The tropical rainforest is at risk from overexploitation and fire clearance, and this has brought trading in tropical timber into disrepute. Timber companies from countries like Peru therefore encounter difficulties in exporting their tropical wood products to the EU market. They are supported by the Import Promotion Desk (IPD), the precondition being that their timber is verifiably sourced from legal and sustainable forestry. Maderacre Rio Acre SAC is a company that meets the criteria of the FSC, demonstrating in practice that responsible forest management can help to protect the rainforest.

At the heart of the Amazon rainforest, Maderacre manages the largest FSC-certified forest concession in Peru. The company exclusively processes tropical timber from its own concessions. In the sawmills at Madre de Dios, the tropical trees are processed into high-quality products for which there is a growing demand on the German and European market.

Tropical wood varieties such as cumaru, garapa or estoraque are ideally suited for manufacturing decking boards, wood tiles or garden furniture. They are far more hardwearing and durable than European wood varieties. Particularly for outdoor use, it is crucial that timber is of a high technical quality and is resistant to weather. Tropical timber is impervious to funguses and vermin, and the massive structure of the wood prevents the risk of penetration by damp or mould.

“Cumaru is one of the densest and most resistant timber species worldwide. Decking boards made of cumaru will last for at least 25 years,” Christian Körting Pacheco, Managing Director of BioMaderas GmbH, confirms. Körting got to know the Peruvian wood exporter Maderacre during a sourcing mission organised by the IPD. “We were able to take a look at the Maderacre wood production on site. The company fulfils all the requirements for sustainable forest management. And so, in 2015, we decided to work together with Maderacre,” says Körting. After having accepted Maderacre into its export promotion programme in 2014, the IPD mediated contacts between the Peruvian company and BioMaderas. Like all exporters with whom the IPD cooperates, Maderacre was first evaluated in the context of a fact-finding mission with regard to the criteria of product quality, exportability, and legality.

Maderacre manages more than 220,000 hectares of forest and complies with the strict criteria of international FSC standards. The timber stand is systematically inventoried. Only previously designated trees that have reached a certain age are felled, and felling quantities are strictly limited to one tree per hectare every 20 years.
“Maderacre is a pioneer of responsible forest management in Peru,” says Frank Maul, IPD specialist for sourcing and purchasing of tropical timber. “Anyone buying certified tropical timber from Maderacre is thereby contributing towards the conservation of the rainforest and supporting sustainable economic development. Sustainable forest management makes it possible to manufacture products with high added value and high export potential, and to provide the people with a lucrative income,” according to Maul.

Early on, Maderacre made a point of securing the verification of the legality and sustainability of its wood products required for the EU market. However, since it lacked knowledge of the market, the company had a hard time finding the right customers that appreciate certified timber products. Through IPD’s study tours to Germany and arranged visits to specialist trade fairs, Maderacre was able to gain insights into the German market and market trends, as well as to establish contacts to German timber importers. In the form of additional capacity building measures, the IPD assisted the Peruvian exporter in increasing its competitiveness and further developing its product range for the EU market.

With the support of the IPD, Maderacre made a first appearance in 2015 at DOMOTEX in Hanover. Further appearances at the leading exhibition for flooring followed. In 2017, Maderacre was amongst those exhibitors selected by the expert jury for Innovations@DOMOTEX. This special exhibition showcases those products and trends in the industry that are most worth seeing. “Munay Deck” was the product that won the jury over for Maderacre. José Canchaya, Managing Director of Maderacre, explains why this product is particularly sustainable: “Our ‘Munay Deck’ outdoor planks are made of offcuts from the manufacture of solid wood flooring. This means that we are even able to make meaningful use of the waste arising during production.” This innovative floor covering too is manufactured from 100% FSC-certified tropical wood. By exporting products that were virtually tailor-made for the EU market, Maderacre has been able to double its production capacity and its turnover since 2014. The company has invested in new forestry concessions and new machines and modernised its production. The number of employees has risen from 150 in 2014 to 300 at present. Maderacre is creating jobs for the indigenous population. The company has a positive influence on the economic development of the region and encourages other timber producers in Madre de Dios to change to sustainable forest management.

“The IPD was an important strategic partner for the ongoing development of our company,” says José Canchaya of Maderacre. “The IPD mediated valuable contacts for us to new business partners and opened the door to the EU market for us. By working with the IPD, it has proved possible to generate an appreciation amongst buyers in Germany and Europe for our good tropical timber.”