

Forest certification and VPAs: Where are we now and where are we heading to?

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Organized by: Asia-Pacific Forest Policy Think Tank

Elements of Certification Schemes

Certification Scheme Standards

Certification Body

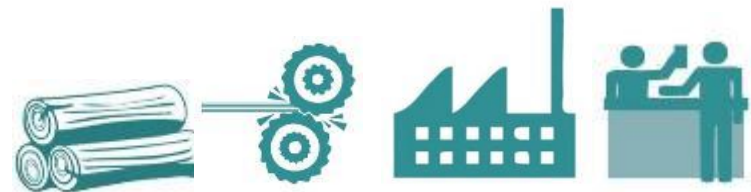


Forest



Certification Bodies are required to be accredited

Certification Body



Chain of Custody

Certification and Legality Verification Schemes

Limited availability

None of the legality verification schemes are accredited, but many verification scheme owners are certification bodies accredited by FSC and/or PEFC

- Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC) 
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) 
- Wood Tracking Programme by GFS
- Verified Legal Origin and Verified Legal Compliance by Rainforest Alliance  SmartWood
Practical conservation through certified forestry
- Origine et Légalité du Bois (origin and legality of wood) by Bureau Veritas 
- Legal Harvest Verification by Sci SCS Global Services
- Legality Assurance System by CertiSource
- Legal Source by NEPCon
- Forest Verification of Legal Compliance by Soil Association Certification Limited

FSC® and PEFC compared

	FSC® (11/2014)	PEFC (11/2014)
Countries with certified forest area	79	29
Area certified (million ha)	183	264.9
CoC individual Certificates	28,248 (112 countries)	15,804 (65 countries)

Sources:

FSC: <https://ic.fsc.org/facts-figures.19.htm>

PEFC: <http://pefc.org/about-pefc/who-we-are/facts-a-figures>

What drives demand for certified timber?

- Consumer/Retailer purchasing preferences
- Public and Private procurement policies
- Binding Legislation (Due diligence/care):



- ✓ US Lacey Act 
- ✓ EU Timber Regulation 
- ✓ Australia Illegal Logging Prohibition Act 

Due Diligence and certified/verified timber?

