



# Collecting evidence of FLEGT-VPA impacts

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**Côte d'Ivoire county report**



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Photo Credit: Tatiana Goetghebuer/ADE  
Caption: Wood market in Abidjan

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# List of acronyms

ATIBT	Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux
BNETD	Bureau National d'Études Techniques et de Développement
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
CTN	Comité Technique de Négociation
EC	European Commission
EFI	European Forest Institute
EU	European Union
EUTR	European Union Timber Regulation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade
GDP	Gross domestic product
MINAGRI	Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement Rural
MINEDD	Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable
MINEF	Ministère des Eaux et Forêts
OI-REN	Observatoire Ivoirien des ressources naturelles
PEF	Périmètres d'exploitation forestière
PIF	Plan d'Investissement Forestier
PND	Plan National de Développement
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SIGEFIB	Syndicat Ivoirien des Groupements d'Exploitants Forestiers et d'Industriels du Bois
SYNEPSEFOR	Syndicat des exploitations du charbon de bois en Côte d'Ivoire
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SODEFOR	Société de Développement des Forêts
SPIB	Syndicat des Producteurs Industriels du Bois
TLAS	Timber Legality Assurance System
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement





# 1 Introduction

The objective of this study, a collaboration between the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and *Aide à la Décision Economique* (ADE), financed by the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), is to identify potential qualitative and quantitative evidence of impacts of the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade-Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT-VPA) process so far across a sample of four countries – Guyana, Honduras, Côte d’Ivoire and the Republic of the Congo. Results are placed within the global European Union-FLEGT (EU-FLEGT) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) indicator database, which includes results from three previous impact assessments in Cameroon, Ghana, and Indonesia, as well as relevant variables from secondary data sources.

A major, broader objective is to continue building a resource base on a long-term complex process which touches upon political, institutional and technical issues, with socio-economic and environmental impacts spanning from very localized to global geographies. By covering four countries at different stages of VPA implementation in addition to the three previous ones, this study will also present findings and lessons at a global level (in a separate summary report), combining results to outline a bigger picture of VPA process impacts where possible. This is also possible because the methodology (see Section 2) used in Cameroon, Ghana, and Indonesia (2019)<sup>1</sup> is the same as that used in these more recent assessments. This provides us with seven countries covered in total, and a real opportunity for in-depth comparative analysis and insight into global-level impacts and specific changes related to negotiation or implementation phases.

The methodology used is designed to be replicable over time and applicable to other VPA countries. FLEGT-VPA impact evidence at a more global level has the potential to provide clearer insights with the inclusion of more VPA countries in the future; and the

current evidence could be used as a baseline scenario should future assessment be repeated in the same countries.

When collecting data, we take into account the fact that countries are at various stages of the VPA negotiation and implementation process. Guyana and Côte d’Ivoire’s VPAs are still in the negotiation phase, while Honduras’ has just been ratified (30 June 2021) and the Republic of the Congo’s has been implemented since 2013. Therefore, the questionnaire was designed to collect information on the current situation, and, through recall questions, on the situation prior to VPA implementation for the Republic of the Congo and on the situation prior to VPA negotiation for Honduras, Guyana and Côte d’Ivoire. This results in indicator values being collected that establish a baseline situation (prior to VPA implementation) for all countries. Furthermore, it also captures perceived changes in various forest sector related domains and the VPA contribution to these perceived changes (due to either VPA implementation or VPA negotiation). While we do not expect VPA negotiations to have made an impact in all the dimensions covered, nor for them to be as important as VPA implementation impacts, it is still relevant to estimate any changes the typically long negotiating phase has brought about, particularly as stakeholders begin to understand the specificities of the VPA process itself.

This report briefly outlines the methodology used, then describes the VPA process and forest context in Côte d’Ivoire, and finally presents evidence of VPA impacts. These results are presented following the general VPA Theory of Change (ToC) logic. This general VPA ToC (Figure 1) details the causal relationship that lead to the expected VPA impacts (far right-hand side) resulting from the expected outcomes (centre and left-hand side).

The CIFOR-ADE team was in Côte d’Ivoire between 30 April and 14 May 2021 to collect data. This country report is an intermediary deliverable designed to feed the final synthesis report of the seven countries.

1 <https://www.cifor.org/knowledge/publication/7566>

# 2 Methodology

## Key takeaways

- Thorough desk review undertaken for each country, identifying available evidence on the impacts of the VPA negotiation phase.
- Sample of respondents representative of the main VPA stakeholders in the country.
- Survey enabling a quantitative assessment of the perceived changes in different fields expected to be impacted by VPAs, and the contribution of VPAs to these changes.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) allowing respondents to give more qualitative details on their perceptions and share personal experience on some topics.
- Positive feedback received from respondents on the data collection methodology.

A mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology was developed to measure the impact of VPAs.

This methodology has been rolled out across each of the four countries, with slight contextual modifications for each. The methodology is designed to be replicable over time and applicable to other VPA countries (in any VPA phase).

The final data collection tool has been developed and then deployed through **three main stages**, as follows:

- Definition of the different themes according to the general VPA ToC,
- Review of the existing literature
- Interviews with key stakeholders

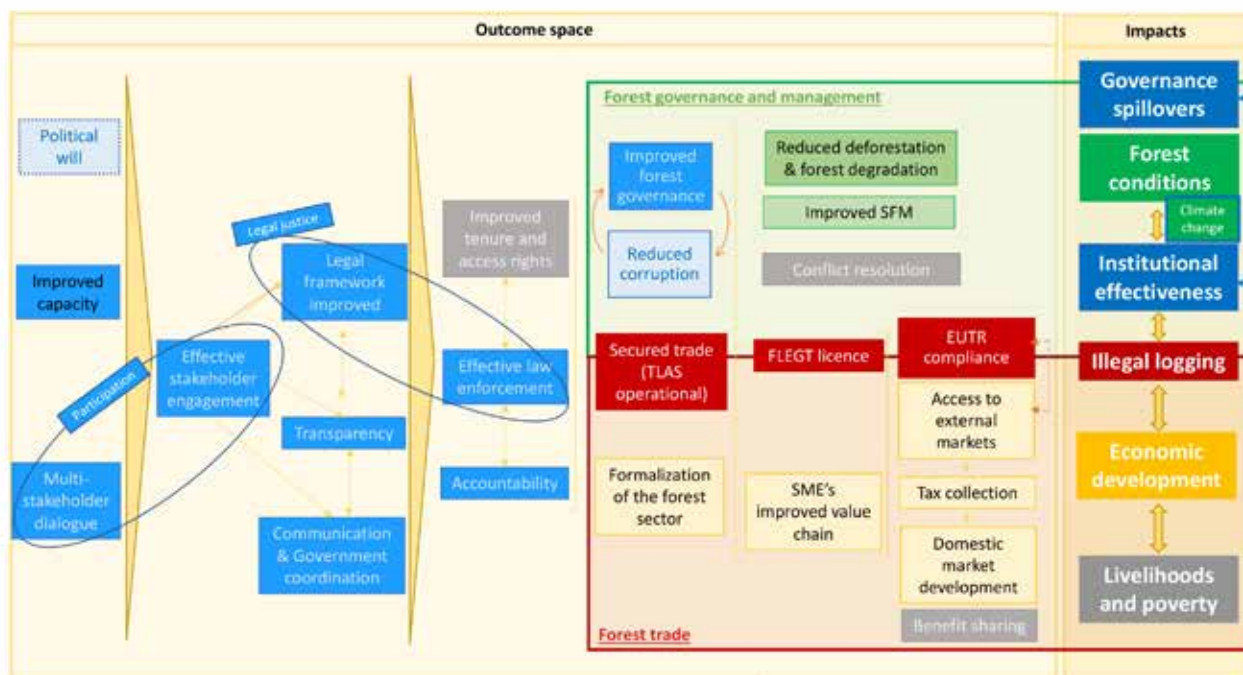


Figure 1. General VPA ToC

Note: For the synthesis report summarizing findings from seven VPA countries (Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana and Honduras), the ToC has been slightly updated.

## 2.1 Main themes of the study based on VPA theory of change

The first stage is the identification of the most relevant themes to cover during the study. ADE and CIFOR worked together to identify five main themes, which correspond to the five expected impacts as shown in the general VPA ToC<sup>2</sup> (see Figure 1). Note that causal links are not as linear as they appear on the figure and that most result boxes are interlinked. However, to better outline these causal relationships and to structure the report, we have assigned a colour to each impact dimension and coloured the related outcome boxes accordingly. First, we start by describing the impact in the governance and institution dimension. This dimension can be regarded as a prerequisite for other subsequent impacts (as shown in the Figure 1).

A map of the indicators collected through the perception survey and the general VPA ToC and respective list of indicators is available in Annex I.

A map of the indicators collected through the perception survey and the general VPA ToC and respective list of indicators is available in Annex II.

## 2.2 Desk review

The second stage is a thorough desk review on each country. Stakeholders were consulted to ensure that the most relevant literature was identified and processed, particularly literature focusing on impacts within the five main themes. An exhaustive list of the reviewed literature is available in the bibliography. Note that this desk review<sup>3</sup> is a living stand-alone document that can be further amended by adding relevant references when available.

The thorough desk review allows us to identify prevailing hypotheses on impacts. This helps to formulate questions for the survey and then build indicators that will be used for the data analysis. The desk review also ensures that the questionnaire can be tailored to different country contexts and that questions are in line with the impacts that the VPA would be expected to create in each country. This ultimately helps us to compare expected VPA

impacts as identified during the desk review against actual VPA progress and possible unintended impacts identified through primary in-country data collection.

The review includes the following categories of documents.

- VPA annexes and VPA-related documentation
- EU FLEGT Facility and FAO EU FLEGT reports (publicly accessible)
- Legislative documents related to forest regulation
- Selected academic papers based on specific literature recommendations from academic experts and CIFOR/EU country offices for each VPA country

One important takeaway from the desk review is that the available literature does not propose baseline measures in most of the impact dimensions. In general, baseline values, i.e., indicator values before VPA implementation starting date, are not publicly available in the literature or simply were not considered at the beginning of the process of assessing a change, hence the need for first-hand data to be collected.

## 2.3 Field mission

The third stage is deploying the questionnaire in-country. Prior to the mission, the questionnaire was reviewed and revised where needed by local experts to tailor it to the relevant country context. In addition, a sample of respondents was selected from public administration, the private formal and informal sectors, civil society, and from local forest communities and indigenous people. Some consultants, academics and representatives from international institutions (EUDel, EU-FLEGT FAO, EFI, etc.) were also invited and constitute the last category (“Other”).

### 2.3.1 Sample selection

Key experts and long-standing stakeholders in the forestry sector were identified and invited to participate in the survey through the contacts and knowledge of the context provided by CIFOR/ADE research teams and EU-FLEGT FAO/EFI. The objective was to reach 100 relevant respondents divided into five categories: public sector, private sector (industrial and formal/informal SMEs), civil society (CS) and local communities and indigenous people (LC&IP), with an additional ‘other’ category consisting of consultants, researchers, and donor

<sup>2</sup> This general ToC has been constructed based on the available ToCs for each of the 16 VPA countries (EFI documentation).

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1.

representatives. In each category, we made every effort to reach out to and include representatives of different associations, NGOs, departments within ministries, etc., to capture as much diversity as possible. This expert sample is large enough to compute statistics and capture a range of the existing different points of view regarding the VPA process and possible impacts.

We ensured that pre-identified respondents who were not available were replaced by an alternative respondent with similar levels of expertise. We also offered the option of answering the questionnaire online along with a Skype or phone call to receive qualitative input.

A full respondent breakdown can be found in Section 2.3.

### 2.3.2 Individual survey

CIFOR's Ethical Review applied to all interview sessions. The agreement reminded respondents of the anonymous and confidential treatment of the information provided in the survey. Respondents were also reminded that they could stop answering at any point during the survey if the questions caused any discomfort. Lastly, by signing the consent form, respondents agreed to their responses being used anonymously in this assessment.

The questionnaire took between two and three hours to complete, depending on the level of discussion and the number of participants.

A brief (15 min) introductory PowerPoint presentation was shown to all participants. The presentation touched upon the aim and scope of the assessment, the types of questions and answers that participants would find displayed on the tablets, and several slides containing practical examples to illustrate the concept of 'impact' and to agree on meanings to be assigned to the various possible answers.

Agreeing on the meaning of the scale is a very important step because various participants from the same group of respondents as well as from different groups may have different understandings of responding 'very positively' or 'very negatively' to a question and impact area. Agreeing on the scale and on the meaning of various steps along the scale (e.g., 'weak', 'very weak', 'strong', 'very strong', etc.) provides the interviewing team and the respondents with a common language to be adopted while filling the questionnaire.

Such a common language also allows for more meaningful cross-country comparisons, as a 'very weak' impact in the case of Country A, for example, can be compared with the same 'very weak' impact from the same question(s) in other countries.

The answers inputted directly into the tablet were designed to be individually completed using a computer-assisted personal interviewing in a group (CAPI-G) approach. These individual sections were constructed using close-ended, multiple-choice or Likert scale questions (0–5, 0–3, 0–100%) to capture respondents' personal opinions, hence allowing **quantitative analysis**.

Questions were mostly designed to understand change trajectories, capturing the respondents' opinions on the current situation within the different impact themes, their perception of the situation prior to VPA ratification or the start of VPA negotiations (recall), and then their opinion on the contribution of the VPA to any perceived change. Other questions were statement assessments, which asked a respondent to either select their agreement level on a statement using a scale of 1–5 or to select which statement they most agreed with.

### 2.3.3 Focus group discussions

The individual questionnaire was broken up with pauses at the end of each theme, during which participants could share the opinions that formed their responses during the previous section in more detail, ideally providing **qualitative measures of change** and specific examples. This anecdotal evidence allowed us to better explain the findings in this report, and questions were tailored according to the group's subject-matter expertise. Indeed, the fact that participants belonged to similar professional categories where feasible ensured that they felt free to talk and share their experiences and vision.

Data collection was bolstered by using two types of input: numerical inputs entered directly into the tablet, the results of which could be accessed daily; and qualitative inputs with examples, which consisted of detailed and anonymous notes taken during these focus group discussion (FGD) sessions. Our analysis could therefore draw on two information sources and direct results back to existing literature to better understand continuity and divergence.

Feedback on the interview experience was also regularly sought from participants. Verbal feedback



from respondents indicated that they enjoyed the two-pronged approach, which allowed them to think about VPA evolution from numerous angles before engaging in often lively discussions with peers. They also commented that the icons associated with the different answers made questions easier to answer. Quantitative answers also had a high response rate, with relatively few “don’t know” responses, validating the expert pool of respondents and the relevance of the questions.

### 2.3.4 Additional KIs

The evaluation team conducted additional interviews during the field mission in Côte d’Ivoire. First, they met with small operators (lumber yard operators and craftsmen) at the Yopougon wood market on Monday 3 May to acquire a better understanding of the impacts of the VPA negotiations on this category of actors. They also met with the director of an industrial company in Côte d’Ivoire to better understand VPA impacts on the private sector and identity issues related to wood supply on the domestic market.

#### Key takeaways

- 83% of respondents were male, while 15% were female and, 3% other.
- The expert pool identified and interviewed for the study was highly relevant: respondents had an average of 11 years of experience in the forestry sector, as well as a high level of knowledge of the sectors covered in the survey (e.g. civil society, local communities, public and private sectors).
- Representatives of forest communities (chiefs of villages who are members of house of chiefs of Côte d’Ivoire and official representatives of local communities in the VPA working groups) are included in the civil society category since few could be met during the mission and most civil society organizations reportedly represent these communities.
- The largest sectors that respondents associated themselves with were public administration (35%), civil society (22.5%), private sector – small-scale operators (19%), and private sector – industrial operators (10%).
- Most respondents reported having been involved in TLAS design (63%), VPA elaboration (60%), and legality definition (53%).

## 2.4 Respondent breakdown

The study purposefully identified experts and long-time participants in the Ivorian forestry sector, demonstrated by the average number of years they had been involved in the sector (see Figure 4). We ensured that the main actors from each respondent group were included by making provisions to travel to them or them to us increasing confidence in the accuracy and credibility of results. Respondents were invited to participate in the study through an official invitation sent by the local facilitator, who was also in charge of following up by inviting respondents to pre-selected slots based on sector on a specific time and date through emails and phone calls.

To allow mean comparison tests across groups, we categorized respondent into five broad sectors<sup>4</sup>:

- **Public sector:** 35%
- **Private Sector – SMEs:** 18.75%
- **Private Sector – Industrial:** 10%
- **Civil Society and Traditional Authorities (TA):**<sup>5</sup> 25%
- **Others** (consultants, research, financial Partners): 11.25%

Against the average years of experience in the forestry sector of **11 years across respondents**, representatives of the private sector – SMEs and “others” (comprised of technical / financial partner and consultants) had the most experience (almost 23 years). NGO representatives and the *chefferie* had the least, with 7.6 years of experience.



