

# FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements: Lessons

Melissa Othman

DEVCO Environment Week

7 February 2017, Brussels



# Introduction

1. VPAs – quick overview
2. Key Lessons
  - Innovative tool
  - Political
  - Inclusive
  - Links to other initiatives
3. Challenges
4. EU FLEGT Facility

# FLEGT Action Plan Elements

- Development cooperation with timber-producing countries
- Trade arrangements between the EU and timber-producing countries
- Public procurement
- Encouraging private sector action
- Encouraging financial institutions' action
- Using existing or new EU legislation
- Addressing conflict timber

# What is a VPA?

## Objective:

- Support countries to advance and reform their forest sector in order to minimize the trade in illegally produced timber
- A legally binding trade agreement between the EU and partner country
- Standard set of articles with country specific annexes
- Voluntary

Product scope

Legality definition

Legality assurance  
system

EU procedures for  
imports of FLEGT-  
licensed timber

FLEGT licences

Independent auditing

Legality assurance  
system assessment  
criteria

Implementation  
schedule

Accompanying  
measures

Public information

Joint implementation  
committee

# What is negotiated?

- Country's system to ensure legal compliance of products is ensured
- Commitments to improve transparency and other aspects of forest governance
- Framework for monitoring and evaluating implementation

# VPA LESSONS

Innovative

# Innovations

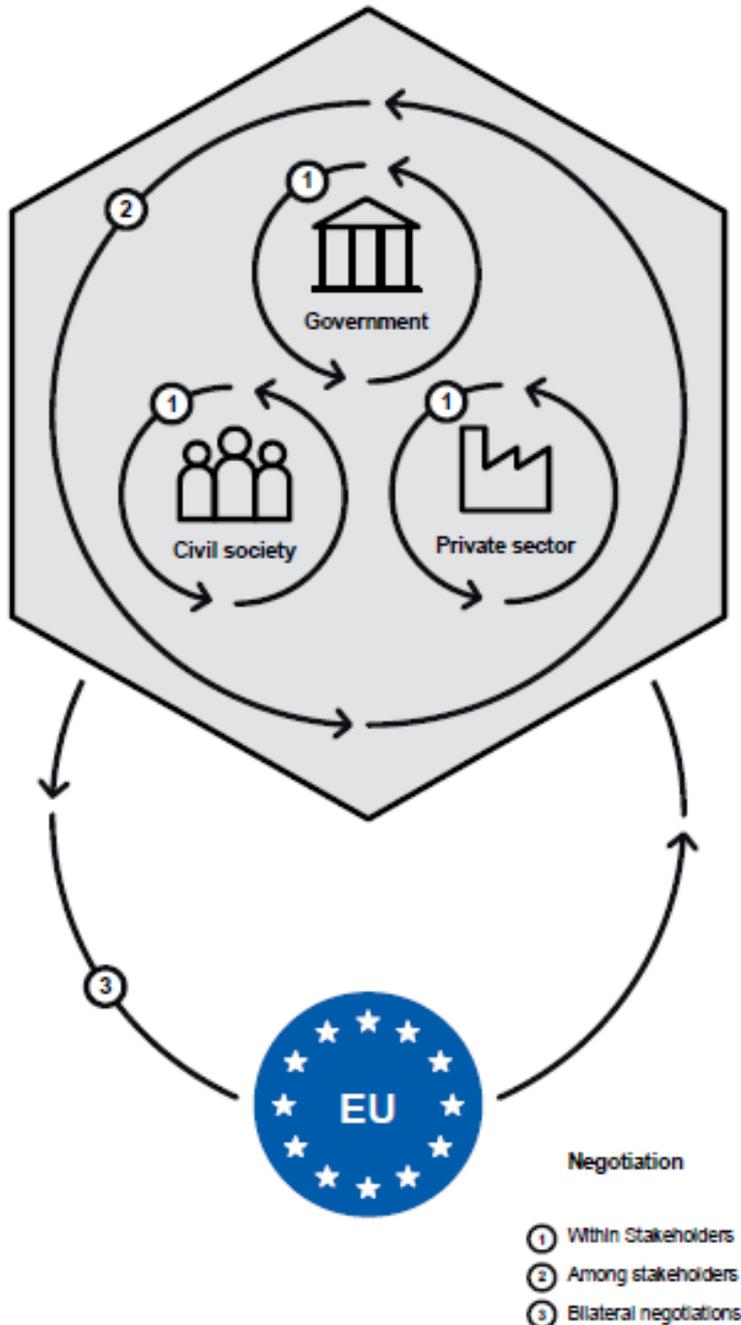
- Combines supply and demand
- Fosters governance reforms through trade
- Provides a continuous platform to engage politically and technically
- Forces consensus and coherence around what needs to be supported
- Adapts to country context

