



Improving Sustainable *Pericopsis elata*
Conservation and Trade Regulation in Ghana

***P. elata* Market Survey Report
Draft**

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Abbreviations

CITES:	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CSO:	Civil Society Organization
DOLTA:	Domestic Lumber Traders Association
FSD:	Forestry Services Division
ITTO:	International Tropical Timber Organization
NDF:	Nature and Development Foundation
<i>P. elata:</i>	<i>Pericopsis elata</i>
RMSC:	Resource Management and Support Centre
TIDD:	Timber Industry Development Division
TUC:	Timber Utilization Contract
WD:	Wildlife Division

Executive Summary

Pericopsis elata is a victim of over-exploitation and consumption mainly for its precious wood. The wood (trade names: afrormosia, assamela, kokrodua) is highly valued on the international market, mainly for furniture and as decorative veneer, but also for interior and exterior joinery, stairs, flooring and boat building. It is considered a substitute for teak. It is also suitable for heavy and light construction, railway sleepers, vehicle bodies, interior trim, handles, ladders, agricultural implements, sporting goods, musical instruments, toys, novelties, boxes, crates, carvings, turnery and draining boards. In traditional medicine in Congo pulped bark is rubbed into scarifications as an anodyne.

Ghana is one of the countries where this species occurred in commercial quantities and was heavily logged because of its highly valued timber. It is one of the few commercial timber species that has been listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). However, although there is no official trading information on the species in Ghana in recent times, a visit to and discussion with some timber companies and wood depots around the forest regions of Ghana indicate some level of trading in the species.

As a precursor for establishing the current conservation status and market information on the trade of *Pericopsis elata* in Ghana and with support from the International Tropical Timber Organization, (ITTO), Nature and Development Foundation (NDF) undertook a country level market study on *Pericopsis elata*. This is because, since the species was listed as CITES Appendix II species, and was classified as a restricted species for harvesting in Ghana, little is known of any special intervention to protect it from local extinction.

The purpose of this market survey therefore is was to establish the value chain, trade volumes and level of knowledge of the protective status of the species. The study has also established current statistics on trade volumes and trade chain of *Pericopsis elata*, the trade volumes versus quantities in the context of sustainability, trade regulations mechanisms instituted and their effectiveness in maintaining sustainable trade, and assessment of the level of knowledge of market players on the protection status of *species* and the required procedures in its trade.

Key issues identified in the survey included: FC does not approve yield allocation that includes *P. elata*; only 20% of FC officials interviewed were aware of the requirement of CITES certificate from WD to export *P. elata*; but all officials interviewed were aware *P. elata* is a restricted species that require approval from RMSC of the FC before harvesting; timber companies are aware *P. elata* is a restricted species and requires a CITES certificate to export in it; timber traders across the six regions are not aware of the restricted status of *P. elata* and the requirements for trading in it; CSOs are also unaware of the restricted status of *P. elata* and the requirements for its trade; and all *P. elata* products traded in the local market are from illegal sources since the FC for a very long time has not approved *P. elata* logging in the country.

1. Introduction

Pericopsis elata (trade names: afrormosia, assamela, kokrodua) has been over-exploited and consumed mainly for its high valued on the international market, mainly for furniture and as decorative veneer, but also for interior and exterior joinery, stairs, flooring and boat building. It is considered a substitute for teak and suitable for heavy and light construction, railway sleepers, vehicle bodies, interior trim, handles, ladders, agricultural implements, sporting goods, musical instruments, toys, novelties, boxes, crates, carvings, turnery and draining boards. In traditional medicine in Congo pulped bark is rubbed into scarifications as an anodyne.

In Ghana where the species occurred in commercial quantities it was heavily logged because of its highly valued timber resulting in it been listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). There is no official trading information on the species in Ghana but a visit to and discussion with some timber traders and wood depots around the forest regions of Ghana indicate some level of trading in the species. As a precursor for establishing the current conservation status and market information on the trade of *Pericopsis elata* in Ghana and with support from the International Tropical Timber Organization, (ITTO), Nature and Development Foundation (NDF) undertook a country level market study on *Pericopsis elata*. This is because, since the species was listed as CITES Appendix II species, and was classified as a restricted species for harvesting in Ghana, little is known of any special intervention to protect it from local extinction.