**Figure 2. Gender breakdown of respondents (N=80)**

<sup>4</sup> The number of responses (N) used for the different analyses is outlined in each figure. Sometimes this number does not correspond to the total number of respondents since not all respondents replied to every question.

<sup>5</sup> We have combined “local communities and traditional authority” with “civil society” given the smaller sample size and the links between the two groups of actors. Both traditional authorities (*chefferie*) and civil society play the role of advocating for local communities.

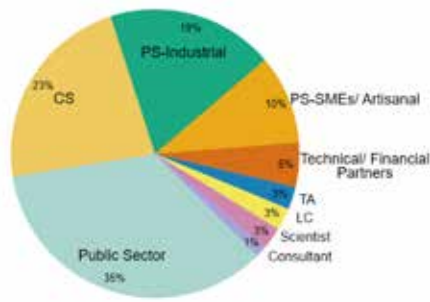


Figure 3. Respondents per their Associated Sector (N=80)



Figure 4. Average Number of years of experience per sector (N=80)

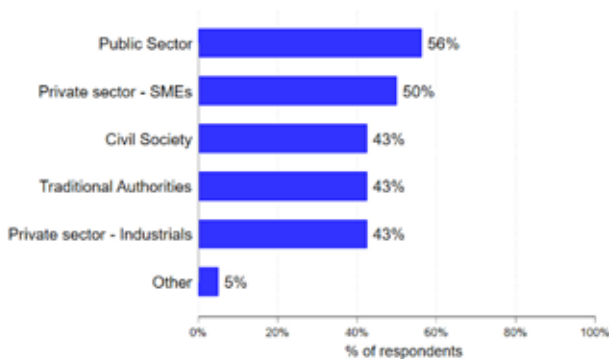


Figure 5. Respondents' knowledge of sectors (N=80)



Figure 6. Top principal motivating factors leading the Côte d'Ivoire to engage in the VPA process (multiple choice possible) (N=80)

The three principal motivating factors that respondents thought led Côte d'Ivoire to engage in the VPA process are i) to reduce illegal logging and trade (67%), ii) to improve forest management (61%) and iii) to facilitate access to the European market (56%) (see Figure 6).

Half or more of respondents interviewed were involved in the design/development of the traceability and legal verification system – TLAS (63%), the development of new regulations in the forest sector (60%), legality definition (53%), capacity building (50%) and law enforcement (50%) (see Figure 7). About 6% answered that they were not actively involved in any of the aspects of FLEGT-VPA. Their answers have been considered relevant for the remaining of the survey because “not actively involved” does not mean “not knowledgeable” about the FLEGT-VPA process. For example, while respondents may not have been directly engaged in drafting and implementing TLAS or transparency-related activities, their knowledge of the FLEGT-VPA process and the forest sector more broadly qualify them to assess the changes and impacts of those activities.

## 2.5 Key takeaways of field mission

The team consisted of two experts from CIFOR and two experts from ADE. In Côte d'Ivoire, stakeholder involvement in the VPA negotiations was structured into four sectors (administration, civil society, private sector and traditional chiefs). As the members of these colleges with proven experience in the forestry sector and effectively involved in the VPA negotiations are mainly based in Abidjan, the choice was made to concentrate the meetings in the country's economic centre.





Figure 7. Aspects of VPA respondents are/were most involved in (multiple choice possible) (N=80)

### Key takeaways

- 80 individual respondents from different categories.
- 14 group sessions were organized in Abidjan (Ivotel Abidjan) (see Annex III for agenda).
- Some respondents travelled from different Ivorian cities, such as San Pedro, to participate in the study. This ensured that all forest areas of Côte d'Ivoire were well represented.
- The team met with the EC delegation to outline the purpose of the study and anticipated milestone dates.

During the first week, formal sessions were held at the main assessment site and at the headquarters of the private sector industrial union, as well as an informal session with urban timber sellers. The second week consisted of a visit to present the assessment to officials from the Ministry of Water and Forests, followed by a group session with officials from the Ministry's departments. It should be noted that preparations for the relaunch of negotiations between the EU and the Ivorian government during the evaluation period affected the attendance rate as many actors were involved in technical meetings prior to this formal negotiation phase.

### Key Lessons Learnt

- **COVID-19 measures were respected** (PCR tests, masks, sanitizer and disinfectant, social distancing, ventilated environment) – the entire team remained healthy during and after the mission. To the best of our knowledge, no participants tested positive during or after the survey.
- **COVID-19 requires invitations to be sent out further in advance**, particularly when travel from outside major populated areas was required. While two weeks' notice was provided, three would have been ideal.
- While invitations were sent to the most relevant respondents and they eventually participated, it was not always clear whether they would personally attend or send a representative from their office, which could be sub-optimal. Close follow-up is important to ensure their personal attendance.
- Related to the above, given that respondents would not always arrive at the same time and to avoid fatigue from participants arriving on time, a general introduction was given to the latter, while one member of the team was dedicated to making introductory presentations to all latecomers *before* they entered the room where the survey was being conducted.
- Participants from the public sector are often busy. As such, it is important to arrange follow-up meetings to complete the entire questionnaire.
- Most participants showed a lot of interest, were involved in the discussions, and appreciated the exercise. Several participants asked to receive the final report of the study after completion. We will oblige by planning restitution sessions in all countries.

# 3 Côte d'Ivoire VPA and forest context in brief

Côte d'Ivoire made an official request to the European Union for information on the FLEGT process in January 2010. The two parties launched VPA negotiations in June 2013.

The forest sector was a significant factor contributing to the economic growth of Côte d'Ivoire between 1960 and 19580. However, it has since been well outweighed by the agricultural sector. In recent years, the importance of forestry in the country's economy has shrunk to the point where it accounted for only 1% of GDP in 2019, according to the Ministry of Water and Forests (*Ministère des Eaux et Forêts, MINEF*). While it remains the fourth largest source of export revenue and a major employer, the future of the sector has been threatened by high deforestation rates and unsustainable practices in recent decades (SPIB and ATIBT 2020).

The forest cover of Côte d'Ivoire has considerably decreased since the 1960s. Forest areas were estimated to cover 16 million ha in 1900 but declined to only 7.8 million ha in 1990. The rate of deforestation has continued to increase, and the country's forest cover was just 3.4 million ha in 2015 (MINEF 2018a). This amounts to around 11% of the country's surface area. The main cause of this alarming deforestation is the conversion of forests into agricultural areas, reflecting the importance of the agricultural sector in the country's economy (Guizol *et al.* 2017). According to Global Forest Watch, Côte d'Ivoire had the highest rate of forest loss of all VPA countries between 2001 and 2016 (Petrucci 2018).

A new forest code was adopted in 2019 to clarify the regulation of forest areas and to define a sustainable strategy for forest management. Following this new definition of property rights with regards to forests, Côte d'Ivoire's forest areas are now divided between public and private ownership:

- Forests owned by the state constitute the state forest domain (*domaine forestier de l'Etat*), which is subdivided into classified forests, agroforests, national parks, and reserves. The rights to exploit the 233 classified forests is granted to private operators by SODEFOR, which also grants rights to exploit agro-forests, a new type of forests introduced in the 2019 Forest Code where agroforestry is allowed. The private operators that gained the right to exploit these two types of forests must comply with the quotas and management plans defined by the forest administration.
- Forests owned by private entities are part of the rural forest domain (*domaine forestier rural*). These forests must be registered so that their owners can be clearly identified. The 2019 Forest Code introduced two new categories of forests within the rural domain: community forests, which are owned by a local community and registered to its name, and sacred forests reserved for cultural and religious practices.

It should be noted that the new forest code has not yet entered into force and that the forestry sector continues to be organized according to the provisions of a previous decree from 1994. Under the current regime, the forest estate consists of classified forests managed by SODEFOR and a rural estate. The rural domain is made up of "périmètre d'exploitation forestière (PEF)" (logging perimeter) that are intensively exploited and generate about 90% of Côte d'Ivoire's timber production. According to the regulation, the exploitation of PEF is subject to a management plan, but in practice, this requirement has never been implemented. The Ivorian logging model does not allow for artisanal logging. Although a significant part of the national and sub-regional market is supplied by artisanal logging, this form of small-scale logging has been formally prohibited since the decree of 26 November 2013 prohibiting chainsaw milling.

# 4 VPA Impacts

This section presents and analyses the results according to the following steps:

- Presentation of quantitative survey data starting with the contribution and impact of VPA negotiations,
- Outlining any statistically different views between respondent groups,
- Highlighting any evolution of indicators from before and after the start of VPA negotiations,
- Setting findings against literature contained in the desk review, and
- Complementing findings with anecdotal evidence provided during the FGDs.

As mentioned in 2.1, we will start by describing impacts in the governance and institution dimension as they can be considered as a prerequisite for other subsequent impacts.

## 4.1 Governance & institutional effectiveness

This section focuses on two initially expected impacts in the VPA process: *institutional effectiveness* and *governance spillovers* (see Figure 8).

- Improved *institutional effectiveness* in the forest sector will be enhanced by increased *forest governance and management* as well as *reduced corruption*, also possibly leading to *spillover* effects as the process could inspire other reform processes.
- To improve governance results, *improved participation* and *capacity* at civil society, government, and private sector levels are primary necessary conditions.
- Subsequently, *improved participation* and *capacity* will also lead to *improved legal justice* (and law enforcement), as well as more *transparency*

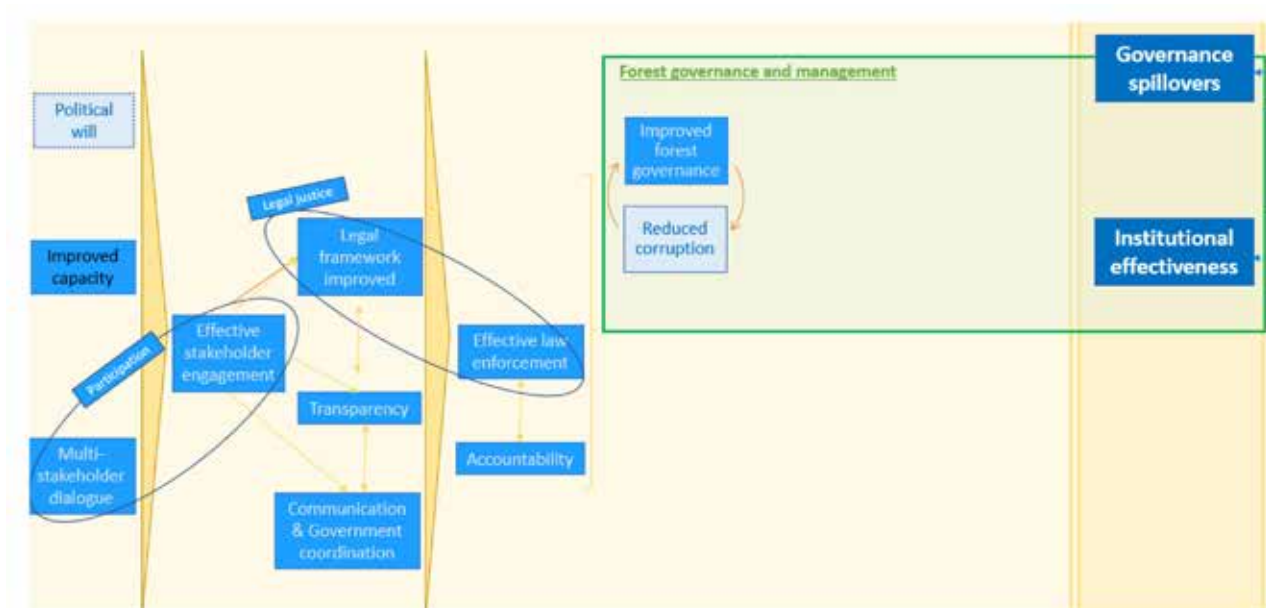


Figure 8. Impact pathways for Governance and Institutional Effectiveness

and better *communication and government coordination*, enhancing improved *accountability*.

- *Corruption* will be reduced thanks to all of the aforementioned improvements if there is sufficient *political will*.

These expected results will be sequentially analysed in this section by using the collected data to construct appropriate indicators for each VPA ToC result box.

### Key takeaways

- The VPA has moderately contributed to **making information more readily available** for SMEs and to improving their technical capacity to conduct their activities legally.
- VPA negotiations have moderately contributed to **increased consultation of local communities and civil society**. Civil society actors and local communities work hand in hand to identify irregularities.
- The VPA has moderately contributed to a **greater degree of autonomy** for civil society in its role as an **independent observer** in the forestry sector and to more effective independent observation.
- The VPA negotiation process has contributed to the **refinement of legal and administrative requirements** applicable to the forest sector.
- The VPA has moderately contributed to **greater enforcement of sanctions** as outlined in the law and to help make sanctions more credible in the forestry sector.
- The VPA has moderately contributed to improving the political will to fight corruption in the forestry sector. The **political will to fight corruption is considered strong**.

### 4.1.1 Forest governance

We first present the results of indicators that have been replicated following the FERN approach, which uses the FAO-PROFOR methodology to assess and monitor forest governance (2011). As the implementation phase of the FLEGT-VPA process has not yet started in Côte d'Ivoire, no report is available from FERN. As such, the data presented below should be considered baseline data that can potentially be compared with data collected at a later stage of the FLEGT-VPA process. The questions



Figure 9. FERN Forest Governance indicators (N=80)

addressed accountability, government coordination, participation, capacity, transparency, and legal justice. These six dimensions of governance are also included on the left-hand side of the VPA ToC. The scale ranges from 0 (extremely poor or non-existent) to 5 (very good), which corresponds to a statement matching a potential situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

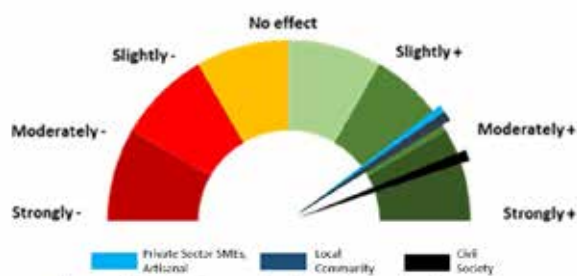
As outlined in the Figure 9, the results are relatively similar across the different dimensions of forest governance, all of which are at an average to high level. More specifically, Côte d'Ivoire scores highest in legal justice, accountability, and participation (3.4, 3.3 and 3.3, respectively) and lowest in transparency (2.9). In the next paragraphs, we present the results from the FERN indicator as well as other indicators derived from the questionnaire for each of the six dimensions.

### Participation (multi stakeholder dialogue and effective stakeholder engagement)

*Multi-stakeholder dialogue* is the first box on the left-hand side of the VPA ToC and is part of the *participation* outcome of the VPA process.



Figure 10. Evolution of the consideration of the opinions of CS, LC&IP and SMEs in decision making in the timber sector (N=75)

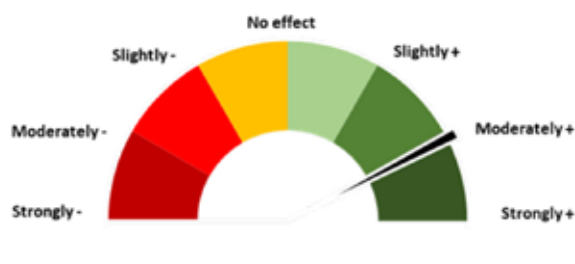


**Figure 12. VPA negotiations' contribution to more consideration of the opinions of SMEs, CS and local communities in decision-making in the timber sector (N=79)**

Overall, the consideration of the opinions of the different actors involved in the FLEGT-VPA process has increased since the beginning of the negotiation process in 2013. The process is considered to have moderately contributed to this improvement. The level of participation today is considered moderately important for civil society, which has participated slightly more actively than small operators in the private sector, who reported taking part in discussions but without necessarily influencing decision-making.

However, according to the literature identified, it is only since 2017 that civil society has been involved in a structured and effective way. The OI-REN platform acquired formal status and represented 300 villages and nearly 100 associations in 2017. As stressed during the FGDs, the recognition of civil society as a partner in the VPA can already be considered a major step forward for the negotiation process in Côte d'Ivoire. Civil society actors are considered as a credible actor in the VPA negotiation process as they have more weight and visibility during discussions today, when compared to the start of the VPA process. One of the participants from CS stated: *"we have been imposed by the EU on the negotiation table"*.

Furthermore, VPA negotiations have contributed to an improving relationship between civil society and the public sector, moving from one of mistrust to one based on trust and mutual benefits. FGDs outlined that small operators have only been involved in the VPA negotiation process over the last two years. Traditionally, larger industrial operators have been more listened to and involved in decision-making processes in the forestry sector. However, SMEs perceive that their opinions have been more widely considered since the start of the negotiation process. The VPA has also moderately contributed to increased consultation with local communities in decision-making in the timber sector.



