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## **Japan's Actions for Promoting Wood Use and Combatting Illegal Logging**

Purpose: Information  
Submitted by: Japan



**20<sup>th</sup> Experts Group on Illegal Logging and  
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# **Japan's Actions for Promoting Wood Use and Combatting Illegal Logging**

**August 13, 2021**

**Wood Products Trade Office  
Forestry Agency, MAFF, Japan**

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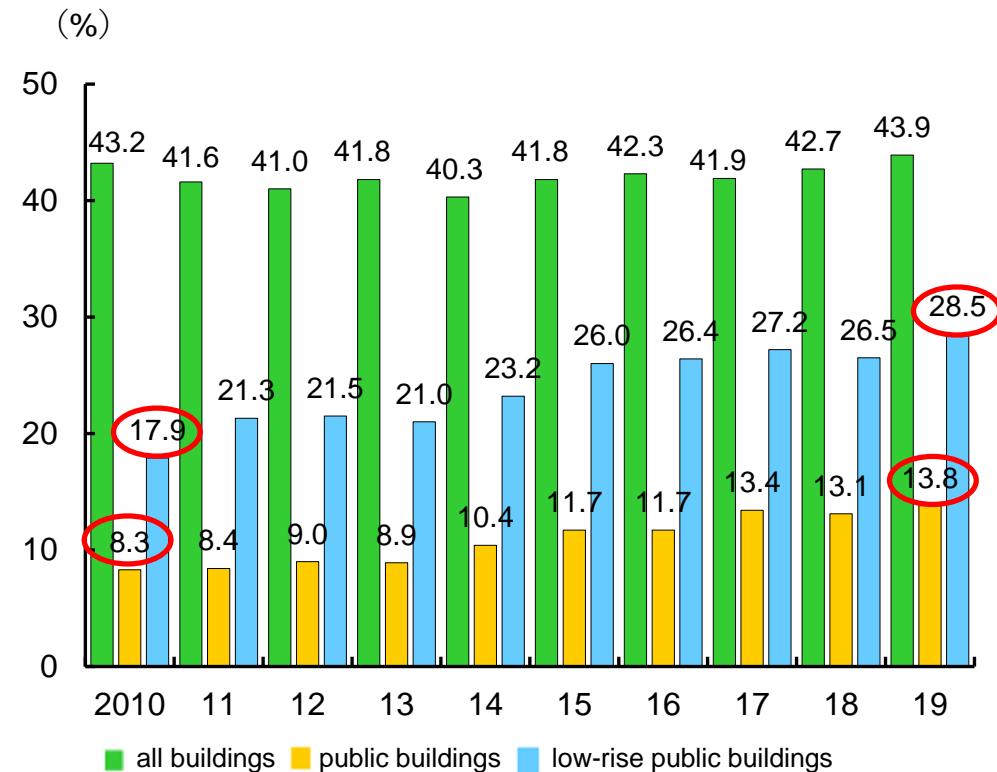
1. Revision of Wood Use Promotion Act
2. Development of “TimberLex”
3. Cases of ITTO projects funded by Japan: Thailand, Philippines

# 1. Revision of Wood Use Promotion Act

- In June 2021, the **revised Act for Wood Use Promotion in Public Buildings** was adopted in the Diet, which will expand the scope of the act to **include buildings of private entities** as well as public buildings. The revision will take effect from this October.
- The **original act** was enacted in 2010, which urges central and local governments to promote wood use in their own buildings for public use.
- Since the enactment of the original act, the **share of wooden buildings in public buildings** has risen from **8.3% in 2010 to 13.8% in 2019**. In particular, the share in low-rise public buildings (three stories or less) increased from 17.9% to 28.5% during the same period.

## Points of revision

- Revised the name of act as **“the Act for Promotion of Use of Wood in Buildings Contributing Decarbonized Society”** for the contribution to zero-carbon initiative.
- Expanded the scope of the act to **include buildings of private entities**, as well as buildings of central/local governments for public use.
- Designated the **“Wood Use Promotion Day” (October 8th)** and **“Wood Use Promotion Month” (October)** for intensive promotional activities.
- Introduced an **agreement system between governments and private entities** for facilitation of construction with wood
- Established the **“Governmental HQ for Wood Use Promotion”** headed by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.



