



Ghana and the European Union

Progress Report 2013 – 2017

Implementing the Ghana-EU FLEGT
Voluntary Partnership Agreement



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



Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
1.1	Key recent developments	5
2	Legality assurance system	7
2.1	Wood tracking system	8
2.2	Legality verification protocols	9
2.3	Licensing procedures	11
2.4	Complaints system	12
2.5	Non-compliance mechanisms	13
2.6	Independent monitor	14
2.7	Joint assessment of the legality assurance system	15
3	Legislative reform	17
4	Domestic market measures	19
4.1	Public procurement policy.	20
5	Trade in FLEGT-licensed timber	21
5.1	EU and other international markets	21
6	Institutional strengthening	23
6.1	Capacity building	23
6.1.1	Civil Society	23
6.1.2	Industry	24
6.1.3	Forestry Commission	25
6.1.4	Other government departments	26
6.2	Institutional structures	26
6.2.1	Timber Validation Department.	26
6.2.2	Timber Validation Council/Committee	26
7	Stakeholder engagement	28
8	Communication and transparency	30
8.1	Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism communication.	30
8.2	National communication	30
8.3	Promotion of verified legal timber.	31
8.4	Publicly available information	32
9	Monitoring.	33
9.1	Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism	33
9.2	Impact monitoring.	34

Introduction

Ghana has approximately 2.6 million hectares of forest reserve land. Of the 1.6 million hectares that lies within the High Forest Zone, 715,000 hectares are designated for timber production, with the remainder under protection. A further 1 million hectares of forest reserve land lies outside of the High Forest Zone and is not classed as production forest. In addition, approximately 500,000 hectares of unreserved forests, and two million hectares of crop land also produce timber. Ghana's Forestry Commission estimates the country's annual timber production to be about 3.5 million cubic metres of round wood, half of which is destined for export markets.

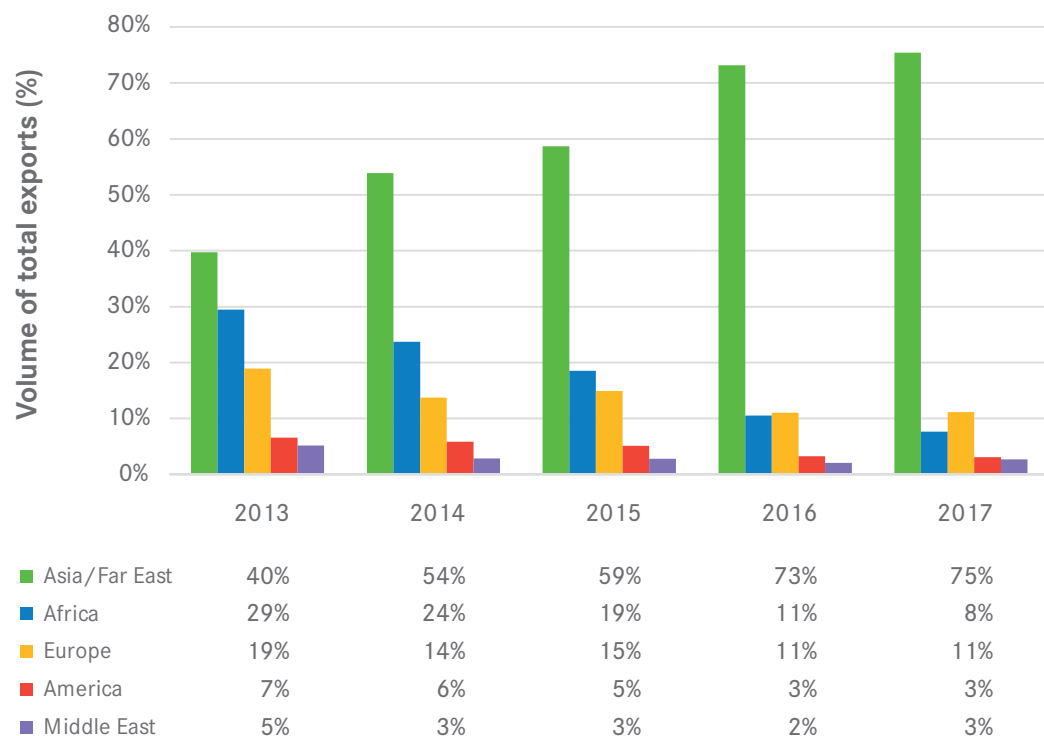
The Timber Industry Development Division of the Ghana Forestry Commission routinely gathers trade statistics capturing the volume and value of wood products exported from Ghana to the EU and other international markets. The Forestry Commission publishes this information each month on its website.

Figure 1 shows the main markets (by volume) for Ghanaian timber exports between 2013 and 2017.

On 19 November 2009, Ghana became the first country to sign a Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU. The agreement can be viewed or downloaded from the website of the European Commission¹ or the Ghana Forestry Commission².

Under the VPA, Ghana and the EU committed to trading only legal timber and timber products. To achieve this, Ghana committed to develop a legality assurance system to track timber along the supply chain, verify compliance with a stakeholder-agreed legality definition, and issue FLEGT licences to verified legal products it exports to the EU. Ghana also committed to applying the same legality standards to all timber exports, regardless of their destination.

Figure 1. Main markets for Ghana's timber exports by % of total volume, 2013-2017 (Source: Timber Industry Development Division)



¹ ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/flegt.htm

² www.fcghana.org/vpa

Furthermore, Ghana had placed dealing with illegal logging to supply domestic demand firmly on the agenda during VPA negotiations and in doing so, had broadened the scope of the VPA beyond the expectations of the EU. This level of ambition reflects the Government of Ghana's intention to use the VPA to support wider sector reforms and to use legality verification as a stepping stone towards the certification of sustainable forest management.

In 2010, Ghana and the EU established a Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism to oversee implementation of the VPA.

This report covers progress in VPA implementation in the period January 2013 to December 2017. As the FLEGT licensing system is not yet operational, there is currently no information for some areas of required reporting relating to the issuance of licences. The approach taken for these areas is to describe the nature of information that subsequent reports will provide.

1.1 Key recent developments

Legal reforms

In November 2017, Ghana's Parliament passed the Timber Resource Management and Legality Licensing Regulations, 2017. The regulations were developed through a multistakeholder process and address several key governance challenges. As such, they are a key milestone on the road to the full implementation of the VPA. Among other things, they clarify the granting of special permits, require companies to negotiate social responsibility agreements with local communities, and include provisions related to public disclosure of information. See Section 3.

Preparation for FLEGT licensing

Ghana has completed the nationwide roll out of its wood tracking system and established the required operational capacity. In 2017, Ghana and the EU carried out a successful shipment test to assess the suitability of Ghana's licensing procedures and licence format. Ghana and the EU agreed to launch the process for securing consultants to carry out the final joint assessment of the timber legality assurance system ahead of a joint decision on when FLEGT licensing could start. See Section 2.7.

VPA annex amendments

In 2017, Ghana worked on its proposed amendments to the VPA annexes I, II, IV and V, and submitted its amendment proposal to the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism. The amendments include changes to reflect the provisions of the new Timber Resources and Legality Licensing Regulations, new commitments and processes related to the handling of transit timber and imported timber, and updates to the FLEGT licence format.

