

AIDE MEMOIRE

FIRST GUYANA - EUROPEAN COMMISSION NEGOTIATION SESSION ON A FOREST, LAW ENFORCEMENT, GOVERNANCE AND TRADE [FLEGT], VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT [VPA]

5 December, 2012, Georgetown, Guyana

Introduction

1. The first Guyana - European Commission Negotiation session on a Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) was held on 5 December 2012 in Georgetown, Guyana. The meeting was officially opened by Commissioner James Singh from the Guyana Forestry Commission.
2. The session was co-chaired by Commissioner James Singh from the Guyana Forestry Commission and Cristiana Pasca-Palmer, Head of Unit (Climate change, Environment, Natural resources, Water), Directorate General Development and Cooperation, European Commission (EC). A list of the delegates is presented in Annex 1.

Agenda Item 1: Opening Statements

Opening Statement by Guyana

3. Commissioner James Singh, in his opening remarks, welcomed the European Union Delegation and confirmed Guyana's commitment to the VPA process. He expressed that the decision to enter into formal negotiations with the EU on an EU FLEGT VPA was informed by an extensive period of stakeholder consultation and engagement in Guyana. He provided background on the forest sector and forest governance in Guyana. Key aspects highlighted included: a commitment to low carbon development, a maintained low rate of deforestation and forest degradation, legality, sustainable forest management as serving the needs of the people of Guyana. He further outlined that efforts have been taken at the legislative, policy and operational levels to continually strengthen and update forest management systems.

Commissioner James Singh further explained current systems in place including Guyana's successful implementation of *inter alia* a forest management framework, monitoring systems both in place and operational within the country, as well as Guyana's engagement in third-party monitoring activities. He emphasised the need for the VPA to build on existing systems in place at country level, to be locally appropriate and to serve the needs of the people of Guyana.

Opening statement by the European Commission:

4. Cristiana Pasca-Palmer thanked Guyana for its commitments towards responsible management of natural resources and noted that discussions with Guyana on FLEGT have been on-going since 2009. She highlighted the remarkable fact that Guyana is not only the first Caribbean country but also the first on the continent of South America, to enter into VPA negotiations. It was emphasised that although markets are changing in light of recent initiatives directed at ensuring the legality of timber and timber products (*i.e. the European Timber Regulation (EUTR), the Lacey Act (US), and similar initiative in Australia and elsewhere*), Guyana is, with its entering into the VPA process, signalling to the market that it seeks to further ensure the practice of strong forest legality, its credibility and be a market competitor.
5. Guyana was reminded that the VPA process is a voluntary process through which the EC is offering a partnership to develop the VPA that is realistic, practicable and implementable. Cristiana Pasca-Palmer further noted that the EC is pleased with the establishment of the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) as broad consultations with stakeholders are critical during the VPA process. It was further stressed that Guyana already has an operational verification system in place which can serve as a sound basis for developing the Legality Assurance System as contemplated under the VPA.

Agenda Item 2: Agreement on draft agenda and session modalities (*negotiation minutes, public report*)

6. The National Technical Working Group (NTWG) will be leading the process of negotiations from the Guyana side and has identified the GFC to speak on behalf of the Group. The GFC may invite, based on the matter under discussion, a member of the National Technical Working Group or any Stakeholder Constituency Group to make a presentation.
Guyana expressed its wishes that the NTWG be present during all negotiations, both technical and formal sessions.
7. It was agreed that reports and notes related to the negotiation process will be made public after joint agreement between Guyana and the EC. An aide memoire of the first negotiation session meeting will be drafted by the European Commission and submitted to Guyana.
8. The EC stated that formal negotiation session should alternate between Georgetown, Guyana and Brussels, Belgium. Although supportive of alternating negotiation sessions, Guyana raised concerns around current budget and other constraints in ensuring that around 18-20 people from Guyana travel to Brussels: this would include approximately 14 representatives from the NTWG

and 5 to 7 representatives from GFC. As such, Guyana expressed that it is the preference for the majority of negotiations session to be held in Guyana, to allow for maximised Guyanese counterpart contribution. Although in principle there was agreement in alternating negotiation sessions between Georgetown and Brussels, Guyana emphasized the significant challenge in being able to secure financing to enable the Guyana team to attend the next negotiation session in Brussels, scheduled for mid 2013.