**Figure 13. VPA negotiations' contribution to more consultation with local communities (N=79)**

Traditional authorities are an integral part of the VPA negotiation process, with a representative of the National Chamber of Kings and Traditional Chiefs in the CTN. Created in 2014, this Chamber has allowed them to be more involved in the VPA process. However, most traditional leaders remain uninformed about the negotiations and question the objectives of the VPA. They argue that the Chamber of Kings has limited visibility in the negotiations (Petrucci 2018). This perception has been confirmed by participants during FGDs. Civil society works in partnership with traditional chiefs to give more visibility to local communities. One participant suggested that *"civil society actors are the eyes, the ears and the mouths of local communities"*. One chief in attendance was surprised to be invited as the involvement of the platform representing traditional chiefdoms has been very limited since the adoption of the new forestry code in 2019.

### Improved capacity

Along with multi-stakeholder dialogue, capacity building is an essential element on the left-hand side of the ToC. It refers to the capacity of CS to serve as an independent observer and the capacity of SMEs to comply with laws and regulations.

Respondents believe **the level of autonomy and effectiveness of civil society** as an independent observer in the forestry sector **has increased since the start of VPA negotiations**. However, they do not perceive that these two qualities have increased to the same extent: only 47% of respondents rated the level of autonomy as high or very high, compared to 9% before the start of VPA negotiations. In contrast, 80% of respondents considered the level of effectiveness average or high, compared to 10% before. The VPA is considered to have moderately contributed to making civil society a more effective and autonomous independent observer in the forestry sector. The



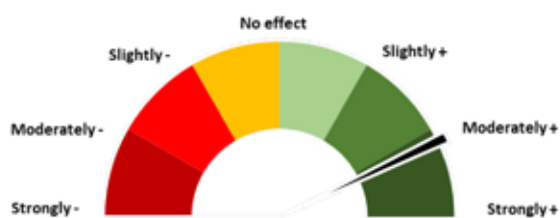


Figure 14. VPA negotiations' contribution to more effective independent observation carried out by CS (N=77)

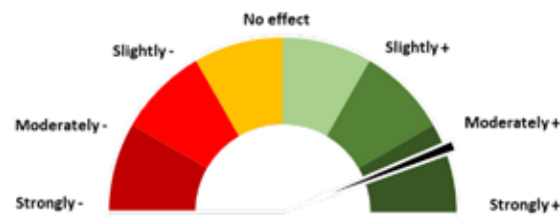


Figure 15. VPA negotiations' contribution to a greater degree of autonomy of CS in its role as independent observer (N=77)

private sector – SMEs is the group that perceives the greatest contribution from the VPA negotiations.

These results are in line with the FGDs that identified the importance of the VPA negotiation process in increasing the capacity of civil society actors. Participants mentioned that Ivorian civil society has become less fragmented, better organized and therefore able to defend the interests of the forestry sector in a more unanimous voice. The REDD+ process has also secured funding for civil society to support capacity building and outreach.

Independent monitoring activities started in Côte d'Ivoire in early 2014 with a pilot project in a classified forest involving the participation of local populations. More CSOs have been engaged through training and are now conducting their own observation activities (EFI country report, 2017). During FGDs, public sector actors outlined the creation of two entities within MINEF linked to independent observation: one entity is in charge of verifying reports produced by civil society, while the second is in charge of following up on the recommendations formulated. While only time will tell how well these entities work in practice, most interviewees agree that the effort made by MINEF to increase collaboration with various actors is a positive step.

Respondents believe **the VPA negotiations have slightly contributed to improving the technical capacity of SMEs to conduct their activities**. VPA negotiations were noted to have contributed to creating an awareness around environmental issues not only among private sector actors but across all parties involved in the negotiations, who have become more aware of the importance of preserving Ivorian forests and the important role of the structures that the VPA can help put in place to reduce illegal logging.

In terms of the FERN capacity indicator, the level of capacity was rated at 3.2 (on a scale of 1 to 5), with no significant difference between actors.

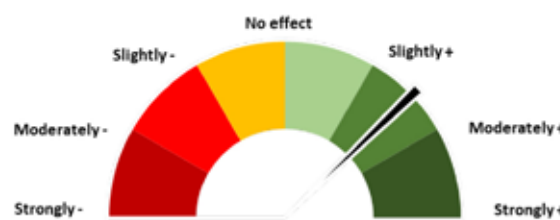


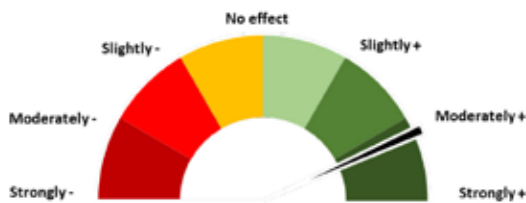
Figure 16. VPA negotiations' contribution to improved technical capacity of SMES to conduct their activities legally (N=78)

## Legal justice

*Improved legal framework and effective law enforcement* both refer to improved *legal justice* thanks to greater participation and capacity of the different stakeholders involved in the VPA process.

According to the EU FLEGT Facility annual report (2017), “the start of the VPA negotiations triggered the revision of the Forest Code”. This helped clarify and improve the broader legal framework impacting forest governance. Côte d'Ivoire is reforming its forest legislation in parallel to VPA negotiations. The two processes have benefited each other: VPA stakeholder structures, which include civil society organizations, private sector, administration, and traditional chiefs (included because of their critical role in land management), have helped integrate stakeholder inputs into the legal reform process and new forest legislation, which has led to improved dialogue and ownership (EU FLEGT Facility annual report, 2014, 2017).

Respondents believe that the VPA negotiations have **moderately contributed to improved coherence of the legal and regulatory framework of the forestry sector**. It appears to have helped refine legal and administrative requirements applicable to the forest sector through the adoption of a new forestry code in July 2019, which clarified the issue of tree and forest ownership (ClientEarth 2020). The new code also



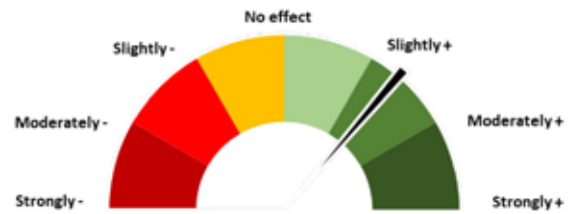
**Figure 17. VPA negotiations' contribution to better coherence of the legal and regulatory framework of the forest sector (N=80)**

made independent monitoring an official element of the control procedures (EU FLEGT Facility annual report, 2017–2019). However, it remains complex as it requires a comparative analysis of several legal texts from different sectors. During discussions, participants stressed the fact that changes in the legal and regulatory framework of the forest sector might be known at the central level, but many at the regional and local levels do not have access to this information. One participant said: “among local communities, many do not know that there is a new Forestry Code adopted in 2019”.

**The level of sanction enforcement has increased since the start of the VPA negotiation process:** 44% of respondents consider that they are mostly or systematically applied, compared to only 13% before the negotiation process. Respondents from the private sector (SMEs and industry) view the application of sanctions most positively, while civil society and traditional leaders were more sceptical. VPA negotiations have slightly contributed to greater enforcement of sanctions as outlined in the law. It is worth mentioning that 25% of private-sector actors in industry believe that VPA negotiations have had a negative effect on the enforcement of sanctions. The “other” category has the most positive perception of the contribution of VPA negotiations.

The desk review and focus group discussions have identified the following issues in relation to application of sanctions:

- The supervision and regulation actions are periodic and take place according to an operating mode based on randomly selected samples in classified forests. They cannot fully cover a very extensive surface area.
- The directorate of the forest police has very limited resources and field vehicles and is often obliged to rent vehicles to carry out its field missions. It should be noted that the Litigation



**Figure 18. VPA negotiations' contribution to more enforcement of sanctions as outlined in the law (N=88)**

Department receives very few cases (Ernest Young and BNETD 2015).

- Operators do not respect logging bans for protected species and protected species are often disguised as species which can be subject to logging. The harvesting of trees below minimum diameter is also a common harvesting malpractice (Nepcon 2017).
- There is an understanding between the forest police at the regional level and operators, who can reach “informal agreements” without notifying the authorities at the central level.

**Civil society plays a greater role in controlling and identifying irregularities since VPA negotiations,** according to participants. Most respondents (83%) believe that civil society did not play a role or played only a minor role in controlling legality and identifying irregularities before the negotiations but now plays a relatively important or crucial role. The VPA negotiation process thus moderately contributed to giving civil society a greater role to civil society in helping to fight irregularities in the forest sector through capacity-building and the financial support of EU-FLEGT programme.

On average, **the VPA negotiations have slightly contributed to making sanctions more credible.** The private sector took a dimmer view: 20% of SME and 37.5% of industrial actors thought that VPA negotiations had no effect.

According to respondents, the three main causes of non-compliance are conflicts of interest obstructing law enforcement (59%), a high overall level of corruption (58%) and a lack of coordination between government agencies (49%). The literature (REDD+ Facility and MINEDD 2016) and focus groups both mention institutional instability, the loss of state authority and the malfunctioning of the information system as disrupting factors.



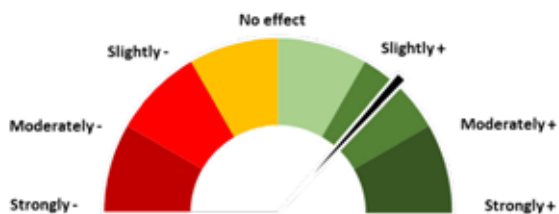


Figure 19. VPA negotiations' contribution to making sanctions more credible in the forest sector (N=86)

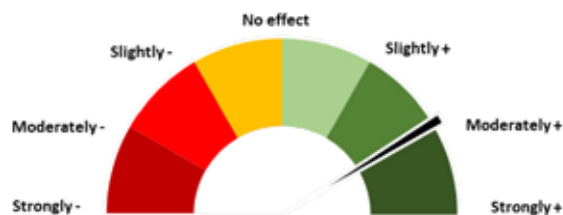


Figure 20. VPA negotiations' contribution to providing CS with a greater role in controlling legality and in identifying irregularities (N=79)

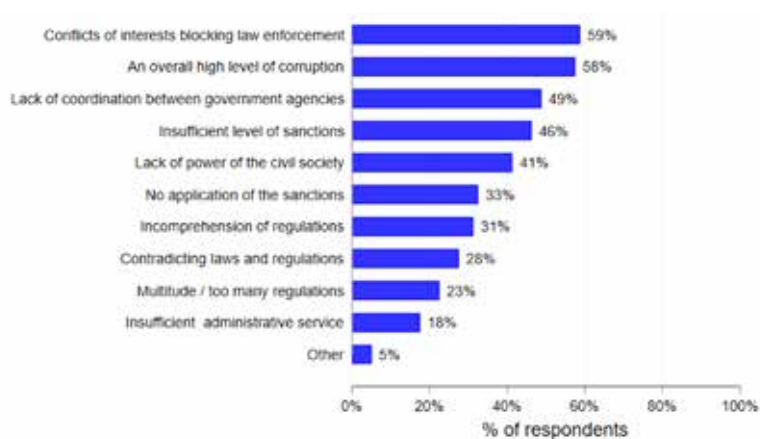


Figure 21. Principal causes of non-compliance with the law (multiple choices possible) (N=80)

As regards to the FERN legal framework indicator, opinions seemed divided but positive overall. Most respondents agreed that “some legal reforms have been completed and significant steps have been taken into account to implement them”. However, 42.5% of participants believed that “laws are being reformed, but the process is far from complete and generally not implemented”.

### Transparency, communication and accountability

*Improved participation and capacity, as well as improved legal justice leads to more transparency and government accountability.*

**The level of transparency in the forestry sector has improved since the start of the VPA negotiation process.** Before negotiations, most participants rated the level of transparency in the forestry sector as level zero, weak or very weak (83%), while the current level was deemed average for the majority of respondents (56%). Nevertheless, 29% described the level of transparency as high, compared to just 1% in the past. The respondents believe VPA negotiations had a moderate effect on improving transparency in the forestry sector.

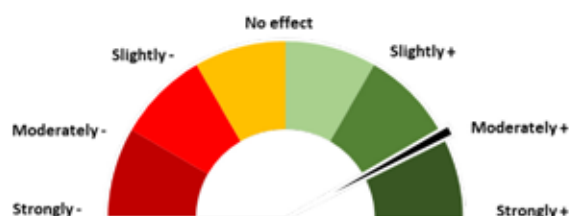
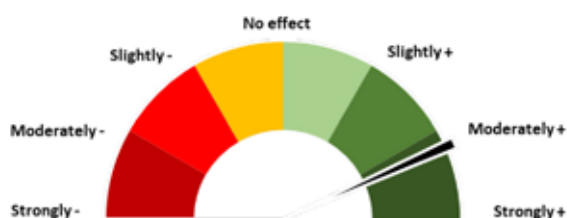


Figure 22. VPA negotiations' contribution to improving transparency in the forest sector (N=79)

Regarding the FERN accountability indicator, we observe a limited level of accountability in the forestry sector. More than 41% of participants agreed that channels for reporting infractions and corruption “exist, are acknowledged by the authorities and sometimes result in actions but it is not always timely or is incomplete”. Almost a quarter of participants agreed that these channels “exist in principle but not in practice”, while 12.5% believe that despite putting them into practice, they do not lead to results.

**The VPA negotiations have moderately contributed to making the government more accountable for its actions.** This view seems to be shared across all

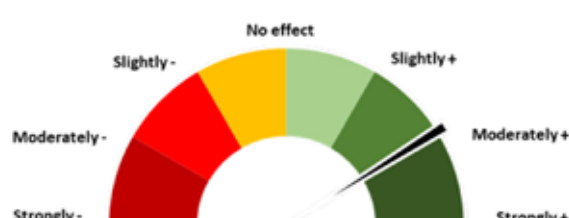


**Figure 23. VPA negotiations' contribution to making government more accountable for its actions in the forest sector (N=79)**

groups of interviewed actors. However, the private sector – SMEs have a less positive view, with a quarter stating that the VPA has made the government *less* accountable. In discussions, several participants stressed the progress made by MINEF in terms of accountability, adding that the MINEF could be considered as “model” or a good example to follow by the Ministry of Agriculture, such as in the framework of the Cocoa Initiative.

The level of government coordination with the forestry sector was deemed moderate: almost half of interviewees considered there to be “some information sharing and coordination but in practice different agencies regularly work in silos”. There is a clear need for government communication and coordination for an efficient implementation of the legality systems. Multiple agencies (MINEF, SODEFOR, MINAGRI, MINEDD) are involved in the implementation of the legal and regulatory instruments of Côte d’Ivoire’s forest law enforcement system. A key achievement of the VPA process has been improved intergovernmental cooperation, along with the trend towards improved stakeholder consultation, as confirmed by existing literature and FGDs. Furthermore, respondents stated that the VPA process had a moderate effect on the provision of information allowing the SMEs to conduct their activities legally.

Opinions on the FERN transparency indicator were divided, but overall, participants considered information to be moderately available on request. Indeed, 35% of participants considered that “some information is available on request and on ad-hoc basis” while 34% estimated that “most information is available on request within a reasonable time frame, some information habitually published”. During discussions, several actors mentioned the importance of raising public awareness on environmental issues and the importance of preserving Ivorian forests.



**Figure 24. VPA negotiations' contribution to providing information allowing the SMEs to conduct their activities legally (N=79)**

Increased communication and information sharing will be needed to achieve these goals.

#### 4.1.2 Corruption

*Participation, capacity, legal justice, transparency, and accountability* are five key elements that, when improved, contribute to improved governance and therefore reduced corruption.

A range of different indicators are presented here to measure the level of corruption in the forest sector. Political will is an important factor in fighting corruption by allowing civil society to play its role of independent observer. Other relevant indicators are an estimation of the prevalence of bribes and informal taxes, which are proxies for the level of corruption in the forest sector.

#### Level of corruption in the forest sector

For decades, corruption and a lack of transparency have been persistent phenomena in the Ivorian forest sector. According to the Corruption Perception Index published by Transparency International in 2019, Côte d’Ivoire was ranked 106th out of 180, with a score of 35 out of 100.<sup>6</sup> The timber industry is affected in the same way as all economic operators by what has come to be known in French as “*corruption discrète*” (quiet corruption) resulting from malpractices of operators at all levels (World Bank 2010).