Impact monitoring

Ghana is close to finalising its VPA impact monitoring framework, which monitors change at the national and sub-national level, and is working to compile baseline data for seven impact areas. In 2017, the Joint Team for Impact Monitoring took the draft framework and baselines through a series of stakeholder consultations to identify and correct gaps. Ghana has also established the institutional structures for the framework to function and collect data regularly, having established an impact monitoring facilitator. See Section 9.2.

Transparency

Ghana's Forestry Commission has worked with civil society to develop an online portal to make information on forest sector management publicly available in real time. This information will support independent forest monitoring and help foreign companies carry out due diligence on their supply chains in Ghana. See Section 8.2.

Rosewood harvesting restrictions

In 2016, African Rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) was added to Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). This listing requires the introduction of controls and a quota system on harvesting levels to ensure that utilisation of this species does not negatively impact on its survival.

As a result, Ghana included rosewood in the restricted species schedule of the new Timber Resource Management and Legality Licensing Regulations, 2017. This clearly identifies rosewood as a timber species subject to harvesting restrictions under CITES. In 2017, following concerns raised about rosewood being harvested in large volumes in northern Ghana, the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources met civil society groups and committed to further dialogue with them on strengthening regulation of this resource.

Independent Market Monitor surveys

In December 2017, the FLEGT Independent Market Monitor reported the results of a survey of Ghanaian timber industry representatives.³ Most respondents said the VPA process was improving forest management and governance in Ghana, helping to control illegal chainsaw milling, and having a positive effect on implementation of laws concerning the payment of fees for the use of forest resources.



Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

³ <http://www.flegtimm.eu/index.php/newsletter/imm-surveys-interviews/18-imm-survey-of-ghanaian-industry-confirms-flegt-improves-governance>



EU trade visit to Ghana

Representatives of EU timber trade associations, importers and traders visited Ghana in November 2016 and were impressed by the systems and procedures that provide the basis for future FLEGT licensing. They were also impressed to learn that the VPA included social, environmental and health and safety requirements. One said: “I see now that FLEGT is much more than legality – like a legality plus.”

Under the Ghana-EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement, the licensing of verified legal timber to the EU and other markets will rely on the successful development and implementation of a credible legality assurance system. The foundation on which this system is built is the definition of legality, around which there is multi-stakeholder consensus. The system described in the VPA includes a wood tracking system that tracks wood products from forest

to port, and a series of protocols for verifying compliance with all laws included in the legality definition. An independent monitor that conducts periodic audits to assure credibility of the system also forms part of the system.

“Until this trip, I had not realised the profoundness and robustness of what was being developed. I had also not appreciated the extent to which the process involved all stakeholders”

— Member of EU private sector delegation that visited Ghana in November 2016 to better understand the systems, procedures and processes that underpin future FLEGT licensing

Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

The following sections provide an update on progress with the development of the legality assurance system.

2.1 Wood tracking system

A wood tracking system enables the establishment of a chain of custody from forest to port or retail yard, for wood products destined for export or the domestic market, respectively. The description of the wood tracking system in Annex V of the VPA, refers to the use of information technology at various points in the supply chain, to enable electronic reconciliation of information at critical control points. The following progress was made in the reporting period.

2013

Work to support the development of an electronic wood tracking system proceeded at pace through a consortium, led by Ata Marie Group Ghana, which had been contracted at the end of 2012.

2014

By the end of the year, the system design was complete apart from work that remained on the design of plantation, export and mill modules. This progress enabled an initial testing of the system with one of Ghana's largest timber companies, John Bitar & Co. Ltd. The test demonstrated the efficiencies that the new system would introduce into forest management processes – such as the ability to produce a digital stock map in three days as opposed to three weeks for a hand-drawn map. It also identified the challenge that intermittent power supply and internet connectivity presented to the efficient running of the system.

2015

With support from the EU FLEGT Facility, a consultant assessed what investments would be required to address the ongoing challenges with intermittent power supply and internet connectivity. Based on the assessment, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) confirmed that it would provide support needed to upgrade IT systems and install solar power systems at the required locations.

2016

By the end of the year, the rollout of the wood tracking system covered 17 forest districts, accounting for 45% of timber production. There were delays in the tender process to procure a service provider for the IT and solar installations.

2017

In November, Ghana confirmed that the roll of the wood tracking system to all districts was complete. Consequently, the Forestry Commission instructed all forest districts to work with the wood tracking system by 4 December 2017. In early 2018, Ghana will start generating 'mock licences' along with all export permits. This will allow Ghana to assess the effectiveness of the migration to the electronic system and the extent to which the new systems are being applied.

The connectivity challenges that had slowed down the uploading of 'backlog data' from the paper-based to the electronic system, were overcome by temporarily hosting the Forestry Commission's server at a commercial data centre. As a result, 65% of the backlog had been uploaded by the end of the year. The DFID-funded contract for installation of IT and solar upgrades was signed in November, paving the way for the connectivity challenges to be addressed in the medium to long term.



Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

2.2 Legality verification protocols

Annex V of the VPA, describing Ghana's legality assurance system, includes a table that sets out the control procedures to be undertaken by various institutions to verify compliance with the legality definition set out in Annex II, using a set of verification protocols or a 'legal timber verification manual'. There follows a summary of yearly progress.

2013

The Forestry Commission, with input from an expert technical team, revised the verification protocols that had been developed in 2012. These protocols include a general description

of the legality verification process, auditing checklists, audit protocols, management and review procedures, complaint and appeals procedures, management of non-compliances, licensing procedures and a range of other operational documents.

Following the entry into force of the EU Timber Regulation in March, it became apparent that the provision made for verifying the legality of timber being imported into Ghana should be strengthened. This decision reflected Ghana's desire to mitigate the risk of illegal timber entering its supply chain. Ghana began work on proposed text for inclusion in the VPA, drawing on examples of best practice from other VPA partner countries where imported timber had merited more detailed discussions during negotiations.

2014

In March, a technical team that included civil society representatives 'field tested' the verification protocols. Feedback from participants enabled the Timber Validation Department of the Forestry Commission to strengthen the protocols. The exercise also underscored areas where legal compliance needed to be strengthened. These included the completion of forest management plans for a number of reserves, and the development of clear criteria for verifying compliance with requirements for the negotiation and implementation of social responsibility agreements between operators and communities.

2015

The Forestry Commission and nongovernmental organisations (Civic Response, ClientEarth, Taylor Crabbe and Friends of the Earth Ghana) developed a checklist to help district staff and Timber Validation Department audit teams verify compliance with due process in the negotiation and implementation of social responsibility agreements.

At a technical session of the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism, Ghana presented detailed protocols for dealing with imported timber that recognised the need to move beyond the verification of export documents from the country of origin as evidence of legality.

2016

Work began on the revision of the VPA annexes II and V, to include reference to the new provisions for verifying the legality of both imported timber and timber in transit.

2017

Following multi-stakeholder consultations, Ghana worked on its proposed amendments to the VPA annexes II and V, and submitted its amendment proposal to the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism. The amendments include changes to reflect the new commitments and processes related to the handling of transit timber and imported timber.