9. In terms of approaches to the formal negotiation sessions, Guyana and EU agreed to have longer technical sessions followed by shorter formal sessions.
10. It was agreed for purposes of good governance, transparency and inclusiveness, that the EC will make its best efforts to include the nominated representative of the NTWG at local meetings coordinated by the EC, on the EU FLEGT Guyana VPA. For meetings that take place out of Guyana and other exceptional cases, it was agreed that the NTWG, should be apprised by the EU, of proceedings and matters raised, in a timely manner. It was further agreed that Guyana and the EC will endeavour to discuss any matters arising from such meetings, in a manner that allows for open and inclusive discussions on relevant areas to the EU FLEGT Guyana VPA.

Agenda Item 3: Guyana's expectations in respect of the VPA and aspects that need to be addressed.

11. Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) proceeded to present the roadmap for the negotiations and reiterated that the VPA must build on, and strengthen existing systems in place in Guyana and be in line with current strategies and priorities of Guyana. Guyana expressed that its vision for the VPA is: *"To further develop and strengthen Guyana's existing framework for forest legality and sustainable forest management in a manner consistent with national priorities, and which enhances Guyana's forest products' market opportunities"*. Further, Guyana expressed that its main objective that it aims to achieve through the VPA is: *"To provide a forest legality framework which supports sustainable forest management and trade, whilst improving Guyana's access to international forest products markets"*.
12. Guyana explained that the VPA negotiations should be seen as a vehicle to build on current Guyanese legality verification systems to get better access to international markets. Forest legality is seen as one part of sustainable forest management.
13. Guyana proposed that the VPA initially only cover exports to the EU for agreed forest products, with the possibility of extending its application to non-EU markets at a later stage. It further stressed that the development of the VPA should recognize *inter alia* the operational structure and legal requirements of Amerindians, miners, state forest operators (both small and large forest

concession holders), and other key actors. It must further also take into account multiple land uses (mining, forestry, other) prevalent in the country. Guyana indicated that it is its preference for the VPA for Guyana to include directly, exports only, since the domestic market will be indirectly included as part of the chain of custody process.

14. Guyana considers communication as an essential component of the VPA process: a communication strategy will be developed through an engagement process inclusive of multiple stakeholders. The objectives which will be to target the beneficial stakeholder groups, should be mindful of Guyana topography and costs of travel, should be appropriate to the local culture and languages. The communication strategy must target and be beneficial to wider range of stakeholder groups and be mindful of the countries topography, travel costs and other related aspects in the approaches used. As such, it must also be executed in a manner that would enable easy interpretation and understanding by local and indigenous communities. Capacity building may form an integral part of the process. Guyana expressed that financing for the development of the strategy as well as for its execution, is needed.
15. With specific reference to the development of the LAS, Guyana highlighted the following intentions regarding the Legality Definition (LD), the Supply Chain Controls as well as Licensing: In respect of the LD and its development it was stated that the LD will be defined after due consultation with stakeholders with a view of also determining what is applicable to each stakeholder group. The application of the VPA for Amerindian communities will depend on the legality definition which will be developed for the purpose of the VPA and this will be reflective of the current relevant laws relating to Indigenous Peoples, in Guyana. The link between the VPA and small scale loggers will depend on the legality definition, and is expected to be largely reflective of existing relevant legal and operational requirements specific to this scale of forest operation. The VPA process will embrace the complexity and the potential areas of conflict between different land uses. Guyana further stated that the LD should, in addition to the relevant sections of the various laws applicable within the forestry context, integrate existing mechanisms such as the Independent Forest Monitoring as well as other relevant mechanisms. In respect of the Chain of Custody (CoC) system, Guyana expressed the need to review and build on existing systems in place (*i.e. log tracking, export procedures, removal and other procedures*). Similar considerations apply to both the verification approaches as well as licensing.
16. In terms of products to be included into the VPA, Guyana identified product codes 4403, 4406, 4407, 4408, 4409, 4412 as those that will be discussed by Guyana for inclusion in the VPA. Also, in respect of the Independent Audit, an audit plan (criteria and scope) has to be jointly decided on and sources of funding for such an audit will need to be explored. Guyana also proposed conducting an impact analysis as part of its development process of the VPA: this analysis will *inter alia*, identify gaps, risks, cost implications and other critical aspects needed to effectively develop an appropriate VPA in Guyana.