Inclusive

VPAs aim at  
broad  
national  
consensus

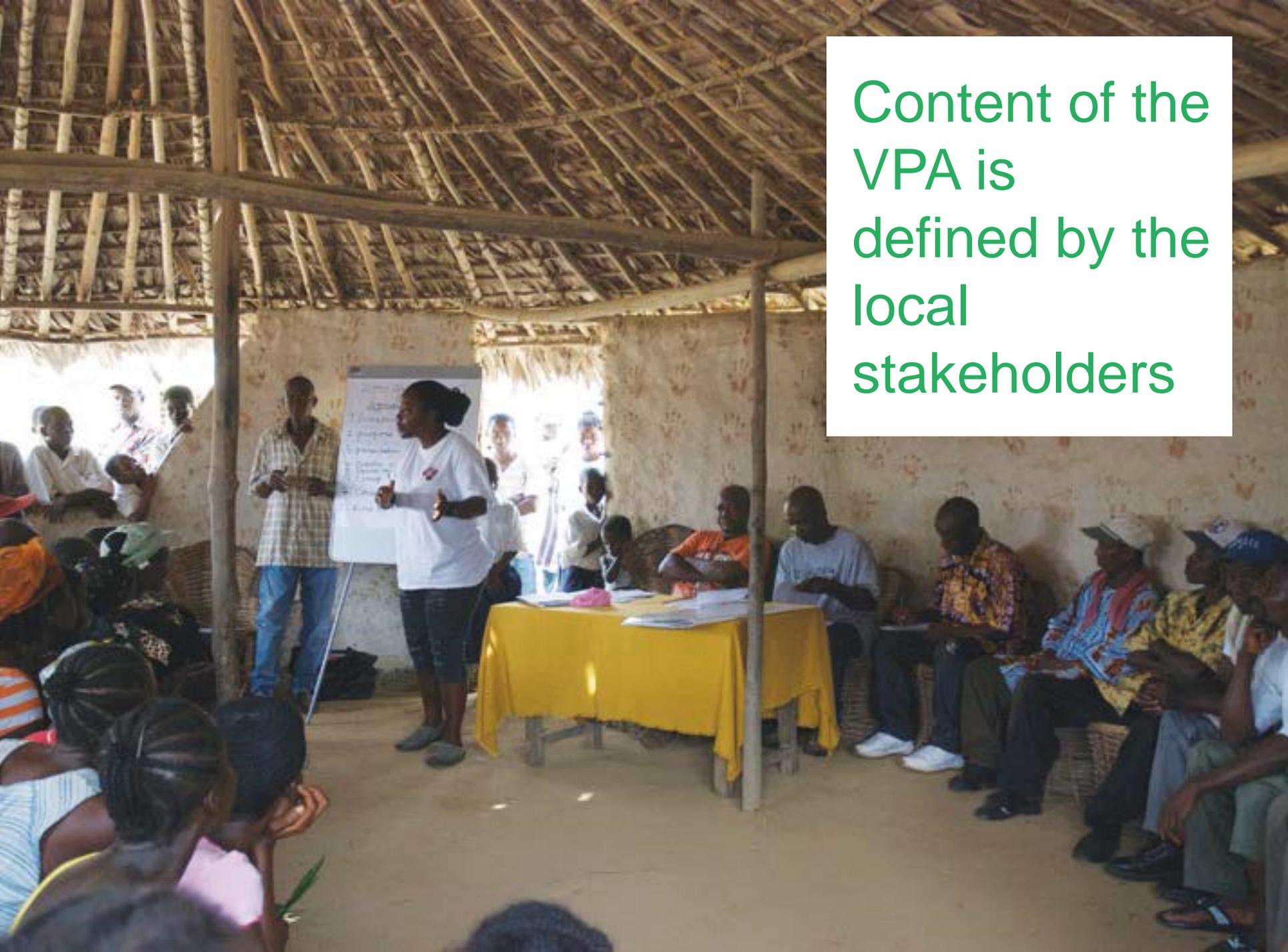


# Formal discussions with the EU create space and foster national dialogue

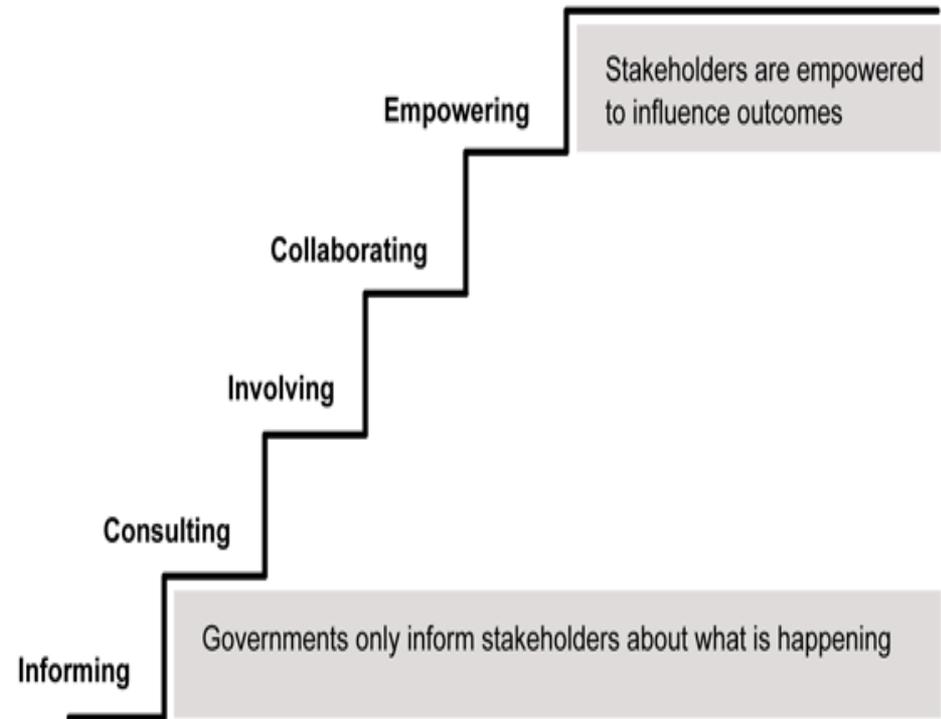


- between stakeholders groups
- within stakeholder groups

Content of the  
VPA is  
defined by the  
local  
stakeholders



VPA's  
unprecedented  
participation has  
led to changes in  
how business is  
done



Political

# Interplay between political and technical provide opportunities

- Pursuit of technical solutions exposes the political obstacles
- Political visibility and attention can contribute pressure - internationally and nationally
- Political obstacles – both a hindrance and an opportunity
- Stakeholder engagement pushes political and technical accountability



# Challenges

- Accompany a political process vs a project
- Processes take time
- Partnership approach with legal obligations
- EU wide – need coherence and agreement

Links to  
broader  
commitments

# REDD+ and zero-deforestation commodities

- Lessons from VPA
  - Combining supply and demand side measures to incentivise zero-deforestation trade
  - Fostering governance reforms through trade
  - Engaging local stakeholders in building low-deforestation jurisdictions
  - Clarifying legal frameworks and defining standards for deforestation-free agriculture
  - Increasing transparency to grow accountability of public and private actors

# REDD+ and zero-deforestation commodities

- In support of VPAs
  - Paris Agreement and NDC process providing new opportunities for VPA (momentum, intersectoral coordination, funding opportunities,...)
  - REDD+ incentives supporting legal compliance by forest operators (e.g. in DRC)
  - REDD+ prioritizing land use planning and conversion

# World Development Report 2017 – Governance and Law

- Policy making takes place in complex political and social settings
- Individuals and groups with unequal power interact with changing rules as they pursue conflicting interests
- Governance can mitigate and even overcome power asymmetries
- Change happens by shifting incentives
- ‘thinking and working politically’, ‘going with the grain’, and ‘doing development differently’

