



Analysis of linkages and opportunities for synergies between FLEGT, REDD and national forest programme in Ghana

Emmanuel Marfo, Elijah Danso and Samuel K. Nketiah



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Executive Summary

This study was undertaken for Tropenbos International (TBI) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) to analyse the Forest Law, Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) and the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) processes in the context of national forest policy and programme in Ghana in order to learn how the coordination of sector policies and programmes can be improved. Specifically, the objective was to see if and how the overall forest governance framework has supported the planning and implementation of forest-related processes and initiatives in Ghana, in particular how the FLEGT and REDD+ processes have been integrated into the national forest strategies. The aim was also to give suggestions on how the initiatives, in particular REDD+ and FLEGT, can further strengthen the use of existing structures and processes, in particular the national forest programme, and create synergies in implementing the national forest policy/strategies. The study, which lasted for about six weeks, mainly involved documentary review and expert interviews as well as synthesis of stakeholder views from a regional meeting on forest governance organised by FAO ACP FLEGT Support Programme in Accra, Ghana.

The observation that even though REDD+ learnt some lessons from FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), especially with regards to stakeholder consultation processes, coordination between the two processes, and the larger sector policy has not been very effective. Potential areas for synergy include data collection, particularly with respect to baseline information, monitoring of the two processes, stakeholder engagement in addressing key governance challenges including law enforcement, issues of equity and benefit sharing as well as legislative reforms. Even though some initiatives have already been taken in enacting new legislation to support the implementation of the VPA, any additional legislation in support of REDD+ implementation could be treated as an amendment to that for the VPA. There should be an attempt to harmonise the two, rather than coming up with completely new laws.

To improve coordination of programmes within the Forestry Commission as the main implementing body of forest policies and programmes, a number of recommendations have been made. First, the Monitoring and Evaluation unit of the Commission should be strengthened to take up the task of ensuring synergy

and cooperation among programmes in the Commission. Second, an alternative arrangement is to institute a high-level technical position within the Forestry Commission, reporting directly to the Chief Executive to handle the technical coordination of all such programmes. A model of this arrangement is that such a high-level office could be responsible for donor relations and programmes coordination.

It is recommended that Ghana moves faster with the efforts to streamline all multi-stakeholder consultation platforms into a single one with the necessary institutional legitimacy and capacity to provide space for effective engagement. At the same time elaborating a platform such as NFF+ could be helpful for stakeholder engagement in complex multi-sectoral programmes such as REDD+.

It has also been recommended to institute or strengthen collaboration among lead officials in Government Ministries and Agencies, for example by formalising periodic joint briefings.

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Numerous people and institutions contributed to this study, both in substance and in process. The authors are grateful to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Support Programme {now European Union (EU) FAO FLEGT Support Programme}, and Tropenbos International Ghana (TBI Ghana) for facilitating the study. We are grateful to the various experts who shared their time and experiences with us: Messrs Chris Beeko, Robert Bamfo, Abu Juam, Yaw Kwakye, Ton von de Zon, Wale Adeleke, Attah Alhassan, Alex Asare, Alex Dadzie and Flavio Chaves as well as Missus Sheila Narh and Claire Brogan. Secondly, we thank the participants of the FAO ACP regional workshop on the experiences of the VPA process in West and Central African countries, particularly those who participated in the session on the synergies of FLEGT, REDD+ and national forest policy frameworks at Alisa Hotel in October 2012. The United Nations programme for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (UN REDD programme) kindly supported participants from different REDD+ teams to the Accra workshop session, for which we are very grateful. Thirdly, we want to express appreciation to Herman Savenije, Roderick Zagt and Marjo Maidell who gave very insightful comments on an earlier draft.

Acronyms

ACP	African Caribbean Pacific
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CFMC	Community Forest Management Committees
CREMA	Community Resource Management Areas
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DDD	Drivers of Deforestation and forest Degradation
DP	Development Partners
ENRAC	Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Council
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FC	Forestry Commission
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
FIP	Forest Investment Programme
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FORIG	Forestry Research Institute of Ghana
FSD	Forest Services Division
FWP	Forest and Wildlife Policy
GFTN	Global Forest and Trade Network
GoG	Government of Ghana
IPCC	Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JMRM	Joint Monitoring Review Mechanism
LAS	Legality Assurance Scheme
MLNR	Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources
MoFEP	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification
MSD	Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue
M-SIC	Multi-Stakeholder Implementation Committee
NCCC	National Climate Change Committee
NFP	National Forest Programmes
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NREG	Natural Resources and Environmental Governance Programme
NRWG	National REDD Working Group
REDD	Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
REL	Reference Emissions Level
RL	Reference Level
RMSC	Resource Management Support Centre
R-PP	Readiness Preparation Proposal
SC	Steering Committee
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment

SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TBI	Tropenbos International
TCC	Technical Coordinating Committee
TFAP	Tropical Forestry Action Plan
TIDD	Timber Industry Development Division
TVD	Timber Validation Department
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN REDD	United Nations programme to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
VLTP	Validation of Legal Timber Project
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
WWF	World Wildlife Fund





1 Introduction

For decades the need to halt deforestation and promote sustainable forest management has been raging. Though approaches on the subject have varied, the underlying principles have remained the same – the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources. This debate has informed the adoption of various initiatives including the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA), the Tropical Forestry Action Plan (TFAP), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), National Forest Programmes (NFPs), and many others (Humphrey, 2006). The current climate change discussions have also placed deforestation and forest degradation at the centre stage. In spite of these numerous initiatives deforestation and forest degradation have not abated. At the turn of the century, it was realised that illegal logging contributed largely to deforestation and forest degradation and that this problem was nested in weak governance systems – a phenomenon that was associated with forests in developing countries. (Beeko and Arts, 2010).

In recognition that European demand for timber was a major driver of illegal logging, the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan was designed to restrict access of, and eliminate illegal timber to the EU market (European Commission, 2003). The FLEGT Action Plan includes the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), the adoption of procurement policies by member states that further promote trade in legal timber, promotion of private sector initiatives and the exercise of due diligence by export credit agencies among others. The VPA in particular is constructed to provide development assistance to volunteering countries to improve on their systems and the overall governance regime as well as curtail trade in illegal timber using both supply and demand side measures. The instrument aims to install among other measures, wood tracking systems in timber exporting countries and a voluntary licensing scheme

where partner countries issue a permit attesting to the legality of timber exported to the EU. Under VPAs, partner countries develop control systems to verify the legality of their timber exports to the EU. The EU provides support to establish or improve these control systems. Once ratified and implemented the VPA is legally binding on both parties, committing them to trading only in verified legal timber products. The Action Plan not only comprises the VPAs with partner countries, but also includes the recently adopted EU Timber Regulation which aims to halt trade in illegally harvested timber on the EU market. This regulation will become operational in March 2013.

Ghana was the first country to conclude a FLEGT VPA with the EU. Negotiations on the agreement was concluded in September 2008, the VPA was formally signed on 20 November 2009 and was ratified by Ghana on 19 March 2010.

Deforestation and forest degradation contribute up to 20% of the global annual greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2007). REDD+ is aimed at mitigating climate change through reducing deforestation and forest degradation, forest conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries, where the problem is wide spread (UNFCCC, 2007). While the architecture of REDD+ within the UNFCCC is still under discussion, several REDD+ initiatives have been launched, including the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility of the World Bank and the United Nations Collaborative Programme in Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD) that support developing countries to 'get ready' for REDD+ (Visseren-Hamakers and Verkooijen, 2012). REDD+ is currently on the top of the agenda on climate change mitigation of the UNFCCC, and has been debated by the convention since 2005 (Visseren-Hamakers *et al.*, 2011). This study was undertaken for TBI, FAO Forestry Department and ACP FLEGT Support Programme to analyse the FLEGT and REDD+ processes in the context of national forest policy and programme in Ghana (a parallel study is being carried out in Liberia) in order to learn how the coordination of sector policies and programmes can be improved.

Specifically, the objective was to see if and how the overall forest governance framework has supported the planning and implementation of forest-related processes and initiatives in Ghana, in particular how the FLEGT and REDD+ processes have been integrated into the national forest strategies. The aim was also to give suggestions on how the initiatives, in particular REDD+ and FLEGT, can further strengthen the use of existing structures and processes, in particular the national forest programme, and create synergies in implementing the REDD+ and FLEGT processes as well as the national forest policy/strategies. The main tasks were to:

- Analyse and document the structure and development of forest policy processes in Ghana from early 2000 to date.
 - » Policies, laws and regulations, strategies.
 - » Government organisations, platforms, other bodies and their roles and responsibilities.
 - » Processes for planning, decision making, implementation, monitoring
 - » Structures and arrangements for enforcement, compliance.
- Examine how new forest-related initiatives (international or national with emphasis on REDD+, FLEGT and NFP) have been used to shape the existing forest governance processes and structures, how these initiatives have been integrated in the planning process, and if there have been success, failure or lessons learned through the planning and implementation process of the diverse initiatives.
- Suggest ways to further improve the cooperation between initiatives and to use the existing forest governance structures and processes as an umbrella or basis for the new initiatives.

The study lasted for about six weeks involving extensive review of policies and programme documents. It also employed expert interviews to complement information from the documentary reviews. In all, 11 experts from the Ministries of Lands and Natural Resources, and Finance and Economic Planning, Development Partners (donors), Forestry Commission, particularly REDD and FLEGT VPA secretariats, timber industry and civil society were interviewed (see annex 1). A draft report was discussed at the EU FAO FLEGT Support Programme's regional workshop in Accra in October 2012 which benefited from both Ghanaian stakeholder inputs as well as experiences from other countries (summary of discussion provided in annex 2).