Verification audits have now been running for three years (a total of six audit cycles; see Figures 2-3). By the end of 2017, the audits had covered Forest Services Division offices, Timber Industry Development Division offices and 162 company audits. The audits are working. They are identifying non-compliances, raising corrective action requirements (CARs) and following up to check on measures for addressing corrective actions.

Figure 2. Number of company audits undertaken during each audit cycle, 2015-2017

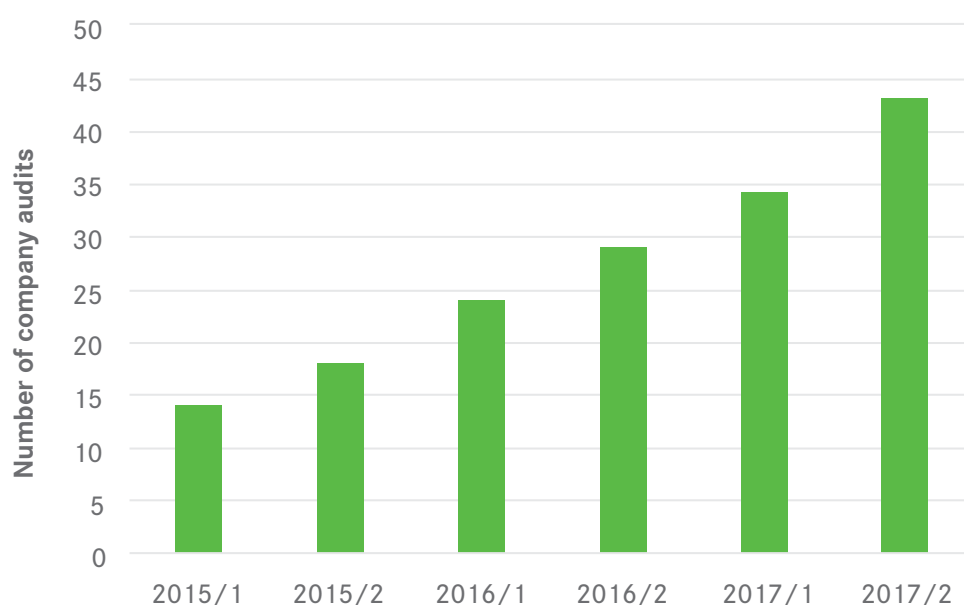
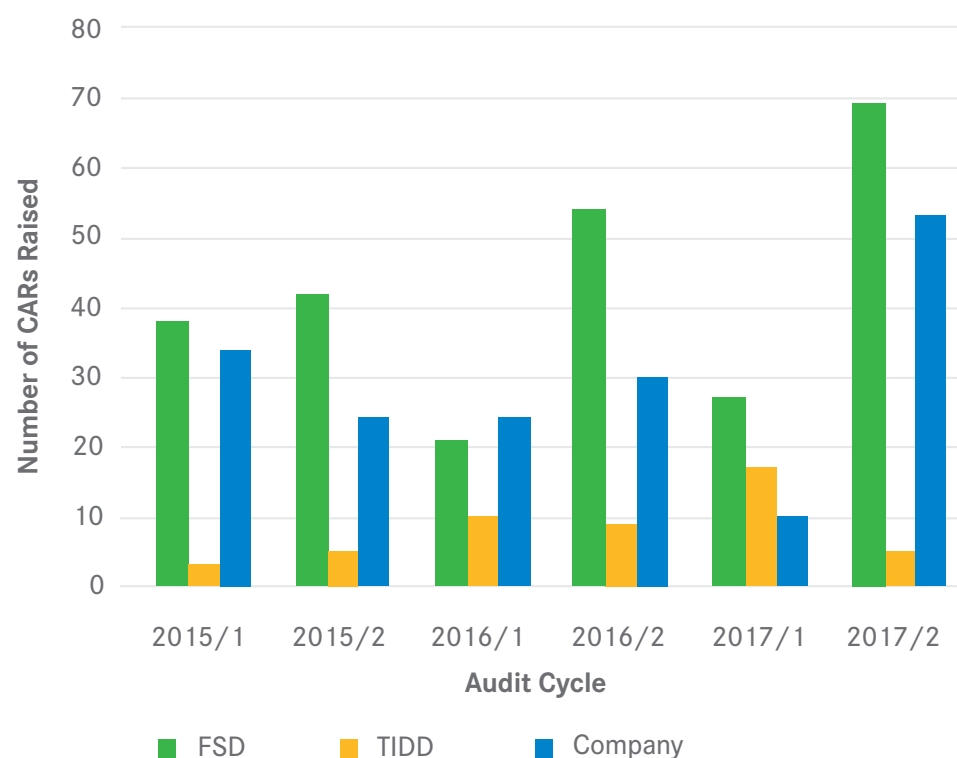


Figure 3. Number of corrective action requirements (CARs) raised during each audit cycle, 2015-2017. FSD = Forest Services Division; TIDD = Timber Industry Development Division



2.3 Licensing procedures

Annex V of the VPA describes the licensing procedures for timber exports. The Timber Industry Development Division of the Forestry Commission is the designated licensing authority but it will rely on information from the Timber Validation Department to confirm legal compliance.

Licensing procedures include templates and descriptions of procedures for the various steps in licensing, including application, notification of intention to suspend a licence and application for a replacement licence. A summary of progress in the reporting period follows.

2013

Ghana began to develop the licensing procedures. This work included the clarification of roles and responsibilities of departments of the Forestry Commission, and reviewing existing export application procedures and related timeframes.

2014

An evaluation by the joint assessment team showed that while the licensing procedures were consistent with the provisions of the VPA, it would be important to ensure their full integration into the wood tracking system.

2016

By the end of the year, Ghana had integrated the licensing procedures into the wood tracking system. However, finalisation of the procedures was still pending a full ‘end-to-end’ testing of the system. The parties agreed that Ghana should ensure that this testing takes place before the final joint assessment of the legality assurance system, so that the procedures could be finalised and shared with EU competent authorities before the start of FLEGT licensing.

2017

In October, Ghana and the EU carried out a shipment test using ‘mock licences’ to be cleared by competent authorities in the Netherlands, Germany and Spain. The objective was to assess the suitability of Ghana’s licensing procedures and licence format in advance of the final joint assessment of the legality assurance system (see Section 2.7).

The test identified issues for Ghana to address in its licensing procedures and format, but also showed the system is robust. There were no inconsistencies reported between the shipment description and the transport documents, as Ghana only issues licenses once the packing of the container is complete and it has been sealed by customs. The competent authorities welcomed this consistency, as challenges in this area would delay the clearance of shipments once licensing begins.

2.4 Complaints system

Under the VPA implementation, there shall be complaints mechanisms to address stakeholder grievances that may arise from the Timber Validation Department’s (TVD) verification and field audit functions as well as the TVD functions of verification and validation of applications for legality licences.

The VPA states that the Timber Validation Committee (TVC) will receive complaints on the operation of the TVD in respect of the process of verification and validation of applications for legality licences, and that the purpose of the complaints procedure will be to “provide an avenue for aggrieved parties to seek redress as well as to promote public confidence in the operation of the verification system”. The TVC complaint system is therefore designed to respond only to stakeholder grievances related to the processes of verification and validation of applications for timber legality licences.