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed (71%) that **the level of corruption in the forestry sector has decreased more than in other sectors since the beginning of the VPA negotiation process**, which is in line with the results related to forest governance. However, we can observe significant differences

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/c%C3%B4te-divoire#>

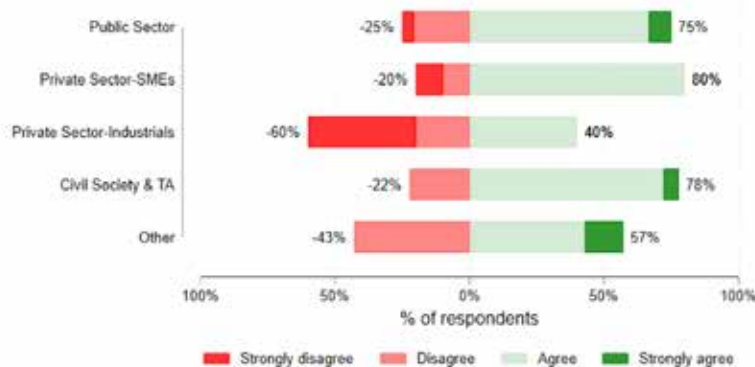


Figure 25. Statement on whether the level of corruption in the forest sector has decreased since VPA negotiations (relative to other sectors) (N=64)

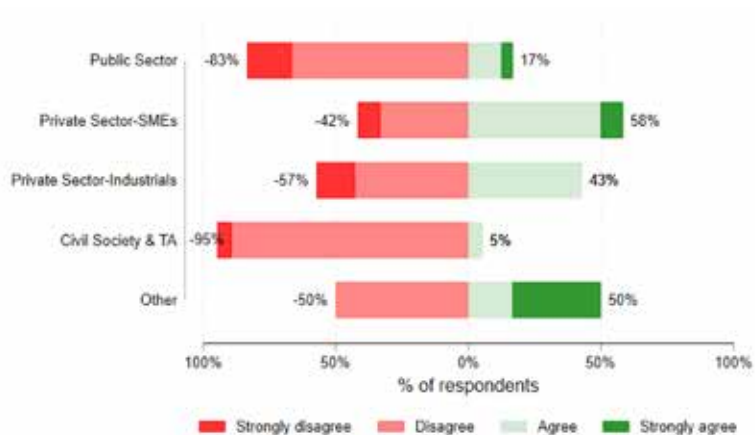


Figure 26. Statement on whether the bureaucracy linked to the VPA process has created new opportunities for corruption (N=68)

between groups of actors. Members of the private industrial sector are more likely to disagree or strongly disagree (60%) than other actors.

Most respondents (73%) do not believe that bureaucracy linked to the VPA negotiations process has created new opportunities for corruption. However, we observed differences between actors in the perception of bureaucracy as a vector for corruption. Most members of the private sectors (SMEs) (58%) and “other” category (50%) agree or strongly agree that it can be a vector, while CS and traditional authorities disagree or strongly disagree with the statement (95%).

### Political will to fight corruption

In 2013, Côte d’Ivoire adopted an executive order to prevent and combat corruption by requiring the public administration and private companies to produce documents proving good governance standards (BNETD 2015). However, some FGD participants highlight that corruption is still widespread across all

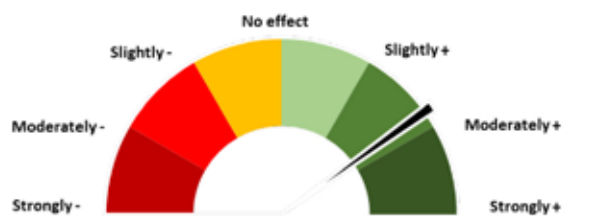
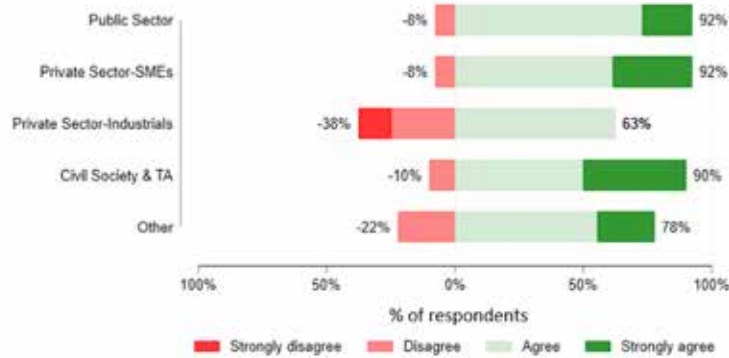


Figure 27. VPA negotiations’ contribution to improving the political will to fight corruption in the forest sector (N=80)

sectors, which also affects the forestry sector and the VPA negotiation process.

The political will to fight corruption in the forestry sector is largely believed to have increased since the beginning of the VPA negotiation process. Before the start of VPA negotiations, most respondents (63%) considered the political will to fight corruption in the forestry sector to be limited to very limited. Furthermore, 7.5% of participants thought there was no political will to fight corruption. Today, most



**Figure 28. Statement on whether independent observation now plays a greater role in reducing corruption in the forest sector than before VPA negotiations (N=76)**

respondents (62.5%) believe there is a moderate to strong political will to fight corruption. The VPA negotiation process is perceived to have moderately improved efforts to fight corruption.

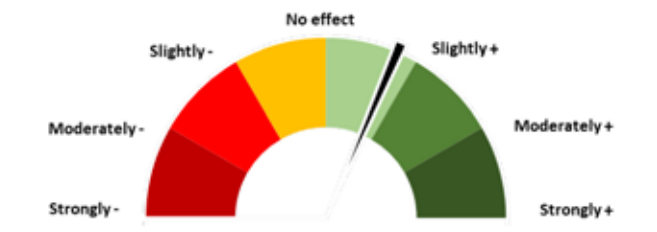
According to FGDs, while the VPA has contributed to improving the political will to fight corruption in the forestry sector, it cannot change practices that are deeply rooted in the system. One participant gave a realistic view on the situation: “You cannot take a white sheet out of a sack of charcoal. Corruption is rampant – it is everywhere and not just in MINEF or in the forestry sector. The VPA alone will not be able to make corruption disappear”.

Work of independent observation in monitoring political corruption in the forest sector

Most respondents thought that **independent monitoring now has a greater effect on reducing corruption in the forestry sector** than before the start of VPA negotiations. Only a minority of actors belonging to the private sector (industry) disagree or strongly disagree (36%) with this view.

### Bribes and informal taxes for SMEs

**The costs incurred by SMEs on informal taxes has decreased by 9% since the start of the VPA negotiations**, although 50% of participants from the public sector, civil society and traditional authorities responded that they did not know about the matter. However, this result is only slightly attributed to the VPA negotiation process. The private sector (small and large operators) is more sceptical regarding the role of informal bribes than civil society and traditional authorities, but FGDs highlighted the fact that informal taxes encountered on the road



**Figure 29. VPA negotiations’ contribution to reducing the costs faced by SMEs paid as informal taxes (N=60)**

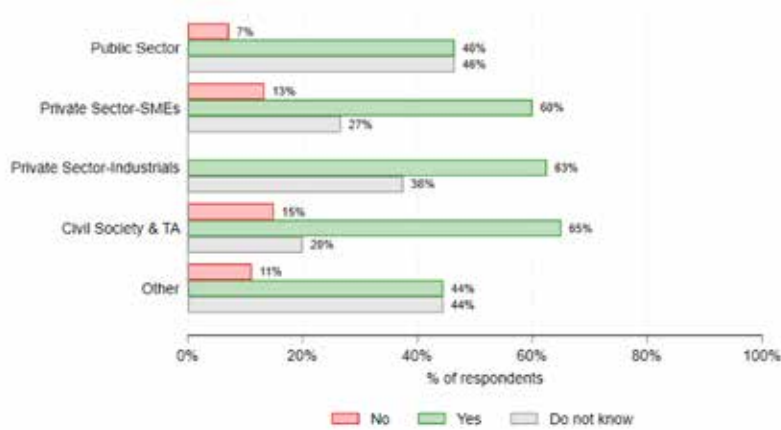
have decreased since the start of the VPA negotiation process.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, FGDs believe that actors in both the formal and informal sectors still have to pay informal taxes (“*tracasseries*” in French). A craftsman interviewed at the Yopougon market highlighted the fact that “*formalizing does not protect you from paying informal taxes, but it forces you to pay taxes*”, leading to increased overall costs for operators.

### 4.1.3 Governance spillovers

Other sectors could also benefit from or be inspired by new processes in the forest sector thanks to FLEGT-VPA, leading to governance spillovers in the country, as shown on the right-hand side of the VPA ToC.

<sup>7</sup> In Côte d’Ivoire, there is limited law enforcement, but there are many checkpoints operated by customs, forestry officials and police for the purpose of collecting bribes rather than checking documents or loads. Company vehicles are subject to “road charges” which increase the cost of transport.



**Figure 30. Statement on whether the VPA process has inspired other processes in the country (N=80)**

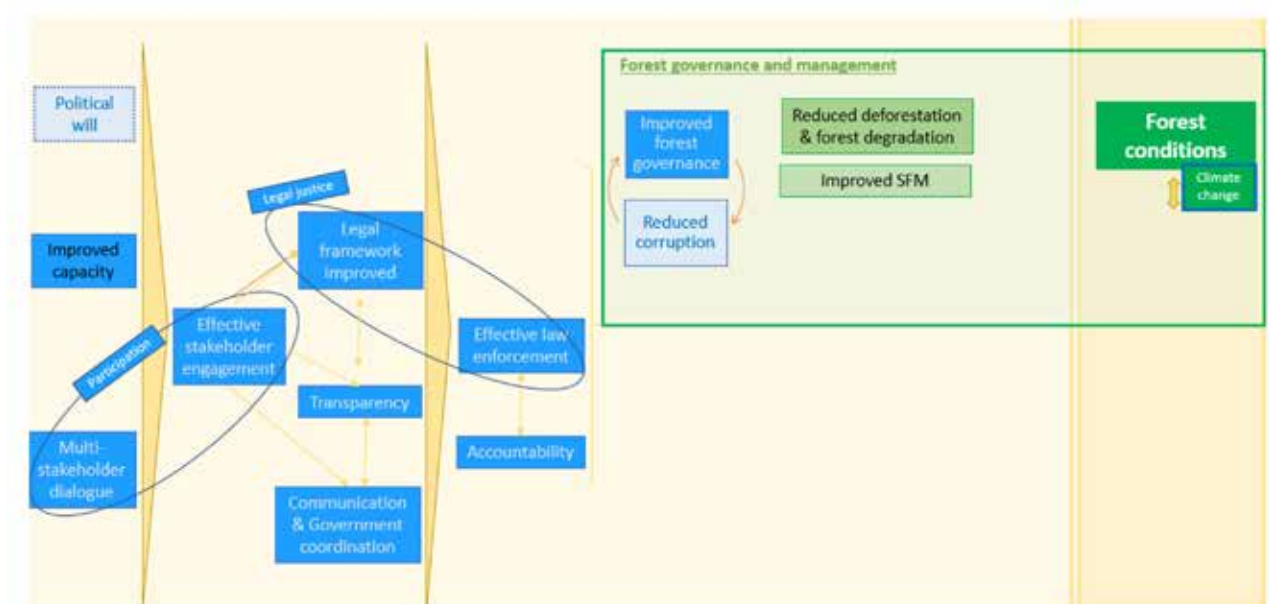
Participants agreed (55%) that **the VPA negotiation process has inspired other processes in the country**, although 35% answered that they did not know. CS and traditional authorities are the most convinced, followed by large and small operators in the private sector. Among the other processes inspired by the VPA negotiations, respondents mentioned REDD+, the *Initiative Cacao Forêts (ICF)*, the EU-CI sustainable cocoa initiative and the independent observation programme.

- Forest conditions will improve thanks to reduced deforestation and forest degradation, as well as more sustainable forest management (SFM).
- All three are directly positively impacted through improved forest governance and reduced corruption in the forest sector.
- Improved participation and capacity and improved legal justice are required to improve forest governance and reduce corruption, as described in the previous section.

## 4.2 Forest conditions

This section focuses on a crucial expected impact of the VPA process: improved forest conditions (see Figure 31).

These different expected results are sequentially analysed in this section by using the collected data to construct relevant indicators.



**Figure 31. Impact pathways for Forest Conditions**



### Key takeaways

- The VPA negotiations have had a **limited effect on reducing deforestation**.
- The VPA has **slightly contributed to improved implementation** of forest management rules.
- VPA negotiations have contributed to **improved integration of multiple forest functions**.
- **Awareness of poor forest management consequences** has increased since the start of VPA negotiations.

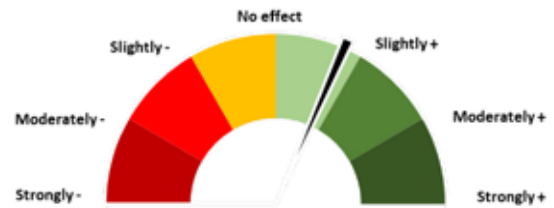


Figure 32. VPA negotiations’ contribution to reduced deforestation (N=79)

### 4.2.1 Reduced deforestation and forest degradation

Respondents believe the VPA negotiations slightly contributed to reducing deforestation. The VPA aims to help establish and maintain sustainable forest management but cannot be the only motor of change, especially as it does not target deforestation caused by agricultural expansion, which is prevalent in Côte d’Ivoire (Petrucci 2018). Deforestation in Côte d’Ivoire is more pronounced than in neighbouring countries (Loupe and Ouattara 2013), and despite growing momentum for environmental reforms, this dynamic has not yet been reversed. While stakeholders agree on the objective of managing forests sustainably, there seems to be an implicit consensus that this cannot be achieved in the short run.

According to discussions, reforestation remains a major challenge. Private-sector operators have a three-year obligation to monitor and ensure that trees are successfully replanted in a process known as “*reboisement compensatoire*” (compensatory

reforestation). Loggers must ensure that at least 82% of the trees they cut down are successfully replanted before their exploitation permits can be renewed. However, several challenges exist in practice, as outlined below.

First, while the private operator ensures that trees are replanted and monitors them for three years, the responsibility falls to MINEF to follow up after this period. Due to a lack of resources, MINEF does not have the capacity to provide the monitoring needed. A participant from the public sector pointed out that forestry agents at the national level are sent to monitor the replanted trees at the regional and local levels, which can be considered an inefficient use of resources, more decentralized monitoring would be more efficient. Consequently, the trees that have been replanted are cut down by loggers, preventing the country’s forests from regenerating.

Second, the difficulty of securing land complicates the reforestation process. Reforestation activities are mainly conducted by loggers in classified forests (managed by SODEFOR). In the rural domain, farmers in community forests do not always have a property title to prove ownership of their lands. As a result, the quota of trees replanted remains very limited.

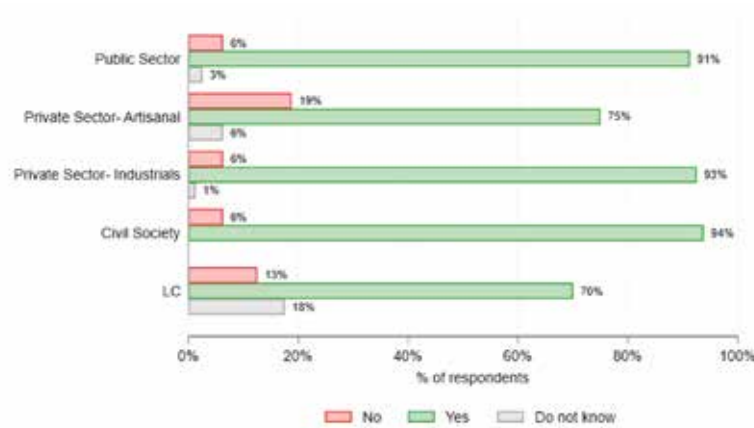


Figure 33. Actors’ awareness of the consequences of poor governance in the forest sector (N=80)

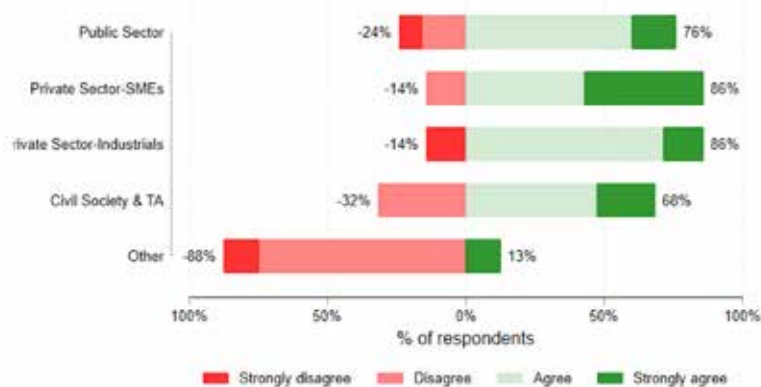


Figure 34. Statement on the reduction of the environmental impact of SMEs since VPA ratification (N=73)



Figure 35. VPA negotiations' contribution to better implementation of forest management plans (N=80)

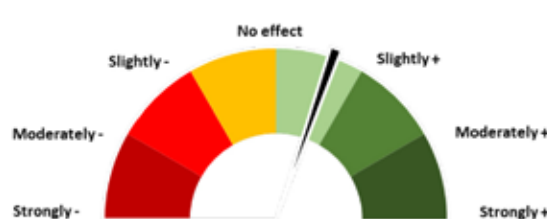


Figure 36. VPA negotiations' contribution to increasing the number of hectares exploited through a private certification system (N=65)

Third, according to several participants during FGDs, reforestation is not a priority of the Ivorian government. Instead, priority is given to agriculture due to its importance to the Ivorian economy. Participants argued that MINEF should provide further incentives to make reforestation less costly as well as raise awareness among local communities and private-sector actors of its benefits.

