

Advocacy and policy/strategy development

Through timber construction, there is a future in which forests can support cities and, in return, cities can support forests. As the global population increases, particularly in cities, the construction sector is expected to exponentially grow in order to accommodate the demand for housing and other infrastructure. Current construction techniques are a significant contributor to the global climate crisis and urgently need to be transformed. By substituting the carbon-intensive materials commonly used in construction with forest economy biomaterials, such as wood and bamboo which sequester carbon, we can create buildings with reduced carbon emissions. However, this timber construction industry is still in its nascency and there is a need to address its market gaps and leverage opportunities to accelerate its development and increase its uptake.

These interventions for the mass timber construction industry can be segmented into seven main categories of solutions that affect the value chain and enablers of the ecosystem. Through various internal and external discussions, Climate Smart Forest Economy Program (CSFEP) has categorized potential solutions as relating to i) Finance and insurance; ii) Product and process certifications; iii) Communication and awareness building; iv) Timber knowledge ecosystem; v) Forest management and timber policies; vi) Value chain linkages; and vii) Timber-based real estate. The proposed solutions can be executed as for-profit, philanthropic, or blended ventures, with the services developed as individual offerings or paired with complementary services in a single offering. Additionally, while some solutions may be set up as a free-standing entity, other solutions may be similar to services provided by existing actors in or adjacent to the CSFE sector. In the case of the latter, it may make sense to approach these existing providers as potential partners to find a suitable and effective home for needed services.

FOREST AND TIMBER POLICIES

One of the industry gaps faced is the limited public policy for mass timber construction, hindering the ability of it, and the larger climate smart forest economy (CSFE), to develop and operate efficiently and effectively. The present misaligned policies, regulations, and standards that govern the industry are key barriers. Current forest policies are either poorly enforced or restrictive of sustainable forest management practices adopted by forest product producers. And timber construction actors face huge variability in local and national policies on building with timber. More government and supranational cohesion and participation is needed to foster the development of this industry.

Promoting the development of local, municipal, regional, national, and multinational strategies and policies that are supportive of CSFEs and timber construction will ensure a more consistently enabling policy environment across the globe. Actors can establish an entity to advocate for these industries and support governments in developing this environment. The objectives of the entity can be summarised as:

- Working with local, sub-national (state, county, etc.), and national governments to develop strategies – and attendant policies – that support the development of the CSFE, encouraging the growth of local and regional value chains and creating high-quality jobs
- Advocating for the needs of CSFE actors with relevant government entities
- Harmonizing supranational regional markets to support the development of CSFE ecosystems that connect producers with consumers across borders

There are private sector actors working towards advocating and influencing public policy to enable the forest economies around the globe. The non-profit Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions helped negotiators from key countries achieve the Paris Agreement, and is ¹ Similarly, the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), a global non-profit research and policy organization, focuses on tackling environmental challenges. SEI's initiative on Governing Bioeconomy Pathways aims to articulate pathways to bioeconomy development (which includes the forest economy) and to identify the policies, institutions, and governance mechanisms that can facilitate them. One of the gaps the initiative stemmed from was a need to identify *“where in the geopolitical space can cohesive bioeconomy strategies be developed”* and *“what types of dialogue and other interaction could support improved governance”*.² This need for strategy and advocacy targeted at government agencies in the bioeconomy includes the mass timber industry, and much can be gained from the players already working towards providing these services to the sector. A key challenge for this intermediary would be to explore opportunities for revenue generation given the current focus on grant funding / non-profitability of current players. Industry bodies /funds can be useful clients willing to pay for services.

In order to meet its objectives, the advocacy and policy entity will have five main functions targeting various stakeholders to address the challenges identified. The entity will:

- Work with Development Finance Institutions to revise their lending criteria for nature-based projects and include policies/incentives around forest economies and mass timber
- Work with government champions to develop strategies, legislation, and policies to support the creation and scaling of CSFEs
- Work with government champions to develop strategies, legislation, and policies that promote timber construction in urban and peri-urban areas
- Provide regulatory training and build capacity for regulators
- Convene national trade and development representatives to support the harmonization of timber-related trade policies
- Provide advocacy services and toolkits for CSFE actors, to help them engage with key policymakers and promote the policies they need, including the development of white papers and other documents to support arguments in favor of CSFE-promoting strategies and policies

If you would like to know more about advocacy, and policy and strategy development, you can reach out to [Dalberg](#) or [Stockholm Environment Institute](#).

¹ Centre for Climate and Energy Solutions, Our Work

² Stockholm Environment Institute, SEI Initiative on Governing Bioeconomy Pathways