



Regional workshop

“Experiences from the VPA process in West and Central African countries”

Accra (Ghana) – 23-25 October 2012

Background

In 2003, the European Union (EU) adopted its Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) with the aim to halt illegal logging and promote better governance. The main tool to implement the Action Plan is the negotiation and conclusion of Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) between the EU and a Partner Country. To date, in West and Central Africa, the EU has signed VPAs with 5 countries (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ghana, Liberia, and Republic of Congo), is negotiating with 2 countries (Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon) and has introduced the VPA in Côte d'Ivoire. In addition to the VPAs, the EU recently adopted the EU Timber Regulation which prohibits the placing of illegal timber on the EU market as of 3 March 2013.

Objectives

The three-day workshop will bring together stakeholders involved in the implementation of the VPA process to:

1. Discuss progress on VPA implementation;
2. Identify the major opportunities, successes, challenges and/or constraints, path forward of the VPA process; and
3. Share and discuss experiences and lessons learned from the VPA process.

Expected outcomes

It is expected that participants from the different VPA countries will create closer and more collaborative networks and exchange ideas on successes and challenges. Following the workshop, a platform could be set up so as to enable the participants to continue exchanging experiences. In addition to the workshop proceedings, the outcomes of the meeting will be included in the overall lessons learned document that ACP-FLEGT Programme and EFI FLEGT facility are publishing.

Participants

Approximately 100 participants are expected to attend the workshop. Participants include representatives from government institutions, civil society and private sector organizations as well as scientists and practitioners from VPA countries. Participation of international and sub-regional organizations active in the VPA process is also expected.



Organizers

The workshop is organized by FAO, through the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Support Programme for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (**ACP-FLEGT Support Programme**) in partnership with the **Forestry Commission of Ghana**, the **European Forest Institute's (EFI) EU FLEGT Facility** and the **Strengthening African Forest Governance** project.

Languages

The workshop will be held both in French and English. Simultaneous translation services will be available.

Venue

The workshop will take place in Accra, Ghana at a venue **to be confirmed**.

Registration process

A number of workshop places remain available for those working closely on FLEGT and VPA issues. Although there is no registration fee, places are limited so if you would like to participate, please send an email with the registration form to accra.vpaworkshop.application@gmail.com.

Lunch and refreshments will be provided, but travel and other costs incurred to attend the workshop will be at the **participants own expense**. For those requiring support with transport and accommodation costs, please indicate it in the registration form.

Registration will close on **21 September 2012** or as soon as the remaining places have been filled.

Please note that we cannot guarantee that applications received will be retained.