Agenda Item 4: EU expectations for the process.

17. The European Commission thanked Guyana for highlighting its expectations and stressed the importance of due consideration of the implementation process to follow during the negotiations process. It noted that this is a partnership which relies on mutual trust between the parties: the EC has a vast amount of experience in VPA negotiation and implementation and is willing to share its experiences.
18. The EC stressed that the agreement and the VPA negotiation process should be credible. The importance of in country consensus building was emphasised. Stakeholders will implement something that they buy in. However Guyana stressed the cost implications of any stakeholder process and pointed the Guyana financial constraints.
19. The EC emphasized the need to strike a balance between extended stakeholder processes and a timely negotiation process: the expectation from the EC, based on past experiences, was to move towards the end of negotiations within 2 years.

Agenda Item 5: Presentation by the European Commission on the VPA framework and the processes that can help develop it in full.

20. The European Commission presented on the VPA framework which essentially establishes a licensing scheme for timber exports to the EU. The European Commission proceeded to explain the VPA agreement including its purpose, scope, objectives and content. In addition to discussing the general conditions as provided for in the standard VPA template, the European Commission detailed the various Annexes to the agreement and their content.
21. The Annexes to the VPA describe the LAS and various country specific aspects of the agreement. The Annex list includes:
 - *Annex 1*: product coverage. These include 6 minimum (*mandatory*) categories plus those identified by the partner country;
 - *Annex 2*: the legality definition (*a subset of the country laws agreed upon*) covering all titles and sources of timber to be exported to the EU;
 - *Annex 3*: Conditions governing the release for free circulation in the Union of timber products exported from Guyana and covered by a FLEGT license
 - *Annex 4*: Requirements and technical specifications for FLEGT licenses;
 - *Annex 5*: Description of the Legality Assurance System (LAS);
 - *Annex 6*: Independent Audit (IA). During the negotiations, the ToR for the Independent Audit will be discussed by both parties;
 - *Annex 7*: The VPA implementation schedule (*dates for the initialling, ratification, co-signing, entry into force, set up of JIC, development, issuance of the first FLEGT licence*), which are the main milestones of implementation;

- *Annex 8*: VPA supporting measures. This is not a financial commitment, but recognizing by both parties that specific measures such as capacity building might be needed;
- *Annex 9*: Criteria for assessing the LAS. A third party will check if the system is operational. The ToR will be developed by both parties.
- *Annex 10*: Transparency and communication: elements that should be public.
- *Annex 11*: Joint implementation Committee (JIC) and activities.

22. It was noted that if other requirements or ideas are developed during negotiations, which are not specifically covered by the Annexes outlined above, more annexes can be added. If, after the entry into force of the agreement, a change is made to an annex, there is no need for ratification: ratification will only be required if changes are made to the text of the main agreement. In order to effect a change to an Annex, Guyana needs to put the proposed change on the agenda of the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC). The VPA establishes a JIC which will consist of representatives of both Guyana and the EU with the main purpose to monitor and oversee the implementation of the Agreement. The proposed change will then be considered during the JIC meeting and if accepted by all parties, the change will be made in the annex. Guyana proposed for there to be a provision written into the Annexes on a five year review of the VPA and asked whether this would be possible. Guyana expressed that the main intent of the review will be to incorporate lessons learned and experiences of early implementation. The EU indicated that this would be possible in the framework of the JIC monitoring activities. Guyana expressed that with regards to the EU's outline of the JIC, that Guyana would have to further discuss the modalities of implementation that will be done by reflecting on the structures used by other countries for this purpose, and with an objective to ensure local ownership of the process.

Agenda Item 6: Presentation by Guyana on the legal framework pertaining to forestry and existing timber legality verification system(s).

23. The presentation focused on the forest legality framework and existing timber legality verification systems in Guyana, presenting the legal framework, the policy framework, the operational framework, the guidelines and codes, and the operational procedures.
24. Similarly Guyana explained its log tracking system, including its history, product identification methods, structure (partial manual, partial electronic), future improvements, transport procedure and documents associated with the system. Guyana explained further the various operating procedures of the system and interaction between the system components.

