How?

- Challenge EU policies and practices
- 3 working areas:
  - Development
  - Consumption (including Trade)
  - Climate Change
How to improve social & environmental justice?

- Evidence-based research & Analysis
- **Policy work** at EU & Member States’ level
- Constructive proposals
- Facilitate NGO networks, coalitions and platforms
EU Action Plan on Forest Law Governance Enforcement and Trade (2003 FLEGT AP)

- Illegal logging:
  - undermines livelihoods,
  - fuels social conflict
  - deprives governments of revenue
  - erodes countries’ natural resource bases
- Problems in tropical forest countries (Africa):
  weak governance: corruption, weak capacities, lack of coordination, lack legal recognition of rights
- FLEGT (2003)
  - Aimed to curb illegal logging & related trade (clean timber market); reinforce governance and law enforcement in forest sector
  - Tool to contribute to EU’s SDG 2030 + Climate change agendas
- FLEGT = Unique package of demand & supply side measures in 7 action areas
- EUTR (demand side) & VPAs (supply side) = main tools
Progress (in Africa) past decade?

Illegalities in forest sector have reduced – Early gains - reduction of large scale logging

BUT problem remains widespread
High risk countries: DRC, Cameroon, RoC, Ghana

Advances in tackling illegal logging have slowed down in recent years

Past efforts have not failed *per se* BUT were unable to keep pace with rapid changes in sector

Evidence of success & governance progress recognised by:

- 2015 Court of Auditors report
- 2016 FLEGT Evaluation report
Why progress is stalled?
Changing nature of forest sector

1. New drivers of deforestation:
- ‘Illegal’ forest conversion for agricultural and other land uses
- Conversion timber accounts now for half of tropical timber trade

2. New markets gaining terrain e.a.
   • China – Vietnam
   • Domestic markets

3. Illegal logging (chainsaw milling) by small-scale producers increased and not adequately addressed by policies.
In the last twenty years, practitioners have come to appreciate that governance is often weak link in addressing unsustainable use of forests and trees. Technical knowledge alone is insufficient, and no natural forest management, protected area, plantation, or agro-forestry project will succeed if the resources are poorly governed.

FAO

Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPAs) = TOOL to improve governance

VPAs are Legally binding trade agreements between the EU and countries that export timber
Key governance pillars of the VPAs
Today

- 6 VPAs agreed
  - 5 in Africa
- 9 VPAs negotiated
  - 3 in Africa

Ghana – 12/2009
Cameroon – 12/2011
Central African Republic – 07/2012
Republic of Congo – 03/2013
Liberia – 12/2013

Indonesia – First FLEGT Licenses in 11/20016
Vietnam – Initialled 05/2017 not in force – signature/ratification ongoing

168 million hectares, 300 million people
VPAs in Africa: State of affairs

CONGO BASIN

• **Cameroon (2011):** Process is lagging behind - lack of political will - focus on SIGIFII at expense of governance challenges - regaining momentum due to recent stock taking exercise – political situation is volatile – conflict in North & South West

• **CAR (2012):** volatile political situation – stagnation of process – expansion of informal sector - access to information improved (online library + website)

• **ROC (2013):** New concessions granted palm oil development – Joint 2018-2022 workplan for VPA implementation – computerised legality verification system developed – progress forest reform is erratic
VPAs in Africa: State of affairs

WEST AFRICA

• Ghana: verge to issue FLEGT licences – joint EU-Ghana assessment of system readiness of Legality assurance system (LAS) - improved CS participation – Timber Transparency Portal

• Liberia: New president’s impact on forests yet unclear - improved participation – community forestry: compliance with community rights law and benefitsharing – land rights bill passed by the House of Representatives
Rooting for transformative change

Measuring impact of VPAs
(2016 Fern briefing)
Accountability

Case of Ghana:

- NGOs and forest communities use improved legal knowledge to expose violations and demand accountability.

- Results:
  - Non-compliant actions have not stopped entirely, BUT no longer with the impunity of the past.
  - Ministry is more cautious about violations.
Case of Cameroon:

‘lack of coordination’ has been identified as a major governance challenge and to has provided potential solutions to address it.
In all countries:

- Independent Monitoring was a real innovation
- Access to information has improved
All governments started to make information about the forest sector publically available through **dedicated VPA websites**

- RoC: [www.apvflegtcongo.info/](http://www.apvflegtcongo.info/)
- Cameroon: [www.minfof.cm/apvcmeroun/](http://www.minfof.cm/apvcmeroun/)
- CAR: [www.apvrca.org](http://www.apvrca.org)

But problems remain:
- Updating websites
- Technical problems
“[The VPA has enabled] clear improvements and irreversible gains.”
“The VPA implies changes in practices and attitudes of forest managers. This is a huge paradigm shift brought by the VPA, hence the Forestry Commission has made efforts to improve the capacity of their frontline staff to meet their legality compliance.”
Ghana/Liberia:
- communities assert their rights in forest governance, especially in monitoring logging processes.
- [before the VPA] communities had even lost the fact that they were the owners of the forest resources and got used to the notion that forest resources belonged to the government.
Key findings:

• All countries with a signed VPA demonstrate significant governance improvements across forest sector

• In countries where civil society was already strong at the start of a VPA process, positive change in other governance indicators is pronounced

• In countries where civil society was less strong at the start of a VPA process, it has become substantially stronger – in a better position to push internally for other governance reforms.
Major Challenges

Lack of political will to follow through with slow & complex implementation process

Widespread corruption hinders law enforcement

Maintain momentum and respect for multi-stakeholder dialogue beyond VPA signature

Issue of conversion (timber) not sufficiently addressed

Limited NGO capacity to support implementation

Limited awareness or direct involvement from local and indigenous groups

EUTR implementation still patchy
Recommendations – Where next?

1. “Effective” implementation of the FLEGT Action Plan NOW!
   - EU and MS should prioritise combatting illegal logging & FLEGT – strengthen links with development & climate agenda
   - Publish the FLEGT 2018–2022 Workplan (includes encouraging ways forward)
   - EU/MS prioritise high level political dialogue with VPA countries
   - Policy coherence – break silos
• Support small scale production, community forest management & promote alternatives to logging
Step up and support independent monitoring.
• Political and technical support to adequate participation
• including IPs and women
Recommendations – Where next?

2. Fight against corruption
   - Empower anti-corruption agencies in producer countries
   - Strengthen capacities of judicial actors
   - Mandatory disclosure of payments by logging companies

3. Adopt EU action plan addressing deforestation & protecting rights – focus on other forest risk commodities
   - Include lessons learned from FLEGT
   - Provide human rights due diligence regulation
Thank you for your attention!

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