In 2016, the TVD developed a separate complaints mechanism, which provides an avenue for stakeholders to lodge complaints about its field audit decisions and timber industry compliance with standards of procedure and regulations.

Complaints forms for the two complaints systems have been developed for communities, timber rights holders, and other stakeholders to use to bring concerns to the attention of the TVC or the TVD, respectively.

In 2017, a meeting took place between the Forestry Commission and civil society representatives who previously felt that the two complaints mechanisms could accommodate all manner of forest sector complaints – such as concerns from affected communities, farmers or other stakeholders. After discussion with the TVD, there was understanding that the complaints mechanisms cannot accommodate all such complaints.



Photo: EU FLEG Facility

A third type of complaint mechanism, under the Forestry Commission's Forest Services Division, deals with issues such as compensation, social responsibility agreements, etc., which are not immediately concerned with the issuance of timber legality licences.

No complaints have been received about the issuance of FLEG licenses as no licenses have been issued as of yet. Once the licensing system is operational, this section will report on the number and nature of complaints received and will provide information on how these complaints were resolved.

2.5 Non-compliance mechanisms

Ghana's FLEG licensing authority will not issue licences to products for which non-compliance with any element of the legality definition is observed, until such time as the non-compliance has been addressed. For the legality assurance system to work efficiently, it is therefore essential that there are clear and effective procedures for dealing with cases of non-compliance as and when they are identified.

The legal timber verification protocols that the Forestry Commission is developing will include procedures for dealing with non-compliances and the formulation of corrective action requirements. Once the FLEG licensing system is operational, this section of future reports will cover cases of non-compliance and actions taken to address them.

2.6 Independent monitor

The role of the independent monitor is to periodically audit the procedures and control measures within the legality assurance system, thereby providing assurances of the credibility of the system as a whole. Annex VI of the VPA describes in detail, the terms of reference for the independent monitor, from their tasks to their reporting requirements.

The independent monitor is required to produce two reports. The first is a detailed report on the functioning of the legality assurance system for the Ghana-EU Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism to review. The second report is a public summary that shares key findings and any system failures identified during the audit. The Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism publishes the public report after it has reviewed and accepted it.

There follows a summary of progress in the reporting period.

2013

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR) issued a contract award letter for the role of independent monitor to Scientific Certification Services (SCS) Global, which then established its offices in Accra.

2014

In May, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and SCS Global signed the contract for the role of independent monitor. Although it was clear that FLEGT licensing would not become operational within the following 12 months, Ghana and the EU agreed that a 'trial audit' to test auditing methodologies should take place in 2015.

2015

The first test audit took place. For this, the independent monitor developed documents including quality and auditor manuals, witness and office audit checklists, a compliance audit checklist, a stakeholder consultation form, and a corrective action request form.

2016

When reviewing the experience of the first audit, the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism decided that, in future, any corrective action requests arising from the audit should be addressed within three months of the final audit report. It also agreed that summary reports of all audits would be published on the websites of the Forestry Commission and the EU Delegation to Ghana. A second audit of the legality assurance system began in November.

2017

In January, the parties reviewed the independent monitor's report on the second audit. In November, the independent monitor completed its third audit. The Forestry Commission and EU Delegation published the public summaries of the first two audits on their websites.

2.7 Joint assessment of the legality assurance system

The VPA requires that the legality assurance system be subjected to an independent technical assessment before the FLEGT licensing scheme becomes fully operational. Annex VII of the VPA sets out the criteria for this assessment. Below is a summary of progress in the reporting period.

2014

In February, Ghana and the EU agreed detailed terms of reference for the joint assessment. The objectives were to assess the consistency of the designed legality assurance system with what was described in the VPA, and to assess the capacity of the Forestry Commission to implement the system. The assessment team was also tasked to identify any systemic weaknesses observed during their assessment and to recommend ways of dealing with any findings of non-compliance. The evaluation took place between April and September. It found areas where the system required strengthening and areas where legal compliance was weak.

2015

During the technical session of the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism in March, Ghana and the EU agreed that the evaluation findings should inform the development – by the Forestry Commission with support from the EU FLEGT Facility – of a joint action plan for FLEGT licensing. This plan included both technical and political issues that needed to be addressed. It also provided a useful guide for FLEGT-funded projects to be able to target their activities to resolve particular challenges in VPA implementation.

2016

In March, Ghana and the EU agreed on pre-conditions to be met before a final joint assessment takes place. These included requirements that:

- A legislative instrument providing a legal basis for applying guidelines for the award of ‘special permits’ be submitted to Parliament for adoption
- Power supply and connectivity challenges had been addressed in priority forest districts through the procurement and installation of the necessary equipment
- At least 12 of the 32 priority forest management plans should be complete
- The rollout of the wood tracking system could allow end-to-end testing for all timber sources
- Proposed amended text for changes to various VPA annexes had been transmitted to the EU

While progress was made in each of the above areas in 2016, by the end of the year, the only criterion fully met was that relating to the forest management plans. The Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism therefore decided to defer a decision on the timing of the launch of the joint assessment.

2017

In November, Ghana indicated that from 1 January 2018, it would be ready for the joint assessment, with systems functioning in all districts, data backlog cleared and full operational capacity established. The EU welcomed the progress and said that it was important for Ghana to be confident that the system is functioning effectively before mobilising the assessment team. Ghana and the EU agreed that they would decide in 2018 when to start the joint assessment. They started the process to contract consultants to undertake the joint assessment in anticipation of this decision.





The objective of the VPA is not simply to verify the legality of timber exports to the EU, but also to strengthen forest governance more broadly. Through the process to reach national consensus on a legality definition, stakeholders identified a number of areas where legislative reform would be required.

Annex II of the VPA identified short-term reforms and medium-term reforms. The former were those that were not extensive and which could be effected through subsidiary legislation within one to two years of the parties signing the VPA. These reforms were mainly focused on the legal framework needed to enable the FLEGT licensing scheme to function.

The medium-term (3-5 years) reforms were those requiring extensive consultations and possible constitutional amendment. They related to issues such as tree tenure, the strengthening of stakeholder rights, a review of benefit sharing arrangements, and policies and supporting legislation to deal with illegal logging to supply the domestic market.

2013

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources announced that it would use technical assistance funds provided by the World Bank for analytical work in the forest sector, to develop policy options for reforming tree tenure.

In May, at the fifth session of the Ghana-EU Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism, civil society raised concerns regarding the issuance of timber rights, referred to as 'special permits', under the provision of Act 617 section 6 (2). Their concern centred on the fact that the VPA's definition of legality did not include this source of timber. Timber from this source would therefore not be eligible for a FLEGT licence. Resolving this matter became a priority for stakeholder deliberations for the rest of the year.

Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

2014

Following further national deliberations on 'special permits', the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources offered assurances that no further permits of this type would be issued during his tenure as Minister and that the government would remove the provision for issuing such permits as part of wider legislative reforms.