This market survey is contributing to the achievement of Output 2 of the project: “Market and trade status of *Pericopsis elata* evaluated” and it is in consonance with the ITTO-CITES program objective of assisting national authorities to meet the scientific, administrative and legal requirements for managing and regulating trade in *Pericopsis elata* (Afrormosia) and, in particular, to develop guidance to ensure that utilization is not detrimental to the survival of CITES-listed tropical timber species.

The market survey focused on the following key aspects:

- The current statistics on trade volumes and trade chain of *Pericopsis elata*,
- The trade volumes versus quantities in the context of sustainability,
- The trade regulations mechanisms instituted and their effectiveness in maintaining sustainable trade, and
- The level of knowledge of market players on the protection status of *Pericopsis elata* and the required procedures in its trade.

The market survey started with the identification of traders and the market chain of *P. elata* in Ghana which included trade in the local market, overland export and other channels.

2. Market Survey Methodology

The methodology adopted for the market survey was basically in two phases – review of secondary data and field data collection from timber markets (through interviews guided by a questionnaire) and analysis.

Phase I – Review of Secondary Data:

A search to identify sources of secondary data in consultation with the FC relevant for the assignment was undertaken. Data was gathered from NDF, RMSC, TIDD, Wildlife Division, FSD, CSOs/NGOs, DOLTA, etc. The various data gathered on Pericopsis trade in Ghana was reviewed and analyzed. The data collected included TIDD quarterly reports, information on concession areas where *P. elata* is found, yield allocation on *P. elata*, information on CITES certificates issued, and appropriate markets where *P. elata* trade can be found. There was no existing secondary data specifically on *P. elata* trade and much of the data was mainly in the form of information gathered from stakeholders through discussions. In all secondary data sourced, no data was available on *P. elata* trade chain and/or trade volumes.

Phase II – Field Data Collection (*List and Categories of Stakeholders Interviewed is attached as Annex I*)

i. Categories of Stakeholders Involved in data collection

The categories of stakeholders selected for data collection was based on their roles in *P. elata* trade chain as statutory authorities, market players and trade associations, traders, and/or civil society actors. Field visits to offices of the various divisions of the Forestry Commission including the FSD, WD, RMSC and TIDD was done to gather data through interviewing of staff. Field data was also gathered from Civil Society Organizations (mainly NGOs), timber companies and timber traders in the Western, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions of Ghana through interviews conducted at their offices. The primary focal stakeholders for the survey were timber producing, processing and trading companies and enterprises who were selected in collaboration with the FC and DOLTA. Data was collected through one-one interviews and focus group discussions using the questionnaire.

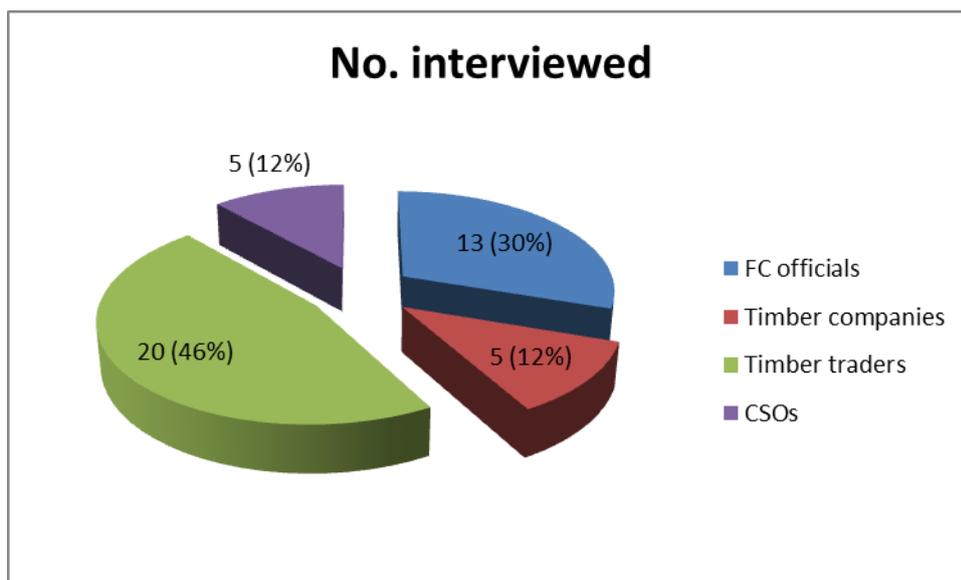
Picture 1: Techiman Timber Market



ii. Total Number of People Interviewed (Sample Size)