The report proceed with a background chapter that looks at the forest policy, legislative and institutional context within which FLEGT VPA and REDD+ developed in Ghana. Next, the two processes, how they evolved, their design and current status are described in some detail. Then the next chapter, which presents the empirical results of the study highlights the lessons learnt and opportunities and constraints for synergising the two processes in the context of national forest policy programmes. The main conclusion and recommendations are then drawn and summarised in the last chapter.



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Policy, legislative and institutional framework

2.1 Forest Policy framework

The FLEGT VPA and REDD+ processes were initiated within the context of the 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy. In spite of reforms carried out, it was still necessary to revise the forest policy in 2011 due to the existence of the following challenges as outlined in the revised policy:

- There was over-exploitation of timber and wildlife resources with the official Annual Allowable Cut (2 million m³) being consistently exceeded by over 1.7 million m³ annually for more than a decade.
- The 1994 Policy failed to respond adequately to domestic demand for timber and timber products to match the massive domestic investment in infrastructural development in the country. The policy was export-oriented and failed to address domestic utilization of timber products. This has resulted in a huge domestic timber demand gap which has induced widespread illegal chainsaw operations in the supply of lumber to the market.
- The Forestry Commission (FC) has not fully developed its capacity to properly manage the forests and wildlife. Due to broader environmental responsibilities it receives a large part of its budget from international funding and draws its salaries from the government funds. Being under the Civil Service, morale is low due to unattractive remuneration and reward systems. Weak capacity is observed in technical skills, financial management and procurement.
- The Forestry Commission (and its Divisions) is not decentralized and continue to have centralized control systems over resources in the off-reserved areas which is an affront to an otherwise decentralized system.

- Natural resources are still perceived as public goods, which are free of charge and of unrestricted use both in the high forest and the savannah ecosystem.
- There is poor accountability in resource exploitation and lack of cost-effectiveness in the use of resources and creation of appropriate benefits in a transparent and accountable manner. More than 1.7m³ of the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) harvested is not accounted for in the national accounts leading to considerable loss of revenue to the landowners, District Assemblies and the State.
- There is poor delivery of quality services by the service providers to resource owners and lack of active multi-stakeholder involvement in forest sector activities.
- Although civil society is willing to participate in sustainable natural resource management, their capacities are weak to carry out the responsibilities.

These challenges should be viewed against the development agenda of Ghana which is underpinned by the objectives of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The third GPRS (Ghana's Shared Growth and Development Agenda) has three distinct pillars: private sector competitiveness, human resource development, and good governance with civic responsibility. Implicit in the narratives of the growth agenda is the need for the forestry sector to:

- *Achieve sustainable forest management* and reducing deforestation and forest degradation and so developing a stable timber resource for Ghana's future.
- *Increase value addition* in the timber processing industry, to create jobs with manufacturing skills.
- *Increase rural employment and livelihoods* through local management of off-reserve forests, through mechanisms such as dedicated forests or Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs).
- *Support investments in plantation timber, tertiary processing, eco-tourism, and wildlife facilities.*
- *Fully capture economic and financial rents* to ensure an effective regulator and a broader tax base.
- *Capture the full range of values of forests including biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services and related values, such as carbon* (pp, 2011 Forest and Wildlife Policy)

Therefore, according to section 2.17 of the revised policy, the national development agenda places an obligation on the forest and wildlife sector to

promote good governance, civil society participation and involvement of effective, responsible and accountable state mechanisms to engage the private sector in the policy-making processes related to growth and poverty reduction.

Today, both FLEGT and REDD+ processes continue to be shaped by a revised sector policy that aims at the conservation and sustainable development of forest and wildlife resources for the maintenance of environmental stability and continuous flow of optimum benefits from the socio-cultural and economic goods and services that the forest environment provides to the present and future generations whilst fulfilling Ghana's commitments under international agreements and conventions.

Specifically, the policy objectives to be pursued and which should drive the implementation and coordination of emerging interventions like VPA and REDD+ as stated in the revised policy are:

1. To manage and enhance the ecological integrity of Ghana's forest, savannah, wetlands and other ecosystems for the preservation of vital soil and water resources, conservation of biological diversity, enhancing carbon stocks for sustainable production of domestic and commercial produce.
2. To promote the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded landscapes through plantations development and community forestry informed by appropriate land-use practices to enhance environmental quality and sustain the supply of raw materials for domestic and industrial consumption and for environmental protection.
3. To promote the development of viable forest and wildlife based industries and livelihoods, particularly in the value added processing of forest and wildlife resources that satisfy domestic and international demand for competitively-priced quality products.
4. To promote and develop mechanisms for transparent governance, equity sharing and citizens' participation in forest and wildlife resource management.
5. To promote training, research and technology development that supports sustainable forest management whilst promoting information uptake both by forestry institutions and the general public.

2.2 Legislative and Regulatory framework

At the same time the legislative and regulatory framework to support the sector policies is skewed towards enhancing timber utilization in terms of granting timber rights, management plans for sustainable timber production, providing manual of operations, guiding timber harvesting and so on against governance processes to secure transparency, accountability, institutional efficiency and to ensure

utilization of forest for environmental services. There are over 30 substantive and over 23 subsidiary legislations governing the forestry sector. However, these have not been able to deal with fundamental challenges facing the effective implementation of REDD+ and VPA either because the applicable law is absent, complicated in interpretation or difficult to enforce. For example, addressing tree and forest tenure security is important for achieving the long term goals of both FLEGT VPA and REDD+ but does not have clear legislative framework. At the same time the ban of chainsaw milling since 1998 by Act 547 and LI 1649 has not been effective in its enforcement and this continue to pose a great challenge to fighting illegality and forest degradation in Ghana (Marfo, 2010).

2.3 Institutional framework

2.3.1 *Statutory bodies*

The Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR), headed by a cabinet minister appointed by the President, has overall responsibility for forest sector planning and policy direction and for monitoring sector programmes towards the attainment of the national goal. Others such as the Ministries of Agriculture and Mines are key players in forest-related issues, especially those involving land uses. The implementation of forest sector policies and programmes is undertaken by the Forestry Commission (FC) which is headed by government appointed Chief Executive. There are three Divisions and one Department of the Commission, namely: The Forest Services Division (FSD), Wildlife Division (WD) and Timber Industry Development Division (TIDD) and more lately a semi-autonomous Timber Validation Department (TVD)¹. The FSD is responsible for the protection and management of the forest resources both within and outside the legally reserved forest estates and it is the leading agency of the Commission in forest-related issues on the ground. In terms of supporting planning for implementing forest policies, the Resource Management Support Centre of the FC has a mandate to undertake inventory and provide data for resource allocation as well as pilot collaborative forest management schemes. In effect, it is the technical wing of the FC.

The Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, though under the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research of the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, has a mandate to undertake user-friendly research and technology development to support sustainable forest management in Ghana.

¹ The TVD was created to monitor compliance of the forest sector with timber legality standards in the chain of custody as a result of the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement which commits Ghana Government to trading legal timber in the domestic market and to the EU market.

2.3.2 *The Private sector*

Two industrial players dominate the forestry sector; the Ghana Timber Millers Organisation (GTMO) comprising the milling and export companies and the Ghana Timber Association (GTA) comprising loggers. Their front is sometimes united and sometimes characterised by tension and conflicts especially when they seek to influence sector policies that favour their members, for example on timber rights allocation. These bodies are each headed by an elected President (and executive committee) by their members. Other players in the industry include the Furniture and Wood Workers Association of Ghana (FAWAG) consisting of a wide range of members from small wood workers to large furniture companies. Lately, retailers of lumber in the domestic market have started organising themselves in the Domestic Lumber Traders Association (DOLTA). Generally, the industry has proven to be very influential in forest policy decisions because of their clientele relationship with political authority and their privilege to sit on the governing body of the Forestry Commission (Awudi and Davies, 2001, Asante, 2005)

2.3.3 *Civil society*

In Ghana, the environmental sector has a wide diversity of civil society actors and has witnessed substantial civil society activism. Prominent issues which have provoked such actions are policies on mining in forest reserves, equitable sharing of forest revenue, transparency in allocation of timber rights, exploitation of natural resources and more lately VPA negotiation and REDD+ development. Organised civil society groups such as NGOs have often claimed a representation of a civil constituency demanding respect for human rights, transparency in government business, fairness, accountability etc.

In the forestry sector, one can identify several of such civil society constituents as green NGOs, local forest users, traditional authorities (chiefs/ landowners) and even academicians. Within the NGO group alone, there are over seventy (70) registered NGOs (TBI, 2008). Within forest user groups at the local level, there are women's groups, hunters and minor forest products' collectors such as herbalists whose livelihoods depend on forests. Putting them together, what might constitute civil society in the forestry sector alone can be a huge mass of people, with different identities and interests. Several civil society coalitions and platforms have emerged in the environmental sector and more can be anticipated in the future; the most significant one today being the Forest Watch Ghana, also claiming a representation of civil society interests in ensuring



good governance in the forestry sector. For example, under the FLEGT VPA process, the Forest Watch Ghana represents the civil society stakeholders in the VPA Steering committee and is consulted regularly on developments with respect to implementation of the VPA.

Traditional authorities are key players in decision-making (they sit on important boards such as the Forestry Commission board and the National REDD Working Group). They are almost always consulted and are beneficiaries of forest management though they do not have any formal roles in forest management². Nonetheless, they exert substantial influence on politicians and bureaucrats in everyday decision making both at national and community levels (Asante, 2005; Marfo, 2006; Opoku, 2006). In addition, the forestry sector is greatly influenced by donors as substantial part of its funding comes from development partners who at the moment number about twenty (Oduro *et al.*, 2012).

