



## Joint Implementation Committee of the Honduras-EU FLEGT VPA

### Aide-memoire

**2nd Meeting of the FLEGT VPA Joint Implementation Committee, 20 April 2023,  
La Tigra National Park, Tegucigalpa, M.D.C., Honduras, C.A.**

**This is a translation of the original document, in Spanish**

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## I. Introduction

Honduras and the European Union (EU) held the second meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT VPA) on Thursday 20 April 2023, at the visitor centre of La Tigra National Park, Tegucigalpa, M.D.C., Honduras. The Executive Director of the National Institute for Forest Conservation and Development, Protected Areas and Wildlife (ICF), Mr. Luis Edgardo Solíz Lobo and the EU Ambassador in Honduras, Mr. Jaume Segura, inaugurated the meeting. Both highlighted the participation of government institutions, civil society, private enterprise and Indigenous Peoples in the implementation of the VPA. They also recognised the efforts made, with the support of the EU, to implement the Agreement.

The second technical session of the JIC was successfully held on 18 April 2023 at the premises of the Association of Municipalities of Honduras, with the participation of representatives of the Honduran Technical Committee and officials from the EU Delegation. For the session, the EU delegated Mr. Stephane Sourdin and Honduras delegated Mr. Juan Carlos Padilla as the coordinators and authorised spokespersons to present the different approaches of the Parties.

Mr. Padilla informed that the ICF is strongly committed to the VPA implementation, the strengthening of mechanisms and the design of regulations to improve forest harvesting. In this sense, he shared in the JIC the progress in the fulfilment of the complementary measures described in Annex VIII of the VPA.

- **Decision No. 1:** The Parties agree that Honduras will share the legal texts of the new regulations and other relevant legal instruments.

In the framework of the discussions on the VPA, the Political Dialogue between the EU and Honduras took place on issues related to progress in the implementation of the VPA, the need for implementation of the law and sustainable financial commitments.

In this session, the Parties signed the aide-mémoire of the second session of the JIC, which also coincides with the start of the Project “Design and Implementation of a Pilot System to Ensure the Legality of Timber in Pine Forests”, approved with Union funds and executed by the ICF in five municipalities of Francisco Morazán and Olancho.

## II. Agenda Development

The Parties adopted the agenda and delegated to the joint secretariat the drafting of the aide-memoire of the present JIC meeting.

### Session 1: Rules of Procedure of the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC)

The VPA Technical Secretariat reported on progress within the ICF on the approval of the JIC Rules of Procedure.

- **Decision No. 2:** The Parties agree to recommend the adoption of the JIC Rules of Procedure once the ICF has given its legal opinion on the document.

### Session 2: Working Procedures for Arbitration

SETAVA reported on the progress of the European and Honduran sides on the approval of the Working Procedures for Arbitration. To date, the European side has revised art. 23 of the Working Procedures for Arbitration (Applicable Law). To date, the Honduran side has obtained the legal opinion from the ICF and the Directorate of Treaties and Conventions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The Working Procedures for Arbitration are currently under legal review at the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic at the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

- **Recommendation No. 1:** The JIC recommends that the final version of the Working Procedures for Arbitration be presented at the technical level at the third meeting of the JIC.

### Session 3: Institutionalisation and establishment of the VPA Technical Secretariat

The VPA Technical Secretariat reported on the outstanding actions that have been developed in the first three months of operation, including:

- Support in the design and management of the approval of the Honduran Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS) Pilot Project (Programme Budget 2021)
- Development of the second session of the JIC
- Development of a session of the Technical Committee
- Drafting and approval of the VPA work plan 2023–2024 by the Technical Committee
- Design of the training strategy for the FLEGT Inter-institutional VPA Implementation Secretariat (SIIAVA)

- Promoting the creation of the Inter-Institutional Land Tenure Roundtable as an initial mechanism for the establishment of the SIIAVA
- Support to the company Prosygma in the development of the QR code system for the transportation documents
- Support in the design of the VPA component of the EU Annual Action Plan 2023
- Advice to VPA actors on their project management models, impact monitoring and social audits

These activities were supported on an ongoing basis by the national facilitation of the ALA Facility.

Finally, VPA Technical Secretariat discussed with the Parties the draft executive agreement on the institutionalisation of the VPA Technical Secretariat.