# EU FLEGT and REDD Facilities

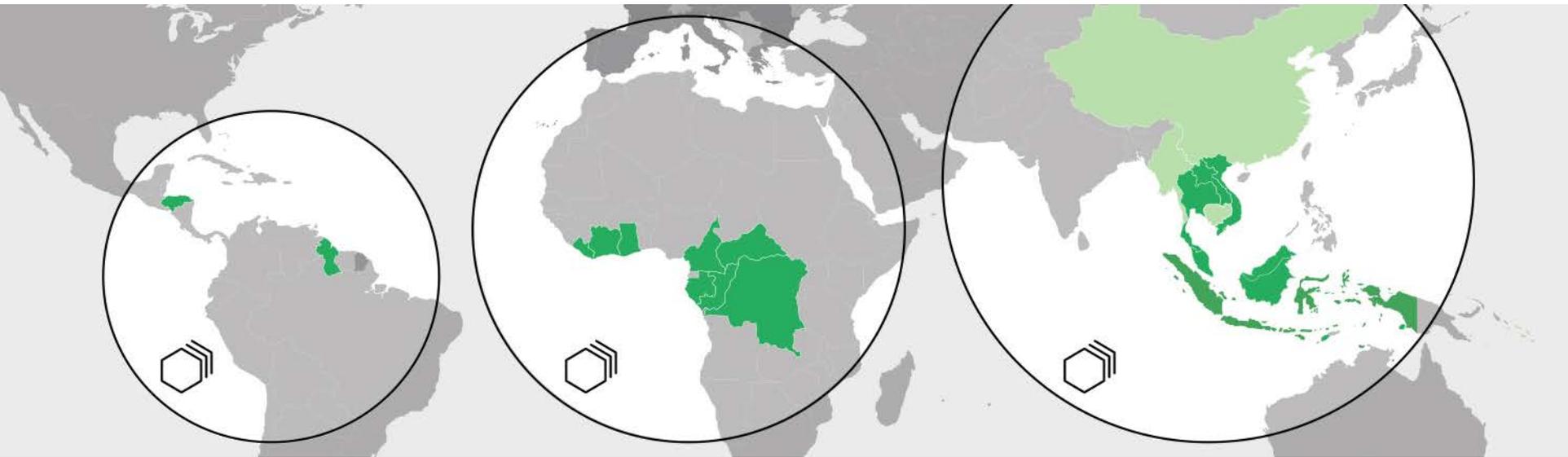
# EU FLEGT Facility

- Funded by the EU (EC + MS)
- Steered by a multi donor trust fund
- Hosted by the European Forest Institute (EFI)
- Supports the EC, EU Member States, VPA countries and regional organisations in implementing the FLEGT Action Plan

## Type of support:

- Support VPA negotiation and implementation
- Governance and technical analysis
- Explore and support FLEGT-REDD synergies
- Encourage regional forest governance processes and exchange
- Work with consumer markets
- Support the EU prepare the EU market for FLEGT licenses
- Communication support
- Etc.