Example: EU Timber Regulation

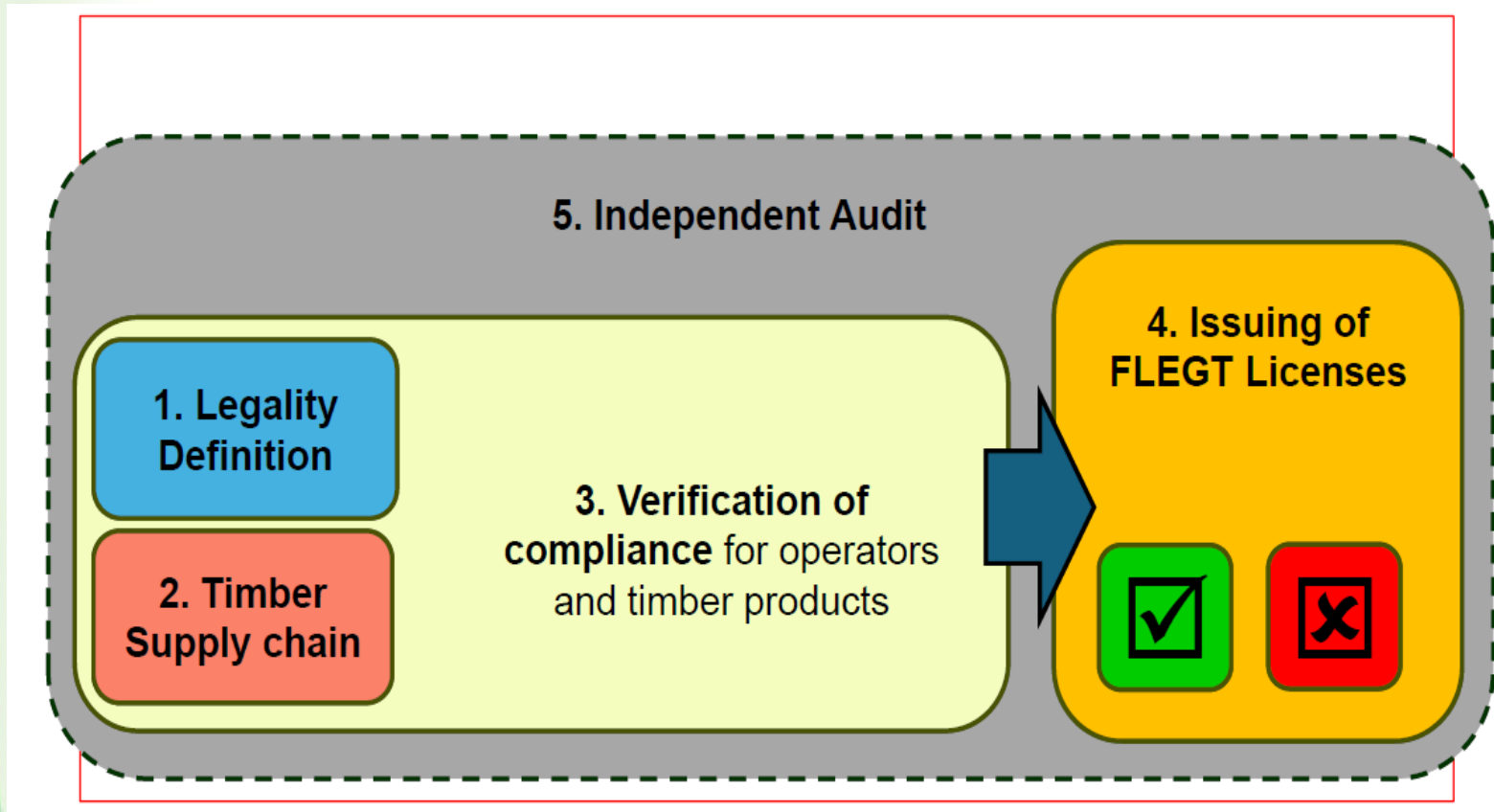


- ✓ Only timber and timber products with a **FLEGT licence (VPA)** or a **CITES permit** automatically comply with the EU Timber Regulation
- ✓ Timber certified under the main forest certification schemes is still subject to Due Diligence requirements but it helps operators assess and mitigate risks

Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA)

- EU – Partner country work together to stop illegal logging and improve forest sector governance
- VPA = Voluntary but binding bilateral trade agreement
- Negotiations to agree on a robust and clear Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS) resulting in the issuance of **FLEGT licenses** which EU customs in all 28 Member States accept as proof for legality (also **fulfils EUTR requirements**)
- Based on national law
- Principles: improved transparency, sector governance and stakeholder participation

Timber Legality Assurance System (VPA-TLAS)



General synergies between VPA-TLAS and Certification/verification

➤ **Certification -> FLEGT VPA processes**

- Pioneer/test best practice and case-based solutions (e.g. group certification with smallholders);
- Provides working examples of standard development, traceability and auditing (develop realistic TLAS systems);
- Creates awareness.

➤ **FLEGT VPA -> Certification**

- Provide clarity on legal requirements applicable to all timber sources and forest operations and built on broad stakeholder consensus;
- Improve framework for certification (transparency and accountability) and make it more accessible.

Evolving VPA-Certification Context

- EU-FLEGT Action Plan:
 - Objective: Encourage SFM
 - Refers to private certification as one of the tools to ensure legality of timber

- VPA-TLAS development and implementation takes longer than expected

- Continuous expansion of certification systems since the 90ies bringing 25 years of relevant experience for FLEGT

Why not recognize certification in VPA TLAS?

- A local stakeholder decision
- Recognise efforts made by Private Sector as well as communities and small holders
- SFM goes further than just legality (EU-FLEGT Action Plan)
- Simplify verification (only one: 3rd party CB)
- Avoid duplication of verification activities

Options

- Certification/legality verification schemes can be formally recognized in VPA and can lead to FLEGT licensing if:
 - ✓ Forest Standards cover VPA legality requirements;
 - ✓ CoC Standards cover VPA Supply chain control requirements;
 - ✓ Government regulation recognizes certification/legality verification schemes based on prior VPA compliance;
 - ✓ assessment and regular monitoring by VPA "system" Auditor.

- VPA compliance assessments need to cover:
 - ✓ Standards: Forest and CoC;
 - ✓ Accreditation process for CBs;
 - ✓ Audit procedures;
 - ✓ Management of non-compliance and grievances.

Options (...cont.)

- Full recognition of certification: all verification actions leading to FLEGT licensing are done by 3rd party;
- Partial recognition of certification (ex: Congo, Cameroun): Main elements of TLAS are « outsourced » but FLEGT licensing still requires some complementary verification;
- Risk classification of companies (defining TLAS verification intensity);
- Contribute to legality assurance for timber imported by VPA country (Due Diligence).

THANK YOU



People, Land Use and Forests in the ASEAN Region: Policy Challenges in the 21st Century
Eighth Executive Forest Policy Course

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Challenges for the 21st Century – Points for discussion

- **What are the pros and cons of the recognition of certification in VPA-TLAS** (early FLEGT licenses, cost, scope, sovereignty, practicality, market access, easier upgrade from legality to sustainability...)?
- **What are the opportunities and risks of simultaneously developing compatible VPA-TLAS and certification standards** (early synergies versus recognition)?