25. The EC acknowledged progress made towards the VPA readiness through systems in place and congratulated Guyana on the same. It was agreed that EFI will visit Guyana during the first quarter of 2013 to better understand the system *vis-a-vis* the VPA and its requirements.

Agenda Item 7: Discussions on interim measures that can be considered to facilitate ease in trade of Guyana's forest products to the EU following March 2013.

26. Guyana expressed the concern on how to react or respond to the upcoming entry into force of the EUTR and whether Guyana's existing system could be used as an *interim* measure for purposes of the EUTR. Guyana also requested for a study visit to be accommodated by the EC, with the main objective of Guyana learning more about the practical implementation of routine EU timber import processes.

27. The EC indicated that the current regulations do not outline interim measure in this regard. The EC affirmed that the entering into VPA negotiations is a positive signal to the market, with a comparative advantage. The current system, however, may provide a measure of guarantee to EU operators: nevertheless, operators may be required to supply additional information. The EC stressed that once the VPA is operational, FLEGT licenses will be sufficient for purposes of the EUTR. The EC responded that a study visit, as requested by Guyana, will be possible in the margins of a negotiation session.

28. There is a need for Guyana to reflect on a communication strategy that can provide comfort to their exporters, especially since Guyana already has a system in place.

Agenda Item 8: Next steps and presentation by Guyana on the draft roadmap for the VPA negotiations and the development of the VPA content and other aspects.

29. It was agreed that as it is a common goal to have the VPA ratified by September 2015, the last negotiation session should take place around the last quarter of 2014, or, at the latest, during the first quarter of 2015. The tentative schedule for the negotiation sessions has been agreed as follows:

- The second negotiation session in Brussels during July 2013, the venue to be dependent on financing availability to fund Guyana's negotiations team attendance;
- The third negotiation session in Georgetown during December 2013;
- The fourth negotiation session in Brussels during May or June 2014, the venue to be dependent on financing availability to fund Guyana's negotiations team attendance;
- The fifth negotiation session in Georgetown during December 2014 (or early 2015).
- A sixth negotiation session is not foreseen for the moment: "Wrapping-up" of the VPA could be done by videoconference and email.

30. A joint roadmap for VPA negotiations is in Annex 3. Both parties agreed that the presented roadmap was tentative and that the negotiations should start with technical sessions during the first half of 2013. It was agreed that negotiations will be an iterative process. The annexes and the VPA text will be drafted continuously.
31. For purposes of the technical sessions (possibly through VCs), Guyana stated that the VC will be led by GFC but that the NTWG will be represented. Both parties agreed that the document should be made available one week before VC and two weeks before negotiation session, to allow for their revisions.
32. The EC stated that no direct funding would be provided by the EC for the negotiation process but that the EC could support Guyana's requests for funding to other donors. Guyana expressed that the successful implementation of the VPA is dependent on financing and pointed to examples of sources already being explored for financing.
33. Guyana reaffirmed that the composition of its negotiation team: the core group will be composed of GFC, the National Toshias' Council (NTC), the Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association (GMSA) and the Forest Products Association (FPA). If a particular stakeholder or stakeholder group feels strongly that he/she/it should participate, they will be accommodated to the extent possible. During the negotiations, the Guyana side could be represented by up to 20 persons.
34. Regarding the impact assessment study proposed by Guyana, the EC suggested that EFI could be involved. The EC further highlighted that EFI may have the financial flexibility for some studies that could support the negotiation process.
35. It was further agreed that Guyana will share the elements of their communication strategy with the EC and EFI.

Closing statements

36. Both Guyana and the EC expressed their appreciation and agreed that the discussions were not only fruitful, but were held in a very cooperative and constructive manner. Both parties agreed that stakeholder involvement was key and that the VPA should build on existing systems and, as far as possible, avoid imposing additional burdens on the various stakeholders. Both parties also agreed that it is the joint expectation, that productive and harmonious trade relations between Guyana and the EU will continue.

Press conference

37. A joint press conference was held at the conclusion of the session. The press conference was attended by Joslyn Mackenzie, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, Commissioner James Singh from the GFC, and Cristiana Pasca-Palmer and John Bruneval from the EC.