2.3.4 *The Forest Forum and policy*

The growing activism of civil society in forestry discussions led to the need for a somewhat multi-stakeholder consultative platform where the state agencies can actively engage them. The Forest Forum was conceptualized in 2003 by the Forestry Commission. Essentially, the Forum is a dialogue platform for different forest stakeholders at District, regional and national levels to meet and discuss policy issues of concern related to the management of the forest resources (Forestry Commission, 2004). Attached to the concept is the notion of representation of stakeholders who become 'privileged' to participate in a network of forest forums at the district, regional and national levels (Forestry Commission, 2002). Decisions at the District Forest Forums (DFF) are expected to be taken up either directly through the District Assembly (DA) or the District Forestry Office (DFO) or indirectly through the regional and then national forum. The FC, in effect, sees the main purpose of the Forest Forum (FF) as the creation of a platform for interaction and dialogue between representatives of the state and civil society (Ngugi, 2007)³. Today, the Forest Forum has gained institutional legitimacy as a consultative platform in the forestry sector, and indeed the REDD+ process has categorically adopted it for stakeholder consultation. At the same time, there are other platforms such as the TBI Ghana/FC/FORIG multi-

2 Traditional authorities obtain a total of 45% of net forest revenue in Ghana

3 To date, about 30 district forums and forestry forums in all the ten regions have been established while the first national forest forum was inaugurated in November 2007. Their activities have now been incorporated into the NREG funded programme whereas the FAO NFP facility is to further strengthen the forums during the phase II by integrating them into the governance structures within the forestry sector. Forum members now routinely participate in consultative processes on such initiatives as the VPA and REDD+ preparation process.

stakeholder dialogue (MSD) that is currently being used to engage stakeholders in the sector to develop policy options for addressing illegal chainsaw milling and the supply of legal timber to the domestic market.





3

FLEGT VPA and REDD+ processes in Ghana

3.1 FLEGT VPA

As indicated earlier, the VPA are the means of putting the EU's FLEGT licensing system into effect, in an attempt to exclude illegally logged timber products from entering the EU markets. The instrument aims to install among other measures, wood tracking systems in timber exporting countries and a voluntary licensing scheme where partner countries issue a permit attesting to the legality of timber exported to the EU. Under VPAs, partner countries develop control systems to verify the legality of their timber exports to the EU.

"A number of key actions are required to implement the licensing system, including, legal and regulatory reforms, institutional arrangements to support the system, and the establishment of independent verification of legal behaviour at every stage of the chain of custody of the products. Perhaps most importantly, the VPAs offer an important means of improving forestry governance in the partner countries." (Source: www.illegal-logging.info/approach).

3.1.1 What informed Ghana's opting for the VPA?

There are a number of policy actions that can be traced as Ghana's attempt at regulating the forest sector with the view to ensuring good sector governance and sustainable removals from forest. The results have been mixed. Using a purely outcomes approach in assessing impacts, it is noticeable that the measures have been less than adequate. Illegal logging has continued as still reported by various writers (Birikorang *et al.*, 2001, Bird *et al.*, 2006, Hansen & Treue, 2008).

In 1994, the old Forest Policy, prepared almost half a century earlier (in 1948), was updated to reflect the reality of the changing times and to particularly give direction to sustainable forest management. The key objective of the 1994

Forest and Wildlife Policy was to ensure that all segments of the society would be perpetually guaranteed equitable benefits in the use of the resource. The policy led to a number of legislative enactments as well as the restructuring of the institutions that held together the forest sector. A master plan was developed to provide the roadmap for the implementation of the policy. Key among the legislative enactments were a Timber Resource Management Act 1997 (Act 547) which provided for the grant of timber rights in a sustainable manner; the Forestry Commission Act (1997) which brought together all forest sector implementing agencies to ensure harmonised implementation of forest policy; the Forest Plantation Development Act, 2000 which also established a fund to provide financial assistance for the development of private commercial forest plantations in Ghana. These were supported by legislative instruments that introduced regulation in the use of chainsaw for milling timber. Other key legislative instruments were LI 1649 & 1721 which effectively introduced the competitive allocation of timber rights using a competitive bidding process. The rationale was to remove arbitrariness and perceived favouritism from the resource allocation process.

While pursuing a more structured development of policy and legislation, some administrative directives with far reaching implications were issued with the intention of galvanizing forest sector development and regulation. The log export ban was one such directives. The log export ban was aimed at incentivizing industry to go into secondary and tertiary processing and improve value addition. Another key initiative aimed at combating illegalities in the forest sector of Ghana is the so called "interim measures". Taking note of the persisting weaknesses in the control environment, the interim measures was introduced to ensure that the stools and communities were made a part of the consultation process leading to the allocation of forest concessions. Farmers were also given the power to decide on whether or not trees could be felled on their farms. Under harvesting procedures, a conveyance certificate for logs in transit was also introduced. Pre-felling inspections was another element that was to ensure that concessionaires respected the terms of their allocation contract. Some elements of the interim measures such as the pre-inspection and informed prior-consent of landowners in the allocation of timber rights found expression in the new legislation.

Ghana also responded to the international private initiative to promote sustainable forest management through forest certification. The efforts at forest certification were initially formalised in mid-1996. A national multi-stakeholder working group on forest certification has worked through a number of stages to develop a check list of criteria and indicators which has given place, through testing, to the national standard. This certification standard has not yet received international endorsement or recognition. To date Ghana is unable to boast of any certified forest. One company has however attained the FSC "controlled wood requirement" status. Five other companies are enrolled in the World

Wildlife Fund for nature conservation and Global Forest and Trade Network (WWF/GFTN) stepwise programme to certification with the prospects of reaching forest certification in the not too distant future.

Recognising the inadequacies of the forest control system which relied on a paper based system of tracking and which also was operated in a regime of disparate management information systems, the forest authorities piloted a log tracking project in 1996. The proposed tracking system recommended among others the use of bar-codes as a way of improving upon the existing paper-based system. The follow-up of this initiative was however delayed until 2003 when it was revived again under a donor assisted programme, the Forest Sector Development Programme II. The new log tracking project eventually metamorphosed into the Validation of Legal Timber Project (VLTP) which was also in turn subsumed under the Voluntary Partnership Agreement.

In spite of all these efforts the rate of illegal logging continued to escalate. By 2005, the estimated timber off-take was about 3 times the annual allowable cut and the current annual deforestation rate (for the period 2000–2010) was estimated at 2.1% (FAO, 2011). Many forest reserves were heavily encroached and degraded, and the off-reserve resources quickly being depleted (Ghana R-PP, 2010). Thus at the initiation of the FLEGT VPA Ghana had been going through different reform initiatives aimed at combating illegal logging and its associated environmental and socio-economic impacts. The VPA was therefore seen as a vehicle that could galvanise Ghana's struggling effort to deal with illegal logging. The buy-in from the Government of Ghana was very quick and it is not surprising that Ghana became the first country to sign on to the VPA.

3.1.2 The Content of the Agreement – the domestic angle

With a national forest and wildlife policy that aspires to a regime of sustainable forest management and a fairly long history of less than satisfactory attempts at improving on regulatory controls within the forest sector, Ghana found the objectives of the VPA in alignment with its on-going efforts. An added reason for buying into the EU's VPA was the fact that Ghana's major timber export destination was the EU market. At the time of indicating a preparedness to enter into negotiations, the EU accounted for over 60% in volume and value of Ghana's timber exports (TIDD, 2007). This figure has however declined over the last four years to 40%. This change has been attributed to the growing Asian/Chinese and West African trade (TIDD, 2011). Overall, the stated vision of Ghana as it entered and negotiated a VPA was "To create an environment that promotes sustainable forest management (SFM), improves rural livelihoods and equity as well as enabling industrial efficiency in a good governance environment". The operative words being: "SFM, Poverty Reduction, Value Addition & a Sustainable Industry, Good Governance" (Attah & Beeko, 2008).

To achieve this vision, Ghana critically brought its domestic interest on to the negotiation table, insisting that the VPA would only be of value to the nation, if it addressed the development and regulation of the domestic market on one hand and the restructuring of the Ghana timber industry on the other hand. Thus whereas the original elements of the VPA as presented by the EU were definition of legality, a chain of custody system, a system to monitor compliance to the legal standard so developed, a licensing system and an independent monitor stimulating systemic improvements on the entire legality assurance system, the Ghana agreement has broader objectives. The EU initiative under the VPA was export focused but as it obtains in Ghana it contains elements for sustainability. On the issue of the domestic market, Ghana's argument has been that the 'end game' is sustainability. Securing exports alone without stemming the tide of the deforestation induced by an undeveloped and unstructured domestic market will not be useful. Legality as a first step to sustainability was therefore to be ensured across board. To underpin the approach, a public procurement policy has been developed for the domestic market in 2012. This will be augmented by other policy initiatives as their necessity becomes evident.

A study of the potential impacts of VPAs on Ghana's Forestry sector (Mayers *et al.*, 2008) at the initiation of the VPA, pointed out that the initiative entailed some political risk that needed to be managed to ensure its success. The study projected a reduced raw material supply under a legality assurance regime. This implied a further reduction in processing capacity of industry with a concomitant reduction in industry employment. The industry restructuring was therefore placed on the negotiating table to ensure that all avenues at mitigating the effect of a dwindling raw material base in-country were explored. Ghana's new agenda under the VPA is a retooled industry that makes use of small diameter logs (plantation timber), has enhanced competencies for downstream processing and which also is developed to be sufficiently competitive to attract raw material from outside its immediate environs (from within the sub-region). It is worthy of note that this position differs significantly from earlier suggestions that the only way forward for industry was a downright downsizing approach.

3.1.3 *The process in Ghana*

Voluntary Partnership Agreements have five phases, as depicted in Figure 1:

1. Preparation, during which countries explore the scope of the Partnership model and assess whether it meets the needs of their forest sector;
2. Negotiations, during which the partners agree on the standards and assurance systems on which they will base their timber trade agreements;
3. Ratification, during which the legislature on both parties' side ratify the agreement and make it legally binding;

4. Development, during which parties develop systems as agreed and assess their credibility;
5. Full implementation, during which the systems are functional and only licensed legal wood exported from the partner country to the European market.