# Supporting 3 regions and 18 countries



## Regions

- Africa
- Asia
- Central and South America



## VPA countries

- Cameroon
- CAR
- Congo
- Côte d'Ivoire
- DRC
- Gabon
- Ghana
- Guyana



## Work in other countries

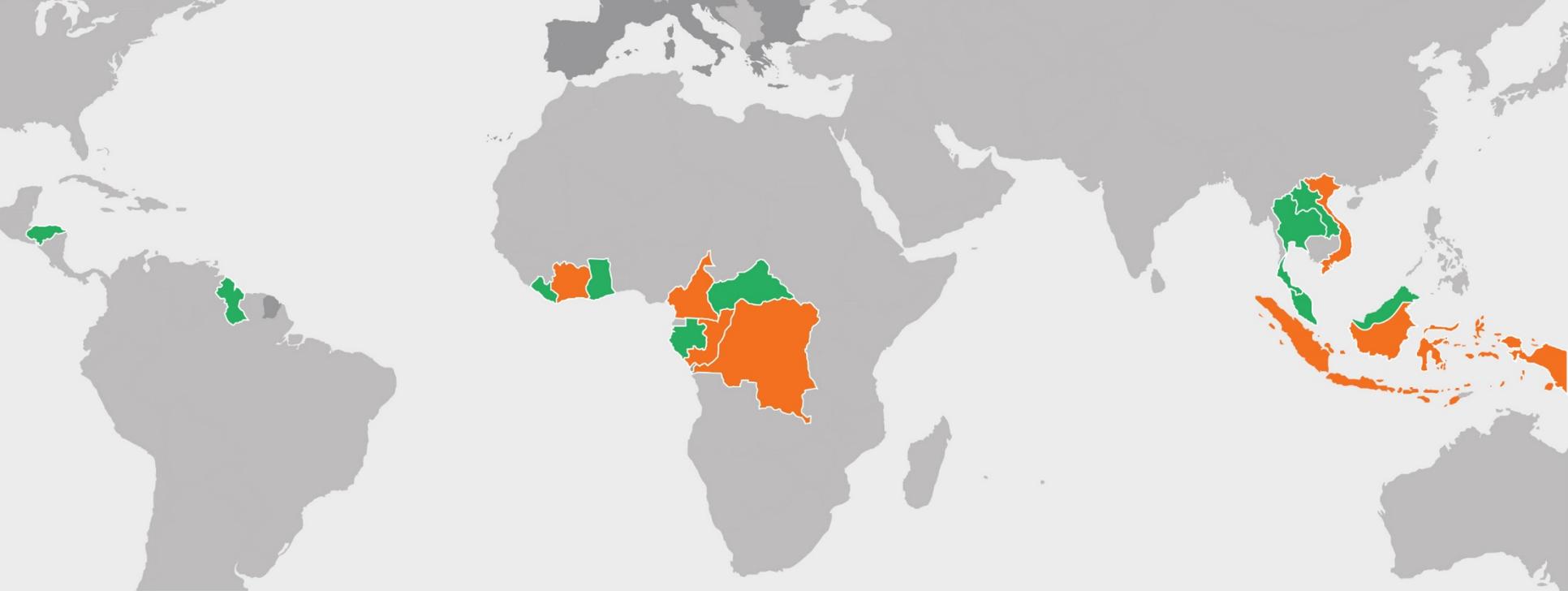
- China
- Myanmar
- Cambodia

# EU REDD Facility

- Funded by the EU (EC + MS)
- Steered by a multi donor trust fund
- Hosted by the European Forest Institute (EFI)
- Supports the EC, EU Member States, VPA countries on REDD+ and broader deforestation policies

## Type of support:

- Support implementation of REDD+ and zero-deforestation commodity approaches in VPA countries
- Governance and technical analysis
- Explore and support FLEGT-REDD synergies
- Support EU policy developments related to deforestation
- Support the EU in multilateral initiatives on REDD+ (e.g. FCPF)
- Etc.

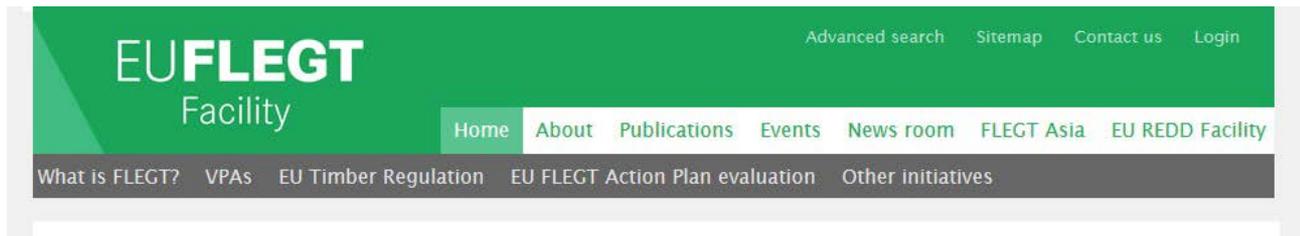


 VPA countries

 **REDD+ countries**

- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Gabon
- Ghana
- Guyana
- Honduras
- Indonesia
- Laos
- Liberia
- Malaysia
- Republic of the Congo
- Thailand
- Vietnam

# Sharing knowledge about FLEGT and VPAs



<http://www.euflegt.efi.int/>



<http://www.euflegt.efi.int/web/vpaunpacked/> (EN, FR, ES)

# Collaboration with other organisations

FLEGT and VPA processes are supported by a range of organisations, working on a variety of issues, including

- Technical assistance
- Advocacy
- EUTR
- Monitoring
- Legality
- Coordination and stakeholder platform building
- Civil society support
- Private sector support
- ...

# Thank you!

[melissa.othman@efi.int](mailto:melissa.othman@efi.int)