- **Decision No. 3:** The Parties agree that the EU-AFD FLEGT Programme will allocate resources for the operation of the VPA Technical Secretariat and national facilitation for the next three years.
- **Recommendation 2:** The EU recommends that the VPA Technical Secretariat include in the draft executive agreement, in a generic way, the structuring of the technical profiles required for the functioning of this body.
- **Decision No. 4:** The JIC agrees that the draft VPA Technical Secretariat executive agreement be submitted for ICF review, approved and published in the Official Gazette by the third quarter of 2023.

## Session 4: Presentation Prosygma QR Code

The representative of the Cameroonian company Prosygma (contracted through the EU-AFD FLEGT programme) presented the progress on the development of a QR code system for timber transport guides in five pilot municipalities of Francisco Morazán and Olancho.

JIC stakeholders recognised the importance of providing the ICF with robust systems to improve legality in the traceability of forest products and by-products.

On this point, the ICF informs that the QR code system will be accompanied by control mechanisms such as surveillance posts, mobile checkpoints, patrols and recurrent operations in the Honduran TLAS pilot development sites.

- **Recommendation No. 3:** The Parties recommend including the Municipal Environmental Units in the validation of the procedures for implementing the QR code.
- **Recommendation No. 4:** The Parties recommend that a representative of the ICF accompany the process to be developed by Prosygma to ensure its sustainability.

- **Recommendation 5:** The EU recommends that Honduras complements this technical system with law enforcement, involving all relevant public institutions, to ensure effective controls to prevent the transport of illegal timber.

## Session 5: FLEGT VPA Inter-Agency VPA Implementation Secretariat

The National Facilitation of EFI presented the methodological proposal for the structuring of the SIIAVA, developed jointly with the VPA Technical Secretariat, under which the SIIAVA is addressed in scalable stages and thematic areas. To this end, the creation of roundtables is proposed, where the institutions linked to the legality grids can jointly address and define mechanisms that allow for the implementation of the Honduran TLAS.

- **Decision No. 5:** The methodological proposal for the staggered structuring of the SIIAVA is approved, starting in 2023 with the forestry and inter-institutional land roundtables and the Inter-Institutional Environmental Task Force.
- **Recommendation 6:** The Parties recommend that each institution appoint a focal point, at the highest possible level, to facilitate the process of forming the SIIAVA.
- **Recommendation 7:** The JIC recommends clearly defining the tasks, attributions and scope of the SIIAVA's roundtables, to guide and generate spaces for the participation of the actors involved in each issue for the implementation of the Honduran TLAS.

## Session 6: PP 2021 and the VPA Pilot Implementation

The ICF presented the Project Design and Implementation of a Pilot System to Ensure the Legality of Timber in Pine Forests (PP2021), approved with EU funds amounting to EUR 1.3 million, to be implemented over a period of three years.

The Honduran TLAS Pilot seeks to design a system to develop and approve forest management plans online and to strengthen the TLAS through the use of computer systems and the design of QR codes on transport guides, the latter initiated through Prosygma.

- **Decision No. 6:** The EU will identify and mobilise expeditiously additional funds through the ALA Facility and the EU-AFD FLEGT Programme to complement the actions initiated with the QR code and other modules for the design of the Honduran TLAS.
- **Recommendation 8:** The JIC recommends that the VPA Technical Secretariat define the coordination mechanisms between the actors to guide the different resources allocated by the EU to implement the VPA in Honduras.

## Session 7: Presentation of the EU-AFD FLEGT Programme

Eticwood reported on the ongoing projects of the EU-AFD FLEGT Programme, including: the operationalisation of the VPA Technical Secretariat and the development of a QR code system

for transportation documents of which Prosygma previously informed the JIC. In addition, Eticwood shared the following projects, for which terms of reference need to be developed:

- Design of the Honduran TLAS
- Independent monitoring – social auditing
- FLEGT facilitation
- Strengthening of the VPA Technical Secretariat
- Activities in support of indigenous communities in the framework of the VPA

The EU also informed that the Study on the business model of forest operators in Honduras will be financed by the F4 Facility (Forest for the Future, managed by the Brussels-based INTPA).