Nevertheless, respondents believed that the different sets of actors working in the forestry sector have become more aware of the consequences of poor forest governance, with 70% of respondents (and 94% of CS respondents) agreeing that local communities are more aware of the consequences of poor governance and management of the forestry sector. Likewise, 69% of respondents agreed that SMEs have reduced their environmental impact since the beginning of the VPA negotiation process.

#### 4.2.2 Sustainable forest management (SFM)

Overall, 78% of respondents believed that the level of implementation of forest management plans are now at least moderately implemented, compared to just 29% before VPA negotiations started. As

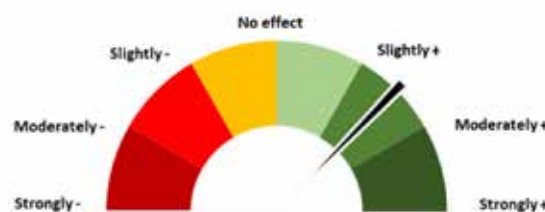


Figure 37. VPA negotiations' contribution to better integration of multiple forest functions (N=78)

such, they believe VPA has slightly improved the implementation of forest management plans. Differences were observed between groups: the public sector, CS and traditional authorities have the most positive view of the role of VPA, while the private sector is more sceptical. Note that forest management plans are not applied in the rural forest domain apart from a few logging concessions holding private certification. Hence, perceived VPA contribution could refer to forest management practices instead of the implementation of forest management plans.



The VPA negotiations contributed slightly to the increase in the amount of ha exploited with a private certification system and to improved integration of multiple forest functions. Many large industrial companies have adopted private certifications to reduce risks within the due diligence system required to access the European market under EUTR. Private certification, however, is expensive and often out of reach for smaller producers (REDD+ Facility and MINEDD 2014).

### 4.3 Illegal logging

This section focuses on one of the main and most obvious expected impacts of the VPA process: the reduction of illegal logging and trade (see Figure 38).

- Illegal logging is expected to decrease especially after the VPA is implemented, once TLAS is being developed and operationalized, ensuring that timber logging and trade can be traced, but also that illegal forest activities can be reported and punished thanks to improved legal justice and forest governance.
- A fully operationalized TLAS leads to the FLEGT licence. Furthermore, a well-enforced EUTR also contributes to reduced illegal timber logging and trade. However, the TLAS is only expected to have a limited effect on illegal logging before it becomes fully operational.

#### Key takeaways

- The VPA negotiation process has **slightly contributed to a reduction in illegal logging** from production, conservation and protection forests.
- Respondents from the public sector and civil society and traditional authorities believe that the VPA moderately contributed to a decrease in illegal logging in production forests. Private sector actors believe the VPA played a more modest role.
- Most respondents estimated that **the volume of illegal logging in both export and domestic markets has decreased** since VPA negotiations.
- According to FGDs, this perceived reduction in illegal logging could be explained by the fact that **the VPA has led to better law enforcement**, making it more difficult for illegalities to continue.

- However, a marginal reduction in illegal practices can be observed thanks to improved forest governance, mainly due to improved knowledge among stakeholders, fostered by higher participation and improved capacity.

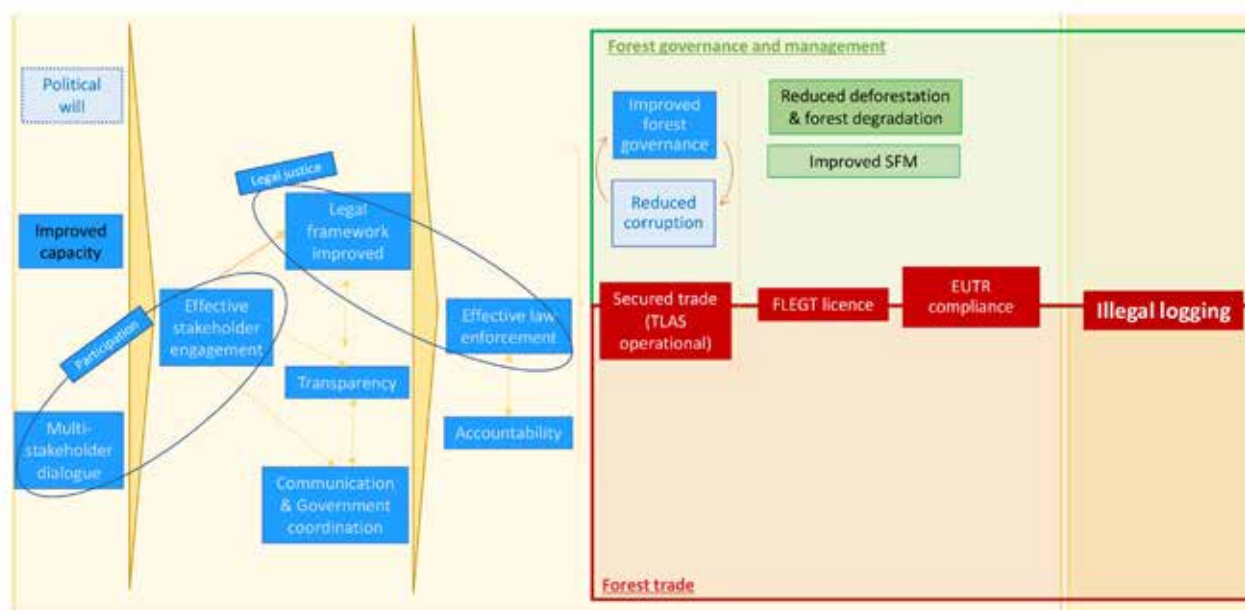


Figure 38. Impacts pathways for Illegal Logging

In this section, estimations of illegal logging are presented in both state and non-state forests as well as in the export and domestic markets. These different expected results are sequentially analysed in this section by using the collected data to construct relevant indicators.

### 4.3.1 Illegal logging measures

The VPA negotiation process has slightly contributed to a reduction in illegal logging in all types of forest. Most respondents think that illegal logging has decreased both in state and rural forest domains: 73% of respondents believe that it has decreased or strongly decreased in the rural domains and 74% in the state domains. Nevertheless, we can observe differences between categories of actors. In state domains, the private sector (SMEs and industry) estimate that illegal logging has decreased, but to a lesser extent than other categories of actors believe. In the industrial private sector, 38% of respondents thought that illegal logging had slightly or strongly

increased since VPA negotiations began. In rural domains, most respondents agree on a slight decrease in illegal logging, although only 23% of industrial private-sector respondents believe it has increased.

According to the literature, the share of timber exports going to regional (West African) markets have been rising in recent years, resulting in a surge of exports through roads which are difficult to control. These include exports to Asian countries, notably China and India, which are often subject to fewer controls on legality. As these destinations are beyond the scope of the VPA, they could enable Côte d'Ivoire to continue exporting illegal timber. These will, however, be included in SVL and TLAS and receive a certificate of legality instead of a FLEGT licence (Blackett and Gardette 2008).

Overall, respondents estimated that **the volume of illegal wood** in both export and domestic markets, as well as the proportion of national timber exploited with a legally obtained permit, **has decreased since**

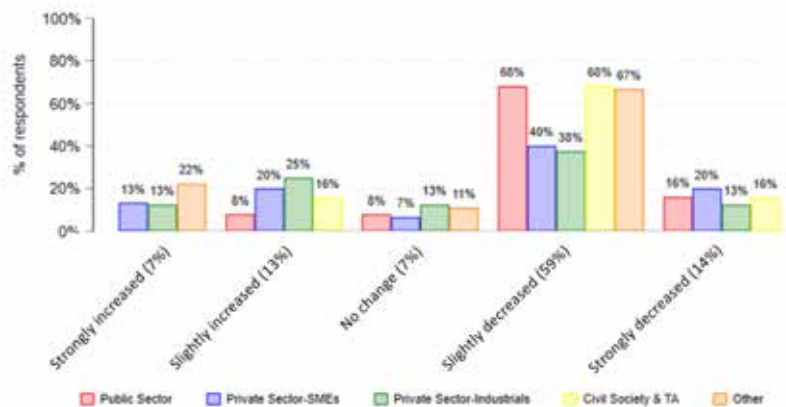


Figure 39. Illegal logging in State Forest domain since the start of VPA negotiations (N=76)

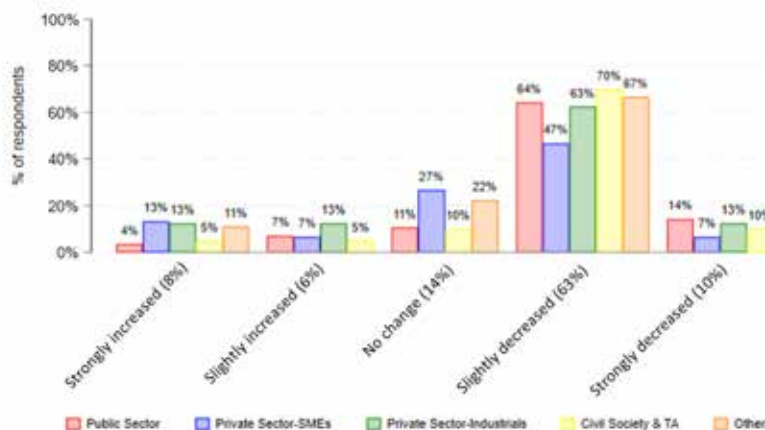


Figure 40. Illegal logging in Rural Forest domain since the start of VPA negotiations (N=80)



Figure 41. VPA negotiations' contribution to the reduction of illegal logging in SFD and RFD (N=78)

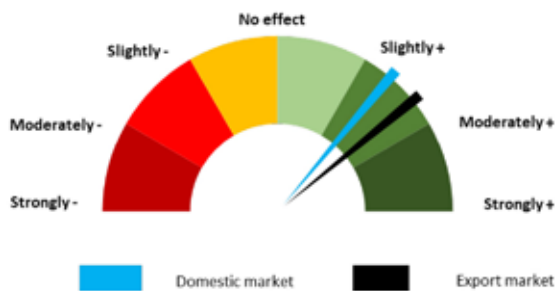


Figure 43. VPA negotiations' contribution to the reduction of illegal logging on the domestic and export market (N=78)

the VPA negotiation process. Participants estimated that the proportion of legal wood in the domestic and export markets have increased by 15%. This could be explained by the increase in the proportion of national timber production being exploited with a legally obtained permit. FGDs outlined that the decrease in illegal logging in the export market is important and more attainable than a decrease in the domestic market. This is due to artisanal sawing, which is illegal in Côte d'Ivoire but remains the main source of domestic timber.

VPA negotiations are considered to have **slightly contributed to a reduction in illegal timber in the domestic market** and **moderately contributed to a reduction in illegal timber in the export market**. It also helped to slightly increase the amount of timber being exploited with a legally obtained permit. According to FGDs, this perceived increase in legal logging could be explained by the fact that the VPA has led to better law enforcement, possibly making it more difficult for illegal activities to continue. The new forest code changed the legislation on public domain permit exploitation rights, which are no longer granted through PEF but through concessions, and the private domain is exploited after agreements have been granted by MINEF.

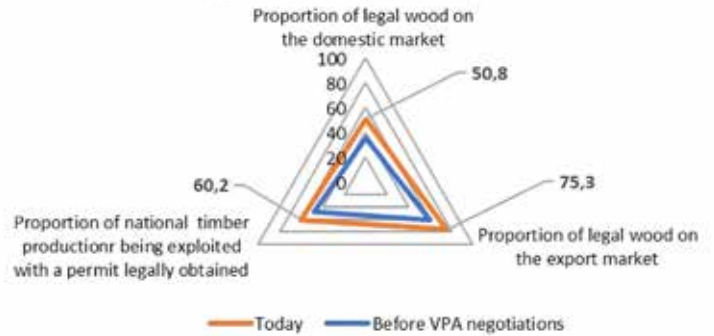


Figure 42. Share of legal timber on domestic and export markets (N=49)



Figure 44. VPA negotiations' contribution to an increased amount of timber exploited with a legally obtained permit (N=76)

### 4.3.2 Secured TLAS

As implementation has not yet started in Côte d'Ivoire, we do not expect any impacts of the VPA on the TLAS. Information about the evolution of the Côte d'Ivoire TLAS can be found in the desk review.

## 4.4 Economic development

This section focuses on a less direct expected impact of the VPA process: Economic development (see Figure 45).

- The country's level of economic development is expected to improve through better access to external markets, the development of the domestic market, and more efficient tax collection.
- Opportunities in domestic and external markets can be created thanks to an increase in legal timber production, which can be locally traded and exported to the EU market through the aid of a VPA process in the long run.
- An increase in legal timber trade, together with better governance and reduced corruption in the forest sector, is expected to lead to more efficient tax collection.

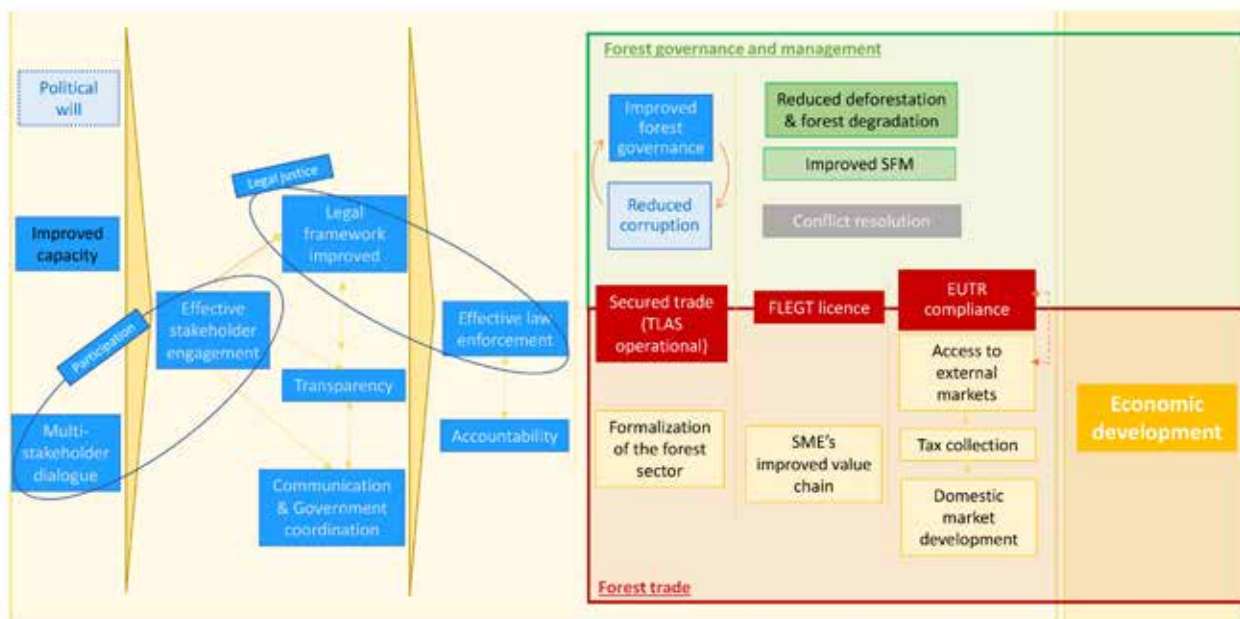


Figure 45. Impact pathways for Economic Development

- Better informed and trained stakeholders are prerequisites to a more formalized timber market and an improved timber value chain at the SME level, which could also contribute to better forest sector governance, along with improved legal justice and greater accountability.

The following section sequentially describes indicators of the development and benefits of the VPA process for the legal timber export and domestic markets, as well as the perceived efficiency of tax collection in the forest sector.

Once implemented, the VPA process is expected to impact not only illegal logging and trade but also economic development. However, it is important to assess the current situation in the light of baseline measures prior to VPA implementation, as well as highlight potential changes thanks to the negotiations.

Almost all participants (94%) **strongly agreed with the statement that the VPA process gives Côte d'Ivoire a positive image as a reliable business partner** as it signifies improved governance or at least a will to improve governance. Participants partly agreed that there is political will to give the development of the forest sector equal priority to that of other sectors. Respondents belonging to the private sector (industry) are the least convinced. Agriculture takes precedence in the Ivorian economy, and demand for agricultural lands for cocoa and coffee plantations has led to land use conflicts with forestry activities.

### Key takeaways

- 94% of participants believed that **being involved in a VPA gives the country a positive image**.
- The VPA negotiations have not contributed to facilitating access to exports for SMEs, but nor has it led to SMEs being squeezed out of business.
- Most participants view legal wood exploitation as too constraining for SMEs.
- The VPA negotiation process has contributed to **improved recognition of SME associations** in Côte d'Ivoire.

## 4.4.1 Export market opportunities

### Timber trade trends

Historically, European countries were the main destination of exported timber from Côte d'Ivoire. However, UN Comtrade data highlights that the share of exports to Europe has been decreasing, while the share of exports to Asia has been increasing. The European Union remains the main export market for Ivorian transformed wood products, accounting for two-thirds of exports. The regional African plywood market has also become increasingly important, while plywood exports to Europe and Asia have almost disappeared (Guizol et al. 2017).

