Vietnam Customs Data

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Customs data in Vietnam

• US$7 billion in forest product exports (2015)
• US$1.5 billion in forest product imports (HS 4403, 4407)

• VN customs produces monthly newsletter on exports market and value
  – Lack of dynamics (e.g. trends, changes)
  – Not enough information to identify risks

• VN Customs import data on value
  – Value of the import
  – Lack of dynamics (trends, changes, species)
Forest Trends customs data analysis

• Need for analysis of detail that VN customs actually collecting (but is not being reported)
• Government of Vietnam does not trust UNCOMTRADE or FAO trade data.
• Need for further clarification of poor data (Forest Trends can go back to customs or companies to clarify or supply missing information)
• Input into VPA negotiations, other donor programs
• Timber associations wanting this information to better understand their markets, their risks, their input into VPA process
Vietnam customs data

• Data collected at border crossings (possible to obtain)

• Vietnam General Dept of Customs’ Information Center compiles customs data from across the country

• Not publicly available
  – Forest Trends partnership with Vietnamese trade associations and government agencies which are allowed to access it.
    • VIFORES access to customs data
Memorandum of Understanding

• VIFORES, HAWA, FPA Binh Dinh and Forest Trends
  – 3 largest timber associations in Vietnam with 1000s of members
• VIFORES access to national customs data
• Forest Trends provides $$ to access to data
• Two tiered governing systems
  – Advisory team: provide advice on what to do
  – Technical team: Analyse data and compile report
• Sharing info (e.g. data) must be agreed by all organizations
• Use of data by one organization must be allowed by the other organizations
Vietnam customs data

• Company names
  – 30 companies import from Africa

• Species names within product descriptions, as provided by companies on custom forms
  – mixing Latin, local, English names or none at all.
  – Confident about list of species
  – Not confident about value listed on customs forms (used only for reference)
  – Confident that there is purposeful misclassification of species
    – When species X was listed on Annex 2, volumes dropped but traders told us that they were just changing the name.
    – Customs data tells us which companies are importing which species, but we cannot publicize this and we cannot ask them directly if they are misclassifying (Vietnam law).
Vietnam customs data

• Species names within product descriptions, as provided by companies on custom forms
  – Weird things happen
    • African species being imported from Laos and Cambodia.
      – Re-export or mistakesk by customs or companies?’
      – Don’t have answers yet

• Forest Trends could do some “cleaning up” of the species information, but hesitant:
  – Want GoVN to realize that they need to do something about quality of information being provided, or do some higher level testing (e.g. DNA testing).
  – Don’t want to be seen changing any data
Vietnam customs data

• Forest Trends can do a validation process, going back to companies (via timber associations) to get clarification or missing data.
  • Easier to do with historically important trade patterns: more familiar with the species and the companies.
  • African species are relatively new to Vietnam
  • A lot depends on the nature of the relationship / trust between companies, trade associations and Forest Trends.
What we do
Export

- Analysis of HS 44 and 94 products between Vietnam and export markets
- Product lines, volume and value and changes
- Identify risks at two levels: Timber species and product groups
- Analysis so far: EU, US, Australia, Japan, Korea, and China
- Reports widely share in Vietnam and beyond
- Gaps:
  - No guarantee if the species listed by the export company is correct
  - Customs do not have capacity to check the name
  - Many products do not have species name
What we do
Import

• Focus on HS 4403 and 4407: the most important import in terms of volume and value
• Analysis: Imported sources, timber species, volume and value
• Identify species risks: Mekong countries, Africa countries.
• List of the imported species provided to the Vietnamese government
• Reports widely share in Vietnam in beyond
• Gaps:
  – No guarantee that the name of the species imported is correct
  – Local names of the imported species diverse
  – Technical problems with the data recording (e.g. Laos timber imported into Vietnam through border pass in Cambodia; Cambodia timber imported into Vietnam through border pass in Laos)
What we will do

• Customs data analysis (continue):
  – Export market: Update
  – Import market: Update, and new (African countries/VPA – non VPA sources)

• Combine two levels of analysis:
  – Customs data
  – Enterprise survey (e.g. timber species, but also labour, technologies, environment compliance)

• Analysis of import – domestic – export dynamics

• FLEGT VPA: signed at the end of 2016(?):
  – Impacts /costs of compliance ?
  – Domestic market ?
  – SMEs ?