

Back-to-Office Report: China-Africa workshop in Beijing

Small group photo after opening on 30th October 2013



Ms Zhang Yanhong, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Development Planning & Assets Management, SFA China is on the right of Ms Heidi Hiltunen of the EU Delegation to China

International Workshop To Promote Understanding of FLEGT VPAs

(co-organized by EU FLEGT Facility, Center for International Forest Products Trade, State Forestry Administration of China and Research Institute of Forestry Policy & Information, Chinese Academy of Forestry)

Date: 30-31 October 2013

Attendees from EFI: Vincent van den Berk (VvB), Aimi Lee Abdullah (ALA), Thomas de Franqueville (TdF), Dr. Chen Xiaoqian (XQ) and Wang Guangxin (GX).

Unit: EFI FLEGT Asia

Recorded by ALA.

The Workshop agenda is as at [Annex 1](#).

Background

At the last EU-China Bilateral Coordination Mechanism (BCM) meeting in Brussels in January 2013, 8 BCM activities were identified, one of which was:

“Co-organizing in China an event with the emphasis on signatory VPA countries and countries negotiating VPAs, subject to interest of signatory/negotiating countries. The main objective of this

event would be facilitating an understanding and sharing experiences of the timber legality verification systems and VPA processes”.

The European Forest Institute’s FLEGT Facility (Asia Regional Office) is currently the main mechanism available to the EU to help implement activities under the EU-China BCM. This is mainly done together with the implementing partner in China being the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF) under the SFA. As this was the first time the Africa-China-Europe link was formally made, the planning and coordination took a bit of time. The date of the workshop had to be postponed once, and the week-long Chinese national day celebrations in early October added to the organizers’ worries.

Additionally, the main workshop focal point person in the CAF was also travelling. However, the workshop was finally organized on **30-31st October 2013 in Beijing**, with a view to involve Chinese stakeholders from the government, as well as private companies in the ongoing debate on SFM in the VPA countries in the African region. Apart from the internal EFI VPA Team and identified country pairs, EFI was supported by the EU Delegation in China and in the VPA partner countries, as well as by Ms. Susanne Wallenoeffler of the GIZ in the planning of this workshop.

This historic first workshop in China involving the relevant lead negotiators from the 5 African VPA signatory countries as well as from Indonesia was very much appreciated by both the China and VPA country side sides. Overall, the workshop brought into focus some bright prospects for cooperation on FLEGT in relation to the China-Africa trade.

Objective

The workshop was organized to share experiences on the VPA negotiations and implementation, and to increase China’s appreciation of FLEGT and the VPA in each of the VPA signatory countries. The aim was also to provide a platform to strengthen Africa-China- Europe cooperation on legal timber trade by promoting dialogue between African timber suppliers and traders with Chinese forestry businesses and their timber processing associations related to the European market.

Participants

The invited international participants were from the Central African and West African countries, as well as Indonesia, the only VPA signatory country in Southeast Asia. The original plan had been to invite three (3) persons each from the 5 African VPA countries and Indonesia. The invitees would constitute major stakeholders in each country’s VPA discussions (government, business, NGO). It was later decided that it would not be possible within the planning scenario and time frame to involve NGOs at this stage as invitation letters would be issued by the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF) with the approval of the Chinese State Forestry Administration (SFA), and all international participants would have to be pre-approved. This process would take a longer time with NGO participants.

It was agreed that one nomination would be invited from each of the VPA government focal points, and to request for another private sector nomination. However, two countries just nominated two government personnel, and the organizers decided to not pursue the matter so as to expedite the arrangement for flights and visa. Involving the Indonesians was also a bit of a challenge as the lead negotiators were busy with the signing of the EU-Indonesia VPA at the end of September and were travelling as well.

In the end, the final list of supported international participants was:

- **Central African Republic:** Joseph-Désiré MBANGOLO (Government) and Ignace VOUNGBO (Private sector);

- **Cameroon:** Salomon Janvier BELINGA (Government) and Jean EAN AVIT KONGAPE (Government);
- **Republic of Congo:** Adolphe NGASSEMBO (Government) and Gregoire Hadjinsy KOUFFA (Private sector);
- **Ghana:** Richard GYIMAH (Government) and Nana Dwomoh SARPONG (Private sector);
- **Liberia:** Harrison S. KARNWEA (Government) and Charles K. MILLER (Government);
- **Indonesia:** Dwi Sudharto (Government), Achmad Edi NUGROHO (Government) and Sandrawati WIBOWO (Private sector);
- **COMIFAC (Central African Forests Commission):** Chouaibou NCHOUTPOUEN
- **CEEAC (Economic Community of Central African States):** Berreck Symphorien AZANTSA
- The **GIZ** was represented by Isaac Yves Nyengue BAHANAK (COMIFAC Advisor).