In all, a total of 43 stakeholders made of thirteen (13) FC officials, five (5) timber companies, twenty (20) timber traders and five (5) CSOs in the timber production and trading hubs of Ghana (specifically within the Ashanti Region, Brong Ahafo Region, Western Region, Central Region, Eastern Region and Greater Accra Region) were interviewed. The thirteen FC officials interviewed represented were made up of four (4) from the FSD, three (3) from the WD, three (3) from the TIDD and three (3) from the RMSC. The timber trading hubs visited included the Accra Agbobgoloshie timber market, Kumasi Sokoban timber market, Koforidua timber market, Takoradi Kokompe timber market, Makessim timber market, Techiman timber market and Sunyani timber market. These markets were selected because they are either found within the high forest zones and/or being the main timber trading hubs in Ghana where *P. elata* trade can be found. These markets were selected based on information analysed from DOLTA and the FSD.

Stakeholders Interviewed



iii. Sampling Criteria

Stakeholders from the FC, Civil Society Organizations, private timber sector producers/traders, timber trade associations were purposively selected based on their involvement and experiences in the trade of pericopsis in Ghana.

The FC and its divisions are the statutory authorities responsible for forest management and regulation in Ghana, timber producers/traders mainly harvest timber from their allocations and trade the timber/timber products on the domestic and international markets while Civil Society Organizations in the forestry sector mainly engage in advocacy for sustainable forest management. These timber companies were selected based on the location of their concessions in areas where *P. elata* is found while traders were selected based on the main timber trading hubs in Ghana.

Primary data collection was done through the use of a data collection instrument in the form of a questionnaire consisting of primarily both quantitative and qualitative items administered in semi-structured interviews. The instrument was administered in the appropriate language and forum as much as possible to ensure the capturing of detail information. While the

questionnaire was mainly administered in English at the offices of the FC, CSOs and Timber Companies, it was mainly done in the local language (Twi) in the timber markets as most traders are more conversant with the local language. Identified respondents were interviewed through face to face interviews and telephone correspondence for mob up data collection. Field data collection also included direct observation and site visits, one-on-one interviewing and/or group interviewing, focus group discussion and transects walks in the timber markets. Primary data collection was basically focused on the past three (3) years – 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Data collection in the field started with proper introduction in the case of the FC and logging companies and engaging DOLTA to link the field team to their regional representatives to support data collection in the case of timber traders. Through organized meetings with the various stakeholders, the survey and its objectives was made known and their consent sought prior to the start of data collection.

Data Quality Check & Control Process

The team ensured at every stage that data collected was verified.

3. Results

3.1 Current statistics on trade volumes and trade chain of *Pericopsis elata*,

3.1.1 Trade Chain

FC Level

Interviews with all thirteen (13) FC officials – 4 from FSD, 3 from WD, 3 from RMSC and 3 from TIDD - and records obtained could not provide any official data in relation to the existing trade chain in *P. elata*. This is mainly because the RMSC indicated that the species/*P. elata* is considered a restricted species and not included as part of the yield to be harvested by TUC holders. According to the RMSC, the last time yield allocation included *P. elata* was in 2002 which was observed during the biodiversity assessment of the high forest zone in 2002. They indicated that *P. elata* is mainly found in forest reserves along the Brong Ahafo Region. Thus the impression is that *P. elata* has not been logged over the last fourteen years and cannot have an established official trade chain.

At the WD division which is the administrative authority of CITES in Ghana, it was indicated that a CITES certificate has not been issued since *P. elata* was listed under the CITES appendix II and this is because, the Division have not received any applications from traders for a CITES certificate to trade in *P. elata*. According to Mr. Naateg, the former Director of Operations of the WD (retired in 2016), there currently exist no records of issuance of CITES certificate for the export of *P. elata* by the WD since *P. elata* was listed in appendix II.

Timber Companies Level

All five (5) Timber companies – Logs Lumber & Limited (Kumasi), ABTS¹ (Sunyani), AGTI (Takoradi), Naja David (Kumasi) and Ayum timbers (Sunyani) - interviewed indicated that they do not harvest or trade in *P. elata* as it is not added to their harvestable yields. They also mention that the procedure of securing CITES certificate from FC to trade in *P. elata* is cumbersome which serves as a disincentive for them.

