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## Gabon Special Economic Zone to process timber

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Gabon is developing a US\$500m Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to focus on downstream processing of timber.

The project, developed by the government and Olam International, covers 1,126ha of land on an industrial park. Foreign investors are being targeted to help finance the project.

One million ha of forest has been allocated to serve the SEZ, with a further one million ha in the process of allotment.

Gabon banned the export of raw logs in 2010 in a bid to add value to the country's timber exports and increase its foreign exchange earnings.

Investors interested in processing timber in the SEZ are being offered incentives, including a VAT exemption for 25 years, and a corporate tax exemption for 10 years. Electricity costs will also be halved.

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**FSC terminates relationship with Danzer**

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) has terminated its relationship with decorative veneer and hardwood timber producer Danzer Group in a landmark decision billed by Greenpeace as critical for the reputation of FSC.

**New North American timber EPDs published**

The American Wood Council and Canadian Wood Council have announced Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) for softwood lumber, plywood, OSB and glulam.

**Bellway focuses on timber sourcing**

Conversations are understood to be taking place at national housebuilder Bellway plc about the sourcing of its CLS due to internal concerns over potential performance issues of home-grown Sitka spruce.

**Rising costs put pressure on UK joinery manufacturers**

Costs associated with CE marking and sourcing timber compliant with the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) are starting to put pressure on joinery manufacturers, according to the British Woodworking Federation's (BWF) latest State of Trade survey.

**Major investment marks Nicklin centenary**

Major timber user Nicklin Transit Packaging, which is celebrating 100 years in business, is undertaking a major capital investment programme to boost capacity and efficiency. It is also looking to use 100% British wood.

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