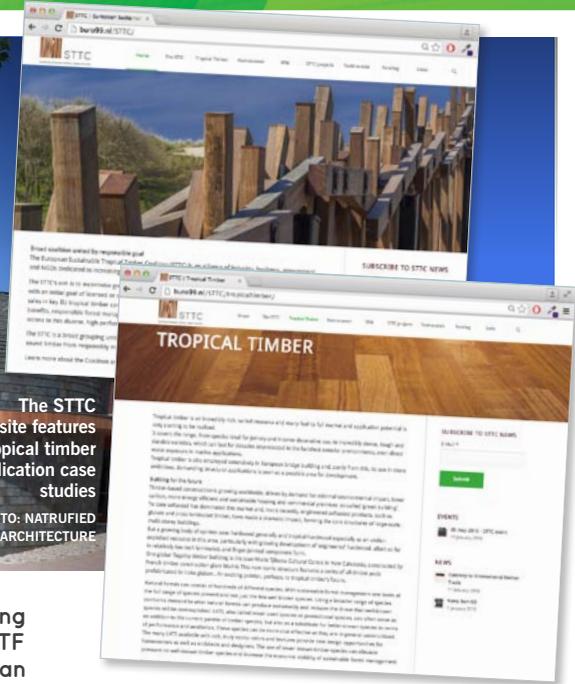


New STTC website launches with funding programme



The STTC site features tropical timber application case studies
PHOTO: NATRUFIED ARCHITECTURE



Mark van Benthem

The European Sustainable Tropical Timber Coalition (STTC) is launching a new website in conjunction with the rollout of its initiative with the ETTF to distribute funding for sustainable procurement strategies to European companies, federations and local authorities.

The STTC launched late 2013 with the aim of reversing the long-term decline in European tropical timber sales. Besides depriving Europe of a valuable

raw material, it maintains, the contraction of this environmentally oriented market disincentivises spread of sustainable forest management in the tropics. It may even trigger forest land conversion to other uses.

Late last year the STTC announced with ETTF it was moving to the next phase of its programme; directly supporting sustainable procurement action plans.

“Concrete [procurement] commitment from companies is what creates real impact,” said ETTF Secretary General André de Boer, announcing the new initiative.

Companies can receive match funding for projects in the framework of an STTC action plan for up to 30% of the cost or €15,000. Federations are eligible for up to €30,000 for developing a responsible sourcing policy or code of conduct. STTC partners can also submit other project proposals supporting STTC goals.

Further details are on the new website, www.europeansttc.com

The site also includes contacts, information on the STTC and its goals, and the overall environmental, commercial and technical case for growing the certified, sustainably

sourced tropical timber market.

It features tropical timber case studies, from manufacturing to construction, comment from STTC supporters and links for further information. It also has STTC contacts and a feedback facility, details of current participants and information on how to become one.

To date the STTC has gathered support from companies, federations, NGOs and government. It has set up working groups and supported projects focused on communications, business links, legality, sustainability and technical issues, including LCA study support. It also launched a website – www.houtdatabase.nl – on lesser-known certified tropical species.

STTC attributes Europe's declining tropical market partly to poor environmental image and a lack of awareness of its availability sustainably and legally verified. Its aim is to boost certified timber's share to a 'tipping point' of 50% of EU tropical sales by 2020.

“There's increasing awareness that avoiding tropical timber does not ensure forests are conserved,” said Mark van Benthem, Probos Senior Advisor and STTC Consultant. “With verified sustainably sourced material we have a great story to tell, backed with impact studies and LCAs, showing timber is often the environmentally right choice.”

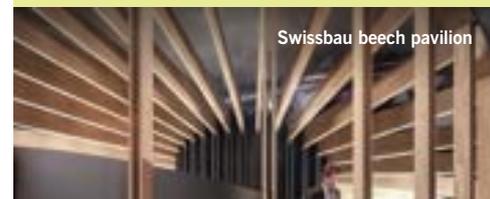
Swiss beech boost

A pavilion in Swiss beech was a star attraction at the Swissbau construction fair in Basle, and highlighted options for using the hardwood in construction.

According to the Swiss Timber Industry Federation, around 18% of standing timber in Swiss forests is beech (*fagus jura*), but little is processed to lumber by Swiss mills. In 2014 95,000m³ of the raw wood sold abroad, half to Italy. Much is used for fuel.

But while most Swiss timber building uses coniferous wood, the message from Swiss beech producers and promoters is that it now presents new possibilities in construction, notably for high rise.

“It's denser and stronger than coniferous wood, making it a prime choice for load bearing structures in lower floors, with potential to substitute concrete and steel,” said Federation Director Jörg Reimer. “It's plentiful and its backers say it's time to exploit its potential.”



Swissbau beech pavilion