The process in Ghana has been variously reviewed and being the first of the agreements to be initiated, has informed the process in the other countries signing on to the agreement. The most significant of the Ghana process, which has received wide acclaim has been the consultation and stakeholder participation during the first two stages of the process – in-country consensus building leading up to the negotiation.

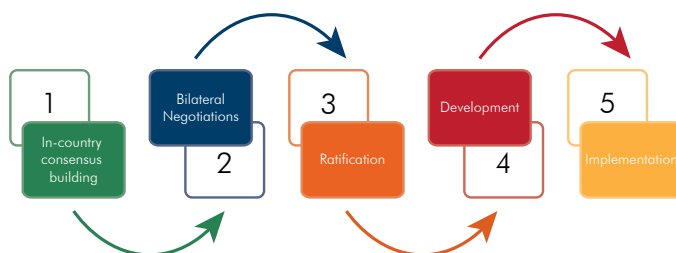


Figure 1. Phases of the VPA process

As elaborated in Figure 2, multi-stakeholder working groups were constituted to deal with various aspects of the VPA; these included the legal standard, verification system, the domestic market, impact management and the chain of custody. Reports from these working groups were further validated at national stakeholder meetings for consensus building. Beeko and Arts (2010) identify three levels of policy dialogue, namely, the tactical level, the strategic level and the policy or normative level. The tactical level is at the lowest level of dialogue where forest fringe communities and community based organisations are engaged. The strategic level refers to dialogue processes taking place at the level of implementing agencies as well as NGOs who are able to penetrate and influence decision making within these institutions. The normative or policy level is at the higher levels of policy dialogue where development partners engage government and where parliamentary debates take place as well as inter-sectoral dialogues. The VPA process escalated stakeholder dialogue from the lower to the higher levels of policy debate in-country.

Chris Beeko, the head of the Timber Validation Department of the Forestry Commission, has noted that:

“ the VPA negotiation in Ghana has been a unique learning experience . I attribute the distinctiveness of the process to three ground-breaking factors combined:

- *the need to bring together key sector stakeholders to achieve a common purpose within a defined time limit;*

- the need to align national governance aspirations with international market requirements; and
- a keen international audience impacting on national debate throughout.

The challenge now, among others, is to build on this dynamic experience, and harness the new learning to inform future policy initiatives that relate to people, resource governance, markets and international standards-setting” (Beeko, in EFI (2009).

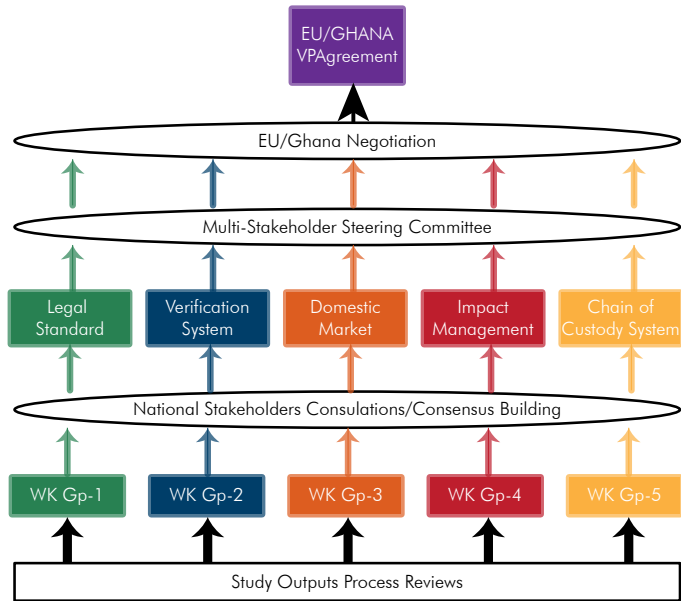


Figure 2. VPA process overview

A **Civil Society** “Contact Group” representing land owners, organised labour, farmers, chainsaw operators, research and academic institutions, domestic timber traders and NGOs has worked to support these negotiations.

The civil society group acknowledged in a communiqué to the Government of Ghana (GoG) on 30th May 2008, that:

1. “The Contact Group commends GOG and the VPA Steering Committee on a successful round of negotiations and assures them of civil society’s commitment to concluding the negotiations phase of the FLEGT process in July 2008 as scheduled.
2. The Contact Group acknowledges that the VPA process has enabled an unprecedented level of stakeholder consultation and participation in sector policy-making. We believe that this is reflected already in the quality of the outputs and will reflect further in the popular ownership that a VPA will enjoy. We are encouraged by the strong statements of support for participatory approaches from all the key players in the negotiations process.”

Perhaps a test of the level of institutionalisation of this pattern would be if position papers will continue to be exchanged among stakeholders and whether disagreement on policy issues will be played out in the press or on the policy dialogue platform. Additionally, it remains to be seen whether there will be a demand for lower level policy dialogue inputs in decision making.

3.1.4 Institutional arrangement for the VPA

A number of organizations and stakeholders are involved in the VPA process (Beeko and Arts, 2010; Wiersum and Elands, 2012). From the government, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the statutory body in charge of forest management, the Forestry Commission of Ghana (FC), including four of its divisions, the Forest Services Division (FSD), Timber Industry Development Division (TIDD), Resource Management Support Centre (RMSC) and the Timber Validation Department (TVD), are involved in the VPA. A multi-stakeholder Steering Committee has been formed to oversee the VPA process. It was mandated to oversee preparatory work for the VPA and to collate the views of different stakeholders and guide the in-country negotiations for the VPA (Owusu, 2009). It was made up of representatives of other relevant government ministries/agencies, as well as a number of stakeholders including civil society, the timber industry (large, medium and small scale), community-based organizations, local communities and the traditional authorities (the chieftaincies). The VPA Secretariat, formed within the FC and later constituted into a department within the FC, performs the day-to-day administration of VPA affairs in the country and supports the VPA Steering Committee (VPA SC) (Owusu, 2009), that has been re-designated as the Multi-Stakeholder Implementation Committee (M-SIC) since the signing of the agreement. This multi-stakeholder approach to the VPA has supported the democratization of forestry policy in Ghana; stakeholders are not only consulted, but are proactively involved in policy development (Attah *et al.*, 2009; Beeko and Arts, 2010; Dooley and Ozinga, 2011).

3.2 REDD+ in Ghana

In 2009, Ghana entered the REDD+ programme of Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank to take opportunities provided by the Facility to enable her to reduce deforestation and forest degradation. Ghana is one of the first African countries to initiate the development of a National Strategy on REDD+ and also coordinates negotiations on the development of international mechanisms on REDD+ for the African Group. Ghana does not have a National Programme with the UN-REDD Programme but it joined as a Partner Country at the end of 2011 (UN-REDD Programme, 2011).

The Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) approved under the FCPF is aimed to address two broad thematic areas; timber demand and supply and wider aspects

of forest policy including agro-forestry and other carbon conserving activities. Ghana is currently in the implementation phase of its National R-PP for which it receives support from the FCPF for 2011-2014. Ghana has also been selected as a pilot country to the Forest Investment Programme (FIP) and has elaborated an investment plan to guide the deployment of FIP resources.

3.2.1 REDD+ in the context of on-going policy processes in the sector in Ghana

As part of the attempt to deal with various challenges in the sector in Ghana and in the light of some recent global concerns, Ghana has also embarked on both policy and legislative review processes, and this has provided the opportunity to incorporate REDD+ considerations into potential legal amendments in the future. In the preamble to the Revised Forest and Wildlife Policy 2011, the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources, Mike Hammah, indicates that reforms in the sector have been influenced by REDD among other issues. He states,

“... Besides the challenges inhibiting the attainment of the 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy objectives, the forestry sector today is also confronted with emerging global issues like the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), Forest Certification and Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) which have far reaching implications for the forest and wildlife industry as well as local livelihoods... a revised policy is therefore necessary...” (MLNR, 2011)

Some complementary national programmes relevant for the implementation of REDD include the following:

- The Natural Resources and Environmental Governance Programme (NREG), which is a sector budget support programme, the goal of which is to reduce illegal logging and integrate environmental considerations into policy formulation and implementation across sectors;
- the National Forest Plantation Development Programme which aims to arrest and reverse deforestation rates in the country, as well as taking steps to increase the national forest cover;
- the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU’s Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) initiative to enhance forest governance and reduce illegal logging.

3.2.2 Institutional Arrangement for the REDD+

Akin to and actually stemming from the experiences from the VPA, the REDD+ process in Ghana is managed by the National REDD+ Working Group which is a multi-stakeholder body chaired by the Deputy Minister for Lands and Natural Resources, with the secretariat housed at the Climate Change Unit of the Forestry Commission. The Working Group is attended by representatives

from government ministries, departments and agencies, the private sector, civil society groups, traditional authorities and development partners. Research and academia are represented by the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, whilst local communities and forest forums are represented by a member of the National Forest Forum. A representative from the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission is responsible for the Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs).



The National REDD+ Working Group functions mainly through technical sub-Working Groups:

- the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) Sub-Working Group,
- the Policy, Legislation and Governance sub-Working Group,
- the Consultation and Participation sub-Working Group,
- the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) and
- Reference Emissions Level (REL)/Reference Level (RL) sub-Working Group.

For effective coordination, the REDD+ focal person at the Forestry Commission also sits on the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) which is under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology. This Committee has the responsibility to develop strategies to deal with the current challenges of climate change and also develop a comprehensive National Action Plan to adapt to climate variability and change for sustained livelihoods.

