

FLEGT process and timber legality in Cameroon

- 1. VPA state of play**
- 2. Progress and challenges towards legal compliance**
- 3. Relevant information for risk assessments**

1. VPA state of play: Good progress towards agreed measures

Main measures in the VPA	Progress
Ratification	Entry into force in December 2011
Governance mechanisms (bilateral & nat. committees, working groups)	Functioning
Legal framework for FLEGT licensing	Adopted
Audit and monitoring mechanisms	In place (temporary gap)
Traceability system	At early stage of development
Transparency	Improving but not yet fully in line with VPA
Institutional strengthening	Ongoing efforts (GIZ, 11 th FED) but long way ahead)

1. VPA state of play: Key challenges remain

- Lack of institutional capacities to implement a very ambitious timber legality assurance system
- VPA mechanisms (committees, monitoring and auditing, transparency measures...) contribute to identify and debate problems – But more is needed to effectively address them
- Over reliance on future information and traceability system?

Conclusions on state of play: Legal framework and administrative tools may all be in place in 2016. But more attention to problems identified is needed

2. Progress and challenges towards legal compliance

Some indicators show progress...

(e.g. total area under voluntary legality verification or sustainability certification, experts perception)

Source: Chatham House 2015 report

Figure 3: Total certified and verified forest area, 2006–12

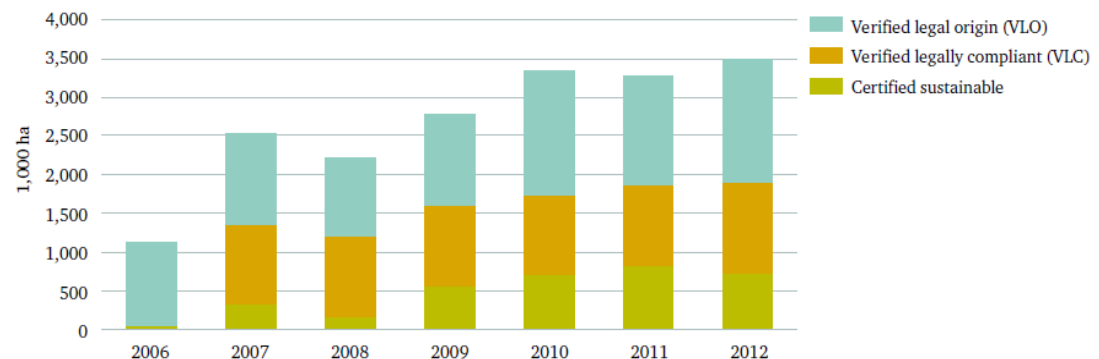
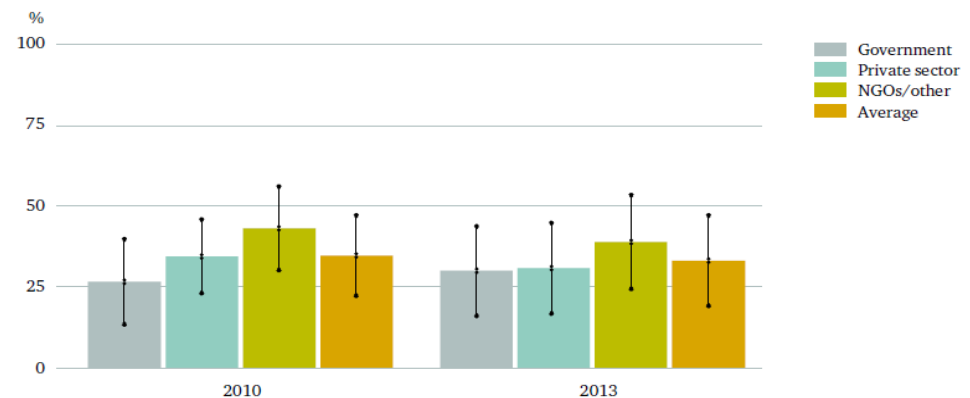


Figure 5: Estimated extent of illegal logging as a percentage of overall log production based on the expert perceptions survey, 2010 and 2013*



