

Follow the profits says World Bank report

A recently released World Bank report shows how countries can fight illegal logging through the criminal justice system, punish organised crime, and trace and confiscate illegal logging profits.



The report, *Justice for Forests: Improving Criminal Justice Efforts to Combat Illegal Logging*, says that to be effective, law enforcement needs to look past low-level criminals and look at where the profits from illegal logging go. By following the money trail, and using tools developed in more than 170 countries to go after dirty money, criminal justice can pursue criminal organisations engaged in large-scale illegal logging and confiscate ill-gotten gains.

Used to pay corrupt government officials

The World Bank estimates that illegal logging in some countries accounts for as much as 90 percent of all logging and generates approximately USD10 to 15 billion annually in criminal proceeds. Mostly controlled by organised crime, this money is untaxed and is used to pay corrupt government officials at all levels. The new report provides policy and operational recommendations for policy makers and forestry and law enforcement actors to integrate illegal logging into criminal justice strategies, foster international and domestic co-operation among policy makers, law enforcement authorities and other key stakeholders, and make better use of financial intelligence.

The full text of the report is available online at <http://media.worldbank.org/secure>.

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