For a broader coordination of the various initiatives related to climate change and natural resources, there is a larger Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC+) responsible for coordinating Ghana's FIP, REDD+ and VPA processes as well as climate change (FCPF, 2011). This Committee made up of the technical directors of all the relevant ministry together with coordinators of the respective initiatives, works up to a cabinet-level advisory body, the Environment and Natural Resources Advisory Council (ENRAC⁴) which is supposed to provide guidance and policy direction at the inter-ministerial level.

3.2.3 Stakeholder participation and engagement with REDD+

Ghana has identified national REDD+ strategy options through a consultative process. The options (discussed in the Ghana Readiness Preparation Proposal,

⁴ The ENRAC is made up of the ministers for Lands and Natural Resources, Energy, Environment, Food and Agriculture, Finance and Economic Planning

R-PP) detail the activities that Ghana could undertake to reduce deforestation and forest degradation.

The options developed in the R-PP commit Ghana to undertake policy, legislative and institutional reforms and strengthen decentralized forest management, including improved stakeholder participation in forest management and conservation, and strengthening of traditional and local level institutions of resource management (Ochieng, 2010). Thus stakeholder participation and consultation has become a policy position with REDD.

In this regard, a number of actions have been undertaken to consolidate stakeholder participation:

- The REDD+ Stakeholder Consultation and Participation Plan of the R-PP was prepared building on lessons learnt from the VPA and the NREG sector programme consultation process. During the process a series of stakeholder consultations at national, sub-national and local levels took place and they culminated in a national validation workshop in October 2009.
- This plan provides a basis towards establishing a national institutional framework for consultations and the working group on Consultation and Participation under the National REDD+ Technical Working Group leads the implementation of the plan.
- A database for REDD+ actors to support networking and capacity building has also been developed at the REDD+ Secretariat.
- A simplified brochure has also been prepared in collaboration with Tropenbos International to educate traditional authorities and local communities about REDD+ and how they could participate in the processes.

However, the consultation process for REDD+ has been criticized as having been rushed, as compared with that of the VPA (Dooley and Ozinga, 2011).

3.2.4 REDD+ implementation process

The REDD+ decision refers to a phased approach to implementation as follows:

Phase 1 - Readiness: Development of national REDD+ plan or strategy, policies and measures and capacity building. This stage involves among other activities, the following:

- organization and management of the REDD+ process (institutional arrangements),
- consultations and stakeholder engagement to foster country ownership of REDD+ process,
- development of national REDD+ strategy options,
- design of policies and measures to set national framework,

- elaboration of reference level i.e. Forest reference emission level and forest reference level,
- design and testing of monitoring (MRV) system,
- initial training and other capacity building activities,
- selection of pilot projects to operationalize REDD+.

Phase 2 – Implementation of REDD+ Strategy: Implementation of national REDD+ plan or strategy, policies and measures and further capacity building, technology development and transfer, and results-based demonstration activities or pilots. Activities in this phase include:

- policy, legal and institutional reforms in the forest and related sectors e.g. carbon rights, tree tenure, benefit sharing schemes etc.,
- land tenure reforms, land-use planning and zoning,
- national forest inventory,
- strengthening of law enforcement (in sync with FLEGT VPA),
- capacity building for implementation of REDD+ (public sector, private sector, forest communities, civil society and other stakeholders),
- targeted programmes to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation e.g. Challenge Fund,
- implementation of demonstration activities to inform REDD+ strategy,
- development of the performance-based payment system.

Phase 3 – Implementation of Performance-based actions: Results-based actions with full measurement reporting and verification (MRV). The anticipated activities at this stage would include:

- administration of the payment system for emission reductions,
- implementation of results-based actions by forest communities, landowners, the private sector, government agencies and other stakeholders (project-based),
- implementation of other low carbon or carbon conserving activities to reduce pressure on forests (project-based),
- Promotion of measurable REDD+ outcomes and results based actions (MRV).

The different phases and the corresponding time periods are depicted in Figure 3.

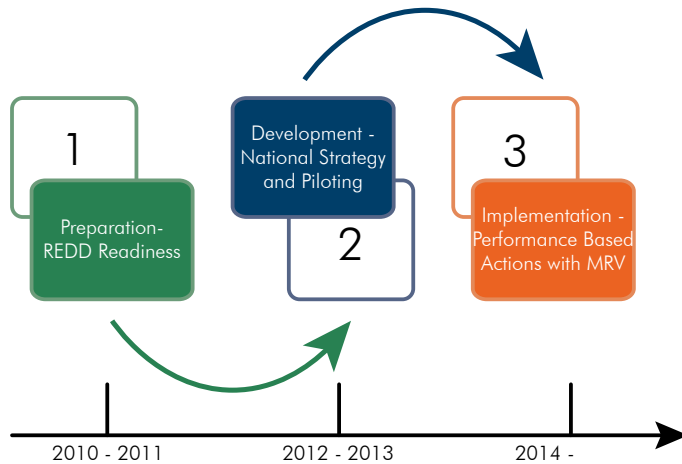


Figure 3. The Ghana REDD+ implementation plan

3.2.5 Governance challenges

The Forest and Wildlife Policy has recently been revised; draft legislations are also being discussed by stakeholders. All these are aimed at mitigating the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation (DDD). CSOs have been well involved in these processes and have made several submissions into the review processes.

Rights and Tenure – Clearly defining tenure arrangements is fundamental to a successful REDD+ implementation. Civic Response, a local NGO has therefore been commissioned to carry out a study to document the status of tree tenure in Ghana and this would involve consultations with all stakeholders as part of the process. The draft report will subsequently form a basis for broader stakeholder consultation with the view to building consensus on tree tenure arrangements which will facilitate REDD+ implementation.

IUCN in collaboration with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources is engaged in developing benefit sharing schemes for REDD+ that will ensure equity. Some modest progress has been made to strengthen institutional capacity, but the issues of coordination, transparency and accountability are still challenging. The R-PP identifies that carbon rights needs to be further clarified and prescribes that a National Expert Consultation on Allocation of Terrestrial Carbon Rights shall take place. The need to enhance and sustain stakeholder participation in all phases of the REDD+ process has been well captured in the R-PP, and a comprehensive plan to that effect has been designed. It is however not too clear how these activities will be financed. A major governance challenge has to do with law enforcement; this is necessary to address illegal logging and other forest illegalities. The dilemma however is that in some cases, illegal practices (e.g. chainsaw milling) have more or less become institutionalized and hence strict

law enforcement will go with a lot of negative social and economic impacts. There is therefore the need to design appropriate safeguards that will mitigate these effects and enhance the positive impacts. It will also require resources and strong political will. In partial response to these, the REDD+ process is now in the process of procuring the services of consultants to carry out strategic environmental and social assessment (SESA) which will design an environmental and social framework to mitigate any negative impacts and enhance positive ones. Again, resources have been made available to study and design conflict (dispute) resolution mechanisms, especially in relation to the sharing of any benefits accruing from REDD+ implementation.

3.2.6 What can REDD+ really deliver?

The country aims to provide incentives to local communities to motivate them to plant and conserve trees, develop strategies for sharing forest (REDD+) benefits including a mechanism for allocating carbon rights between government, land owners and local communities, and create alternative livelihoods for forest dependent peoples (Ghana R-PP, 2010). In the strategy options, Ghana aims to address the deficit in domestic timber supply by plantation development, development of a more vibrant timber sector through increased investment efficiency, and by establishing a licensing system for small-scale timber producers, including the chainsaw millers, who convert logs into lumber on-site, and often operate illegally (Wit and Van Dam, 2010).

3.2.7 Anticipated enduring incentives for REDD+ deliverables

More efforts are required from all stakeholders to explore ways of addressing the challenges facing REDD+ through the development of national strategies, action plans, access to sustainable finance, policies and measures for a full and effective REDD+ implementation. It includes the following:

- Predictable and sustainable finance to deliver real and verifiable emission reductions.
- REDD+ benefits should reach those farmers and local communities who own the land and trees.
- MRV and Registry of carbon and non-carbon data and information and transactions (biodiversity , soil & water conservation, improved livelihoods, forest governance, etc.) will ensure stakeholder confidence in the REDD process.
- Information system for reporting and respecting safeguards for ensuring social and environmental benefits for REDD+.
- Institutional arrangements that allow for effective collaboration and ensure synergic relationships especially within the forestry regulatory authority.





4

Lessons from FLEGT VPA and REDD+

4.1 Effects of REDD and FLEGT VPA processes on forest governance in Ghana

The study assessed the views of experts on the effect of the REDD+ process on forest governance in the sector with respect to stakeholder consultation and trust building, law enforcement, institutional capacity building and financing. Generally, the opinion was that there has been some improvement in stakeholder consultation and access to financing, while responsiveness and accountability of institutions, trust among stakeholders, law enforcement and institutional capacity building have not seen much change. Indeed in comparison with the VPA, there are few who think that the level of consultation and trust have even worsened with the REDD+ process. For law enforcement, it was often remarked that perhaps we need some time to assess, since both initiatives are yet to be implemented on the ground.

For the effect of the VPA process, similar observations were made except that it was generally perceived that the VPA process has rather improved institutional capacity and responsiveness and accountability of institutions. With the establishment of the Timber Validation Department (TVD), the FC's capacity to enforce regulation has potentially been improved. In the long run, with the LAS, experts think that VPA will substantially improve law enforcement in the sector.

4.2 Perceived relation between VPA and REDD

The response of the experts suggested five main areas that the two processes are related:

- Improving good forest governance;
- Ultimate reduction of forest degradation and deforestation;
- Halting illegality in the sector;
- Improving sustainable forest management; and
- Improving livelihoods for poverty alleviation.