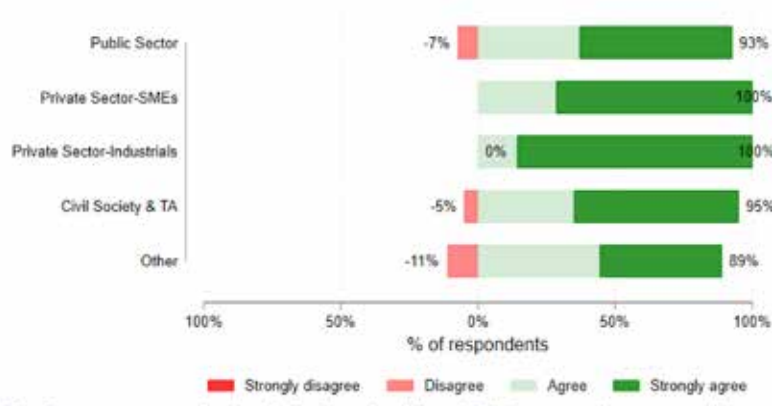


Figure 46. Statement on whether being involved in a VPA improves the country's image (N=77)

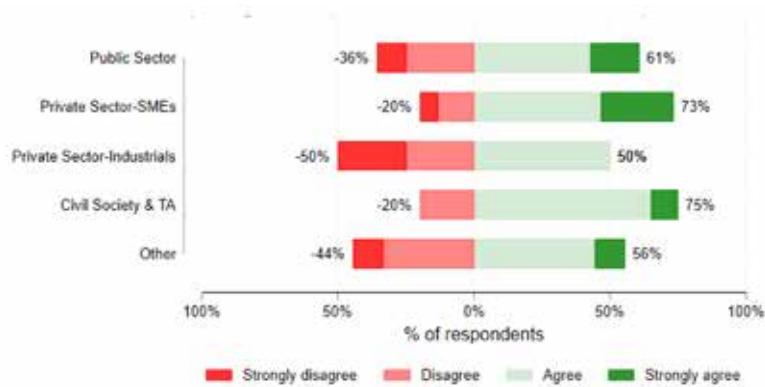


Figure 47. Statement on whether political will exists to give the development of the forest sector equal priority to that of other sectors (N=80)

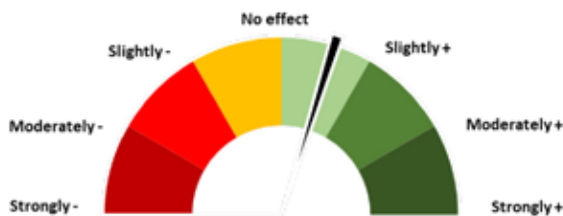


Figure 48. VPA negotiations' contribution to squeezing SMEs out of business (N=69)

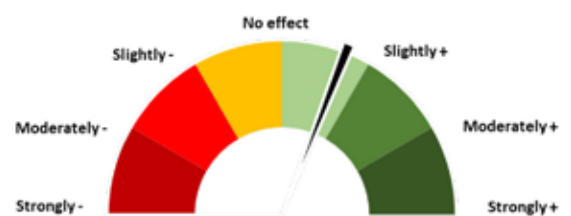


Figure 49. VPA negotiations' contribution to improving access to the export market for SMEs (N=75)

The estimated total volume of fresh and dried sawn timber exported in 2019 was over 61,000 m<sup>3</sup>. The main destination for fresh sawn timber was Asia, which accounted for 50% of exports, followed by Europe with 30%, Africa with 20% and lastly the Americas with 0.1%. As for dried sawn timber, Europe was the top destination with 54% of exports, followed by Asia with 28%, the Americas with 13% and Africa with 5% (SPIB and ATIBT 2020).

The VPA negotiation process has slightly improved SME access to the export market and has not squeezed them out of business. While most participants estimated the share of SME produce in export markets at less than 10% before the negotiations, most respondents estimate it to be above 10% today, although a third of respondents did not know.

FGD private-sector participants shared their expectations on the increase in the price of Ivorian



timber in the EU export market thanks to the VPA process and FLEGT licence.

### Perception of VPA-FLEGT benefits

The main perceived benefits from the VPA process are expected improvements in forest governance, a reduction in corruption in the forest sector (Petrucci 2018), and the improved inclusion of stakeholders in the legislative process (Fern and LoggingOff 2020). The FLEGT-VPA process has contributed to a significant acceleration in the creation of implementation texts for the new 2019 Forest Code (SPIB and ATIBT 2020).

In the early stages of the VPA negotiations, industrial logging companies expressed interest in the VPA process as they believed it would reduce competition they faced from illegal loggers, which they considered unfair. However, as the negotiations continued without significant results on the field, the perception of potential VPA-FLEGT benefit for these stakeholders diminished (Petrucci 2018).

#### 4.4.2 Domestic market development

Several factors have made domestic and regional markets increasingly important for the forest industry in Côte d'Ivoire: the emergence of an Ivorian middle class, the investments made in infrastructure and, more generally, the important demographic growth of African countries, in parallel with a reduction of export flows towards Europe. Depending on the source, the share of timber sold in the domestic market ranges between 10% and 15% of total sales (Guizol et al. 2017). The inclusion of the domestic market in the VPA has been a topic of research and discussion between stakeholders (EFI country report 2019), and timber production for the domestic market

will be integrated into the future legality verification system (Petrucci 2018).

### Political will to prioritize the development of the forest sector

The Ivorian government has defined a strategy (*Cadre d'Action Commune pour la préservation et la réhabilitation des forêts de Côte d'Ivoire et la cacao-culture durable*<sup>8</sup>) to improve coordination among stakeholders and pursue a sustainable management path for forests and cocoa culture (World Bank 2019). Furthermore, participants welcomed the strong political will to support change in the forestry sector at the administrative level.

On average, respondents agreed or strongly agreed (56%) that **the government has made legal wood more attractive in the domestic market since the start of the VPA negotiation process**. Public-sector and "other" actors were more sceptical about the statement. Despite growing concern about timber legality on the international market, legality is seldom a political priority for the domestic timber trade (Tsanga and Cerutti 2020). According to FGDs, between 15% and 20% of industrial production is required to be sold domestically, but the actual quantity sold can be much lower as it is economically unviable. As one participant pointed out: *"Imposing a rate to industry to supply the domestic market is impossible without subsidies from the state. SMEs will not be able to pay the same price as companies in the export market. The state will need to pay the income difference for industry"*.

8 Common Action Framework for the Preservation and Rehabilitation of Côte d'Ivoire's Forests and Sustainable Cocoa-Cultivation

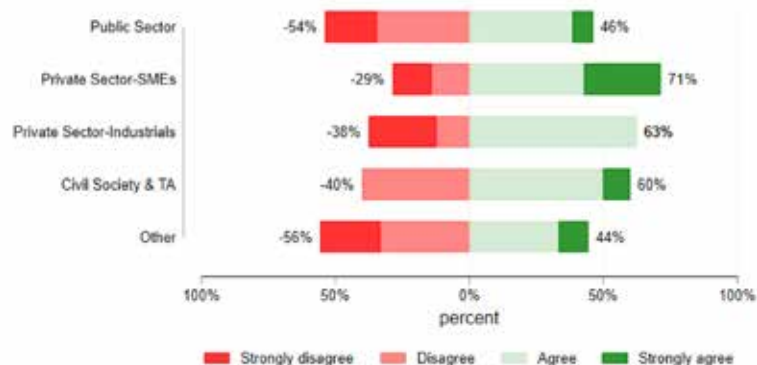


Figure 50. Increased attractiveness of legal wood on domestic market due to government action (N=77)

## Legal wood constraints on the domestic market

Most respondents (62%) agreed that **legal wood exploitation is both too technically and financially constraining for SMEs**, although we observed differences between groups: 42% of actors from SMEs disagreed or strongly disagreed, compared to just 29% of respondents from industry. Other constraints affecting legal wood distribution in the domestic market are a lack of consumer awareness of wood legality and sustainability, the limited availability of legal stumps for small operators, and the selling of wood at lower prices by informal artisanal loggers.

The wood exchanged on the domestic market is mainly supplied by such often informal artisanal loggers, as industrial firms face higher costs from taxes and transport expenditures (artisans are usually located near markets), which often leave them struggling to compete. This tendency for often illegal timber to remain prominent in the domestic market is reinforced by a lack of consumer awareness of wood legality and sustainability, as well as by the closing of many industries in the early 2000s following the political crisis. The main reason is probably the scarcity of wood due to degradation of the forest ecosystem: due to a reduction in forest cover, as well as the indiscriminate use of certain species in the past decades, there are not many ‘uninteresting timber species’ left for the industry, and all operators are now competing for the remaining species.

According to our discussions, **the limited availability of legal wood remains a challenge for small operators and craftsmen**. One participant described the situation as follows: “We are ready to pay for legal wood, but the limited availability remains an issue as sawmills prefer selling to the export market where margins are higher and the wood volumes ordered are

greater”. They deplore the fact that the only wood available on the domestic market is provided by sawmills and of poor quality, as the highest-quality wood is mainly reserved for export).

Finally, local small-scale operators complain about competition from well-organized groups of traders who exert a monopoly on timber harvesting and trade on the domestic market. Such groups can work collectively and have the purchasing power to eliminate competition from small-scale local operators. Sawmills prefer to supply larger orders rather than smaller ones from local craftsmen. Furthermore, grouped traders can also pre-finance sawmills to ensure their access to wood. Confronted with this situation, craftsmen stated during the FGD that their only option given the prevalent power of industry and organized traders is to resort to artisanal logging (*sciage à façon*). To address such issues, one solution suggested by some SME respondents was to group local small operators together through a central purchasing office (“centrale d’achat”). This would allow them to benefit from increased weight and visibility as well as place larger orders for wood from sawmills. However, several challenges were also raised, such as the breadth of actors with divergent interests.

## Private sector organization and formalization (associations)

Industrial actors are represented by the *Syndicat des producteurs industriels du bois* (SPIB), which is present during the VPA negotiations. Other private sector associations include the *Syndicat Ivoirien des Groupements d’Exploitants Forestiers et d’Industriels du Bois* (SIGEFIB) and the *Syndicat des exploitations du charbon de bois en Côte d’Ivoire, représentant les producteurs de produits secondaires de la forêt*

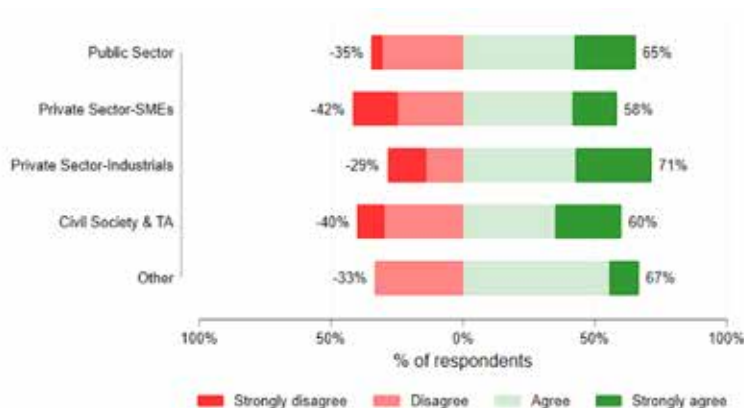


Figure 51. Statement on whether the legal exploitation of wood is too constraining for SMEs (technically and financially) (N=74)



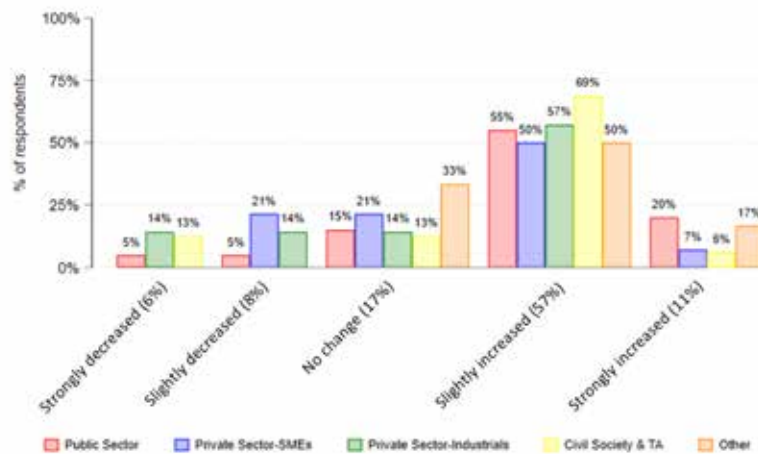


Figure 52. Evolution of the number of SMEs (N=63)

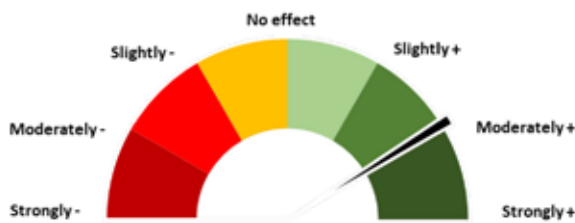


Figure 53. VPA negotiations' contribution to better recognition of SME associations (N=78)



Figure 54. VPA negotiations' contribution to less disruption in the timber sector (N=75)

(SYNEPSEFOR), which are less involved in the VPA process (Petrucci 2018). The AVSI Foundation and the SPIB are working on projects to formalize the informal sector “to establish more organized and credible transactions for the domestic market” (EFI country report 2019). The efforts are ongoing and have not yet produced tangible results.

According to respondents, **the number of SMEs has slightly increased since the start of the VPA negotiation process.** According to FGDs, negotiations contributed to an increase in awareness of the formalization process as several SMEs moved from the informal to the formal sector. However, not all participants appear to be well informed on the benefits and process of SME formalization; some participants claimed that formalization did not exempt them from paying informal taxes. As a result, several formalized actors decided to return to the informal sector.

The VPA negotiation process has moderately contributed to the improved recognition of SME associations and slightly contributed to a decrease in disruptions in the timber sector.

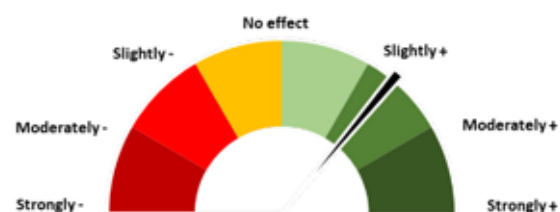


Figure 55. VPA negotiations' contribution to a more efficient collection of taxes by the state in the forest sector (N=64)

#### 4.4.3 Tax collection efficiency

The fiscal rules applied to the forest sector rely on three categories of taxes (Duhesme and Sepulchre 2013): taxes following the attribution of forest concessions, taxes linked to the exploitation of forest resources (calculated depending on the volume and species logged), and taxes on the sale of forest products (VAT).

**The amount of taxes effectively collected from the forest sector is perceived to have slightly increased:**

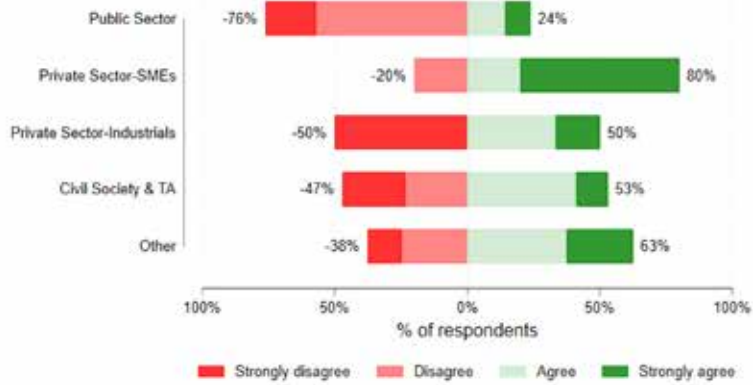


Figure 56. Statement on whether obtaining a certificate of legality (FLEGT) introduces new formal and informal taxes (N=62)

48% believed that more than three-quarters of the amount that is owed is effectively collected by the government, versus 39% before VPA negotiations.

Respondents believed that **the VPA process has slightly improved the collection of taxes by the state in the forestry sector**. Civil society and traditional authorities as well as the private sector (SMEs) had the most positive view regarding the role of the negotiations. According to participants from the private sector during FGDs, operators conducting their activities legally and complying with the three categories of taxes mentioned above pay around 35% of their income in taxes, while a representative from the Ministry of Finance highlighted increased

cooperation between MINEF and the Ministry of Finance since the start of the negotiations.

Although the VPA still remains in the negotiation phase, 51% of respondents believed that the process has not introduced any new formal or informal taxes.

#### 4.5 Livelihoods and poverty

This section focuses on the last expected impact of the VPA process: *livelihoods and poverty* (see Figure 57).