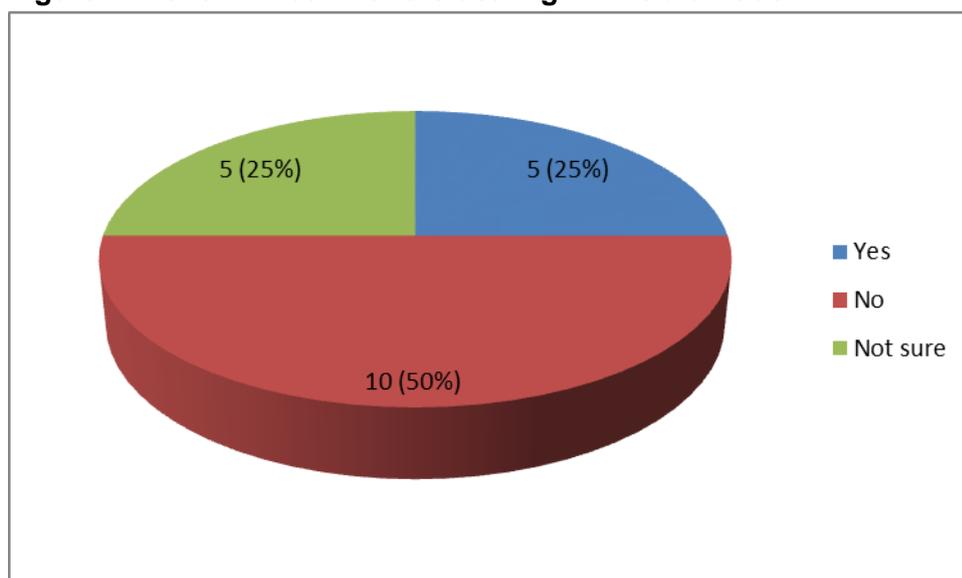
Timber Markets

P. elata trade was only observed at timber markets in two (2) regions – Greater Accra and Brong Ahafo out of the six (6) regions visited. In all seven (7) timber markets were visited - Accra Agbobgoloshie timber market, Kumasi Sokoban timber market, Koforidua timber market, Takoradi Kokompe timber market, Makessim timber market, Techiman timber market and Sunyani timber market. Out of twenty (20) Timber Traders interviewed, only five (5) indicated they traded in *P. elata* and could identify it, ten (10) indicated they did not even know how *P. elata* looks like risking the possibility of trading in *P. elata* unknowingly, while five (5) said they have never traded in its products. The five (5) timber traders who trade in *P. elata* indicated that they got their products from the sawmills (mainly illegal chainsaw operators) in the form of beams which they then process to various sizes for sale but all refused to name the source of their *P. elata* products. According to the traders, buyers hardly demand specifically for *P. elata* but usually come to buy hardwood except for only two (2)

¹ Asuo Bmosadu Timber and Sawmill Limited

consumer companies as mentioned by traders in Accra (ie Kings furnitures and Agorwu furnitures who specifically demand for *P. elata* from traders but this could not be verified).

Figure 2: No. of Timber Traders dealing in *P. elata* trade



3.1.2 Trade Volumes/Quantities

Trade Volumes from FC Records: There was no available quantitative data on production and trade volumes on *P. elata* at the FC offices. All TIDD reports reviewed and officials interviewed indicated *P. elata* not to be part of species traded over a very long time. The same scenario was encountered at the FSD, RMSC and WD offices. Thus implying that officially Ghana has not recorded any trade in *P. elata* over the last three years. Officials however raise the possibility of mislabelling by timber companies to trade *P. elata* under a different species name. This is seen as a very strong perception held by FC officials due to the inability of officials to identify *P. elata* beams and other products.

Trade Volumes from Timber Companies: All five (5) timber companies interviewed stated that they did not trade in *P. elata* and has no records on trade volumes.

Trade Volumes from Timber Markets: The five (5) Timber traders who indicated that they deal in *P. elata* products found it difficult providing estimates of the trade quantities as they did not document their sales. The table below is a summary of their estimates in terms of container of wood products.

