



INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVENT

FLEGT VPA MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CORE GROUP – A 5-YEAR JOURNEY

Binh Duong, 27/10/2022 – Today, the Multi-Stakeholder Core Group which was established under the umbrella of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT VPA) reviewed its five-year existence. As such, an anniversary workshop was organized with the support of the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry in collaboration with the German Development Cooperation Organization GIZ.

In October 2018, Viet Nam and the EU signed the FLEGT VPA. This Agreement aims at improving forest governance and enhancing the legal framework for timber and timber products in general and for their export from Viet Nam to the EU and all other markets.

Active engagement of a variety of stakeholders is at the core of the FLEGT VPA and serves as the basis for its effective and successful implementation. Thus, in October 2017, the FLEGT VPA Multi-Stakeholder Core Group (in short: Core Group) was established. The Core Group provides a platform for coordination and participation in the FLEGT VPA implementation.

"In the coming time, the Core Group should focus on four working areas. The first is strengthening the organization as well as incorporating more members. The second is defining issues, content, and topics for FLEGT VPA's implementation. Third is carrying out consultation and critique activities. And last, is continue performing well the task of providing information related to FLEGT VPA's implementation in Viet Nam." – Prof. Dr. Pham Van Dien, Deputy Director General of VNFOREST commented.

Over the past five years of operation, the Core Group has held 11 meetings, contributing to – among others – the development of (1) an action plan on communication and information disclosure on the FLEGT VPA and (2) the framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of FLEGT VPA. Several Core Group members also joined together in developing a policy brief focusing on the situation of Viet Nam's Enterprise



Classification System (ECS) — a key step towards establishing a strong Vietnamese Timber Legal Assurance System (VNTLAS). It is hoped that this will contribute to increases in business value, expansion of market share and exploration of new markets, while simultaneously – once Viet Nam's FLEGT licenses are issued – reducing the overall future workload of verification and inspection by competent authorities.

"The policy brief that has been developed and published by members of the Core Group has shown the gaps and potential risks in the implementation of regulations on labour contracting, labourers' insurance, and labour safety by small and micro timber enterprises in the context of the FLEGT VPA implementation" – Mr. Cao Chi Cong, the Core Group Co-Chairperson commented.

The workshop to review the Core Group's five years of operation also brought about an opportunity to develop ideas for the group's joint activities in the coming time. The discussion on technical aspects related to the FLEGT VPA implementation helped to shape the Core Group's priorities looking ahead. The event also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to better comprehend the effective practices of the FLEGT VPA implementation in Viet Nam and the Core Group's positive contributions to this process so far.

"Since the negotiation and now the implementation, the focus of the collaboration and its backing has shifted to ensure the alignment of the legal framework from Viet Nam with the agreements in the FLEGT VPA as well as capacity development and unyielding support to the active involvement of the various stakeholders in the process. The Core Group is a key aspect of the implementation and success of this process and I think also their contribution and active engagement have been recognized and appreciated several times over by the two parties." – Ms. Anja Barth, Chief Technical Advisor, GIZ Viet Nam commented.

The workshop was attended by more than 60 participants from agencies including VNFOREST, member organizations of the Core Group, the Joint Expert Meeting (JEM), and the Delegation of the European Union.

An accompanying exhibition highlighted key messages and practices related to the FLEGT VPA while introducing the activities, achievements, and commitments of the Core Group members and enterprises in "Working together to ensure timber legality" — the



slogan of this year's event. The exhibition was a great opportunity for organizations to exchange, share and discuss future opportunities for cooperation.

About FLEGT VPA Multi-Stakeholder Core Group

To date, the FLEGT VPA Multi-Stakeholder Core Group has had the active participation of more than 40 members representing six different groups of organizations, including the private sectors, timber industry associations, non-governmental organizations, research institutes, international development partners, and supporting forestry-related projects and verification agencies.

Information about the FLEGT VPA and some key milestones

Timber and timber products are important export products of Viet Nam. The export turnover of these items has been incrementally increasing over the past decade. The turnover increased from 3.4 billion USD in 2010 to 14.5 billion USD in 2021, making Viet Nam the 2nd largest timber exporter in Asia and the 5th in the world. The EU is Viet Nam's fifth largest export market of timber and timber products. In 2019, Viet Nam's export turnover of timber products to the EU reached over 1.03 billion USD, accounting for 9.2% of the export market share. The country currently is home to nearly 14,000 enterprises of different scales that are active in timber processing, producing timber and timber products. These enterprises together create more than 500,000 long-term jobs for workers, contributing to stabilizing social security and sustainable economic development.

On the other hand, Viet Nam is facing global challenges related to illegal timber harvesting and trade. Therefore, drastic and comprehensive solutions are needed to ensure the sustainable and legal growth of Viet Nam's timber industry, while promoting good forest governance.

After six years of negotiations, FLEGT VPA came into force starting in June 2019. Decree 102 was promulgated by the Government of Viet Nam in September 2020 to describe the key aspects of Viet Nam's timber legality assurance system. When the FLEGT licensing



system comes into operation, Viet Nam will only export timber products with FLEGT or CITES licenses to the EU market. Additionally, the EU will only permit Vietnamese timber to enter into the EU if it has a valid FLEGT or CITES license.

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