Main Outcomes

- VPA countries shared information on the efforts they are making to design and implement legality assurance systems that will ultimately ensure that their exports are legal;
- Chinese policy makers showed encouragement for the tremendous efforts (including law reform and institutional changes) of the five African and the Asian country to stop trade in illegal timber and forest products and to foster sustainable forest management in their respective countries;
- China showed her intention to trade in timber products that are legal according to the legislation of the producer country. Africans participants heard this intention;
- China demonstrated that she is supportive and welcoming of FLEGT and VPAs and showed recognition of the efforts of VPA countries;
- The participating countries recognized the support and financial contributions of the European Union under the EU FLEGT Action Plan to combat illegal logging;
- The Chinese government shared information about its efforts to promote responsible forestry by Chinese businesses overseas, through the development of a new “Guide on Sustainable Overseas Forest Trade & Investment by Chinese Enterprises”;
- The Chinese industry related efforts by Chinese enterprises to meet international requirements for legally harvested timber by adopting timber certification and undergoing annual verification audits.

Possible next steps

- Further encourage Chinese policy makers – as suggested during the workshop and side meetings - to specifically recognise VPA country efforts in country guidelines and ultimately sign bilateral agreements with VPA countries to recognise FLEGT licensed timber;

- Encourage business-to-business approach - timber associations to set up buyers & suppliers network with an active communication support on the importance of legal sourcing. There is an urgent need to improve Chinese stakeholders' understanding on FLEGT VPA developments, EU TR and other emerging market requirements through provision of information and materials and through the development of a Common Information Window;
- Encourage Chinese businesses to leverage on their buying power to strengthen FLEGT enforcement;
- Chinese government to pilot in VPA countries where there is dominant Chinese investment (CAR, Cameroon, Congo, Liberia);
- Chinese government to consult with VPA country signatories when developing the new Chinese "Guide on Sustainable Overseas Forest Trade & Investment by Chinese Enterprises";
- Encourage Chinese government to put in place Chinese public procurement policy favouring legal timber, send out clear messages that government is concerned about legality and favour FLEGT timber.



Business Roundtable chaired by Mr. Shi Feng. Panel representatives (from left) are Mr. Ignace Vougbo of CAR, Nana Sarpong of Ghana, Harrison Karnwea of Liberia, Jean Kongape of Cameroon, Sandrawati Wibowo of Indonesia, Wang Shaofeng of Shanghai Timber Industries Association and Zeng Zhiwen of Chinafloors Timber (China) Co. Ltd.

Attachments:

ANNEX I

ANNEX 2 (press release)

ANNEX 3 (press coverage in the Green Times)

Date	Time	Activity	MODERATOR	
30 th Oct	8:00-9:00	Registration		
	9:00-9:20	Opening remark -- Mr. SU Chunyu, Director General, Department of International Cooperation, State Forestry Administration of China (SFA) - Ms Heidi HILTUNEN, Environment Counsellor, EU Delegation in Beijing, China	Mr. CHEN Shaozhi, CAF	
	9:20-10:00 Section 1: EU FLEGT Action plan and China's forest trade policies			
	9:20-9:35	China's policy on promote legal and sustainable forest trade- Mr. FU Jianquan, Division Director, Department of Development Planning & Asset Management, State Forestry Administration of China (SFA)	Mr. CHEN Shaozhi, CAF	
	9:35-9:50	EU FLEGT Action Plan implementation -progress and challenges-Mr. Vincent VAN DEN BERK, Haec of Asia Regional Office, EFI EU FLEGT Facility		
	9:50-10:10	Question and answer		
	10:10-10:30	Tea break		
	10:30-15:00 Section 2: FLEGT VPA signatory countries' information sharing			
	10:30-10:50	Ghana's FLEGT VPA: Progress, experiences and challenges - Dr. Richard GYIMAH, Manager, Verification and Audit, Forestry Commission of Ghana	Mr. Vincent VAN DEN BERK, EFI	
	10:50-11:10	Republic of Liberia's FLEGT VPA: Progress, experiences and challenges – Mr. Charles K. MILLER, Deputy Director, VPA Supporting Department, Republic of Liberia		
	11:10-11:30	Republic of Cameroon's FLEGT VPA: Progress, experiences and challenges – Mr. Salomon Janvier BELINGA, Ministry of Forests & Wildlife, Republic of Cameroon		
	11:30-12:00	Question and answer		
	12:00-13:30	Buffet Lunch		
		13:30-13:50	Central African Republic's FLEGT VPA: Progress, experiences and challenges – Mr. Joseph Desire MBANGOLO, Ministry of Water, Forests & Protected Areas, Central African Republic	Mr. JING Toa, SFA