2015

A government committee with representation from civil society determined a new approach to dealing with special permits, to enable the inclusion of timber from these areas in the FLEGT licensing scheme. This committee, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Forestry Commission and civil society was convened in July to develop guidelines for the allocation of these permits.

Also in 2015, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources commissioned technical advice to inform the design of options for the reform of tree tenure and associated benefit-sharing mechanisms. The scope of this work covered a range of management regimes, such as trees on farms, commercial plantations, and trees in forest reserves. With support from the Legal Working Group convened by ClientEarth, civil society prepared a position paper on tree tenure to inform the development of these policy options.

2016

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources agreed to develop a legislative instrument to provide a legal basis for applying the guidelines developed for the award of 'special permits'. A joint working group comprising representatives of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Forestry Commission, the Attorney General's office and civil society was set up to begin this work.

As work progressed, it became clear that there were areas of existing legislation where further provisions or harmonisation were necessary. As a result, by the end of 2016, the working group had developed a more comprehensive, consolidated legislative instrument than had been intended.

2017

Ghana's Parliament adopted the new legislative instrument – the Timber Resource Management and Legality Licensing Regulations, 2017 (LI 2254) – on 3 November. This allowed Ghana to finalise its proposed VPA annex changes as it enabled the inclusion of the legal reference in the relevant text. The new regulations include:

- A clarification that no timber rights are subject to automatic renewal
- A provision that extant leases could be converted to Timber Utilisation Contracts through a 'one-off' payment of a Timber Rights Fee
- A requirement that logging companies negotiate social responsibility agreements with communities adjacent to their operations for all logging permits
- Provision for public access to various information related to forest resource management



During VPA negotiations Ghana, with strong support from the private sector and civil society, decided to include measures to address illegal logging to supply the domestic market. Although Ghana banned commercial chainsaw milling in 1998, tackling this issue has remained one of the greatest environmental and socio-economic challenges facing successive Governments.

2013

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources released a National Strategic Plan for Addressing Illegal Chainsaw Activities. It covered the period 2013-2017 and set out the key actions and financial arrangements necessary to operationalise the Chainsaw Policy that was developed in 2012. The plan sought to support five strategic objectives:

1. Meet the demand for timber on the domestic market from legal sources
2. Eliminate illegal timber production and trade
3. Promote good governance in the supply of timber on the domestic market
4. Promote industry modernisation and retooling for improved efficiency
5. Promote community-based enterprises as alternative livelihoods for forest fringe communities

2014

With EU support, Tropenbos International Ghana and the Forestry Commission piloted approaches to supplying artisanal millers with legal timber. These included '100% yield removal', whereby the concession holder would remove its entire yield and then enter into an agreement with an artisanal miller, to whom it would sell surplus logs. The ability to access timber in this way is a clear incentive for artisanal millers to be registered.

2015

To promote registration of artisanal millers, the Forestry Commission formed alliances with various local timber trade associations through a series of consultations in five regions in Ghana. This led to the creation of the Domestic Timber Trade Network (DOTNET), a coalition of all major actors along the supply chain. It has established committees throughout the country, made up of buyers and sellers, to oversee the flow of legal timber along the supply chain.

Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

2016

The Timber Industry Development Division of the Forestry Commission introduced a new mandatory system for tracking timber on the domestic market. This involves the issuance of a Domestic Timber Inspection Certificate (DoTIC) for all timber supplied to the domestic market. The DoTIC is linked to the Log Measurement and Conveyance Certificate (LMCC), which is issued at the point of loading logs for transport out of the forest. As the LMCC is only issued to logs from legal sources, this allows the Forestry Commission to establish a clear chain of custody that ensures the legality of timber being traded domestically.

2017

Discussions took place between the Forestry Commission and concession holders about extending the time concession holders can work in each compartment from two to three years. This would give concession holders enough time to remove the portion of yield that they are interested in removing and also have time to negotiate with artisanal millers to reach agreement on the sale of the remainder of their yield.

4.1 Public procurement policy

Around 84% of the domestic timber supply comes from illegal chainsaw milling. Ghana therefore decided – as stated in Annex II of the VPA – to develop a public procurement policy for verified legal timber in order to eliminate chainsaw lumber from the supply chain of government-funded contracts. A summary of progress follows.

2013-2014

Inter-governmental consultations on the draft procurement policy continued and included discussions with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Lands and Forests.

2015

With support from the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme, the Nature and Development Foundation worked with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Timber Industry Development Division of the Forestry Commission to produce implementation guidelines to support the policy. Once approved, these were annexed to the draft policy for review by Cabinet. These guidelines can be downloaded from www.ndfwestafrica.org

2016

In February, a Cabinet sub-committee was set up to examine the policy and its likely impact on various Government ministries, departments, and agencies. However, there was no further progress by the end of the year.

2017

A change of Government in January made it necessary for the new Minister to relaunch the consultation with his Cabinet colleagues on the public procurement policy for legal timber. However, other priorities – such as consultations on the draft Wildlife Bill and work to pass the new Timber Resources and Legality Licensing Regulations, 2017 – meant that Cabinet level discussions did not take place.

Ghana has noted the need for significant investment in raising awareness on both the rationale for and content of the policy, to see progress on this issue. This would need to include individuals in Cabinet, in the Parliamentary Select Committee on Lands and Forests, and in various ministries, departments and agencies.



A key objective of the VPA is to ensure that all imports into the EU from Ghana of timber products covered by the Agreement have been legally produced (Article 1). The FLEGT licence will attest to the legality of products Ghana exports to the EU.

In future editions of this report that follow the launch of the FLEGT licensing system, this section will focus on reporting statistics and information relating to the trade in FLEGT-licensed timber products, such as:

- Volume of FLEGT-licensed timber exported from Ghana to the EU
- Volume of FLEGT-licensed timber received in the EU
- The number of FLEGT licences issued by Ghana
- The number of FLEGT licences received by the EU
- EU licence verification processes
- Details of any problem cases

5.1 EU and other international markets

In October 2010 the EU adopted the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR), which lays down the obligations of operators who place timber and

timber products on the market.⁴ By explicitly recognising FLEGT-licensed timber as meeting its requirements, the EUTR creates a strong market advantage for such products.

2013

The EUTR entered into force in March.

2014

In March, the European Commission contracted the International Tropical Timber Organization to develop a system of independent market monitoring in order to:

- Generate information on the performance of FLEGT-licensed timber in the EU market
- Improve the understanding of the impacts of VPAs on timber prices, trade and market trends globally
- Ensure that VPA partner countries and the EU provide reliable statistics and information on trade in FLEGT-licensed timber
- Inform decisions by the Ghana-EU Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanisms and Joint Implementation Committees in other VPA countries by providing timely and accurate information on market impacts

Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

⁴ Regulation No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010

2016

In November, Indonesia became the first VPA country to issue FLEGT licences. To inform Ghana's preparations for issuing FLEGT licences, the FLEGT Facilitator and the EU FLEGT Facility shared with the Forestry Commission lessons from Indonesia's experience of FLEGT licensing and provided guidance on how the format of Ghana's FLEGT licence format might need to be amended.