Almost all experts suggest improvement in forest governance as an important goal for both processes. Both processes claim to have collective ownership as they evolved through extensive consultation. The view of experts suggest that VPA is largely owned among all stakeholders both within and outside the forestry sector compared to REDD+, which is thought of as mainly owned by sector ministry and lead departments and units within the Forestry Commission. One expert remarked “there are suspicions that VPA was forced upon Ghana but VPA helps us as a country to move forward in our forest governance”. In spite of this, an expert observed “VPA is phase specific programme- at the negotiation stage - there was large ownership but at the development/implementation phase where we are now, it is mainly led by the agency... I am not sure about the REDD+, it’s probably owned mainly by the department”.

4.3 Perceived extent to which REDD learnt from VPA

One area in which there is a claim of REDD building on lessons from VPA was the use of the VPA consultative structures as espoused in the R-PP document. Indeed, almost all the experts interviewed mentioned stakeholder consultation as one area that REDD learnt from VPA. It was indicated that lessons from the institutional arrangement, consultation processes and public awareness of the VPA for REDD was moderate to significant. It is believed that the level of success of the VPA and how much was talked about it required that it could not be ignored by REDD. However, there is some opinion that REDD did not significantly build on the priority issues identified under the VPA. There is perceived CSO frustration as to why their findings were not used and in terms of the extensive nature of identifying priority issues, some experts think the CSOs did a better job with VPA but not sure with REDD. This was attributed mainly to the ample time and financial resources that were made available under the VPA process for stakeholder consultation. Another observation is that even though public awareness is high with REDD, it cannot necessarily be attributed to learning from VPA - the sheer demands of the initiative itself requires high public awareness. There is a counter observation from other experts that there is not sufficient knowledge about REDD in the public domain as claimed⁵. Another area that REDD was mentioned to have learnt

⁵ It should be cautioned here that some experts clearly admitted that they have limited knowledge about REDD and therefore their assessment may not be reflecting prevailing situation.

from VPA is the piloting strategy. REDD is as complex as VPA and therefore using piloting of schemes was crucial.

Generally, even though some experts could not think of any areas where REDD failed to learn from VPA, a few thoughts were shared. First, there was a hurry to get results with REDD, failing to realise how the VPA negotiation process was sometimes frustratingly delayed because there was the need to build consensus on some issues before proceeding. REDD's consultation seems to have aimed at sharing information rather than building consensus⁶. The VPA's consultation process in fact allowed non-governmental actors to influence the content of the process. This was limited with REDD. Ghana CSOs provided initial drafts of the VPA not EU consultants.

Second, the capacity of the FC and its own set-up for knowledge management is constraining. It was thought that the organizational culture and capability in the FC to use lessons is very limited; as with FLEGT, REDD seems to be suffering from the low level of awareness among FC technical staff, especially those outside the head office. Generally, experts interviewed did not seem to recollect areas of mutual learning between FLEGT and the REDD processes. The response of one of the experts may suffice the conclusion, "beyond consultative processes, we are yet to see any mutual learning. However, there are lots of potential mutual learning areas, like use of data, but we are yet to get there".

⁶ This however is understandable: with the VPA issues were fairly definite right from start, e.g. definition of legal logging, building of consensus was therefore necessary. By contrast, the whole architecture of REDD is still evolving, and the issues are not quite definite.





5

Analysis and possible synergies between VPA, REDD+ and National Forest Policy Frameworks

5.1 Status of forest governance and national policies

The overall assessment of the status of some critical governance issues in meeting national forest policies objectives and sector governance was not very positive except in the areas of laws and regulation, institutional arrangements, funding and stakeholder consultation. In spite of the general perception that the status of funding is somehow sufficient, experts from the ministry think otherwise. They explained that operational funds are often not fully disbursed by donors, always staggering payments making financial flows disjointed and thereby piling debts whilst figures in official programme documents create impression of full payment to outsiders. Another opinion was that funding has been sufficient but it has not effectively been targeting challenges and that there is the need for a radical rethink about how to sustain funding in the forestry sector.

Generally, the status of the adequacy of laws and regulations, institutional arrangements and stakeholder consultation in the sector were judged to be sufficient but needs improvement. For example two issues came up strongly with respect to institutional arrangement and capacity. First, it was observed that the coordination between sector institutions still needs improvement. Second, even though the sector has sufficient technical capacity, it needs to focus more on respective mandates. For example, the Forestry Commission needs to focus more on its regulatory mandate, allowing the private sector to do tree planting for example.

Even though the status of laws and regulations governing the sector was considered sufficient, there are still significant gaps with respect to regulation regime for off-reserve management. In this regard, CSOs for example have petitioned Parliament against a Legislative Instrument with respect to government's involvement in the allocation of timber resources. To a larger extent issues on

community rights, especially with regards to tenure security and benefit sharing are still hanging and not well addressed within the existing legislative framework.

Table 1. Summary of perception of 12 experts interviewed about the extent to which the indicated governance issues has impacted national forest policy and governance

	Sufficient	Quite sufficient but needs improvement	Insufficient
Laws and regulation	9	3	-
Law enforcement	-	3	9
Institutional arrangements	6	6	-
Institutional capacity	-	4	8
Funding	4	8	1
Stakeholder consultation	3	9	-
Political will	1	1	10

Even though the status of laws and regulations governing the sector was considered sufficient, there are still significant gaps with respect to regulation regime for off- reserve management. In this regard, CSOs for example have petitioned Parliament against a Legislative Instrument with respect to government’s involvement in the allocation of timber resources. To a larger extent issues on community rights, especially with regards to tenure security and benefit sharing are still hanging and not well addressed within the existing legislative framework.

In terms of stakeholder consultation, even though there is a growing culture in the sector, their effectiveness in terms of sustainability (institutionalisation) and responsiveness were raised. It looks like the consultations are scattered, not very systematic and not well coordinated in the sector. An expert puts it as ‘policies are changing but do they achieve impact on the ground’.

The areas where respondents considered that their status was insufficient to impact on the achievement of sector policies were law enforcement and political will. Even though assessing political will was mainly considered insufficient, it was observed that the situation may differ depending very much on the attitude of people in authority and perhaps the nature of decisions to be made. For example, it was observed that during the VPA negotiation, a particular deputy minister was able to push for cross party buy-in of the initiative, which positively impacted on the progress of the process. However, this ‘push’ dwindled when a different person took over. The experts further observed that when political support has somehow been guaranteed at the ministerial level, the situation has often been positive at the technical level. However, it was emphasised that when FLEGT VPA implementation, particularly the wood tracking system, is in force, law

enforcement in the sector will generally improve as there will be both market and political incentives for increased enforcement of legality standards.

5.2 Obstacles for Synergies

The obstacles identified by the study relate mostly to the weak coordination between FLEGT VPA and REDD+ processes at different levels. The improved coordination, communication and exchange of information and lessons learnt can bring about more efficiency, effectiveness and participatory democracy.

5.2.1 Weak programme coordination

First, the major problem is that there seems to be too much territorialism with programmes within the sector. There seems to be a very sharp distinction between the programmes mainly because REDD+ and FLEGT emerged as 2 separate programmes; “the need for synergy came as an afterthought; not anticipated from scratch” an expert observed. It was observed that these programmes seem to be attached to particular personalities and units within the Forestry Commission and have more or less assumed the character as ‘pet projects’. This is partly related to a kind of established institutional culture where projects are isolated and institutional ownership is often lacking. An expert observed that “this is a systemic problem within the institution, perhaps coming from lack of effective supervision within the Commission”. Another expert put it that “focus on the goal not the vehicle, whether REDD+ or VPA, the important thing is what it is to be achieved and not the label”.

Identification and creation of synergies between REDD+ and VPA processes would require stronger programme coordination, as this facilitates the mapping of cross-cutting issues and possible joint projects and actions. Based on the previous analysis reported in the literature (e.g. Ochieng, 2010; Ochieng *et al.* 2012) and the expert interviews, a number of possible measures can be identified to encourage and facilitate exchange of information as well as coordination between the processes:

1. Mutual representation of both the VPA and REDD secretariats on different committees of the two initiatives. This would help to increase understanding of each other’s goals, activities and processes, and the possible similarities between them.
2. Institutional strengthening to collapse the culture of project isolation within the Commission. It was suggested that the Chief Executive could deal with the political or administrative issues, but another high-level office reporting to the CE could deal with technical issues and charged with the responsibility of monitoring and coordination of programmes. The responsibility could also include donor liaison functions, so that donor relations and programme coordination could be handled from one end. Justifiably so because the sector

is highly driven by donor-dependent programmes and the strong emergence of environmental climate change issues, the trend may continue in the short to medium term. Even though there has been a strong argument rather in favour of using the Monitoring and Evaluation unit of the Commission to accomplish programme coordination, this can happen with well-thought procedures and strict discipline. This is especially so when the unit is not hierarchically above others. Effective Programmes supervision and coordination will require some leverage of authority, especially in an institutional setting where the culture of a somewhat autonomy of programmes seems to be a structural reality. In any case, coordination may also improve communication between programme heads as this will be facilitated in the process of gaining information, looking for areas of commonalities and designing common implementation actions to cut cost, time and budgets.

It looks like there is a better coordination of programmes at the ministerial and sectoral levels, using structures like ENRAC (inter-ministerial) and the Technical coordinating committee (inter-sectoral).