ANNEX 1:

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A) Guyana team

1. James Singh – Guyana Forestry Commission
2. Anthony Yung – Representative of Guyana’s Forest Products Exporters to the EU
3. Derrick John – Chairperson, National Toshaos’ Council
4. Eusi Anderson – Ministry of Legal Affairs
5. Gavin Agard – Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
6. Peter Khalawan – Forest Products Association
7. Laura Singh – Forest Products Development and Marketing Council Inc.
8. Mohindra Chand – Guyana Manufacturers and Services Association
9. Raj Singh - Forest Products Development and Marketing Council Inc.
10. TasleenDrepaul – Representative of Small Loggers
11. Yvonne Pearson – Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
12. Stanley Phillips – Guyana Revenue Authority

Guyana Forestry Commission Support Staff:

1. PradeepaBholanath
2. Tasreef Khan
3. Kenny David
4. Ruslin Richards
5. AlandiaWarde
6. Jacy Archibald

B) European Union team

1. Cristiana Pasca-Palmer, EuropeanCommission (Brussels)
2. John Bruneval, EuropeanCommission (Brussels)
3. Emilie Goransson, European Commission (Brussels)
4. Joachim Jakobsen, EU Delegation (Georgetown)
5. Morne van der Linde, European Forest Institute
6. Didier Devers, European Forest Institute

Annex 2: Agenda

Proposal for the Agenda for the launch of negotiations of a FLEGT Partnership Agreement between Guyana and the European Union on Wednesday December 5, 2012, Georgetown, Guyana

Agenda Item No.	Time	Agenda Item
		Morning Session
1	9:15am – 9:25am	Opening Statement
2	9:25am – 9:30am	Agree draft agenda and session modalities (negotiation minutes, public report).
3	9:30am – 10:15am	Expectations: presentation by Guyana on the objectives it wishes to achieve in the Agreement and the issues which Guyana would like to see addressed in the VPA. Followed by discussions.
4	10:15am – 10:45am	Expectations: presentation by the EU on the expectations for the process. Followed by discussions (to be oriented on main principles).
<i>Break</i>	<i>10:45am – 11:00am</i>	<i>Break</i>
5	11:00am – 11:20am	Presentation by the European Commission on the framework of the VPA (Objective and Structure) and the processes that can help develop it in full. Followed by discussions.
6	11:20am – 12:20pm	Presentation(s) by Guyana on legal framework pertaining to forestry and existing timber legality verification system(s). Followed by discussions.
<i>Lunch</i>	<i>12:30pm – 1:30pm</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
		Afternoon Session
7	1:30pm – 2:30pm	Discussions on interim measures that can be considered to facilitate ease in trade of Guyana's forest products to the EU following March 2013.
8	2:30pm – 3:15pm	Next steps: presentation by Guyana on the draft roadmap for the VPA negotiations and the development of the VPA contents (including stakeholder consultation process, roles and responsibilities). Discussion on negotiation modalities (meetings, VCs, venue...), consultation process, communication. Followed by discussions.
9	3:15pm – 3:30pm	Closing Statements.
<i>Break</i>		<i>Break</i>
10	4:30pm – 5:00pm	Press Conference

ANNEX 3:

Joint Roadmap for Guyana – EU FLEGT VPA Negotiations

Points to Note:

1. Joint Technical meetings can be conducted via teleconference, video conference, and supported via email communication.
2. For technical areas of work that are proposed to be finalised by a specified timeline, these may be subject to changes at a later date up to the point of finalising of the agreement; and will be supported by appropriate justification.
3. For Negotiation Meetings 4-5, although not detailed in the table below, technical meetings will be scheduled and agreed on, to inform these and to conduct technical work in preparation for these sessions.
4. Activities identified for the post ratification stage, are not presented in the table below, and these would be subject to discussions through the process.

Overview:

The Joint Roadmap below presents a summary of the negotiations and technical meetings, as well as a detailed breakdown of activities that will be jointly executed over the course of the negotiation process, to inform the negotiation session and the finalising of the VPA.

