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# Press release

## **New e-training course to improve the legality of timber imported into Viet Nam**

**Hanoi, 16 September 2021** – The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) launched an e-training course on a due diligence system (DDS) for timber imports into Viet Nam at an online event today. The online course is a joint initiative implemented by GIZ and Preferred by Nature - an accredited research organisation in the forestry sector formerly known as NEPCo.

The course covers principles of due diligence and its application in business activities of timber operators through a combination of theory and exercises developed based on real-life cases, and the Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (VPA/FLEGT).

“Many countries, including Viet Nam, require enterprises to exercise due diligence. Due diligence requires enterprises to be responsible for their timber supply chains and to respect legality requirements. Taking the DDS e-training course will enable participants to learn about the Viet Nam Timber Legality Assurance System (VNTLAS). The course also gives participants practical insights on how to set up due diligence systems for their own enterprises,” said Anja Barth, Project Coordinator and Chief Technical Advisor of the GIZ/MARD ‘Support to VPA process in Viet Nam’ Project.

As the representative of the timber industry, the Viet Nam Timber and Forest Product Association (VIFOREST) is supporting the government to build capacity for timber enterprises, helping them to meet international standards on sustainable development. “By signing the VPA/FLEGT, the government of Viet Nam has committed to eliminate illegal timber. Each Vietnamese enterprise should be well equipped to practice due diligence for the sake of their own survival and of the timber community in Viet Nam,” said Mr. Ngo Sy Hoai, Vice-chairman and Secretary General of VIFOREST.

The Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA/FLEGT) between Viet Nam and the EU entered into effect in June 2019. Since then, the Vietnamese Government has carried out various activities to enhance timber legality in the supply chain. The issuance of Decree 102/2020/ND-CP on the Vietnam Timber Legality Assurance System (VNTLAS) in October 2020 was a crucial milestone of the VPA process in Viet Nam. It is expected to raise the reputation of Vietnamese timber products in international markets while promoting the industry’s development. However, implementation of the Decree is facing challenges due to new requirements under the VNTLAS and the VPA.

GIZ is collaborating with the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry to support Vietnamese stakeholders through various capacity building activities. From December 2020 to April 2021, GIZ and VIFOREST organised five pilot training modules on due

diligence for more than 200 participants from timber enterprises and associations in key timber processing hubs, such as Binh Duong, Dong Nai, Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Dinh, and Nghe An. Based on the participants' feedback, the training modules were improved and converted into the free DDS e-training course, which is accessible to anyone with an interest in timber trade.

The free online course offers a sustainable capacity building solution available to a wide range of timber operators and other stakeholders. Verification agencies, including forest protection departments and customs authorities, are encouraged to take the course. Their active participation in enforcing the legal compliance of timber importers is an integral part of the VPA process in Viet Nam.

The DDS e-training course is developed under the "Support to VPA process in Viet Nam" project, which is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and co-financed by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom. The project is implemented by GIZ and the Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST).

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