Name of Timber Company or Trader	Source of <i>P. elata</i> products	Are you a producer, trader and/or buyer	Estimated Trade Volumes Per Company per year of <i>P. elata</i> traded			Remarks
			2013	2014	2015	
Accra Timber Market	Sawmills from all parts of Ghana	Traders	1 Containers	1 Containers	1 Containers	Out of 6-5 containers annually 1 container have <i>P. elata</i> per year in the form of beams. <i>The biggest log is</i>

						about 110 diameter and produce very small amount of beams -110 diameter produces 3 logs, 35 beams and 50 pieces of 2x6 boards
Sokoban Timber Market	Sawmills from all parts of Ghana	Traders	Nil	Nil	Nil	Believe, <i>P. elata</i> is been miss-label for Construction of Government project (Kejetia Market Construction)
Koforidua Timber Market	Sawmills from all parts of Ghana	Traders	½ container	½ container	½ container	For Government projects, Individual carpentries also sometimes demand for <i>P. elata</i>

3.2 Trade regulations mechanisms instituted and their effectiveness in maintaining sustainable trade

3.2.1 Existing Regulations

The existing institutional arrangements that guide the trade of *P. elata* using the CITES certificate is the responsibility of the WD. The WD of the FC however does not play any role in timber harvesting regulation and management. The RMSC approves yield allocations and ensure the non-harvesting of protected species. Thus until the RMSC approves a yield allocation for *P. elata*, no trader can apply to the WD for a CITES certificate to export it. For trade in the local market, one needs a grant of timber rights and yield allocation approved by the RMSC. Currently the RMSC does not allocate *P. elata* for logging since 2002. This implies that *P. elata* was still allocated as yield for harvesting after it was listed in 1992 until it was observed during the biodiversity assessment of the high forest zone in 2002 and stopped thereafter. With the domestic timber market mainly getting its timber from illegal sources, its logical to conclude that the *P. elata* trade observed is mainly products which are illegally sourced.

3.2.2 Permit Regime

To export *P. elata*, a CITES certificate issued by the WD is required. Thus even though a timber company may have obtained timber rights to harvest timber including *P. elata*, such a company will be required to follow the procedure and obtained a CITES certificate from WD before it exports *P. elata*. Also, harvesting of restricted species are usually referred to RMSC for approval and its expected that a timber company who gets RMSC approval to harvest *P. elata* will be referred to the WD for a CITES certificate. A timber trader does not require CITES to trade in *P. elata* locally but such products must be from sources approved by the RMSC for them to be legal products.

3.2.3 Monitoring and enforcement

All thirteen (FC) officials interviewed indicated that the FSD prepares yield data for approval by RMSC and that *P. elata* is treated as a restricted species which is no longer approved by RMSC in yield allocation. If *P. elata* is identified at TIDD check points it will be confiscated but FC officials indicated that such reports have not come up over decades now. Officials also indicated that identification of *P. elata* products by its staff is the biggest challenge and such products could escape their notice when miss-labelled.

The FC taskforce only establish checkpoints along major roads but do not undertake market monitoring of possible illegal trade in *P. elata* especially in the local market where these products are found even though the FC has not granted harvesting to any entity. At the ports, TIDD officials inspect trade in wood products but the same issue of inability to identify *P. elata* products when miss-labelled was mentioned as the challenge.

3.3 Level of knowledge on the protection status of *Pericopsis elata* and the required procedures in its trade.

3.3.1 FC Level

All the thirteen (13) FC officials interviewed were aware that *P. elata* is a restricted species that require approval from RMSC but 80% (10) of them are not aware that traders need CITES certificate from WD to export *P. elata* products.

3.3.2 Timber Producers

All the five (5) timber companies interviewed are aware they need a CITES certificate to export *P. elata* but indicated that the procedure is cumbersome and they do not get the approval from RMSC to log *P. elata* in the first place. Ayum Timbers indicated that it ever made a request to harvest *P. elata* as part of its yield but was not approved by the RMSC and so the procedure stopped at that point.

3.3.3 Timber Traders

In all the five (5) timber markets visited across the six (6) regions not a single trader interviewed was aware of the protection status of *P. elata* neither are they aware that they require a CITES certificate to export *P. elata* products.

3.3.4 Civil Society

All five (5) CSOs (manily NGOs active in forest sector advocacy) interviewed indicated they have no knowledge on the protection status of *P. elata* and the requirement of a CITES certificate to trade in *P. elata* products.

4. Discussion

4.1 Current statistics on trade volumes and trade chain of *Pericopsis elata*,

There is currently no official data on *P. elata* trade at the FC partly due to the non-approval of *P. elata* as part of yield allocation. According to the RMSC, *P. elata* is usually removed from the yield allocation when detected and apart from that most of the *P. elata* sometimes found in the stock do not meet the 110cm minimum diameter requirement for allocation. Thus officially Ghana does not trade in *P. elata* products and have no existing trade chain. However, it is common knowledge that one of the common illegal acts committed by timber companies is logging outside the yield. This illegally harvested timber might be exported as a different species or sold on the domestic market. The possibility of miss-labelling mentioned by officials means that there is a weakness in institutional capacity to inspect and verify wood products that are been traded locally or exported. If miss-labelling can be verified and/or investigated further, then the FC might have to target the timber companies with concessions in forest areas where *P. elata* exist.