No.	Negotiation Elements	2012	2013				2014				2015			
		Q ₄	Q ₁	Q ₂	Q ₃	Q ₄	Q ₁	Q ₂	Q ₃	Q ₄	Q ₁	Q ₂	Q ₃	Q ₄
1	Negotiation Meeting 1													
2	Negotiation Meeting 2													
3	Negotiation Meeting 3													
4	Negotiation Meeting 4													
5	Negotiation Meeting 5													
6	Wrap up/ Conclusion Meeting													
7	Initialing of VPA													
8	Ratification process, including signature													
9	Entry into force of VPA													

Activities	Tentative Sub Activities	Tentative Completion Date	Tentative Key Milestones
Negotiation Meeting 1	Hold Negotiation Meeting and Joint Press Conference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial Presentation on VPA Structure and Objectives - Introduction to Guyana's Legality Framework and Existing Timber Legality Verification System - Joint roadmap on negotiations 	December 2012	Joint Aide Memoire of Meeting
	Conduct Pre Negotiation Meeting	December 2012	Meeting Summary
	Conduct Initial Field Visit	December 2012	Field Visit Agenda
	Develop and Finalise Roadmap on Negotiations Elements.	January 2013	Final Joint Roadmap for Guyana – EU FLEGT VPA negotiations
Preparatory Activities to inform Negotiation Meeting 2	Joint Technical Meeting 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VPA Structure and Objectives. Draft section of VPA on VPA Objective. - Initial Discussion on Compliance Framework. - Initial Discussion on Scope of Agreement (includes product coverage) 	February 2013 (week 1)	VPA Objectives for Guyanadocumented. Initial Compliance framework developed. Summary of initial discussions on Scope of VPA.
	Joint Technical Meeting 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further Discussion on Compliance Framework - Initial Discussion on Definition of Legality - Finalise Discussion on Scope of Agreement (includes product coverage) - Drafting of VPA Annex 1: Product Coverage 	March 2013 (week 3)	Summary of initial and further discussions on Definition of Legality and Compliance Framework. Scope of Agreement finalised, including outline of product coverage. VPA Annex 1 developed.
	Joint Technical Meeting 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft legality Definition and compliance framework (Annex 2). - Compile first draft on some aspects 	May 2013 (week 3)	Legality Definition and compliance framework developed in draft, to be

	<p>of Annex 5: LAS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wood Tracking Systems Developed based on existing systems. - Discuss verification system. Commence development of FLEGT Licensing procedures and structures. - Discuss and Draft Annex 3: EU Procedures Port Entry. 		<p>further informed by results of field testing. Annex 2 developed.</p> <p>First Draft of Annex 5 documented – some aspects.</p> <p>WTS developed.</p> <p>Summary of Discussions on Verification System, FLEGT licensing procedures and structures.</p> <p>Annex 3 developed.</p>
Negotiation Meeting 2	<p>Hold Negotiation Meeting and Joint Press Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation on Final VPA Objective for Guyana - Presentation on Final Scope of Agreement (including an outline of product coverage) - Presentation on legality definition and compliance framework (subject to revision following field test). Annex 2. - Presentation on main Elements of LAS. - Annex 9 developed. - Discuss and agree on Wood Tracking System. - Discuss and finalise Annex 3: EU Procedures Port Entry 	<p>July 2013 (week 2)</p>	<p>Joint Aide Memoire of Meeting</p> <p>VPA Objectives developed.</p> <p>Agreement on Scope of VPA (Annex 1).</p> <p>Annex 2 – Legality Definition and Compliance Framework agreed to (subject to findings of field test)</p> <p>Main elements of Annex 5 (LAS) and Annex 9 – (Assessment Criteria for LAS) finalised and agreed.</p> <p>WTS agreed to.</p> <p>Annex 3 agreed.</p>
Preparatory Activities to Inform Negotiation Meeting 3	<p>Joint Technical Meetings 4 and 5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalise discussion on verification system. - Further discussions on FLEGT Licensing procedures and structures - Review and Develop LAS. Draft Annex 9 Assessment Criteria for LAS - Identify and assess the main social, economic and environmental impacts of VPA. Identify Impacts on indigenous peoples, forest operators, millers, regulatory agencies, forest sector employees and other relevant stakeholders. 	<p>Sept 2013 (week 3)</p> <p>Nov 2013 (week 2)</p>	<p>Verification Protocol and MoPs developed/ revised</p> <p>Summary of discussions on FLEGT Licensing Procedures.</p> <p>Main Elements of LAS finalised. Annex 9 developed.</p> <p>Supporting Measures for VPA identified –Annex 8 developed.</p> <p>Review draft text of identified elements of VPA.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Annex 8 on additional Measures” identification of capacity gap. - Discuss main aspects of Agreement text including: Licence Verification process in the EU, Additional measures to reinforce legality verification, stakeholder participation, market visibility and promotion, and communication. 		
Preparatory Activities to Inform Negotiation Meeting 4	Joint technical meetings and agenda to be determined		
Negotiation Meeting 3	<p>Hold Negotiation Meeting.</p> <p>Presentation on Verification Protocol and Manual of Procedures developed/ revised</p> <p>Presentation on supporting Measures for VPA identified</p> <p>Annex 8 on additional measures: identification of capacity gaps, developed.</p> <p>Presentation on main aspects of Agreement text including: Licence Verification process in the EU, Additional measures to reinforce legality verification, stakeholder participation, market visibility and promotion, and communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further discussions on FLEGT Licensing procedures and structures - Review and Develop LAS. Draft Annex 9 on Assessment Criteria for LAS. - Identify and assess the main social, economic and environmental impacts of VPA. Identify Impacts on indigenous peoples, forest operators, millers, regulatory agencies, forest sector employees and other relevant stakeholders. 	Dec 2013	<p>Joint Aide Memoire of Meeting</p> <p>Verification Protocol and MoPs developed and agreed.</p> <p>Annex 8 finalised and agreed.</p> <p>Summary of discussions and agreements on identified elements and draft text for sections identified.</p> <p>Summary of discussions on FLEGT Licensing Procedures.</p> <p>Main Elements of LAS finalised.</p> <p>Annex 9 developed.</p> <p>Supporting Measures for VPA identified – Annex 8</p> <p>Annex 8 developed</p>