2. Progress and challenges towards legal compliance

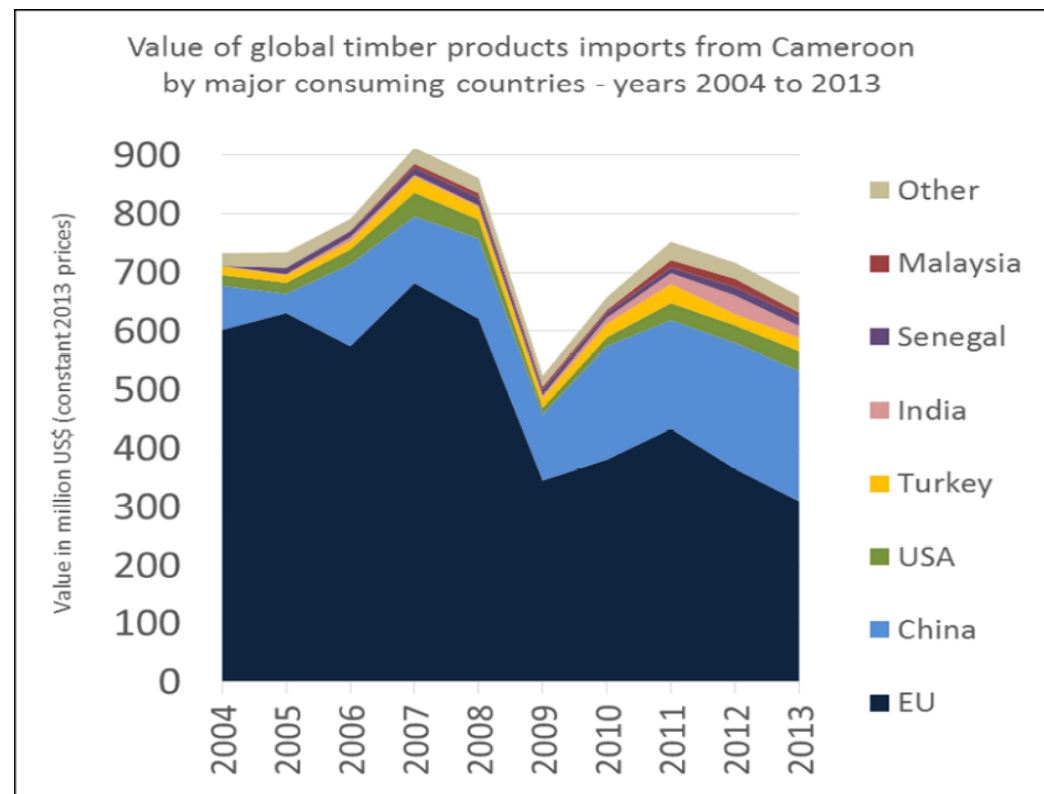
... but key forest governance challenges remain:

- Forest law reform: NGO concerns about lack of consultations, weakening forest protection. Impact on VPA?
- Conversion timber: lack of clear framework and coordination (including with agriculture, mining and land institutions)
- Mixed progress on transparency: some gaps (e.g. land allocation process), information not systematically updated
- Human resources: Lack of law enforcement staff (*Chatham house*), corruption, poor attribution of responsibilities (e.g. public information disclosure)

2. Progress and challenges towards legal compliance

The trade shifts towards less sensitive markets:

- Growing importance of the domestic market
- EU share decreasing; China growing



Derived from ITTO FLEGT Independent Market Monitoring (IMM) analysis of Global Trade Atlas data on imports of all wood products listed in HS Chapter 44 by 80 countries including most of the world's largest consumers. Constant 2013 values in US\$ calculated using US Consumer Prices Index.

3. Relevant information for risk assessments

The VPA helps operators assessing risks from Cameroon...

- The VPA clarifies / confirms requirements: list of species forbidden for exports (annex I-B), requirements per types of permits (legality grids)...
- The VPA website provides relevant information (permit holders, maps of concession, allowable cuts etc.: <http://www.minfof.cm/apvcameroun/>)
- Forthcoming legality certificates –a key element for FLEGT license- will ease due diligence from buyers, even before FLEGT licenses are issued
- The VPA steers actions to raise awareness (guide to forest controllers, guide on legality certificates for operators...) which can help operators



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3. Relevant information for risk assessments



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3. Relevant information for risk assessments

... But risk assessment remain complex:

- Availability and conformity of documents is problematic (Independent Auditor)
- UFA perceived as less risky - Concerns with special permits for sales of standing volumes ("ventes de coupe speciales"), ARB and AEB permits for conversion and for confiscated timber (lack of clear requirements, information, monitoring)
- Allegations of official documents awarded illegally (e.g. Herakles)
- No synthetic yet comprehensive list of key documents required for exports; operators assess risks on a case by case basis ("the higher the risks, the more unnecessary documents are provided").
- Forthcoming legality certificates + MINFOF action on availability and conformity (i.e. new awards? new documents? acceptance of incomplete documentation for legality certificates?) should help

Conclusions

- No easy risk assessment
- The VPA has contributed to clarify the framework, document possible problems, make information publicly available
- Caution when assessing risks from VPA countries:

VPAs imply more transparency –and more information being published– about illegal practices than in countries without such commitments. This obviously does not necessarily mean they perform more poorly than countries that restrict information.