



# Strengthening Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Cameroon for the implementation of the LAS and EUTR requirements



*Renforcement des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (PME) camerounaises en vue de la mise en œuvre des exigences du SVL et du RBUE*





- Duration: 12 months (Feb 14 to Feb 15)
- Budget: 156.096,98 € (EU financed 120.000 €)

## Approach

- Information meetings / awareness
- Exchange meetings
- Training Workshops
- Develop reports/guidances

## Target group

- Cameroonian SMEs on the timber industry and staff/ professional foresters working on logging sites;
- Professional associations representing SMEs on the timber industry
- European buyers and importers associations/federations



# Why this project?



Origin of the project  
(evidences from the field)

Evaluation of a sampling of companies to be in compliance with requirements of VPA (EFI/TFT)

Identification of constraints of SMEs in relation with VPA/EUTR (CEEAC/ETTF)

Several years of implementing project TTAP (Timber Trade Action Plan) in the region

More constraints and difficulties for SMEs than big companies

Why SMEs?

Less prepared to constraints of legal compliance

Less involved on the support of international organizations within the timber industry

# Why this project?



- SMEs facing more challenges/constraints in regard to legal compliance (*observations/results from previous projects*)
- Lack of actions/projects to support the timber industry (particularly SMEs)
- No exchanges or workshops on the practical implications of the legality requirements
- Funding from European Delegation Cameroon "*Appui à la participation des organisations de la société civile nationale et du secteur privé dans la mise en œuvre des APV FLEGT – Composante Cameroun*", priorité n° 3 "*actions qui appuient la structuration et la représentation des petites et moyennes entreprises forestières et qui les accompagnent au regard des défis de la légalité (RBUE, APV)*"

# OBJECTIVE OF PROJECT?



## GENERAL

- Support civil society organizations and private sector on the implementation of the VPA process in Cameroon by strengthening the capacity of SME operators on the timber industry.

## SPECIFIC

- Strengthen the capacity of SMEs to implement the legality requirements of FLEGT VPA / EUTR through practical training workshops.
- Build the capacity of SME Associations
- Facilitate direct dialogue between SMEs and European importers
- Strengthen the capacity of forestry professionals on the field

# WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED?



## ACT 1:

- Successful training sessions realized (Yaoundé/Mbalmayo-July)- 74 SMEs staff trainee.
- Finalization of a document on the practical implications of the legality requirements (VPA): who is responsible? What I need to do to comply with each requirement?



## ACT 2:

- Exchanges with SME associations on driving the process
- Training about how is a Due Diligence System- request on European importers (within the EUTR)- 30 Sep
- Development of statutes and rules of performance national federation SMEs-  
**ongoing**

# What we have done?



## ACT 3:

- Date and place agreed (17-20 Nov- Brussels)
- Big interest identified on the Cameroonian side to participate to the meeting!
- Preparation workshop/study visit-plan of communication in collaboration with EFI "case study" and "video" - **ongoing**

## ACT 4:

- Training modules and guidance of training completed
- Places to hold the trainings identified. Date: December-January
- Exchanges **ongoing** on how to organize them?

# Challenges identified within the project



- There is a need to explain the synergies VPA-FLEGT and EUTR.

Which requirements need the Cameroonian exporters to be in compliance with, to help European importers to be in line with EUTR? (development of a list?).

Example of mitigation action from European importer: field visit of Cameroonian company. The Cameroonian side ask: what is the level of confidence of the auditor selected by the importer? what is the criterion of the chose of this auditor?

*This questions will be discussed during the meeting 17-20 November 2014 Brussels.*

# Challenges identified within the project



- There is a need of information to SMEs about laws and regulations applicable in Cameroon

Questions related with payment of taxes, how to calculate? Who is responsible?

- There is a need to clarify responsibilities within the Cameroonian Administration and within the company

Some questions related with: when we have a problem with taxes, to whom (which Ministry?) we need to address the issue? Who need to supervise inventories?

# Challenges identified within the project



- There is a need of better understanding on follow up procedures

Questions related with: What are the procedures to export sawn timber and logs?

*Some of these questions about procedures and how to implement have been addressed during trainings and the report/guidance develop on the ACT 1 will help companies to put in place the legal requirements.*

- Technical aspects/implementation on the field

Different technical questions identified on trainings.

*This questions will be discussed and solve during the trainings on field on December-January in Cameroon (ACT 4)*

# Challenges identified within the project



- There is a big concern about additional costs for SMEs to be in compliance with VPA/FLEGT and problems to access to resource and commercialization

Questions related with: who pays the legality? Does the importers going to pay a surplus on the material? problems with supply legal timber (ex. artisans (2nd / 3rd wood transformation))? Market relation with European importers?

*Some of this questions will be discussed during the meeting 17-20 November 2014 Brussels.*

- Management of social aspects

Several questions related with social requirements, responsibilities within the company? And labour/social inspections from the Ministry?

# Conclusion/next steps



- Reality check of SMEs - Workshop around the *document develop ACT 1*, giving the possibility to SMEs to develop their own list of tasks to be done in relation with legal requirements-VPA
- Develop thematic guides for field staff to make the link between requirements and implementation on field.
- Consultancies to help SMEs to implement legality requirements
- Evaluate how far some of the SMEs are in compliance with the legality requirements? (field audits by an external structure)
- Strengthen exchanges between SMEs and services administration (MINFOF..)
- Administration will ensure a frequent communication about responsibilities, rules, regulations to be implemented
- Administration ensure the applicability by SMEs of the regulations



*Thank you!*

Leticia CALVO VIALETES

Project Manager

lcv@nepcon.net

If you are interested on establish a dialogue with SMEs from Cameroon- keep the date 17-20 Nov: Workshop/study visit in Brussel.