2017

In August, a multistakeholder delegation from Ghana visited Indonesia to learn about its experiences of FLEGT licensing including challenges it experienced during the deployment of its VPA systems for verifying timber legality and issuing licences. In October, a shipment test using 'mock licences' assessed the readiness of competent authorities in the Netherlands, Germany and Spain to accept FLEGT licences from Ghana.



Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

6.1 Capacity building

The implementation of the VPA is a responsibility shared by government, the private sector and civil society. The nature of capacity building required to support each group covers the spectrum from awareness-raising on the requirements of VPA, to training in new skills needed to effectively implement the legality assurance system. The following sections describe support provided to each group during the reporting period.

6.1.1 Civil Society

A number of capacity building programmes were instituted by civil society organisations with support from a variety of sources. It is not the intention in this section to provide an exhaustive list of all initiatives funded but rather to highlight a selection of those that took place during the reporting period to illustrate the nature of capacity building support being provided by these initiatives.

2013

With funding from the EU Delegation in Ghana, Civic Response provided training for local community stakeholders, industry players (formal and informal), customs officers and forest managers to update them on VPA implementation, FLEGT-VPA processes and monitoring of the timber legality assurance system.

2014

With funding from the EU Delegation in Ghana, Civic Response organised community and district level forest forums across Ghana to create space for communities to engage district level Forestry Commission staff on a range of forest governance issues.

2015

The joint assessment of Ghana's legality assurance system in 2014 highlighted non-compliance of logging companies with social responsibility agreement obligations. In 2015, the Forestry Commission worked with Friends of the Earth Ghana, ClientEarth, Taylor Crabbe and Civic Response to develop a checklist to help district forestry offices and auditors verify compliance, show companies what evidence auditors will require, and inform communities about what to expect from a properly negotiated and implemented social responsibility agreement. By the end of the year, the Timber Validation Department audit teams were using the checklist during their field assessments for legal compliance.

2016

In February, Friends of the Earth Ghana and Rainforest Foundation UK began implementing their 'Community-based real-time forest monitoring' project in Ghana. In the pilot phase, the project provided 18 community monitors from six communities with training and with mobile phones with data collection applications for reporting illegal activities in the forest sector. Civic Response provided training for community representatives from 11 districts in four regions on community-level monitoring of forest infringements, with funding from the EU Delegation in Ghana.

2017

Through the support of the DFID-funded legal working group, convened by ClientEarth and their local partner, Taylor Crabbe, civil society continued to receive capacity building on legal issues. Highlights of this support in 2017 include an explanation of the new Private Members Bill and how civil society organisations might be able to use it to engage parliament, support to providing civil society input into the development of the Timber Management and Legality Licensing Regulations, 2017, and guidance for civil society organisations to ensure effective review of proposed amendments to the VPA annexes.

6.1.2 Industry

Capacity building activities in the reporting period include the following:

- Between 2013 and 2016, Friends of the Earth-Ghana and the Working Group on Forest Certification Ghana, carried out an EU-funded project that assessed the training needs of different categories of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and artisanal timber millers. The project produced training modules and trained 60 SME representatives and 120 artisanal millers on how to comply with the VPA timber legality assurance system, and EU due diligence and legal timber requirements.
- From 2013-2015, Tropenbos International-Ghana implemented an EU-funded project that enhanced the capacities of SMEs and civil society organisations to comply with Ghana's timber legality assurance system and the VPA. It also built capacities in policy advocacy for effective participation in the domestic market policy reform processes.
- In 2014 and 2015, the Forestry Commission's Resource Management Support Centre implemented a project to build capacity of timber processing SMEs in relation to VPA implementation. It raised awareness of the tenets of the VPA among more than 200 members of the Domestic Lumber Traders Association across major timber operational areas.
- In 2015-2015, the Sustainable Forest Management Partnership-Ghana implemented a project on improving off-reserve logging in support of a functional VPA. The project developed compensation negotiation frameworks for fair and equitable payments by timber companies to farmers for damage to crops during timber harvesting.
- From 2016 to 2017, the Ghana Timber Millers Organisation, with support from the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme, trained 60 SME representatives – including loggers, millers and wood exporters. The training improved their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in legal timber trade. It included training in proper documentation and record-keeping required by the wood tracking system.
- From 2016 to early 2018, the Forestry Commission's Resource Management and Support Centre implemented a project that built the capacities of domestic lumber suppliers to secure and produce legal timber for domestic and international markets. The project, which was supported by the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme, also strengthened collaboration among SME coalition members and forestry civil society organisations to engage with policy makers on forestry issues.
- In October 2016, the Nature and Development Foundation began a project to train personnel at 90 timber companies in Ghana and Liberia, to build their capacity to supply legal timber to their domestic markets. The project is funded by the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme and will end in October 2018.
- From 2016 to 2017, the Kumasi Wood Cluster Association built the capacities of 35 small and medium forest enterprises to meet the requirements of Ghana's timber legality assurance system through training, coaching and monitoring. Ten these enterprises were subjected to 'mock audits' of their timber supply chains to assess their readiness to be issued with FLEGT licences.
- In 2017, the various formal and informal private sector trade associations in the forest sector in Ghana agreed to come together to form the 'Federation of Ghana Forest Industries' so that the private sector could be better represented in VPA discussions. By the end of the year, a draft constitution for this body had been developed. It will be taken out to consultation with the various trade associations in early 2018.



6.1.3 Forestry Commission

2013

With support from the EU FLEGT Facility, three staff of the Timber Validation Department visited South Africa to observe the work of auditors carrying out an audit to certify sustainable forest management using Forest Stewardship Council standards.

2014

The Forestry Commission organised training on ISO 19011 standards for eight auditors working with the Timber Validation Department team. These individuals were also provided with training on the electronic wood tracking system.

The Forestry Commission also organised training for personnel from its Forest Services Division (FSD) and its Timber Industry Development Division (TIDD). In April, as part of the first phase of the wood tracking system rollout, this training included 137 staff from five FSD districts and three TIDD areas. In September-November, the Forestry Commission organised training for a further 218 personnel from ten FSD districts and three TIDD areas as part of second phase of the rollout.

2015

In January, some 138 TIDD personnel were trained in Sefwi Waiwso on the mill processes of the wood tracking system.

2016

Between May and September, 30 FSD personnel from Bibiani and Enchi districts were trained on and began using the wood tracking system.

2017

The Forestry Commission undertook compliance and enforcement training of all its field staff (850 staff members) to address mistakes flagged within the wood tracking system and to ensure proper use and upload of data.

In May-June, 301 FSD personnel from 17 districts received training during the third phase of the wood tracking system's rollout. They were trained on the various wood tracking system modules, from stock survey to transportation.

In November, training was held for FSD Regional Office personnel from Ghana's six high forest zones and selected Resource Management Support Centre personnel involved in the wood tracking system. In all, about 46 personnel were trained. Some 75 Forestry Commission financial auditors and FSD accountants also received training on the wood tracking system.

Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

6.1.4 Other government departments

Several government ministries and departments will have a clear role to play once the legality assurance system is operational. These include the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Customs, Excise and Preventative Service, and the Environment Protection Agency. During the period under review capacity building of these institutions was not considered to be a priority. Now that the design of the wood tracking system has been finalised and the associated verification procedures have been elaborated and field-tested, capacity building support to the relevant institutions will be elaborated in consultation with their representatives.