- Improved livelihoods and reduced poverty are directly linked to the potential impact on economic development, mainly through the

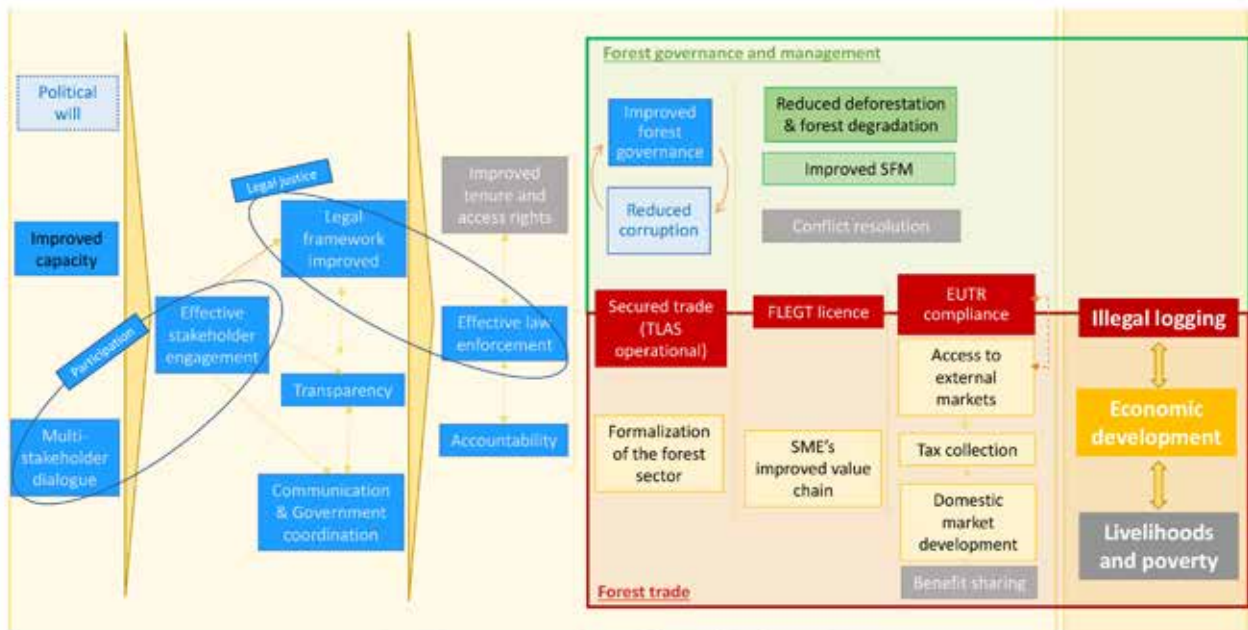


Figure 57. Impact pathways for Livelihoods and Poverty

potential increase in job opportunities and improvements in working conditions in the forest sector.

- Increased business opportunities in legal timber and improved governance leading to more efficient tax collection would entail improved redistribution of taxes and benefit sharing, improving livelihoods.
- Furthermore, an improved legal framework and law enforcement (legal justice) in the forest sector would contribute to greater consideration of property rights, particularly those of LC & IP, but also those of women, youth and marginalized groups, which in turn would contribute to the development of conflict resolution mechanisms, hence improving living conditions.

As for the previous impact dimensions, impacts on livelihoods and poverty may not yet be observed during the VPA negotiation phase. Here, we present a variety of different indicators to assess the potential

impact of the VPA process on livelihoods and its contributing factors.

#### 4.5.1 Job opportunities and working conditions in the forest sector

In 2020, the informal timber and forest sector was estimated to directly or indirectly employ around 8,000 people. Integrating the domestic market into the VPA puts those individuals at risk of losing their main source of revenue (Tsanga and Cerutti 2020). Overall, the formal timber and forest sector remains a major source of employment, providing around 50,000 direct jobs (SPIB and ATIBT 2020).

**The VPA negotiation process has contributed to a slight increase in job opportunities:** 51% of respondents believe that it has at least resulted in some increase in job opportunities, while 31% thought it has had no impact on the labour market. Differences can be observed between groups. Small operators from the private sector have the most positive view regarding the contribution of the VPA negotiations, while the public sector and “others” have a more sceptical view. Respondents are divided on whether this slight job gain in the labour market has benefited local communities: 43% believe it has not changed, while 45% believe that it has slightly or strongly increased.

#### Improved working conditions

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed (54%) that **workers in the forestry sector have access to more secure jobs than before the start of negotiations**. CS respondents agreed the least and

#### Key takeaways

- **The VPA has moderately contributed** to greater recognition of the rights of local communities;
- **The VPA has slightly contributed** to improving working conditions in the forestry sector;
- The VPA contributed to a **slight increase in job opportunities** and **slightly contributed** to improved consideration of the status of youth, women and marginalized groups.

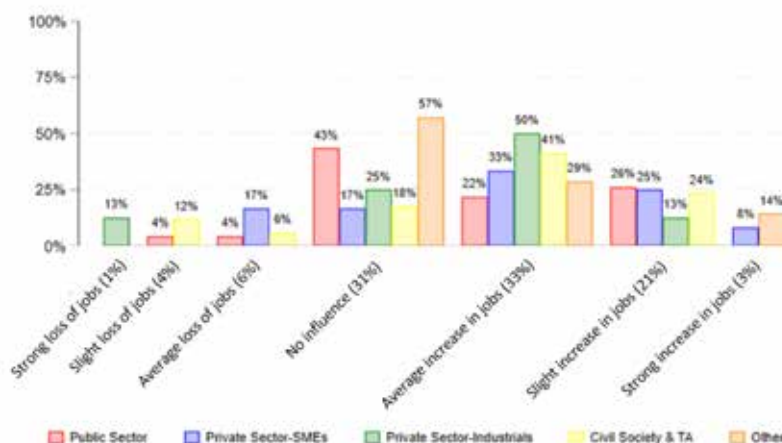


Figure 58. Evolution of the number of jobs in the forest sector since the start of VPA negotiations (N=67)

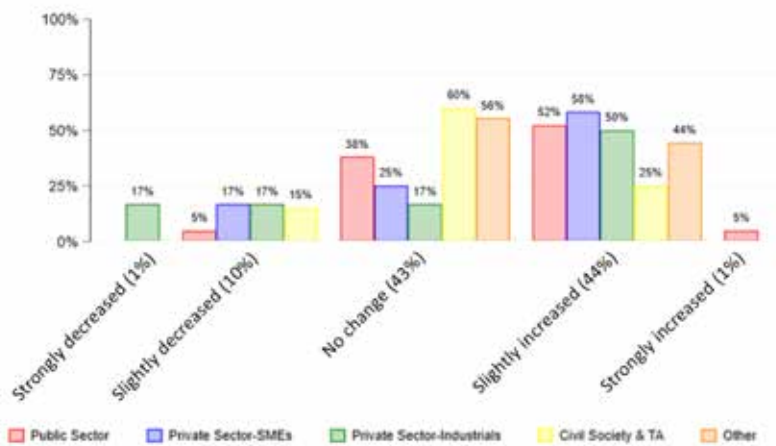


Figure 59. Evolution of the employment opportunities for CL&PA since VPA negotiations (N=68)

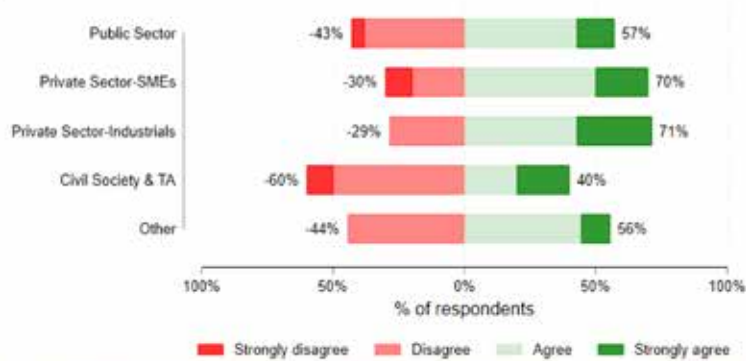


Figure 60. Statement on whether the forest sector workers have access to more secure jobs than before VPA negotiations (N=67)

private-sector actors (both small and large operators) the most. During FGDs, some participants outlined that working conditions are set by the Labour Code, and the VPA process is therefore unlikely to impact them.

Two positive indirect effects from the negotiations were identified on **improving working conditions in the forestry sector**: (i) civil society has contributed to raising awareness and defending the working conditions of SMEs and craftsmen in the forestry sector, and (ii) large operators must comply with certain due diligence standards (including improved staff working conditions) to obtain private certification. Overall, 63% of respondents recognized that forestry sector workers are better organized than before VPA negotiations.

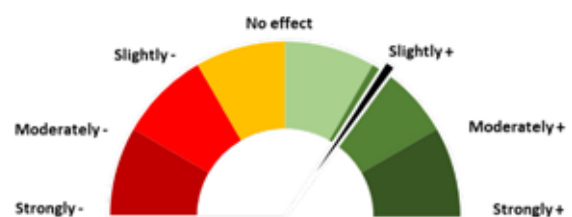


Figure 61. VPA negotiations' contribution to improving working conditions in the forestry sector (N=89)

### Improved worker curricula and expertise

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that **the curricula of training institutions now better integrate the themes of legality and SEM than before VPA negotiations**: 57% also agreed or strongly agreed that forest workers had more expertise than before VPA

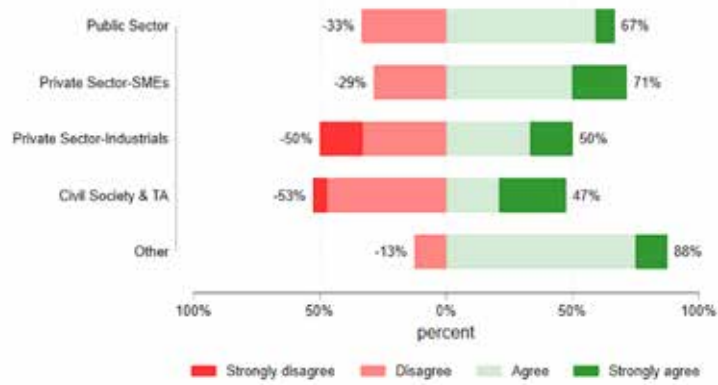


Figure 62. Statement on whether forest sector workers are better organized then before VPA negotiations (N=74)

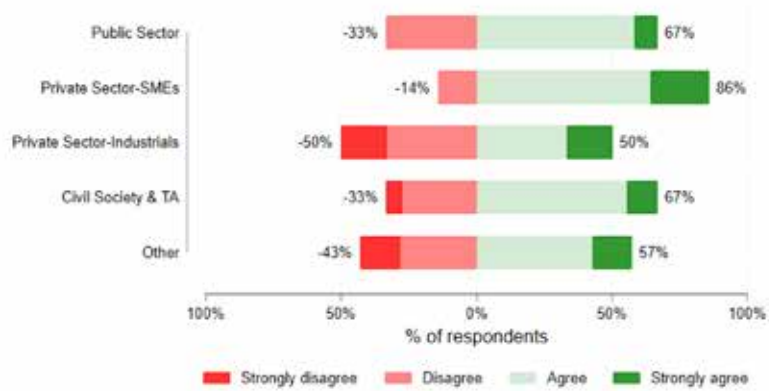


Figure 63. Statement on whether the curriculum of institutions better integrates the themes of legality and sustainable forest management than before VPA negotiations (N=69)

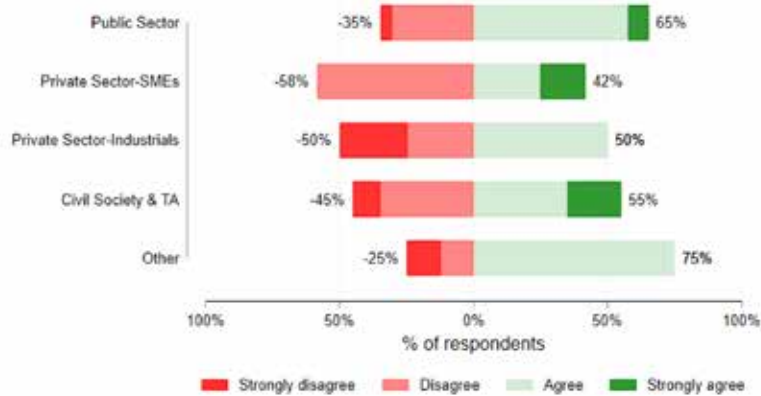


Figure 64. Statement on whether forest sector workers have greater expertise than before VPA negotiations (N=74)



**negotiations.** However, many actors from the large operators of the private sector as well as the “other” category did not agree or strongly disagreed (50% and 43%).

#### 4.5.2 Tax redistribution and well-being of local communities / benefit sharing

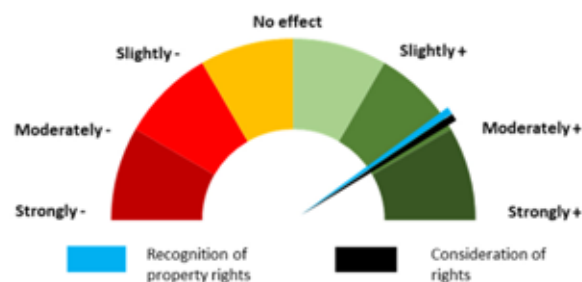
Forest operators are required to carry out work in kind before any exploitation on village land as a contribution to rural development (SPIB and ATIBT 2017a). Large operators must prove that they have respected the specifications (“*cahier de charge*”) that require them to undertake social actions such as building a road or a school that the community can benefit from. However, as pointed out during FGDs, in practice, operators sometimes do not meet the required specifications and there is limited follow-up from MINEF to exert pressure on non-compliant operators.

Direct tax redistribution from the state could also be a way to improve livelihoods. Village communities benefit from the allocation of royalties linked to public interest works, but we did not raise questions about it during the survey or during FGDs.

#### 4.5.3 Rights and property rights (land tenure) of local communities

**The VPA negotiations have moderately contributed to greater recognition of the rights of local communities and improved consideration of their property rights.** FGDs have highlighted the fact that the issue of land tenure remains a key challenge that needs to be addressed to advance into the VPA implementation phase. While the 2019 Forestry Code took a step forward by clarifying the definition of the right of ownership of the tree, the registration of customary rights through property titles (“*immatriculation*”) remains a problem for local communities as it involves a long and costly process. According to one participant from the public sector, only 5% of lands in Côte d’Ivoire are registered, in line with the literature, which highlights that most of the customary land in Côte d’Ivoire is not registered (Alden Wily 2015; Fern 2016).

Rural communities cannot own trees and forests without forming a legal entity. Consequently, they can only acquire rights and bear obligations if they form a registered association or an economic interest group (a legal entity under private law). The 2019 Forest Code imposes a deadline for the registration of



**Figure 65. VPA negotiations' contribution to more consideration and recognition of the rights of LC & IP (N=77)**

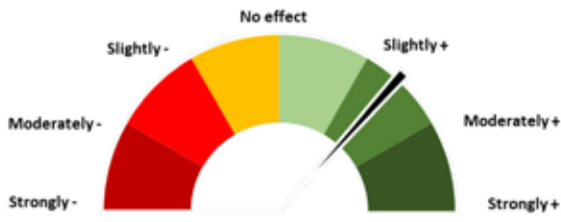
customary rights through property titles: from 2023 onwards, customary land that has not been registered will be considered “land without an owner” and will de facto become the property of the state (Article 6). Customary owners will again become simple occupants who can remain on land until the state decides to use it for other purposes. Some important nuances of customary property rights are lost when customary land rights are transformed into formal property titles. In particular, property titles erase certain customary practices such as seasonal access to the land or to a specific product, which may exclude individuals and therefore cause conflict. Furthermore, registration imposes significant costs on landowners, amounting to several million CFA francs (Alden Wily 2015).

Several participants have suggested that the Ministry of Agriculture (in charge of land tenure and property rights) work hand in hand with MINEF to find an inclusive and lasting solution. Land tenure issues make it difficult to reforest as the property of the replanted land is difficult to prove without a registration title. This is further discussed in section 4.2.

#### 4.5.4 Women, youth, and marginalized groups inclusion

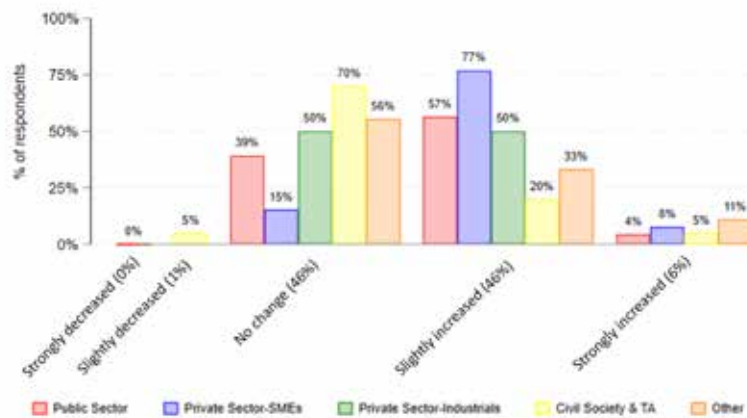
**VPA negotiations have slightly contributed to the improved consideration of the status of women, youth and marginalized groups in the forest sector:** 39% of participants believed that the VPA negotiations had a moderate contribution; 30% view it as weak and 12.5% as strong. Civil society and traditional authorities as well as the private sector have the most positive view, while the private sector (industry) and “others” are least convinced. Gender is not an explicit component of a VPA, but it has an important place in the framework of the participatory process (Petrucci 2018).