- **Decision No. 7:** The JIC approves the proposed resource guidance submitted by Eticwood on the EU-AFD FLEGT Programme.
- **Recommendation No. 9:** The JIC recommends that the ICF define the priorities for the implementation of the Honduran TLAS in the VPA framework, based on experiences such as PP2021 and supported by instruments such as the VPA work plan 2023–2024.
- **Recommendation No. 10:** The Parties request AFD to mobilise sufficient resources for Eticwood to implement this key programme more effectively and rapidly, and to enhance its presence in Honduras. In addition, as of the next JIC, AFD (under the EU-AFD FLEGT Programme) has to ensure its physical presence in Honduras to attend the JIC's meetings and dialogue with the Parties.

## **Session 8: Work Plan 2023–2024 and implementation priorities**

The VPA Technical Secretariat presented the VPA Work Plan 2023–2024, which was approved by the Technical Committee in March 2023. The strategic lines of the work plan include:

- VPA management, coordination and monitoring
- Honduran TLAS development and implementation
- Impact monitoring and social audits
- Communication and transparency
- Strengthening the Private Sector for Legal Enforcement
- Sustainability of VPA implementation

On implementation priorities, the F4 consultant presented the Annual Action Plan 2023 document, which is structured along three sections: VPA FLEGT, Forest Partnership and Green Business. The first component comes with an envelope of EUR 8 million to boost the design and implementation of the Honduran TLAS. Concrete actions and activities were already identified.

- **Decision No. 8:** The Parties endorse the strategic lines of the VPA Work Plan 2023–2024 and commit to developing the details soon. The VPA Technical Secretariat will share this Plan with the Parties.
- **Recommendation No. 11:** The EU recommends that Honduras increase its financial contribution to the implementation of the VPA in the coming years, for sustainable ownership of the Agreement.

## Session 9: Inter-institutional Bureau on Land Tenure

The Land Registry presented the strategy for the creation of the Inter-Institutional Land Roundtable based on an analysis of legal instruments, human and logistical resources, and operational systems to improve the management of information related to land tenure.

- **Decision No. 9:** The Parties agree to support the establishment and strengthening of the Inter-Institutional Land Roundtable.
- **Decision No. 10:** The Parties agree to support the creation of the Unit for the Certification of Cadastral Delegates attached to the Land Registry.
- **Recommendation No.12:** The Parties recommend that the Inter-Institutional Land Roundtable define in the short term the actions to be developed and the necessary resources for their execution within the framework of the design and implementation of the Honduran TLAS .

## Session 10: JIC Communication

The VPA Technical Secretariat presented the press release for the second session of the JIC and proposed to define a strategy for communication and visibility of the VPA.

- **Decision No. 11:** The JIC approves the communication strategy of the JIC.
- **Decision No. 12:** The Parties decide to develop a national communication and visibility strategy for the FLEGT VPA.

## Session 11: Decisions and recommendations

**Decisions. The JIC took the following decisions:**

1. Decision No. 1: The Parties agree that Honduras will share the legal texts of the new agreements and other relevant legal instruments.

2. **Decision No. 2:** The Parties agree to recommend the adoption of the JIC Rules of Procedure once the ICF has given its legal opinion on the document.
3. **Decision No. 3:** The Parties agree that the EU-AFD FLEGT Programme will allocate resources for the operation of the VPA Technical Secretariat and national facilitation for the next three years.
4. **Decision No. 4:** The JIC agrees that the draft VPA Technical Secretariat executive agreement be submitted for ICF review, approved and published in the Official Gazette by the third quarter of 2023.
5. **Decision No. 5:** The methodological proposal for the staggered structuring of the SIIAVA is approved, starting in 2023 with the forestry and inter-institutional land roundtables and the Inter-Institutional Environmental Task Force.
6. **Decision No. 6:** The EU will identify and expeditiously mobilise additional funds through the ALA Facility and the EU-AFD FLEGT Programme to complement the actions initiated with the QR code and other modules for the design of the Honduran TLAS.
7. **Decision No. 7:** The JIC approves the proposed resource guidance submitted by Eticwood on the EU-AFD FLEGT Programme.
8. **Decision No. 8:** The Parties endorse the strategic lines of the VPA Work Plan 2023–2024 and commit to develop the details soon. The VPA Technical Secretariat will share this Plan with the Parties.
9. **Decision No. 9:** The Parties agree to support the establishment and strengthening of the Inter-Institutional Land Roundtable.
10. **Decision No. 10:** The Parties agree to support the creation of the Unit for the Certification of Cadastral Delegates attached to the Land Registry.
11. **Decision No. 11:** The JIC approves the communication strategy of the JIC.
12. **Decision No. 12:** The Parties decide to develop a national communication and visibility strategy for the FLEGT VPA.
13. **Decision No. 13:** The Parties agree to hold the third meeting of the JIC in Honduras, between October and November 2023.

