Dear colleague,

We would like to update you about our progress in implementing the Indonesia-EU FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) to combat illegal logging and foster good forest governance.

First, we are pleased to tell you that we expect FLEGT licensing to begin before the end of the year.

On 21 April, the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk confirmed that Indonesia had met the final major requirement ahead of FLEGT licensing.

This means that, following internal EU procedures and the completion of minor outstanding actions, the Indonesia-EU Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) can set a date for FLEGT licensing to start.
On 18 May, the JIC met in Brussels to review further progress under the VPA, discuss next steps, and clarify both the procedures that must take place before FLEGT licensing can begin, as well as the timeline.

Before FLEGT licensing can begin, the EU must amend its FLEGT Regulation to list the products covered by the VPA and information on Indonesia’s FLEGT licensing authorities. Following the adoption of a Delegated Regulation by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers of the European Union will have a minimum of two months to review the amendment before it can enter into force.

Once the Regulation enters into force, it will become applicable in the EU after 90 days. During this period the Competent Authorities of the EU’s 28 Member States will get ready to receive FLEGT-licensed products from Indonesia. Competent Authorities are responsible for applying the EU Timber Regulation which prohibits operators in the EU from placing illegally harvested timber and products derived from illegal timber on the EU market.

When the amendment to the Delegated Regulation comes into force after the period of review, the JIC will meet and agree upon a date for FLEGT licensing to begin. We therefore expect FLEGT licensing to begin before the end of the year.

The JIC discussed Indonesian timber exports to the EU during the transitional period before start of the FLEGT licensing system and the role that V-Legal Documents will play in fulfilling EU Timber Regulation requirements in the interim period.

The EU agreed to inform the Competent Authorities in EU Member States that Indonesia has met the final major requirements of the VPA and is on course to become the world’s first country to issue FLEGT licences. This means the Competent Authorities can take Indonesia’s advances into consideration over the coming months as the parties take the final steps before FLEGT licensing can officially begin.
At the JIC meeting on 18 May, we reviewed ongoing activities under the joint action plan on VPA implementation, such as improvements to transparency and law enforcement, the nationwide roll out of Indonesia’s timber legality assurance system (SVLK) and the preparations for periodic evaluation of the SVLK by independent auditors.

We also discussed a need for a longer-term action plan to provide oversight of ongoing work to improve implementation of the timber legality assurance system after FLEGT licensing begins. This relates to issues such as effective data collection, independent forest monitoring, periodic evaluation and impact monitoring.

For more information on the Indonesia-EU VPA and the decisions of the JIC, visit the websites of Indonesia’s Ministry of Environment and Forestry or the EU Delegation to Indonesia, the EU FLEGT Facility and the Multistakeholder Forestry Programme.

Best regards,

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