6.2 Institutional structures

To support the implementation of the legality assurance system, it was necessary for Ghana to create new institutional structures. The following sections describe the role and status of these structures.

6.2.1 Timber Validation Department

The Timber Validation Department is described in Annex V of the VPA as performing the following functions:

- Auditor in the operations of actors in the forestry sector – in this respect it will check on the status of implementation of regulatory function as prescribed by law and contained in the definition of legality framework
- Reconciliation of datasets generated through field operations within the sector for the purpose of enabling the issuance of system-based licences

By 2013, the Timber Validation Department had appointed five staff and was able to start baseline audits by the end of the year. In 2014, the Timber Validation Department revised its legality verification protocols after field testing them with sector stakeholders. It also recruited ten internal auditors, strengthening the team's capacity. In 2015, the Timber Validation Department completed its baseline audits and started a second verification cycle. By the end of 2017, it had completed a total of six audit cycles. See Section 2.2 for information on the verification audits in the reporting period.

6.2.2 Timber Validation Council/Committee

Annex V of the VPA states that Ghana would establish a multistakeholder 'Timber Validation Council' to provide oversight to the functioning of the Timber Validation Department, and to receive and deal with complaints related to the issuance of FLEGT licences.

In July 2012, Ghana's Parliament passed the Timber Resources (Legality Licensing) Regulations (Legislative Instrument 2184), which provides a legal basis for the functioning of this entity and which changed its name to the Timber Validation Committee. The name change was necessary to ensure that the TVC did not appear to be a parallel body to the Forestry Commission. It does not affect the ability of the TVC to operate as envisaged during VPA negotiations.

Membership of the Committee was outlined as follows:

- A chairperson appointed by the Minister acting on the advice of the Forestry Commission
- The Chief Executive of the Forestry Commission
- One representative not below the level of Director from the Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority nominated by the Commissioner-General; the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources; and the Ghana Police Service;
- One representative from Judiciary nominated by the Chief Justice
- One representative of the Trades Union Congress
- One representative from the private sector with the requisite qualification
- One representative from the timber industry
- One representative from the National House of Chiefs
- The Director of the Forestry Commission division or department responsible for verification and validation of applications for licences

Below is a summary of progress in the reporting period.

2014

The Timber Validation Committee was inaugurated in April with a tenure of three years. It was chaired by an Appeals Court judge and included representation from stakeholder groups (see above). By the end of the year, the committee members had undergone a comprehensive induction and field training to familiarise themselves with the functioning of the legality assurance system.

2015

By the end of the year, the Timber Validation Committee had held its fifth meeting. The committee had focused on the development of procedures and manuals to guide its work, including how it would address complaints from stakeholders regarding the legality assurance system.

2016

At the TVC's 6th ordinary meeting, the TVC noted the need for a source of funding for its investigations into complaints it receives, as no funding source was indicated in the legislative instrument (No. 2184) that set up the TVC. The committee again identified the need to train investigators to support its work of complaints management.

The TVC also held its 7th and 8th ordinary meetings. At the 7th meeting, the TVC adopted its complaints policy and procedures. Committee members also discussed their need for more in-depth knowledge about other policies and activities in the sector. Members also discussed how the TVC can influence the application of the law to ensure the effective implementation of the timber legality assurance system on the domestic market.

2017

The term of the original Timber Validation Committee expired in April, requiring the committee to be reconstituted. The new Timber Resource Management and Legality Licensing Regulations, which Ghana's Parliament passed in November, clarified the make-up of the committee with respect to civil society representation.



Photo: EU FLEGT Facility



Photo: EU FLEG
Facility

Upon conclusion of the VPA negotiations, the Government of Ghana gained recognition from both the private sector and civil society as having worked to ensure effective consultation with all stakeholders to develop an agreement for which there was strong stakeholder support. It was important that the same spirit of consultation should remain during VPA implementation.

In 2010, a multistakeholder implementation committee (M-SIC) was constituted to oversee the overall implementation of the VPA and coordinate the delivery of outputs to ensure that the objectives are achieved in line with the content and schedule set out in the agreement.

In the period 2013-2017, the M-SIC meetings focused on preparing for upcoming meetings of the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism. The following mechanisms providing additional opportunities for stakeholder deliberation around specific issues related to the VPA implementation:

- The multistakeholder dialogue convened by Tropenbos International Ghana to support the development of strategies for dealing with the domestic market

- The legal working group convened by ClientEarth to build civil society capacity to engage in dialogue with Government and other sector stakeholders on matters pertaining to the legal framework for the forest sector
- The National Forest Forum structures that provided opportunity for discussion of the full spectrum of forest sector issues
- The Domestic Timber Trade Network (DOTNET), through which the Forestry Commission engages with operators and traders dealing with the domestic market
- A working group comprising representatives of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, the Forestry Commission, the Attorney General's office and civil society, which was set up in 2016 to draft the new legislative instrument on timber resource management and legality licensing

Throughout this period, the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism has continued to ensure that it allocates time for Ghana and the EU to meet with a wider stakeholder group as part of the technical level discussions that inform the formal meetings. Issues raised during these stakeholder meetings are reflected in the aides-mémoire of the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism.



8.1 Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism communication

In 2016, Ghana and the EU adopted a communication strategy to guide joint communication by the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism (JMRM). The strategy defines communication responsibilities that are essential to fulfilling the JMRM's mandate according to the VPA, and outlines the tactics, activities and tools to support JMRM communication. These include announcing proceedings and issuing routine reports, managing JMRM stakeholder relations, capturing and sharing evidence of JMRM activities, and managing contentious media issues.

A joint communication team established by the JMRM is already implementing aspects of the communication strategy by means of regular direct emails that update stakeholders on outcomes of JMRM events.

In 2017, Ghana and the EU revised and expanded the scope of the JMRM communication strategy in order to describe the communication opportunities on the road towards FLEGT licensing. As part of this, the joint communication working group developed media materials around the Timber Resources Management and Legality Licensing Regulations 2017. The JMRM also kept stakeholders updated directly by issuing its regular direct emails.

8.2 National communication

There follows a summary of communication activities undertaken in the reporting period to inform stakeholders and the wider Ghanaian public about how the VPA will address illegal logging and the trade in associated products, and to keep stakeholders informed and engaged as the process progresses.

In 2013, the Forestry Commission organised VPA stakeholder conferences in London and Brussels to share updates on various aspects of VPA implementation with interested stakeholders from government, private sector and civil society.

In 2015, the Timber Validation Department – with support from the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme – published a guide for other government institutions on their respective roles and responsibilities in VPA implementation. This publication also described the rationale for entering into a VPA, the systems and structures established to support its implementation, and an overview of the scope of laws covered by the legality definition.

In 2016, Tropenbos International Ghana donated an information centre to the largest wood market in West Africa – Sokoban Wood Village, in Kumasi – through an EU-funded project targeting support to small and medium enterprises working in the domestic market. This facility enables the dissemination of information to traders within the site, on policy and legal reforms, health and safety obligations, and other issues of relevance to those trading on the domestic market.

