

Shelter working group

Field assessment report: Maniche: Sud department

Timber salvage

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Team members:

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This report is written following a journey by car with a multi-sector team, during one day from Les Cayes to Maniche along rural roads, with the objective of better understanding timber salvage and use in post hurricane recovery. During the field assessment the team spoke with home owners on the use of wood, merchants, furniture makers and people recovering timber and making planks with saws.

Recommendations

- **Larger dimension construction timber needs to be imported** from outside the area as it does not appear to be available from salvaged timber in sufficient volume for the reconstruction.
- **Further analysis is required** to better understand the availability and sourcing **of timber poles**.
- **Any further analysis that is made** of the use of salvaged timber must take into account the different types of wood, their processing and usage.
- There is **limited number of skilled workers to recover timber for boards**, but these are primarily used for furniture and not construction.
- Any IEC materials should reflect the reality of bush poles in construction, but **should not promote the use of locally sourced timber**
- **Urban shelter projects** need to take account of the fact that homeowners have to purchase all timber. In rural areas more salvage, as well as cutting of fresh timber is possible for reduced or no financial cost.

Observations on Recovery

- Self driven recovery is ongoing in earnest.
- 10-20% of observed houses had one or more new CGI sheets on the roof.
- Several people said that they would prefer to rebuild houses with blocks and that molds for forming blocks were available.
- Everyone people were salvaging materials from their houses



Photo: People are rebuilding wherever possible. The building pictured here has a roof repaired with a combination of salvaged and new corrugated iron

Salvage of timber from damaged houses

- A lot of the timber in houses were old, had infestations in the structural members, had rot where the wood was in contact with the ground or had been structurally weakened with notches and previous construction.
- Most of the timber seemed to have broken at the joints (nails pulling out, etc.) rather than splitting in two.
- Not all of timber could re-usable and most had limitations for structural uses.



Photo: The home owner has salvaged usable timber and other materials. However, the salvaged timber is often old, and has some damage from water, insects and previous construction markings

Salvage of timber from fallen trees

Charcoal

Species: breadfruit, mango, avocado etc.

- Some larger fallen trees were being used for making charcoal because the wood was not appropriate for planks.
- Most charcoal production seems to be sold rather than stocked.



Photo: Wood stacked for making charcoal. The quality and species of the timber is not suitable for construction

Planks and sawn timber

Species: Cojou cene, and oak for furniture

- Some timber is being sawn by hand and made into planks, but the limiting factor on the speed of plank production is skilled people with the tools to do it.
- Those making planks were planning to stock the some planks rather than sending them to market.
- The fallen timber to be used for planks should be sawn in months rather than years. Those sawing the planks prefer to use wet timber rather than dry timber, because it saws easier.
- Most of the fallen timber cannot be used for planks.
- Planks are primarily for use in furniture production.

- Planks are not generally used for structural purposes



Photo: Fallen trees of suitable species and quality are sawn into planks by hand, often on site. The primary use for this timber is furniture. There is a shortage of skilled workers able to make these planks

Structural timbers and beams

Species: Bois blanc for sawn structural elements

- There are limited volumes of timber suitable for structural purposes
- Planks are generally not used for Structural elements
- Bush Poles were being collected (8ft long approx 3" diameter) - it was not clear if all was from fallen timber. Some is still being cut for this purpose. These poles are used in housebuilding, bracing and scaffolding. They are cleaned by machete.
- Larger section timbers (greater than 3" section) do not appear to be salvagable in significant quantities.
- Difference in prices for poles were noted. In non-representative sampling, in a rural areas 12 poles were 200gd, in urban areas (les cayes) the same poles would cost 600gd
- There is a difference between access to materials in rural and urban areas – in rural areas it is possible to harvest and salvage some timber. In urban areas homeowners have to purchase all timber.



Photo: There appears to be very limited volumes of larger dimension of timber salvagable for construction purposes. All sawn 2x4 timber observed was imported.

Woven walling

Species: coconut

- Salvaged coconut can be used for clissade walling. The timber is split into thin pieces which are woven. Soil can be added later.
- The coconut timber species observed were not used in construction