

## Brazil Wood Sector Sells US\$ 8 Million to Arabs in First Quarter

Contributed by Omar Nasser  
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The Brazilian wood industry had revenues of US\$ 8.1 million with exports to the Arab countries in the first quarter of this year. The value represents 23% of the US\$ 35.5 million sold in the whole of last year.

Businessmen believe that there is potential to increase this value due to the demand that the region, mainly the Middle East, offers.

"The tendency is for businessmen to increase their business with the Middle East," stated the development vice president of the Brazilian Processed Wood Brazilian Plywood Industry and Exporters Association (Abimci), Luiz Carlos Reis de Toledo Barros.

The main clients for this sector in the Arab world last year were Morocco (US\$ 14 million), the United Arab Emirates (US\$ 7.8 million), Saudi Arabia (US\$ 6 million) and Egypt (US\$ 2.3 million). Toledo Barros stated that currently the best opportunities for the sector are the Middle East and Asia.

The sector is still highly dependant, however, on the markets considered traditional, like Europe and the United States. A reduction in the demand in these regions, however, is causing the domestic industry to find trade alternatives.

"Some industries are already managing to find positions in less traditional markets with strong growth potential, like Saudi Arabia and Egypt," he explained.

The Brazilian forestry sector is diverse. It includes mechanically processed wood and wooden products, like panels and laminates, sawed wood, plywood, floors, components and doors.

Apart from diversification, companies have been investing in technology and improvement of quality. In 1999, the Abimci released the National Wood Quality Program. In April last year, CE Marking was implemented.

Abimci represents 165 industries in Brazil, of which 51 are in the southern state of Paraná. Throughout Brazil, the solid wood sector productive chain employs 2.5 million people.

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