3. Streamline and institutionalise stakeholder consultation and engagement processes to ensure that common platforms of engagement are used across the sector. This enables stakeholders to have a broader view of issues and put them in a better position to see areas of commonalities and bring experiences to bear on new initiatives. This directly relates to efforts that attempt to strengthen the district and national Forest Forums and institutionalise them as policy dialogue and consultative platforms. At the same time, other similar platforms such as the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD) created through the Tropenbos International Ghana, FORIG and FC collaborative projects should be targeted for harmonisation. Further, to ensure that the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder engagements are uniform and that civil society for example are able to exercise the same level of influence across programmes, it was suggested that institutional representation and capacity building for negotiation efforts need to be strengthened. An expert concluded that “different stakeholders have different capacity, building stakeholder capacities will help avoid elite capture”. Another issue is that the rules of engagement for the acceptance of the final product of the engagement process be established. For instance, with the VPA any decision that was sent to the EU had to have the consent of all stakeholders. This type of rule should be applied in other initiatives and should be part of the platform institutionalisation process. It should however be pointed out that REDD is about forestry in climate change involving several ministries and actors outside the forestry sector. This calls for a more horizontal coordination with implication for who participates in the consultation process. Perhaps, an innovative idea would be to have a National Forest Forum plus, as an extended platform to engage stakeholders when issues that far extend beyond the forestry sector such as REDD+ is involved. This will potentially maintain a core of multi-stakeholder actors who

are regularly consulted and who can be targeted for capacity building and institutional strengthening.

5.2.2 *Weak inter-sectoral coordination*

In addition to improving the synergy between FLEGT VPA and REDD+, there are other thoughts to improve the synergy between these programmes and the broader sector policy environment.

There is a call for better coordination of the Natural Resources and Environment sector group between the government and the development partners (DPs). At the moment, the coordination is thought to be too informal and that, for example as observed by an expert, minutes of meetings are not often shared. It was suggested that producing minutes of meetings for instance will be crucial to informing new portfolio holders to inform themselves. This is particularly important because of the rapid rate at which government and DP representatives in the sector are changed. It is also important for DPs to confer but this should not be done in a way that compromises priorities of national government. This however requires that government is clear on what it wants to achieve so that new interventions could be streamlined into national goals and priorities.

Second, the role, responsibility and coordination of lead technocrats of various donor programmes need to be clarified. Experts have called for a round table discussion on this. For example while the MoFEP is involved in both REDD and VPA discussions, it was observed that there is no intra-ministerial coordination. The representatives of both programmes at the Ministry are not 'talking to each other' on the subject. Another area that needs improvement is broadening the character of representation to reflect the new trend of collaborative governance as espoused in the forest and wildlife policies. For example, selection of national delegations to programme missions could involve CSOs and other non-governmental stakeholders as such broad-base delegation could guarantee public monitoring and uptake of national positions by government authorities.

Another suggestion for effective coordination was to ensure that every dollar goes to adding value to achieving the objectives of the sector through collaborative auditing. Specifically, in addition to ensuring that there is occasional financial and technical auditing for all programmes, it was suggested that a more effective coordination will be achieved if the auditing is done through a collaborative mechanism. The lack of independent review was mentioned as an inherent weakness of the REDD+ process. In the case of the VPA, it was conceded that provision has been made for independent monitoring, but this will only be at the implementation stage. It was also pointed out that the role of the JMRM of the FLEGT VPA could not adequately address this need.





6

Concluding thoughts and recommendations

6.1 Concluding thoughts

6.1.1 *The need for synergy*

The study clearly shows that the forestry sector needs some form of institutional and programme coordination to improve the level of synergy among various actors and intervention programmes. This, it is believed, can significantly improve institutional, human resource and financial efficiency and effectiveness. So far, the FLEGT and REDD+ processes have run parallel, claims of coordination seem more rhetorical; real institutional control is quite limited.

FLEGT VPA and REDD+ are two separate international initiatives designed separately with no apparent synergies anticipated from scratch. However, the two initiatives have partly overlapping objectives of improving forest sector governance and improved forest management with potential influence or impact on livelihoods and poverty alleviation. They both target essentially the same sector and deal with the same stakeholders, though to varying degrees; they also rely heavily on similar processes, i.e. stakeholder consultation and participation; they both use fairly similar institutional structures and baseline data. The two initiatives could therefore derive much mutual benefit from greater linkages and synergy. It should however be noted that any desire for synergy and cooperation should be circumspective since there are still some significant differences between the two. REDD+ is an international process far more complex than a bi-lateral trade agreement (like the VPA); it cuts across more sectors and by and large still under negotiations.

6.1.2 Areas where there has been synergy

The most significant area where there has been an attempt to synergise the two processes has been stakeholder consultation and engagement. Even there, the study suggests that the quality of engagement in terms of effectiveness of downward consultation, accountability, space for civil society inputs and drive differed. It seems the FLEGT process had a more effective civil society engagement than the REDD+ process, perhaps because of the way the two were designed, *ab initio*.

Given the functional linkage of the ultimate goals of the two initiatives, both at the national and international levels, Ochieng *et al.* (2012), point out that the older Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) served as a policy model for the design of the national REDD+ strategy in several ways. They go on to argue that multi-stakeholder Consultation and Participation Plan for the development and implementation of the national REDD+ strategy was modelled along the multi-stakeholder consultation process for the in-country negotiation for the VPA, among other ongoing consultation processes. They quote a section of the Ghana R-PP to support this assertion. (In practice however, as noted elsewhere, there were marked differences in the consultation and participation efforts. It is however correct to note that both processes (REDD and VPA) had a Consultation and Participation Plan). The establishment of the National REDD+ Working Group (NRWG) to facilitate stakeholder consultations on REDD+ and to advice on appropriate policies for REDD+ mirrored that of the Voluntary Partnership Steering Committee. There is not only overlap in the membership of the two committees, but also in their roles (Ochieng, 2010; Owusu, 2009). Similarly, the setting up of the REDD+ Secretariat to oversee day-to-day administration of REDD+ activities in the country and support the NRWG mirrored that of the VPA Secretariat in both its design and functions (Ochieng, 2010; Owusu, 2009). Considering that REDD+ has a much broader scope than the VPA one could expect that the composition of the two committees, necessarily, had to be different.

Ochieng *et al.*, 2012, also points out that useful information and ideas generated during the pre-negotiation and negotiation phases of the VPA inspired many elements of the national REDD+ strategy. The authors cite the examples of the need to regulate the domestic timber market and to develop alternative livelihoods for forest fringe communities.

6.1.3 Areas where there has been failure to build synergy and why

Unfortunately, the learning of lessons has not been optimal. For instance whereas the stakeholders' consultation and participation under the VPA was acclaimed to be very good, it took a protest from civil society before wider stakeholder input was solicited in the formulation of the R-PP. Again the strong leadership offered

by government in rallying round all major stakeholders in the VPA process has been missing in the REDD+ process. Moreover, in the REDD+, the commitment and contribution from the relevant ministries, departments and agencies have not been forth-coming as they were under the VPA. For instance, key sectors like the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Attorney General's Department have not been too visible on the National REDD Working Group. Another area where lessons from the VPA process have not impacted on the REDD+ process is the participation of civil society at negotiations at the international level, as was the case under the FLEGT VPA. Several and diverse reasons may have accounted for these. The level of (national) ownership of the respective processes, the requirements/demands of the funding agency and the resources (both time and finances) available for the consultation have been cited. The evolving nature of the REDD process could also have accounted for some of these missed opportunities.

6.1.4 Potential areas for synergy

In spite of the apparent missed opportunities, there are still several possibilities for building linkages and synergy between the REDD+ and FLEGT VPA processes, especially in the light of the strong overlaps in the objectives, processes and institutional structures, not to mention the similarities of issues, challenges and stakeholders involved in the two processes. Potential areas for synergy include:

1. Data collection. This is particularly with respect to baseline information, monitoring, reporting and verification (e.g. monitoring framework such as timber tracking and remote sensing) for the two processes.
2. Legislative review. Even though some initiatives have already been taken in enacting new legislation to support the implementation of the VPA, any additional legislation in support of REDD implementation could be treated as an amendment to that for the VPA and attempts made to harmonise the two, rather than coming up with completely new laws. Legislations could address common fundamental problems or issues. For example, how can the current legal reform for implementing VPA also provide room for supporting the implementation of some REDD actions. This needs a deeper reflection and exchange which seems not satisfactorily existent at the moment. This recommendation becomes all the more feasible in the light of the fact that the revised Forest and Wildlife Policy is about to be out-dooed.
3. Stakeholder engagement in addressing key governance challenges including law enforcement, issues of equity and benefit sharing.
4. Capacity building and awareness creation, especially at the community level.

To a large extent exploring these opportunities will have the advantage of what Ochieng *et al.* (2012) has referred to as 'transfer of commitments': this refers to the situation where similar commitments made under the different initiatives can

be fulfilled using resources from one of the initiatives. For example, under the VPA, Ghana has committed to minimize any adverse impacts on indigenous and local communities and poor people which may arise as a direct consequence of implementing the VPA; under the REDD process too, Ghana will carry out a strategic environmental and social assessment (SESA). With better linkages and coordination, these commitments could be addressed under one stroke. Another case in point is the commitment to undertake legislative and institutional reforms to harmonize existing policies with the timber legality standard (Ghana-EU VPA, 2008 pp. 56, 58); similar reforms are also necessary (under the REDD process) for clarifying the rights of local communities with regard to forests, and mechanisms for sharing benefits, including rules for allocating carbon rights. Again, one or the other initiative could provide the resources for carrying out the reforms in one stroke.

The training and capacity building envisaged under REDD+ will improve the capacity of the FC not only to implement REDD+ but also the various elements of the VPA. For instance, under the VPA, the FC is required to undertake a socio-economic impact assessment of the VPA (Ghana-EU VPA, 2008). Similarly, in REDD+, the FC is to undertake a Strategic Environmental and a Social impact Assessment (SESA) (Ghana R-PP, 2010a). Thus, training of the FC staff to undertake a SESA under REDD+ automatically trains them to undertake the socio-economic impact assessment under the VPA.

6.2 Recommendations to foster greater synergy

Following the analysis of both expert opinions and discourses around the FLEGT VPA and REDD+ processes in Ghana against the general background of Ghana's National Forest Programme, the following recommendations can be drawn from the study to improve coordination of programmes in the forestry sector. It is from effective coordination of the different initiatives can one identify possibilities and areas for fostering synergies.