Date	Time	Activity	MODERATOR	
	13:50-14:20	Indonesia's FLEGT VPA: Progress, experiences and challenges – Dr. Dwi Sudharto, Director, Forest Product Processing and Marketing, Ministry of Forestry, Indonesia Achmad Edi Nugroho, Indonesian Co-Director, Multi-stakeholder Forestry Programme, Indonesia		
	14:20-15:00	Question and answer		
	15:00-15:20	Tea break		
	15:20-17:00 Section 3: Business Roundtable			
	15:20-16:50	Business roundtable meeting 5 business participants from 5 VPA countries, as well as 2 Chinese industry members (Congo participant could only arrive on 31 st due to flight delay)	Mr. SHI Feng, China National Forest Product Industry Association (CNFPIA)	
	16:50-17:00	Conclusion		
	18:00-19:30	Buffet Dinner		
31st Oct	9:00-10:30 Section 4: Discussion on EU FLEGT VPA			
	9:00-10:30	Continue with one presentation: Republic of Congo's FLEGT VPA: Progress, experiences and challenges – Mr. Adolphe NGASSEMBO, Vice-Director of Project on Traceability System of Congo, Ministry of Forest Economics of the Republic of Congo Panel Discussion: The challenges of FLEGT VPA preparation and negotiation The challenges and experiences on FLEGT VPA multi-stakeholder discussion mechanism Is FLEGT-VPA enough to meet the legality requirements of markets? What is the future outlook	Aimi LEE Abdullah Dr. CHEN Yong	
	10:30-10:45	Tea Break		
	10:45-12:00 Section 5: Enhance Regional Cooperation			
	10:45-11:00	The effort on promoting Sustainable management and utilization by China-Research Institute of Forest information and policy, Chinese Academy of Forestry (Dr. Chen Yong, CAF)	XIA Jun, SFA	

Date	Time	Activity	MODERATOR
	11:00-11:15	The effort on promoting Sustainable management and utilization by Europe- Thomas DE FRANQUEVILLE, Program Officer, VPA Team, European Forest Institute (EFI) FLEGT Facility	
	11:15-11:45	Discussion on how to enhance the regional cooperation	
	11:45-12:00	Conclusion	
	12:00-13:30	Buffet Lunch	
	14:00-18:00	Field trip to forest farm	

Press release for China meeting of VPA countries
01/11/2013

China and African and Asian countries share lessons on combating illegal trade in timber

Beijing, 31 October 2013. Chinese policy makers and representatives of six African and Asian countries timber industry members met for the first time to share lessons and enhance cooperation in a global effort to stop trade in illegal timber and forest products and to foster sustainable forest management at a workshop on 30th -31st October in Beijing.

“China is committed to trading in timber products that are legal according to the legislation of the producer country,” said Chen Shaozhi, Director of the Research Institute of Forestry Policy and Information, Chinese Academy of Forestry at the International Workshop to Promote Understanding of FLEGT VPAs. “China has become a major player in the global trade in forest products over the past two decades. Since 1983 the total value of our international trade has climbed from US \$60 billion to more than US \$ 400 billion. As a major player we are committed to strengthen forestry cooperation and in doing our part in the fight against illegal logging.”

Illegal logging has serious environmental, social and economic consequences. Illegal logging causes deforestation, loss of biodiversity and the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. It contributes to poverty among people who depend on forests for their livelihoods and is associated with armed conflict, violence, human rights abuses and corruption. Illegal logging undermines the legitimacy of the forest sector and hinders the efforts of governments to implement sustainable forest management and robs public coffers of tax revenue.

The participating countries are all engaged in developing or implementing Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) with the European Union as part of the EU FLEGT Action Plan to combat illegal logging. They included Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia and the Republic of Congo. FLEGT, which stands for ‘forest law enforcement, governance and trade’ brings together demand-side and supply-side measures to combat illegal logging. China has engaged in this effort since 2009 through a Bilateral Coordination Mechanism with the EU.

“The work that we are doing in the Republic of Cameroon to ensure the legality of our forest products for the EU market will also enable us to ensure the legality of our growing exports to China,” said Jean Avit Kongape of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife. “We appreciate China’s invitation to share information and collaborate to ensure legal trade, good forest governance and sustainable forest management.”

At the workshop, China shared with participating VPA countries information about its efforts to promote responsible forestry by Chinese businesses overseas, through the development of a new “Guide on Sustainable Overseas Forest Trade & Investment by Chinese Enterprises” as well as measures taken by Chinese industry.

Zeng Zhiwen of Chinafloors Timber (China) Co. Ltd. related efforts by Chinese enterprises to meet international requirements for legally harvested timber by adopting timber certification and undergoing annual verification audits.

VPA countries shared information on the efforts they are making to design and implement legality assurance system that will ultimately ensure that their exports are legal.

