

Sub-Regional Training Workshop on Timber Legality Assurance

Towards a Credible Timber Legality Assurance System in the Mekong Region

24 - 26 November 2010
Ha Noi, Viet Nam



**International Cooperation Department (ICD),
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) of Viet Nam**

EFI's EU FLEGT Asia Regional Support Programme (FLEGT Asia)

ASEAN Secretariat



1. Workshop Summary

Sub-Regional Training Workshop on Timber Legality Assurance System, 24-26 Nov. 2010

Ha Noi, Viet Nam

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Co-organized by the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Viet Nam, ASEAN and the EU FLEGT Asia Support Programme implemented by the European Forest Institute, a training workshop for participants from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam was held in Ha Noi from 24-26 Nov 2010 which included a field visit. The event was additionally supported by the Vietnamese-German Forestry Programme and the ASEAN-German Regional Forestry Programme, both implemented by GTZ Germany. The more than 50 participants included government officials, members of civil society and the private sector.

In response to the serious global concern on illegal logging and its associated timber trade, initiatives and regulations are being implemented to combat such malpractices including, among others, the EU FLEGT Action Plan, EU Timber Regulation, the US Lacey Act and Public Procurement Policies. These markets demand the importation of timber and timber products which have been verified through a credible Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS). Such a system is central to the EU FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), which has been signed with Ghana, Cameroon and Republic of Congo. In the ASEAN region, negotiations with the EU are in an advanced stage in Indonesia and Malaysia, whilst formal negotiation with Vietnam will commence on 29 Nov 2010.

In November 2009, the ASEAN member states adopted a reference framework for timber legality which define the criteria and indicators for legal timber, as part of a phased approach for timber certification for sustainability. This ASEAN initiative is a significant contribution to the development of a credible system for the verification of timber legality. It is within this context that the Sub-regional Training Workshop on TLAS was convened with the following objectives:

- Provide an overview of the policies related to timber legality and market initiatives
- Exchange experiences on TLAS between ASEAN member countries
- Enhance the capacity of participating countries to develop and implement TLAS based on the ASEAN framework and other initiatives
- Discuss options and elaborate initial steps for sub-regional and/or national level processes in the Mekong region

During the workshop presentations were made by resource persons and representatives of the participating countries, which outlined relevant international initiatives and the situation in each country respectively. This demonstrates the recognition of the importance of TLAS by all participants. At the end of the presentations, participants broke up into national working groups to



formulate a roadmap on how their respective countries may make progress to develop a credible TLAS. Each national working group presented their proposal in plenary. From these presentations made by the representatives from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, the following was highlighted:

- a strong commitment towards the development of a credible TLAS within the framework of the EU FLEGT VPA
- the need to establish or strengthen institutional arrangements to facilitate the development of TLAS
- the need for resources and technical support to facilitate capacity building in order to undertake awareness raising, consultations, training and studies in relation to the development of TLAS and subsequent negotiation and implementation of EU FLEGT VPA
- the need for close sub-regional coordination and exchange of knowledge and experiences within the framework of ASEAN
- the need to identify gaps in the existing systems in order to develop a credible TLAS

The enthusiasm of all participants and the formulation of national roadmaps towards the development of the TLAS, in which there was broad consensus and commonality on the elements independently identified, augurs well for the future. These roadmaps will need further reflection and elaboration by each country, but they will nevertheless form the basis for internal consultations, not only with relevant government authorities but also with other stakeholders, to ensure a well balanced approach when embarking on formal negotiation with the EU. The role of ASEAN in these initiatives is well appreciated by all participating countries.

The success of the workshop is attributable to the active participation of all participants, the very informative presentations by resource persons and the general conduct and structure of the workshop in addition to the hospitality of the host government. All participants wish to convey their appreciation to the sponsors of the workshop, Dr. Alex Hinrichs as workshop facilitator, the contributions of the resource persons from ASEAN Secretariat, European Forest Institute, Indonesia and Malaysia, and the excellent logistical arrangements made by the secretariat. The workshop was held in the traditional ASEAN spirit of cooperation and solidarity.

Ha Noi, Vietnam

26 Nov, 2010