However, *P. elata* products were found in the timber markets in Greater Accra and Brong Ahafo Regions. This has been attributed to illegal logging. The sources of wood for the domestic market generally in Ghana are known to be mainly through illegal sources. These traders however, do not have appropriate records to provide estimates of trade volumes/quantities and are unwilling to provide information on the sources of their wood products.

Thus the findings implies that no single scientific market data exist in Ghana on *P. elata* trade either through legal or illegal means making it much more difficult to track the trend and make deductions as to whether *P. elata* is been traded at sustainable levels or not to inform policy decisions on its sustainable trade.

4.2 Trade regulations mechanisms instituted and their effectiveness in maintaining sustainable trade

The existing regulation mechanisms for *P. elata* trade are actually not in operation since *P. elata* logging is currently not approved by the FC. From the results of the survey, the FC does not approve yields or allocate yields that include *P. elata*. According to the RMSC, this decision was administratively taken after the biodiversity study undertaken in 2002 that found that *P. elata* was allocated for logging. This implies that no timber company or trader has been given official approval by the RMSC in the first place to warrant the application to the WD for a CITES certificate to export *P. elata*. The RMSC could however track the possibility of illegal harvesting and miss-labelling using the pre-felling and post-felling inspection reports in concessions where *P. elata* exist. For example, if 5 *P. elata* trees were identified during pre-felling inspection which have not been allocated and this number reduces during post-felling inspection, then, that could be an indication that the timber company might have logged and miss-labelled the products and further investigations can then be carried out with the appropriate expertise. According to the RMSC no such elements has been observed. The low capacity of FC officials to identify *P. elata* wood products is a major issue to check miss-labelling and illegal trade.

There currently exists no official monitoring of timber products traded in the domestic market to track trade in illegal wood products. It is hoped that the artisanal milling policy under the

VPA could in future contribute to the streamlining of timber trade in the domestic market and reduce trade in illegal wood.

4.3 Level of knowledge on the protection status of *Pericopsis elata* and the required procedures in its trade.

The knowledge level among stakeholders on the protection status of *P. elata* and the required procedure for its trade is so poor. Its much more of a worry when the staff of the regulatory institution seem to be unaware about the requirement of a CITES certificate from the WD. The institutional role of the RMSC has however enabled the official protection of *P. elata* with respect to legal logging.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

All *P. elata* products originating from Ghana currently are illegal since the FC has stopped yield allocation and by extension, grant of timber rights for *P. elata*. Thus no timber rights are being granted for *P. elata* harvesting in Ghana. So whether a *P. elata* product is traded locally or exported from Ghana means the product is from an illegal source. The survey results indicate that over a very long time and within the past three years, no official approval has been granted to any timber company or trader to log or trade in *P. elata*. This partly accounts for the non-availability of trade data in order to compare with conservation status and predict whether current trade patterns are sustainable or not. Until the FC begins to approve yields and yield allocations that include *P. elata*, such data cannot be available.

The FC currently do not have specific measures to track illegal trade in *P. elata* on the local market and miss-labelling beyond the measures put in place to avoid illegal harvesting. Even though the perception of miss-labelling and illegal trade in the local market is so strong and real, the FC has not been able to verify and track such activities. This has a very serious consequence for sustainable conservation of *P. elata*.

5.2 Recommendations

The FC could institute mechanisms to track the illegal trade through miss-labelling and trade of the species on the local market. Miss-labelling can be checked through the use of pre-felling and post-felling inspections.

To address the possible logging and miss-labelling for trade in *P. elata* products, the FC will need to recruit competent wood scientists to lead their inspectorate divisions for wood products in order to ensure the records presented by timber traders correspond to the wood products packed.

A rigorous awareness raising and sensitization programme need to be put in place to improve the knowledge of FC officials, timber companies, timber traders and Civil Society on the protection status of *P. elata* and the requirements for its trade.

6. Annexes

6.1 ANNEX 2: Categories of Stakeholders Interviewed

6.2 ANNEX 3: Data Collection Instrument