1. First, the institutional culture of 'attaching' personalities to programmes and cultures need to change, both through education and coordination arrangements that inhibit the tendency for people to pet projects that they are privileged to lead. To this end, ensuring institutional supervision and coordination is key. Specifically, the study recommends two options. First, creation of a high-level technical position/office within the Forestry Commission, reporting directly to the Chief Executive to be responsible for donor relations and programme coordination. Whilst this has a tendency to introduce additional bureaucracy, if well-coordinated, it may pay off in terms of budget efficiency, institutional ownership and implementation effectiveness. The second option recommended is to use the existing Monitoring and

Evaluation unit recognising the challenge of leveraging authority and capacity to be effective.

2. Second, perhaps very much related to the point above, instituting formal technical and financial audits by independent bodies' right from programme design through implementation has been suggested. The FLEGT VPA Joint Monitoring Review Mechanism (JMRF) model is useful except that its independence has been questioned.
3. Third, there is the need to harmonise coordination of the programmes, especially with regards to stakeholder engagement within the spirit of collaborative forest management. As part of the collaborative efforts, the National Forest Forum (NFF) has been piloted under the National Forest Programme and has been adopted as a platform for engaging non-governmental actors. Strengthening it through effective institutionalisation will create a greater means of synergising stakeholder consultation and negotiation requirements of complex policy programmes requiring participation in the sector programme. It is recommended that Ghana moves faster with the efforts to streamline all multi-stakeholder consultation platforms, with the necessary institutional legitimacy and capacity to provide space for effective engagement. In this respect, it is recommended that on-going discussions about how to harmonise and bring project-level platforms like GIRAF's forums and TBI Ghana/FC/FORIG's MSD and the NFF needs urgent attention.
4. Fourth, in the forestry sector, there are a number of donor-assisted projects and programmes with the involvement of different representatives from other agencies. The study observed that communication between officials from even same ministries serving on different sector programmes is often weak. It is therefore recommended to institute or strengthen collaboration by formalising for example periodic joint briefings among these officials. This requires dedicated efforts in terms of institutional programme, human resources and logistics. To this end, the study specifically recommends that an expert round table meeting on how to effectively (and perhaps efficiently) coordinate of programmes within Government Ministries should be organised.
5. The coordination of the natural resource and environment sector meetings involving donors and government should be improved through a more formal arrangement. Particularly, documenting and sharing minutes of such meetings will be very crucial for sustaining interest and ensuring follow-ups.

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Annex 1: Brief background of experts interviewed

Clare Brogan has been actively involved in the forestry sector, especially following the VPA process since 2005. She is a consultant providing advise to the EU on the Flegt VPA, in practice working to support also government to move things forward with respect to the process. She has been supporting the the EU delegation for the negotiation and involved in some consultancy and report preparation related to the the VPA.

Robert Bamfo is the head of Climate Change Unit of the Forestry Commission (which also serve as the national REDD secretariat) with substantial experience and exposure to the forest policy landscape having worked with the Commission for over twenty years. He has been actively involved in all major sector policy programmes except for the VPA. The most important area of his expertise is the design of the REDD+ process where he has been involved in stakeholder consultation and awareness creation process, technical drafting of the various versions of the REDD readiness plans and coordinating the institutional functioning of the various committees and working groups of the REDD process.

Adewale Adeleke is affiliated to IUCN and works as the West African coordinator for forestry programmes. He has been very actively involved in the consultation on the VPA between 2007 and 2009, design of the REDD since 2009 to date. He serves on the technical committee of VPA as an observer and member of the consultation and participation sub working group of REDD. He has been involved in awareness creation efforts for both the VPA and REDD for the same periods. In addition, he was actively involved in the consultation process for the review of the Forest and Wildlife Policy, providing inputs into several drafts. His involvement in legislation development has been slight.

Ton van der Zon is affiliated with the Netherlands Embassy as the first secretary responsible for water and environment. He was the immediate past NRE sector lead working in the environmental and forestry sector of Ghana since about 2008. He has been actively involved in VPA process design and monitoring and serves on the national REDD steering committee.

Abu Juam is the Technical Director (in charge of forestry) of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources with many years of working experience in the sector. He has been involved in the VPA, REDD, FIP, FWP review and the NLBI. His involvement in the VPA has been limited to consultation and provision of general policy direction. He was consulted on the REDD process and participated in the policy working group, mostly chairing the the NRSC on behalf of the ministry. He was involved in the FWP review, mainly commenting on technical drafts. He was consulted on the NLBI, especially on the definition of forest.

Chris Beeko is the Director for the Timber Validation Department of the Forestry Commission. He has long years of working experience in the Commission and has been actively involved in the VPA process since its inception. He coordinates the VPA process in Ghana.

Flavio Chaves is the Task Team Leader for FIP and FCPF and manages the programmes on behalf of the World Bank in Ghana. He has been actively involved in the REDD+ process in Ghana.

Alex Asare is the manager of the Collaborative Resource Management Unit of the Resource Management Support Centre of the Forestry Commission. He is a lead expert in Ghana's experimentation of collaborative forest management and has been actively involved in both REDD and VPA as well as forest policy reform processes in Ghana. He is the national Focal Point for the National Forest Programme, and was a member of the Steering Committee of the NLBI.

Alex Dadzie is a private timber contractor and a lead representative of the Ghana Timber Association in sector policy consultations. He has been very active in both REDD and VPA consultation processes. He serves on the National REDD Working Group and is a member of the sub-working group on REDD pilots. He is also one of two representatives of the private sector (timber industry) on the Multi-Stakeholder Implementation Committee (M-SIC) of the VPA.

Attah Alhassan is the Executive Director of the Timber Industry Development Division of the Forestry Commission. He serves on the Multi-Stakeholder Implementation Committee VPA, having served as the alternative chairman of the VPA Steering Committee during the formulation and negotiation stages.

Yaw Kwakye is the deputy head of the Climate Change unit of the Forestry Commission and has extensive experience with the consultation processes of REDD.

Sheila Narh is a staff of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. She has represented the ministry on the VPA process from the design through negotiation to the implementation of the process.

Annex 2: Summary of discussion- FLEGT and REDD synergy

FLEGT and REDD+ session, FAO-ACP regional forest governance workshop at Alisa Hotel, Accra in October 2012

1. How are REDD+ and FLEGT initiatives currently coordinated with the existing structures and processes for forest policy, planning and implementation that exist at the national level?

What is national? Each country is unique.

REDD is in the national discussion on climate-related issues, so the institutional structures are rather related to CC issues, such as adaptation, agriculture and infrastructure development. This means that you have to look at it horizontally and not only vertically. But we realized that you need to do the same for FLEGT as well.

Ghana: There are layers even within the national level, for example, within the ministries and implementing agencies. When you say 'national,' it's very broad and the various layers need to be taken into account. How many levels should we break it down to? Structures are there, but effective coordination is lacking. Highest coordinating body is NREG at the Ministerial Level in Ministry of Finance and that coordinates all forestry initiatives; NREG has technical coordinating committee composed of REDD+ and FLEGT coordinators; At the implementing agency level- you have the different units and there is not a formal way of coordinating their roles and responsibilities.

Liberia: PM, government and CS and even key private sector representatives all need to be put together at the national level.

RDC: 'National level' is very global because there are 2 initiatives that are at once technical and political, so there are different stakeholders. It is not necessary to divide it into layers, it is better to look at structure.

Congo-Brazza: There are two different national consultation structures for REDD and FLEGT and although there is not an official way of coordinating the two, some of the same people are in these structures.

Liberia: Forestry Development Authority has both FLEGT and REDD; not much coordination, informal coordination when meeting about other issues. Do you have the same people sitting in each one? Stakeholders are different.

RDC: REDD is more advanced but now they are at the most difficult phase of implementation. FLEGT Focal Point is going to REDD asking for how to best

coordinate. They have had a workshop where they defined 4 common areas and have a protocol for how to coordinate this at the secretariat level.

2. What opportunities exist for strengthening the overall forest policy framework (e.g. national forest programme) by better coordinating REDD+, FLEGT and other forest policy implementation actions?

DRC: Developing an informal Protocol or MOU for how to coordinate the two.

Ghana: the revised forest policy has set a direction that recognizes the need for dealing with Illegal Logging as well as ensuring that ES and Climate Change issues are taken on board. There is a Forestry Sector Master Plan that is under development and it is an opportunity for both REDD and FLEGT to be incorporated into the legal structures. Especially because both have the broader common goal to improve forest governance, working for this objective should be included in the forest policy.

There is an opportunity for both processes to be integrated into law reforms, taking into account CC and Illegal Logging issues. Instead of coming up with an entirely new legislation, this is a way for harmonizing. This should not be separate laws, these should be harmonized into a common law and will help synergize the two.

- related to this is RDC, where an international consulting firm is currently looking at what laws are relevant for putting REDD into practice and they should take into account FLEGT in these law reforms.

There are already many institutional arrangements that need to be enhanced and strengthened instead of creating new ones. Informal platforms can be formalized and capacities reinforced for a more positive synergy.

Liberia: There needs to be donor coordination because there are some donors who are behind REDD and others behind FLEGT. When they go into the field, the focus areas are different. It needs to start at the donor level to mainstream the donors. Forestry Donor Working Group- should incorporate REDD in this WG.

RDC: Communication was one of the 4 areas of interaction identified for the protocol. The communication channels developed for REDD should be exploited by FLEGT. Especially in a country where communication with local stakeholders is a big challenge, such synergies are critical.

Ghana: Could have REDD Focal Point serve on VPA Steering Committee but the added value of having a single person participate in the two processes was questioned.

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