**Recommendations: The JIC adopts the following recommendations:**

1. **Recommendation No. 1:** The JIC recommends that the final version of the Working Procedures for Arbitration be presented at the technical level at the third meeting of the JIC.
2. **Recommendation No. 2:** The EU recommends that the VPA Technical Secretariat include in the draft executive agreement, in a generic way, the structuring of the technical profiles required for the functioning of this body.

3. **Recommendation No. 3:** The Parties recommend including the Municipal Environmental Units in the validation of the procedures for implementing the QR code.
4. **Recommendation No. 4:** The Parties recommend that a representative of the ICF accompany the process to be developed by Prosygma to ensure its sustainability.
5. **Recommendation No. 5:** The EU recommends that Honduras complements this technical system with law enforcement, involving all relevant public institutions, to ensure effective controls to prevent the transport of illegal timber.
6. **Recommendation No. 6:** The Parties recommend that each institution appoint a focal point, at the highest possible level, to facilitate the process of forming the SIIAVA.
7. **Recommendation No. 7:** The JIC recommends clearly defining the tasks, attributions and scope of the SIIAVA's roundtables, to guide and generate spaces for the participation of the actors involved in each issue for the implementation of the Honduran TLAS.
8. **Recommendation No. 8:** The JIC recommends that the VPA Technical Secretariat define the coordination mechanisms between actors to guide the different resources allocated by the EU to implement the VPA in Honduras.
9. **Recommendation No. 9:** The JIC recommends the ICF to define priorities for Honduran TLAS implementation in the framework of the VPA, based on experiences such as PP2021 and supported by instruments such as the VPA work plan 2023–2024.
10. **Recommendation No. 10:** The Parties request AFD to mobilise sufficient resources for Eticwood to implement this key programme more effectively and rapidly, and to enhance its presence in Honduras. In addition, as of the next JIC, AFD (under the EU-AFD FLEGT Programme) has to ensure its physical presence in Honduras to attend JIC's meetings and dialogue with the Parties.
11. **Recommendation No. 11:** The EU recommends that Honduras increase its financial contribution to the implementation of the VPA in the coming years, for sustainable ownership of the Agreement.
12. **Recommendation No. 12:** The Parties recommend that the Inter-Institutional Land Roundtable define in the short term the actions to be developed and the necessary resources for their execution in the framework of the design and implementation of the Honduran TLAS.

Honduras and the EU have signed this Memorandum of Understanding for the record at the Visitors' Centre of La Tigra National Park, Tegucigalpa, M.D.C., Honduras, on the twentieth day of April of the year two thousand and twenty-three.



***For the European Union***

*Jaume Segura*

*Ambassador of the European Union in Honduras*

***For Honduras***

*Luis Edgardo Solíz Lobo*

*Executive Director of the National Institute of  
Forestry Conservation and Development, Protected  
Areas and Wildlife (ICF)*

### **III. Annexes:**

1. **Annex 1.** ICF Presentation
2. **Annex 2.** Political JIC Agenda
3. **Annex 3.** Technical JIC Agenda
4. **Annex 4.** Presentation of the VPA Technical Secretariat
5. **Annex 5.** Draft Executive Agreement on Institutionalisation of the VPA Technical Secretariat
6. **Annex 6.** Prosygma Presentation
7. **Annex 7.** Methodological proposal for the structuring of the SIIAVA
8. **Annex 8.** Presentation PP2021
9. **Annex 9.** Presentation Eticwood-AFD Honduras
10. **Annex 10.** VPA Work Plan 2023–2024
11. **Annex 11.** Presentation of the Inter-institutional Land Roundtable
12. **Annex 12.** Press release of the second JIC
13. **Annex 13.** List of participants in the technical session
14. **Annex 14.** List of participants in the political session