“When our VPA is operational we will be able to provide Chinese importers with FLEGT licensed timber that is guaranteed as legal,” said Harrison Karnwea, Interim Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority of the Republic of Liberia. “We hope China will use its buying power to support the fight against illegal logging by supporting VPAs and favouring FLEGT-licensed timber in its domestic and export markets.”

The workshop was co-organized by the Research Institute of Forestry Policy and Information, Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF), Center for International Forest Products Trade, State Forestry Administration of China (CINFT, SFA) and EU FLEGT Facility.

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BACKGROUND

- China is an important trading partner for many African countries. Trade in forest products from Africa to China has reached US 4.34 billion. This trade increased 7.76% from 2001 to 2012 and accounted for 2.5% of the total value of Chinese forest products imported and exported. Indonesia is also an important supplier of timber to China.
- Trade could be expanded in timber and timber products. Good forest governance in Africa is one key to maintaining and further developing a sustainable trade relationship in legal timber and timber products.
- Several African countries have jointed in the global fight against illegal logging and care in various stages of Voluntary Partnership Agreements with the EU that will ensure trade in legal timber. When these VPAs are operational, they will be able to issue FLEGT-licensed timber.
- China is also taking steps to address illegal logging, as are other consumer markets such as the EU, USA, Japan and Australia.
- China is taking steps to guide overseas operations to ensure trade in legal timber. It has issued two guidelines for Chinese forestry business that are operating overseas.

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加强经验信息交流分享 推动中欧森林执法合作

欧盟FLEGT-VPA国家经验交流会在京召开

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交流会现场。本报记者姚远 摄

本报讯 记者迟诚 姚远 报道 10月30日-

31日，欧盟森林执法、施政与贸易自愿伙伴关系协议（FLEGT-VPA）国家经验交流会在北京召开。会议旨在贯彻落实中国与欧盟森林执法与行政管理双边协调机制第四次会议成果，促进各国对欧盟FLEGT-VPA进程和木材合法性认定体系的理解和经验分享。

欧盟森林执法、施政与贸易（FLEGT）行动计划是欧盟在2003年提出的计划，旨在推动森林可持续经营。FLEGT行动计划的主要方法是在木材生产国和欧盟之间签署“自愿伙伴关系协议”（VPA），通过此协议的签署帮助木材生产国建立起控制和许可程序，以确保只有合法木制品才能进入欧盟市场。目前已有6个国家为VPA签署国，分别是，刚果共和国、中非共和国、印度尼西亚、加纳、利比里亚和喀麦隆。

为推动FLEGT行动计划的实施，欧盟出台了欧盟木材法案，并已于今年3月3日正式生效。该法案对进入欧盟市场的木材和木制品的合法性提出了严格要求，对全国木材与木制品贸易产生了重要影响。对此，代表们认为，各国有必要进一步加深对FLEGT-

VPA的理解和研究，并制定科学合理的应对措施。

国家林业局国际合作司司长苏春雨介绍，中国作为负责任的发展国家，一直积极反对打击木材非法采伐和贸易行为，坚持可持续的森林资源管理合作战略，采取了一系列有利的应对措施，包括建立并实施森林管理制度，严格执行法律法规，确保木材及木材产品在中国境内采伐、运输、加工利用的合法性；建立中国森林认证体系，逐步完善森林认证标准等技术性文件，推动体系互认；探索建立各方利益特别是广大发展中国家和木材生产国利益的木材合法性互认办法，并在中国的部分企业开展试点工作；广泛开展多双方合作，积极参与有关国际和区域谈判，推进国际对话与交流等。

欧盟驻华代表团环境参赞何海迪说，打击非法采伐和相关贸易是长期复杂的过程，需要各国政府、协会、企业和森林经营者积极的参与以及国际有关主体的共同合作；欧盟森林执法，施政与贸易自愿伙伴关系计划，将施政贸易统筹考虑，将森林管理和保护从单一的项目实施，提升到国家和区域层面，对国际社会应对非法采伐将产生深远的影响。

交流会上，国家林业局发展规划与资金管理司有关负责人介绍了中国促进合法和可持续林产品贸易政策和措施；欧盟森林研究所的代表介绍了欧盟FLEGT行动计划实施情况和挑战；已经签署了FLEGT-VPA协议的国家代表们分享了各自国家在FLEGT-VPA协议谈判过程以及实施过程中的困难和经验。各国从事可持续森林经营和贸易的业内人士共同探讨了企业如何满足欧洲市场木材合法性要求。

此次会议由中国林科院林业科技信息研究所、国家林业局林产品国际贸易研究中心、欧洲森林研究所（EFI）欧盟FLEGT基金共同主办。

(作者：中国绿色时报记者迟诚 姚远) (编辑：施一凡)

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