



Cameroon and the European Union

Joint Executive Summary of the 2010-2011 report

Implementing the VPA in Cameroon



Common efforts to ensure and promote legal timber trade and good stewardship of the forest sector



Niger

Chad

Nigeria

Central African Republic

Republic of Cameroon

Equatorial Guinea

Gabon

Republic of the Congo

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Angola



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Introduction and context

As part of the FLEGT Action Plan (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) of the European Union (EU), Cameroon and the European Union have made a commitment to combat illegal logging and its devastating impacts on the national economy, environment, climate and communities.

Following several years of negotiations, both parties concluded a FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT VPA) which is currently being implemented. This report describes the progress made and the constraints and challenges faced in implementing this Agreement during 2010 and 2011.

Photo: Ollivier Girard/CIFOR



2 Achievements in 2010



Photo: Ralph Ridder

The year 2010 was a crucial period for the Cameroon VPA.

The Agreement was signed by both parties and several projects were launched to help improve forest governance such as the project to establish a timber traceability system in Cameroon (STBC, Système de traçabilité du bois au Cameroun) and the last stage of the independent observer project (OI FLEGT). These projects were carried out with the financial support of the European Union through the 10th European Development Fund (EDF).

Concerning the establishment of a timber traceability system in Cameroon, the main activities carried out in 2010 included awarding a contract to a consortium (SGS & Helveta Ltd) tasked with developing the system, and actually starting the development of the application.

Several other projects were financed by the EU under FAO's ACP-FLEGT support programme and targeted civil society organisations, the private sector and governmental institutions. These projects focused on supporting external and community observation by civil society, engaging local and indigenous communities in forest management, information dissemination, setting out timber legality verification procedures and improving the forestry tax recovery system.

3 Achievements in 2011

The year 2011 saw the ratification and entry into force of the FLEGT VPA. Reviews were conducted in parallel to operationalize the procedures for issuing legality certificates and FLEGT licenses as well as those related to the computerised forestry information management system (SIGIF). These enabled an effective vision for the FLEGT licensing scheme to emerge in Cameroon. Projects focusing on informing, awareness raising and capacity building of the various stakeholders concerned were also carried out in 2011 with funding from FAO's ACP-FLEGT support programme, the 10th European Development Fund and a local EU call for proposals in the area of civil society engagement in the FLEGT process.

In addition, the STBC architecture was implemented and initial functionality tests

were carried out in pilot forestry companies, legality tables were tested and their social aspects were also developed. Similarly, most of the VPA implementation activities scheduled in Annex IX for the first year of the preparatory phase were carried out. In addition, pilot testing of the timber traceability system was carried out in a sample of forest management units and communal forests. A guide for forest controllers was developed on the basis of the National Forest and Fauna Law Enforcement Strategy (SNCF) and the FLEGT legality tables. Consultations in small subject-specific groups also took place as part of the efforts to amend the forestry law and its implementing regulations.

Photo: Ollivier Girard/CIFOR





Photo: Ollivier Girard/CIFOR

A few key dates

The dates below were the milestones for 2010 and 2011 in implementing the VPA:

In 2010

- February 2010: start of the project to establish an Independent Observer under the 10th European Development Fund.
- April 2010: start of the project to set up a timber traceability system in Cameroon (STBC) under the 10th European Development Fund.
- 6 October 2010: signing of the VPA by Cameroon and the European Union in Yaoundé, thus sealing the agreement between both parties on the VPA content and their intention to become partners.

In 2011

- July 2011: law ratifying the VPA voted by the National Assembly.
- 9 August 2011: VPA ratified by the President of the Cameroon Republic.
- 16 November 2011: ratification officially notified to the EU.
- 1st December 2011: Agreement came into force.

Challenges and problems

Implementing the VPA raised several challenges and several difficulties were encountered during 2010 and 2011. Some of these still need to be resolved.

Problems

The problems encountered during VPA implementation in Cameroon during 2010 and 2011 were mainly related to setting up the STBC. These included: differences in the understanding of the terms of reference by stakeholders; actual implementation in the field; application complexity (architecture, high number of legality tables and verifiers); inadequate representation of titles in the sample for system pilot testing; and lack of legislation which hampered some of the activities scheduled in the Agreement.

Challenges

Challenges that emerged while implementing the VPA during the period covered by this report include:

1. Need for speed in implementing preparatory activities in 2010 and 2011 so that FLEGT licences could be issued in time for 3 March 2013 which is the date at which the EU Timber Regulation became effective; the Timber Regulation recognises FLEGT licences as proof of legality;
2. Integrating FLEGT with REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and coordinating all of the activities carried out for FLEGT-VPA implementation;
3. Setting up the MIB in order to have better control of the internal timber market.

Photo: Ollivier Girard/CIFOR



This report was jointly prepared by Cameroon and the EU and was validated by the joint committee in December 2013.

This report is a translation of the original report in French.

The online version is available on the website of the European Union Delegation in the Republic of Cameroon http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/cameroon/index_fr.htm

Photos: FODER/Doucet

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Cameroon – EU

