

Danube Building Materials goes green with launch of FSC and PEFC-certified whitewood and hardwood timber in GCC

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*Leading building materials provider to collaborate with **Dubai Municipality** in promoting 'Green building codes'*

Danube Building Materials, the leader in construction, building materials and shop fitting industries, has announced the launch of the first Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)-certified whitewood and hardwood timbers products in the GCC. This is in line with the company's commitment to sustainability, which is further underlined by its planned collaboration with the **Dubai Municipality** to promote 'Green building codes'. Company officials are positive of the response for these new eco-friendly products at the upcoming 'Big5 International Building and Construction Show', which will mark their official launch in the UAE and across the rest of the GCC.

Frank Owens, product Manager of Hardwood Timber, Danube Building Materials

As support for green building initiatives in Dubai escalates - with the emirate drawing up 'green' building standards – Danube has reported that the number of inquiries for FSC and PEFC timber from its customers has increased. This has prompted the company to introduce building materials certified by FSC and PEFC, which are independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisations that promote sustainably managed forests through independent third party certification. Certification from these bodies is a testament of responsible production and consumption of forest products thereby letting consumers make eco-friendly purchasing decisions while supporting ongoing business value.

"No matter what policies exist, contractors cannot fulfil consultant specification if the materials are not available on ground. As the largest building materials company in the Middle East, we have invested in making green products such as certified hardwood and whitewood timber available in the GCC region, and we intend to use our extensive presence throughout the region to enable project managers to turn green policies from theory into practice," said Frank Owens, Product Manger of Hardwood Timber, Danube Building Materials. "In addition, we have been engaged in ongoing discussion with on how to best formulate and implement 'green' building codes to ensure a positive effect on the environment."

As a pioneer in supplying green building materials to GCC market, Danube will be focusing on educating buyers on certified materials, its benefits, and from which local vendors they can legitimately procure materials. Special efforts are also made to meet and educate the consultants specifying new projects so that they understand the availability implications of the certified products they aim to specify. At present, the company is actively working with certification bodies like

BM Trada to promote among joinery factories in its sales network the 'Chain of Custody' certification, which will be a strong deterrent against certified material fraud. Danube also revealed plans to offer certified plywood and veneer soon, in line with its goals to provide a fully-certified wood products line up by end of 2009.

"The whole idea of 'green' building is to invest a little more in the design and materials phase of production and get a larger return on the investment over the long term as reduced energy consumption translates into significant yearly savings. As more organisations recognise and embrace this concept, we are seeing a sizable increase in the number of firms significantly involved in 'green' building projects as well as 'green' accredited building professionals. While projects in progress for which green building products were not specified will be completed as usual, our focus is to steer future projects towards green materials through education," concluded Owens.

(Zawya)