In 2017, a two-day communication training event on messaging for impact was held in Accra, Ghana. The overarching objective of the training was to ensure that communication by the different stakeholder groups involved in the VPA process in Ghana is accurate and on message, especially as the country gets closer to the issuance of its first FLEGT licences.



8.3 Promotion of verified legal timber

Ghana and the EU acknowledge that once Ghana is producing FLEGT-licensed timber, considerable work will need to be done to promote these products. While the legality assurance system was still in development, the parties considered it premature to begin work in this area. In 2017, however, the following activities took place.

In January, Ghana and the EU approved a joint communication strategy for FLEGT licensing linked to a set of milestones towards licensing. Under this strategy, the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism sent a 'friendly email' to interested stakeholders to communicate the headlines from its June technical session.

Another element under the joint communication strategy for FLEGT licensing was the delivery of media training for key individuals from Ghana and the EU, at both political and technical levels. The training was delivered in September.

In June, the UK Timber Trade Federation in collaboration with the Global Timber Forum, held a mission to Ghana to begin developing a communication strategy for the promotion of FLEGT-licensed timber to international markets.

In August, Ghana and Indonesia discussed a goal of working together to promote FLEGT-licensed timber on international markets after Ghana begins issuing licences.

In November, upon the passing of the Timber Resources and Legality Licensing Regulations, 2017, the parties issued another friendly email and a press release.

At the technical session of the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism in November, the parties acknowledged that as Ghana gets closer to licensing, it will be important to ensure that adequate notice is given to the market, competent authorities in EU Member States and others, so they can prepare to receive FLEGT licences from Ghana. On Ghana's part, this will require putting a plan in place that enables proactive engagement with these stakeholders.

Once the FLEGT licensing system is operational, this section of the report will reflect on progress with promotional activities for FLEGT-licensed timber products.

Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

8.4 Publicly available information

Unlike other VPAs, the Ghana-EU VPA does not have an annex on transparency/information disclosure as the parties did not discuss this during the VPA negotiations.

However, Article 20 of the agreement states that the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism shall record Ghana's efforts to be transparent by, among other things, making publicly available information – about harvest rights, areas designated for harvesting, harvesting schedules, timber rights fees, harvest related payments, social responsibility agreements and crop damage compensation awards.

2013

In November, the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism agreed that civil society would prioritise a list of information that they would like to have access to.

2014

In June, the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism agreed that the information requested by civil society could be made available. The information of interest was as follows:

- Forest reserve management plans
- A list of all valid timber rights
- National forest maps delineating the various Timber Utilisation Contract concession areas
- Salvage permit inspection reports
- A list of all companies with valid property marks
- List of loggers and vendors in good standing vis-à-vis the payment of various fees and taxes

An annex to the aide-mémoire of the 7th Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism meeting provides more details on the type of information being requested and the mechanisms through which this information would be made available.

2015

At a technical session of the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism in March, civil society reported challenges in accessing the information that the Government had agreed to make available. These challenges largely centred around a lack of clear procedures for making information available that the Forestry Commission could share with staff of district forestry offices.

2016

To make forest sector information more accessible, Civic Response committed funds from a project funded by the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme and worked with the Forestry Commission to begin developing an online 'public portal' for the wood tracking system. By allowing civil society access to information held on the wood tracking system, this portal will enable more effective independent forest monitoring. It also has potential to help the international private sector carry out due diligence on their supply chains in Ghana.

2017

The new Timber Resources and Legality Licensing Regulations, passed in November, require the Forestry Commission to publish on its website key information about management of the forest sector. The scope of information required extends beyond what stakeholders had previously agreed. The portal that the Forestry Commission is developing with Civic Response will make available this information in real-time. A working version of the portal is complete and Ghana expects to launch the full public version early in 2018.

Civil society also collaborated with the Resource Management Support Centre of the Forestry Commission to develop a database of social responsibility agreements, to which the portal will be linked. The database will support monitoring of compliance with VPA obligations and of the VPA's impacts on local livelihoods.



9.1 Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism

The Ghana-EU Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism (JMRM) is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the VPA.⁵ Ghana's representation to the JMRM is led by the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources. The EU's representation is led by the Head of the EU Delegation in Ghana.

Article 19 of the VPA sets out the JMRM's responsibilities, which include:

- Recommending the date upon which the FLEGT licensing system should become fully operational
- Reviewing reports of the independent monitor
- Issuing public summary reports based on the findings of the independent monitor
- Establishing, if necessary, subsidiary working groups for areas of work requiring specific expertise

The JMRM meets in both formal and technical sessions. The following meetings took place in the reporting period:

May 2013	5th formal session
November 2013	6th formal session
June 2014	7th formal session
March 2015	Technical session
March 2016	8th formal session
November 2016	Technical session
June 2017	Technical session
November 2017	Technical session

A summary (termed an aide-mémoire) of each session is available to download from the websites of the Forestry Commission and the EU Delegation to Ghana.

Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

⁵ Regulation No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010

9.2 Impact monitoring

Each VPA includes a commitment to monitor impacts, and national impact monitoring frameworks will be developed for each VPA. The purpose of impact monitoring will be to determine whether the intended impacts of the VPA are being realised, and also to identify any negative impacts of implementation so that measures may be taken to mitigate them.

Once the national monitoring framework has been developed and the FLEGT licensing is operational, this section of future reports will cover key impacts observed as a consequence of VPA implementation and measures taken to mitigate any adverse impacts.

Here follows a summary of progress to date.

2013

In May, at the fifth session of the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism, Ghana and the EU committed to work together to develop an impact monitoring framework that meets the needs of both parties. They agreed that each party would nominate their representatives to a Joint Team on Impact Monitoring (JTIM) that would be tasked with leading on the development of this framework.

2014

By the end of the year, the JTIM had met five times, with four of those meetings drawing on the support of an independent monitoring and evaluation expert contracted through the EU FLEGT Facility. This work saw the drawing together of areas of interest for both parties for impact monitoring.

2015

To inform the development of terms of reference for baseline studies, the JTIM decided to compile an assessment of research relevant to the thematic areas of interest for the impact monitoring framework. The EU FLEGT Facility contracted IOD PARC, to support the JTIM with the development of the framework.

2016

In November, the JTIM presented a draft framework for monitoring seven impact areas to a technical session of the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism. The impact areas are forest condition, forest management, forest governance, market structure and performance, revenue generation, and national VPA governance. The proposed institutional arrangement for managing this framework includes the appointment of a VPA impact monitoring facilitator whose work will be guided by a manual of procedures developed specifically for this role. The JTIM will continue to oversee impact monitoring once it is operational.

2017

The JTIM prepared baseline statements for the seven impact areas, and shared the VPA impact monitoring framework and draft baselines with stakeholders through two national consultation events. Feedback from these events will allow the JTIM to finalise the baselines. The consultations also identified some areas where new research may be required.



This annual report was jointly prepared by the Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism Secretariats of the European Commission and Ghana to inform the public about progress in implementation of the Ghana-EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement.

Photo: EU FLEGT Facility

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

Ghana – EU

