIA) developed a TLVS (released in September 2017), which is envisaged as an important element of the national China TLVS⁵⁷. This standard sets out the requirements for legality at the forest management level and throughout the chain of custody and will apply to domestically harvested and imported timber⁵⁷. Implementation of the standards and tools being developed as part of the TLVS is currently foreseen as voluntary⁵⁷, although the Chinese government is planning to put in place mandatory regulations which will require companies to demonstrate that their timber imports are legal⁵⁷. The Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF) is also supporting companies to establish due diligence systems based on a toolkit developed by the CAF⁵⁷. CAF also launched a China Responsible Forest Product Trade and Investment Alliance (China-RFA), which is, *inter alia*, "working to establish partnership agreements with international market participants to support the capacity building of Chinese enterprises and to establish collaborative partnerships to promote responsible business"⁵⁷.

Take-up of third party chain of custody certification (CoC) is also increasing, for example, over 5000 FSC CoC certificates and nearly 300 PEFC CoC certificates are currently held by Chinese organisations^{10,11}.

China and the EU have established a Bilateral Coordination Mechanism (BCM) to facilitate cooperation to reduce illegal logging and the associated global trade in illegal timber, intended to act as a forum for policy dialogue and a mechanism for sharing information on policies and legal frameworks, as well as coordinating relevant initiatives⁶.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY¹

For further details on China's legislation relevant to EUTR, see the [China country page on FAOLEX](#) and NEPCo (2017) '[China list of applicable legislation](#)'.

- [Forestry Law of the People's Republic of China](#) (1984, amended 1998 and 2009)
- [Forestry Act](#) (1979)
- [Measures for Administration of National Public Forests](#) (2013, amended 2017)
- Regulations for the Implementation of the Forest Law (2000)
- Natural Forest Protection Program (2000)
- Environmental Protection Law (1989)
- Law on the Prevention and Control of Desertification (2001)
- Environmental Impact Assessment Law (2003)
- Land Administration Law (1998, amended 2004)
- Regulations for the Implementation of the Land Administration Law of China (1998)
- Constitution of the People's Republic of China (as amended 2004)
- A Guide on Sustainable Overseas Forests Management and Utilization by Chinese Enterprises (2009)
- Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Administration of Import and Export of Endangered Wild Animals and Plants (2006)
- Foreign Trade Law of the People's Republic of China (2004)
- Regulations of the People's Republic of China on the Administration of Import and Export goods (2001)
- Measures for the administration of import licences for goods (2004)
- Code of practice for the issuing of import licences (2007)
- Code of practice for the issuing of export licences (2007)
- Measures for the administration of small and medium border trade and border areas for foreign economic and technical cooperation (1996)
- Customs law of the People's republic of China (1987)
- Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Implementing Customs Administrative Penalty (2004)
- Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Import and Export Duties (2003)
- Regulations on the Origin of Import and Export Goods of the People's Republic of China (2004)
- Law of the People's Republic of China on Import and Export Commodity Inspection (1989)
- Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China concerning Import and Export Commodity Inspection (2005)
- Law of the People's Republic of China on Entry and Exit Animal and Plant Quarantine (1992)
- Regulations for the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Entry and Exit Animal and Plant Quarantine (1996)
- The measures for the administration of the quarantine of the articles carried by persons on entry or exit (2002)
- Log import quarantine requirements (2001)

¹ The following list may not be exhaustive and is intended as a guide only on relevant legislation.

LEGALLY REQUIRED DOCUMENTS²

See WWF GFTN [‘Guide to legal and responsible sourcing’](#) and NEPCo (2017) [‘China document guide’](#) for a further list and examples of legally required documents.

- **For harvesting:**
 - **Forest Authority Certificate or Tenure Certificate**
 - **Operating license** (in the case of commercial exploitation)
 - **Wood Harvesting Admission Certificate** (a timber harvesting licence)
 - **Document permitting conversion of land use** (in the case of timber harvested during conversion of forested land)
- **For transporting:**
 - **Wood transport licence** (giving details of what is being transported, its origin and destination)
 - **Plant quarantine certificate**
- **For processing:**
 - **Business registration certificate**
 - **Processing licence/ Timber Processing Certificate**
- **For export:**
 - **Packing list/ list of products in export shipment**
 - **Invoices**
 - **Bill of landing**
 - **CIQ (Centre for Inspection and Quarantine) form for export inspection**
 - **Customs export declaration**
 - **Sales contract**
 - **Shipping order**
 - **Verification form of inward remittance (by Exchange Control Administration)**
- **For export products made of timber originally imported into China from another country:**
 - **Customs declaration**
 - **Contract**
 - **Commercial invoices**
 - **Bill of landing**
 - **Detail of loading contents**
 - **Quarantine certificate**

² The following list may not be exhaustive and is intended as a guide only on required documents.

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