Preparatory Activities to Inform Negotiation Meeting 4	<p>Joint technical meetings and agenda to be determined</p> <p>External legality definition review (if legality definition is mature enough)</p>		
Negotiation Meeting 4	<p>Hold Negotiation Meeting.</p> <p>Develop LAS in full (to be informed by changes in legality definition).</p> <p>Discuss Results of Pilot of LAS</p> <p>Review Status of body formulated for implementation of VPA: Annex 11</p> <p>Review of VPA text</p>	May 2014	<p>Joint Aide Memoire of Meeting.</p> <p>All Elements of LAS developed, Annex 5 on LAS completed.</p> <p>Results of Pilot of LAS</p> <p>Annex 11 on developed.</p> <p>Review of VPA text conducted.</p>
Preparatory Activities to Inform Negotiation Meeting 5	<p>Joint technical meetings and agenda to be determined</p> <p>External paper review of the VPA and its annexes.</p>		
Negotiation Meeting 5	<p>Hold Negotiation Meeting</p> <p>Finalise FLEGT licensing procedures and structures.</p> <p>Finalise Principles of Independent Monitoring/Audit</p> <p>Discuss Results of field test of Legality Definition</p> <p>Implementation strategy and schedule discussed and finalised.</p> <p>Information disclosure and reporting aspects discussed and finalised.</p> <p>Review VPA Text</p>	Dec 2014/Jan 2015	<p>Joint Aide Memoire of Meeting.</p> <p>Annex 4 completed – FLEGT Licensing procedure.</p> <p>Annex 6 – Principles of Independent Monitoring developed.</p> <p>Finalise Legality Definition if require changes.</p> <p>Annex 7 agreed: Implementation Schedule.</p> <p>Annex 10 finalised: information disclosure, etc.</p> <p>Review conducted.</p>
Close off,	Hold negotiation Meeting	Jan/Feb	Joint Aide Memoire of

Wrap up Meeting	Finalise VPA Text Initialling of VPA, beginning of ratification process	2015	Meeting Final VPA text agreed for all aspects of VPA. Initialed VPA
Ratification process, including signature of VPA	Discuss implementation and ratification processes	Feb/Sept 2015	Signed VPA GoG/EU Statement issued
Conclusion of Ratification of VPA	Ratification completed byGoG and EU	Sept 2015	Ratified VPA Enters into force
Discussion on Next Steps Prior to Issuance of First FLEGT Licence	National Roll out of LAS	Dec 2015	All timber firms operation under a national LAS