

SUMMARY

- Attendance was over 17% up on the previous all-time high in 2018
- Exhibitors from 40 countries attended
- The new compartmentalisation of the event made it easier to navigate
- France's RE2020 environmental regulation is expected to benefit trade

CARREFOUR POINTS TO MORE STABILITY

Participants at the CIB reported a busy show and more positivity in the international trade.
Mike Jeffree was there



France's Carrefour International du Bois (CIB) has kept up its record of expanding and evolving each time it comes around. Exhibitors and visitors at the three-day May event in Nantes said it also further cemented its status as Europe's leading all-timber trade show.

According to the organisers, visitor numbers were down around 500 from 2022's record 14,000. But exhibitors attributed the bumper total two years ago to the post-Covid bounce that boosted the timber market globally. They also pointed out that this year's attendance was over 17% up on the previous all-time high in 2018 (the 2020 show was cancelled due to the pandemic). ▶



Above: Exhibitors said the CIB cemented its status as Europe's leading all timber trade show

PIVETEAUBOIS IN ENGINEERED WOOD PARTNERSHIP WITH BUILDING GIANT



Above: Piveteaubois' Hexapli

Also, on Piveteaubois' CIB stand during TTJ's visit was Pierre-Alexandre Herard, timber construction procurement and partnerships manager at French-based international building giant Bouygues Construction. As part of its environmental strategy, the company has pledged that 30% of its projects in France will be wood-based by 2030. Committing to source 50% of this actually coming from France, three years ago Bouygues signed a 'framework' supply agreement with Piveteaubois, which has just been renewed. The prime product provided by Piveteaubois under the deal is its Hexapli CLT, but it also supplies glulam.

"Under the arrangement we secure our supply of engineered timber and at the same time benefit from Piveteaubois' knowledge of CLT," said Mr Herard. "We work together at an early stage on new projects, and we've also developed commonly with Dassault System an application software system allowing us to increase efficiency on structural analysis and to optimise the volume and area of CLT needed for each development, which takes into account all the site's health and safety rules. The objective is to have digital continuity from the 3D model to Piveteaubois' manufacturing machine, to the construction site."

So far under this programme, Bouygues estimates it has used about 80,000m² of CLT. That includes over 6,000m³ of French pine Hexapli CLT in Campus Engie, the second largest CLT build in France. ■

◀ There were 637 exhibitors at the CIB (against 607 in 2022), with 39% from outside France, representing 40 countries. There was a marked increase in visitor attendance from abroad too, also hitting 39% of the total, and drawn from nearly 100 countries.

The show also occupied more space this year at Nantes' Beaujoire fair complex, with the 28% area increase outstripping the rise in stand numbers thanks to the use of hall XXL for the first time.

Another change was the new compartmentalisation of the event, with

the different halls dedicated to flooring, wood-based panels, timber building and construction services, and the XXL hall grouping sawmills, timber trade and forestry. The consensus was that this made the event easier to navigate.

While acknowledging their market perceptions were yet to be underpinned with categoric stats, attendees also felt show attendance indicated the mood of the timber sector was on the turn, after a challenging 2023/early 2024. The feeling was that confidence is "gently improving" due to

inflation decreasing (and the EU area rate was down to 2.6% in May from a 2022 peak of over 10%) and the prospect of lower interest rates, with the European Central Bank cutting them for the first time in five years in June to 3.75%.

The level of product development at the show, plus news highlighted by many companies of capital investment and corporate development projects, also indicated a more positive perspective.

Multi-faceted French softwood sawmill and timber product manufacturer

ARCLIN AT CIB AS PART OF DRYSHELL SALES DRIVE



Above: Arclin promoted its Arctek Dryshell factory applied protective, vapour control overlay for timber construction panel products

American building sector bonding and surfaces specialist Arclin was at Carrefour as part of its drive to develop the European market for its Arctek Dryshell overlay for OSB and plywood (see pp44-45).

Dryshell is based on a proprietary resin formula. It is factory applied and billed as the next generation successor to site-fixed protective polyethylene membranes. The overlay, says Arclin, is moisture resistant and vapour permeable, delivering weather protection to wood-based panels and providing vapour control. At the same time, with panel joints simply taped, it enhances building air tightness.

Already a well-established technology in the US, Arclin's Paul Worsley said Dryshell is getting a positive reaction from panel producers and processors across Europe, including in the UK where the company recently acquired processor Trade Fabrication Systems.

"OSB producers across the continent are expressing interest," said Mr Worsley. "They're looking to add value to their product and evaluating surface solutions." ■



Above: Piveteaubois' Pivolta car park solar canopy

◀ “This is a great cladding timber, and a replacement for Siberian larch, for which we’re also offering ayous and thermo-treated timber as alternatives,” said Ms Standaert. “Louro vermelho is also a good price.”

With recent CITES Appendix II listings including ipé and cumaru, Vandecasteele has also focused on lesser-known species for decking. At CIB it showed samples of other suitable South American species – balsamo, tanimbuca, sucupira preta and jutai.

The upcoming EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) was another hot topic of show conversation. Companies acknowledged its demand from the end of 2024 for due diligence assurance that timber imported to and exported from the EU is deforestation-free and legal, and for geolocation co-ordinates for provenance, will be a challenge.

Vandecasteele said it was considering use of Orbify’s geospatial data platform for natural assets monitoring as part of its EUDR strategy.

Interholco, the Switzerland and Africa-based timber and further processed product supplier, believes the combination of certification of its African forest and wood operations, plus its own data and traceability systems will facilitate EUDR compliance.

“We already provided geolocation information for our concessions as part of legality assurance under the EU Timber Regulation, and we draw on Global Forest Watch satellite monitoring of forest cover,” said vice-president sales and marketing Christophe Janssen. “Although it’s not related to EUDR, [in terms of environmental validation] we’re also working with the International Tropical Timber Technical Association (ATIBT) on life cycle analysis for our timber products [to enable development of environmental product declarations and health and environment declaration sheets].”

The company, he added, is also part of the European Biochar Industry Consortium, looking at the use of by-products to make biochar, which has uses as a soil improver, in water filtration and as a long-term carbon store, including in concrete production.

With log export restrictions in the Republic of the Congo, where Interholco subsidiary IFO has its production and forest operations, Interholco has also accelerated further processing and finished goods production.

“We’re investing in new edging and kilning capacity, and a new 180m finger-jointing line has doubled our multi-ply window and door scantlings capacity,” said Mr Janssen.

Interholco too, is developing use of lesser-known tropical species.

“Recently we’ve been evaluating olon and olonvogo,” said Mr Janssen. “The latter is very close in performance to iroko, where

availability has not been sufficient to meet demand.”

Centre stage on Arxada’s stand was its Tanalith metal-free range, plus the Lifestyle Colours designed for use with both Tanalith MF and E.

“We’re looking at the needs of the market 10, 12 years into the future, and Tanalith MF is one of the outcomes of that long-term focus,” said Arxada marketing director EIMEA Wood Protection Andy Hodge. “It’s ideal for such areas as playground equipment, garden furniture and other out-of-ground contact timber uses. You don’t need that heavy chemical content. An added incentive to choose MF is materials costs, with copper prices up 25% this year. Lifestyle also enables users to be more creative, including through blending to create their own signature colour range.” ■



Above: Many exhibitors used the show to launch new products