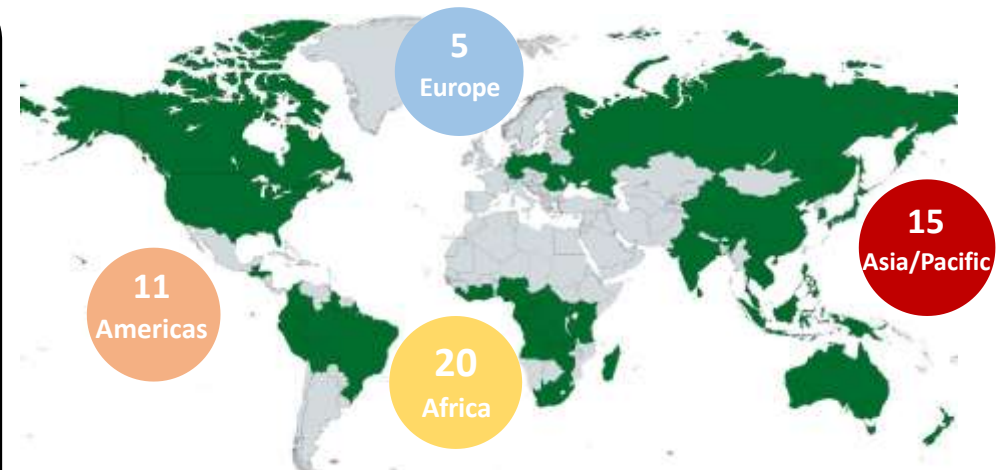
Share of wooden buildings in Japan

## 2. Development of “TimberLex”

- The Japanese Government provided funding of \$900,000 to FAO for the project of “Enhancing knowledge and capacity around forest-related legislation and timber legality” in 2018-2019.
- The project has developed an online database named “TimberLex,” which provides free and easy access to comprehensive country-specific legal information on forest management, timber production and trade in as many as 50 countries in the world.
- The TimberLex platform started its operation from last month. <http://www.fao.org/faolex/timberlex/>

### Overview of TimberLex

- Objectives are; to
  - (i) facilitate access to legal frameworks governing forestry and timber production and trade,
  - (ii) support timber-producing countries to strengthen and enforce their legal frameworks, and
  - (iii) assist timber traders to meet legality requirements in timber-importing countries.
- TimberLex country profiles are structured around a set of 31 Guiding Legal Elements (GLEs) for timber legality.
- Each GLE falls into one of four clusters encompassing critical stages of the timber value chain.



### TimberLex Geographical Coverage (planned)



Four clusters of GLEs

### 3. Cases of ITTO projects funded by Japan: Thailand

#### (Development of Legality Certification System in Thailand)

- Japan's Forestry Agency assisted an ITTO project to establish a legal certification system of smallholders and community forests in Thailand from 2018 to 2019 (Japan's contribution: \$209,574).
- In Thailand, wood produced from planted forests of smallholders and communities play a major role. Recently, certification of legality or sustainability of forest management is required in the wood market, but obtaining recognized forest certifications is too expensive for them.
- In this regard, the Thailand government initiated a project (i) to establish a simple, low-cost, and practicable legality certification system for wood, and (ii) to strengthen the capacity of smallholders and communities for forest management.
- The Royal Forest Department (RFD) established a national working group with a membership comprising representative of the RFD, academia and the private sector to develop "Thai Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for sustainable management of planted forests and community forests" (7 criteria and 35 indicators) and "Thai Chain of Custody (CoC) certification system" (which tracks wood from forest to processing with documentation).
- Pilot projects in two sites showed that smallholders and community leaders developed greater capacity to communicate the state of their forests to third parties with the use of new C&I and CoC.
- The project also strengthened collaboration among stakeholders through working group meetings and training workshops, disseminating the understanding of the C&I and CoC in the country.
- The RFD is planning to endorse both of C&I and CoC as the national standards, to apply all forests including planted forests and community forests.



Field work in the Training on C&I and CoC in Nan province  
Photos : ITTO



An infographic developed by the project illustrating the seven Thai C&I



### 3. Cases of ITTO projects funded by Japan: Philippines

#### (Development of Wood Tracking System in Philippines)

- Japan's Forestry Agency assisted an ITTO project to establish a traceability system for wood production in Philippines from 2016 to 2019, in cooperation with Australia, Korea, and the US (Japan's contribution: \$ 392,930, total ITTO funds: \$497,930)
- The Philippines government has been using an information system for forest policy administration. But the current system named "Forest Stock Monitoring System (FSMS)" lacks credibility due to its dependance on old fashioned equipment such as timber crayon. There are doubts that local markets may be handling illegally-sourced wood.
- In this regard, the Philippines government initiated a project to develop additional modules to the current FSMS with the use of IT technology.
- The project introduced a new module with the use of nail tags and QR Codes. Nail tags are attached on standing trees before harvesting, and then read by a device recorder to record information on each tree. Those data are saved in the central database. After processing to lumber, QR codes are attached on processed products which can be read by smart phones. Nail tags and QR codes enable to locate where the trees were harvested.
- The system can be used in an environment without internet connection, where the readers collect data offline and transfer them to the server once internet connection becomes available.
- Pilot testing in three sites successfully demonstrated feasibility and effectiveness of the new system.
- The Philippines government intends to revise the system to cover other products including plywood and veneer and incorporate latest IT progress.



Nail Tag



Hammering a nail tag



Device Reader