**Figure 66. VPA negotiations' contribution to better consideration of the status of women, youth and marginalized groups in relation to forest management and logging (N=79)**

**Participants believe that employment opportunities for women, youth and marginalized groups have slightly increased since the beginning of the VPA**



**Figure 67. Evolution of employment opportunities for women, youth and marginalized groups in the forest sector (N=71)**

**negotiation process**, although a large minority (44%) believe it has not changed. There is a significant increase in the percentage of female staff in the MINEF , which is currently 14%.

#### 4.5.5 Conflict resolution

Côte d'Ivoire's decade of military-political crisis (1999–2011) culminated in a post-electoral crisis that deepened social divides and led to a slowdown in economic activity. Land tenure rights remain deeply contested due to high rates of migration during and after this period, with existing customary and statutory mechanisms to resolve such conflicts falling far short of the task.

# 5 Summary of impacts

The Figure 68 summarizes the four impact dimensions, excluding livelihoods and poverty, with indicators showing the average changes in each available indicator between the periods before and after the start of VPA negotiations. In addition, we identify the contribution of the VPA process to such change.

The average improvements are greatest for governance and institutional effectiveness (97%) and forest conditions (79%) and lowest for illegal logging (27%) and economic development (6%). This is in line with the chain of causality of the VPA-ToC, assuming that the latter dimensions are impacted

at a further stage of a VPA process. **Importantly, the VPA negotiations had a positive effect on all dimensions according to the respondents:** 60% for governance and institutional effectiveness, 52% for forest conditions, 47% for illegal logging and 22% for economic development.

Although a decrease was reported for the indicator A.16 (market share of SME businesses in export market) was reported, this does not mean that the VPA negotiations contributed negatively to development; rather, the decline could have been even greater had the negotiations not taken place

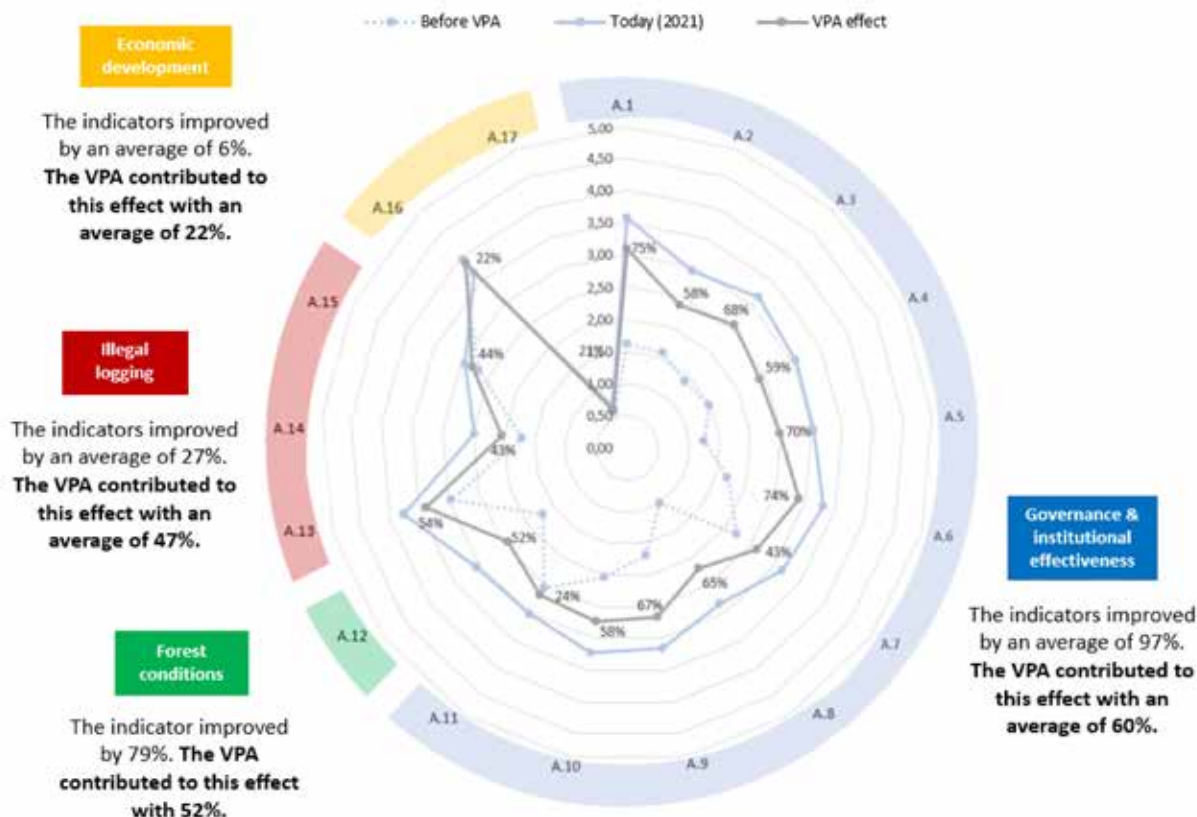
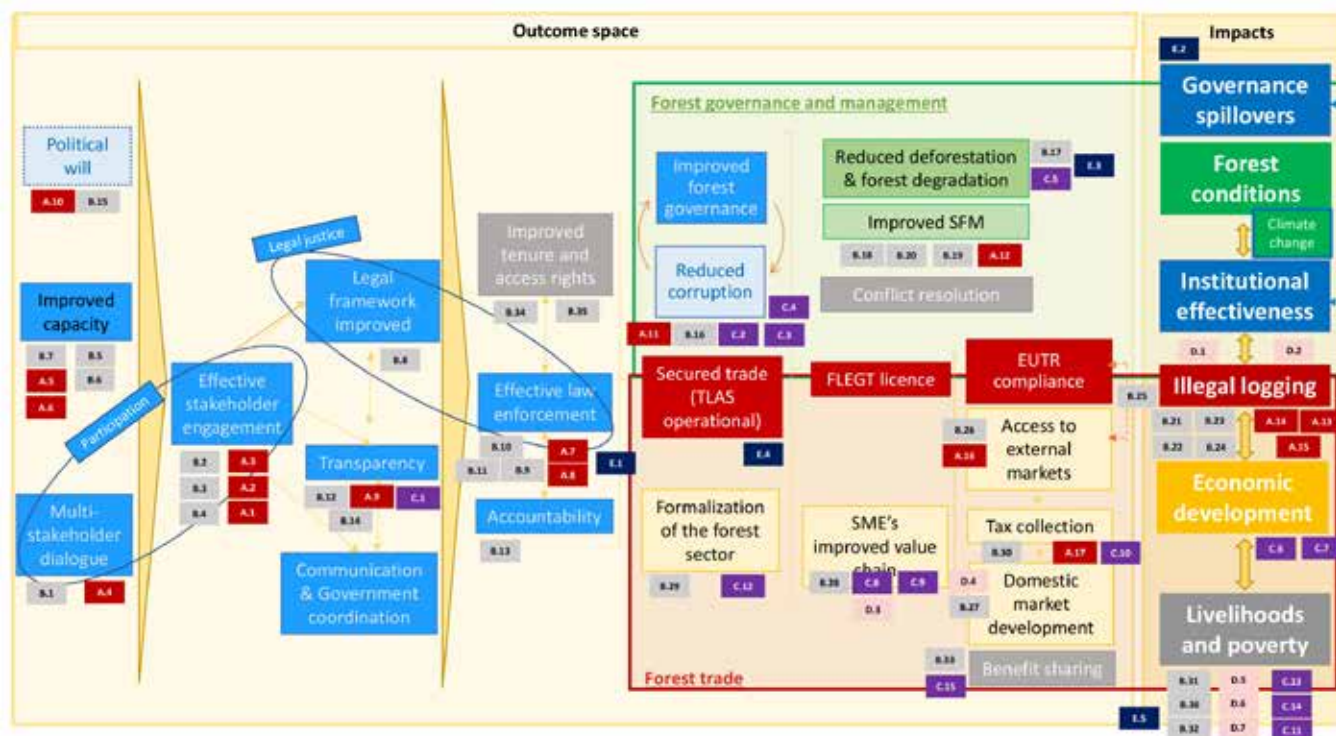


Figure 68. Change measurements between before and after VPA negotiations with the estimated VPA contribution to these changes (scale from 0 to 5)

# Annexes

## Annex I. Theory of change mapping and indicators



### A. VPA Impact - Change indicators (before and after VPA ratification/negotiation)

- A.1** Level of consideration of CS opinion in forest sector decision-making
- A.2** Level of consideration of SME opinions in forest sector decision-making
- A.3** Level of consideration of LC and IP opinions in forest sector decision-making
- A.4** Level of LC and IP consultation in the forest sector decision-making
- A.5** Level of CS effectiveness as independent observer
- A.6** Level of CS autonomy as independent observer
- A.7** Level of sanction enforcement
- A.8** Level of importance of CS role as a control agent to report irregularities in the forest sector
- A.9** Level of transparency
- A.10** Level of political will to fight corruption
- A.11** Share of SME costs paid as informal taxes
- A.12** Level of implementation of forest management plans in the country
- A.13** Proportion of legal wood in the export market
- A.14** Proportion of legal wood in the domestic market
- A.15** Proportion of national timber production exploited with a legally obtained permit
- A.16** Market share of SME businesses in export market
- A.17** Level of efficiency of tax collection

## B. VPA Impact - Contribution indicators

- B.1** VPA C° to greater consultation of LC and IP
- B.2** VPA C° to greater consideration of LC and IP opinions
- B.3** VPA C° to greater consideration of CS opinions
- B.4** VPA C° to greater consideration of SME opinions
- B.5** VPA C° to more effective CS independent observation
- B.6** VPA C° to greater autonomy of civil society in its role as an independent observer
- B.7** VPA C° to improved technical capacity of SMEs to operate legally
- B.8** VPA C° to improved coherence of the legal and regulatory framework
- B.9** VPA C° to providing CS with a greater role in controlling legality and identifying irregularities
- B.10** VPA C° to better enforcement of sanctions
- B.11** VPA C° to more credible sanctions
- B.12** VPA C° to improved transparency in the forest sector
- B.13** VPA C° to greater government accountability
- B.14** VPA C° to the provision of information allowing SMEs to operate legally
- B.15** VPA C° to improved political will to fight corruption
- B.16** VPA C° to reduced share of SME costs paid as informal taxes (bribes)
- B.17** VPA C° to reduced deforestation
- B.18** VPA C° to improved implementation of forest management plans
- B.19** VPA C° to greater integration of multiple forest functions and ecosystem services
- B.20** VPA C° to increase in privately certified areas
- B.21** VPA C° to reduced illegal logging type 1
- B.22** VPA C° to reduced illegal logging type 2
- B.23** VPA C° to reduced share of illegal logging in export market
- B.24** VPA C° to reduced share of illegal logging in domestic market
- B.25** VPA C° to increased production exploited with a legally obtained permit
- B.26** VPA C° to improved SME access to the export market
- B.27** VPA C° to squeezing some SMEs out of business
- B.28** VPA C° to reduced market disruption
- B.29** VPA C° to greater recognition of SME associations
- B.30** VPA C° to more efficient tax collection
- B.31** VPA C° to changes in the forest sector labour market
- B.32** VPA C° to improved working conditions in the forest sector
- B.33** VPA C° to improved redistribution of taxes to LC and IP
- B.34** VPA C° to improved consideration of LC and IP's rights
- B.35** VPA C° to improved recognition of LC and IP's property rights
- B.36** VPA C° to improved consideration of women, youth, and marginalized groups' opinion

### C. VPA Impact - Statement indicators

- C.1** Publicly available information on legality requirements is relevant for SMEs to meet the requirements
- C.2** Bureaucracy linked to the VPA process has created new opportunities for corruption
- C.3** The level of corruption in the forest sector has decreased since VPA ratification (relative to other sectors)
- C.4** The work of the independent observer contributes more to reducing corruption in the forest sector than before VPA ratification
- C.5** Reduction of the environmental impact of SMEs since VPA ratification
- C.6** The VPA process gives a positive image of the country and enables it to be considered as a reliable business partner
- C.7** Political will exists to give equal priority to the development of the forest sector as to that of other sectors
- C.8** SMEs in the forest sector provide better-quality timber than before VPA ratification
- C.9** Legal exploitation of wood is too constraining for SMEs (technically and financially)
- C.10** Obtaining a certificate of legality (FLEGT) introduces new formal and informal taxes
- C.11** Forest sector workers have access to more secure jobs than before VPA ratification
- C.12** Forest sector workers are better organized than before VPA ratification
- C.13** The curriculum of training institutions better integrates the themes of legality and sustainable forest management than before VPA ratification
- C.14** Forest sector workers have better expertise than before VPA ratification
- C.15** Tax revenues from the timber sector contribute more to improved well-being of LC&IP than before VPA ratification

### D. VPA Impact - Evolution indicators (since VPA ratification/negotiation)

- D.1** Illegal logging evolution type 1
- D.2** Illegal logging evolution type 2
- D.3** Evolution of the number of SMEs
- D.4** Evolution of the demand for legal wood on the domestic market
- D.5** Evolution of job opportunities in the forest sector
- D.6** Evolution of job opportunities for LC and IP in the forest sector
- D.7** Evolution of job opportunities for women, youth, and marginalized groups in the forest sector

### E. VPA Impact – Other indicators

- E.1** Causes of non-compliance with the law
- E.2** Statement on whether the VPA process has inspired other processes in the country
- E.3** Actors' awareness of the consequences of poor governance in the forest sector
- E.4** Effects produced by the process of TLAS development
- E.5** Reasons for job increase in the forest sector

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## Annex III. Field mission agenda

### Day 1&2: April 30 – May 1

Arrival of CIFOR and ADE teams in Abidjan  
Discussion on the content of the evaluation, agenda of the mission and clarification of logistical aspects

### Day 2: May 3

AM	Informal meeting with urban timber sellers
AM	Discussion on the content of the evaluation, agenda of the mission and clarification of logistical aspects

### Day 3: May 4

AM	Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
AM	Interviews undertaken by participants
PM	Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
PM	Interviews undertaken by participants
PM	End of day debrief

### Day 4: May 5

AM	Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
AM	Interviews undertaken by participants
PM	Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
PM	Interviews undertaken by participants

### Day 5: May 6

AM	Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
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AM	Interviews undertaken by participants
AM	Meeting with Stephano Liverani, Tranche Ivoire
PM	Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
PM	Interviews undertaken by participants
PM	Meeting with EU-Delegation (Stephan Coco)

### Day 6: May 7

AM	Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
AM	Interviews undertaken by participants
PM	Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
PM	Interviews undertaken by participants

### Day 7: May 10

AM	Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
AM	Interviews undertaken by participants
AM	Survey session with private sector - Industrial
PM	End of day debrief

### Day 8: May 11

AM	Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
AM	Interviews undertaken by participants

### Day 9: May 12

AM	Debrief by facilitators, notes editing and clarification of outstanding statements on focus group sessions
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### Day 10: May 14

AM	Meeting with Deputy DIRCAB
AM	Survey session at the Ministry of Forest and Waters with forestry administration participants

This Côte d'Ivoire report is part of a series of seven country level studies (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia and Republic of Congo) which intend to gather qualitative and quantitative evidence of the impacts of the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade – Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT-VPA) process to date. This initiative was financed by the European Union and results are placed within the global European Union–FLEGT (EU–FLEGT) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) indicator database. The analysis is structured along five key thematic areas (with indicators clustered into governance and institutional effectiveness, illegal logging, forest conditions, economic development, and livelihoods and poverty). The methodology used is designed to be replicable over time as well as applicable to other countries. Each country assessment provides a baseline for future studies in the same country, that would help to measure progress (or regress) between two points in time. More countries can also be added over time to increase the overall sample and help to derive lessons based on more evidence. By covering seven countries that are in different stages of the VPA process – from negotiation to implementation to issuance of FLEGT licences – findings allow for global lessons to be learned across different geographies and time. These lessons and global findings are presented in a separate synthesis report, which combines results to outline a bigger picture of VPA process impacts where possible.

In total, 80 respondents were interviewed in Côte d'Ivoire, which started its negotiation phase in February 2013.

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Financed by the European Union and led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), GML is a five-year project implemented across Sub-Saharan Africa that aims to address key knowledge, technical and policy gaps related to the global impacts of the FLEGT Action Plan, as well as forest and land governance, trade in informal and legal timber products, deforestation-related commodity-based agribusiness, woodfuel and ultimately sustainable forest and land-use management and improvement of livelihoods.

#### Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

CIFOR advances human well-being, equity and environmental integrity by conducting innovative research, developing partners' capacity, and actively engaging in dialogue with all stakeholders to inform policies and practices that affect forests and people. CIFOR is a CGIAR Research Center, and leads the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA). Our headquarters are in Bogor, Indonesia, with offices in Nairobi, Kenya; Yaounde, Cameroon; Lima, Peru and Bonn, Germany.

