GLOBAL TIMBER TRACKING NETWORK (GTTN) REGIONAL WORKSHOP IN AFRICA

Yaoundé, Cameroon, 27-28 June 2018

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Background

Illegal logging and related trade pose a significant threat to the sustainability of forest ecosystems, result in losses of government revenues, foster a vicious cycle of bad governance, and contribute to increased poverty and social conflict. Unsustainable and illegal logging is driving deforestation and forest degradation worldwide and Africa is no exception.

A number of trade-driven legislations have come into force over the past ten years in the main forest products consumer markets. Several countries have made it a punishable offence to trade wood-based products of illegal origin in their territories.

The United States of America with the amendment of the Lacey Act covers timber since 2008; in Australia the Illegal Logging Prohibition Act since 2012 makes it a criminal offence to import illegally logged wood or products thereof; the European Union has its Timber Regulation in force since 2013. These legislations put responsibilities to economic operators, which need to give due care and ensure their products are of legal origin. In return, numerous initiatives have been developed at various levels, in the public and private sectors, both in consumer, producer and processing countries, to achieve demonstrable legal trade in timber and wood-based products.

A most comprehensive approach is in the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) as developed by the EU and a number of timber producing countries in the frame of Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). Through these bilateral trade agreements, countries seek to combat illegal logging and related trade in illegal timber products, resulting in so-called FLEGT licensed wood once agreements are implemented. Several African countries, including Ghana, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Liberia and Republic of Congo have signed their respective FLEGT VPA with the EU. Other countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon are currently negotiating their VPA with the EU.

Furthermore, other measures taken by some African countries to address sustainability of the timber trade include voluntary forest certification schemes, CITES and REDD+ initiatives. However, significant gaps still exist both in the identification and evaluation of policy responses and also in finding effective methods of halting illegal logging globally and in Africa in particular.

Legality verification and assurance approaches now mostly rely on a correct handling of permits, licenses, inspections and taking account of wood conversions factors along the wood chain-of-custody.

While human-made systems will always be vulnerable to human-made tampering, scientific methods that can unambiguously confirm or reject claims of wood species and origin. This can be tested on wood-based products in any section of the wood chain-of-custody.

Why GTTN now?

From around the globe, the Global Timber Tracking Network (GTTN) brings specialists together to further develop the combination of innovative technologies like DNA-analysis, stable isotope and other methods with modern wood anatomy techniques.

With the ultimate goal to strengthen forest governance, GTTN promotes expertise and tools that customs, law enforcement agencies, third-party certifiers of sustainable forest management, companies and other actors can utilize in eradicating illegal timber trade.

GTTN provides an opportunity to increase regional discussion and cooperation to strengthen regional capacities and cooperation amongst African countries to detect and prevent illegal timber trade in the region.

Objective of the regional Workshop

In general, the level adoption of GTTN-promoted timber tracking techniques is low in Africa, both in terms of policy and practice. This is partly because of the relatively high investment costs involved in the use of some of the technologies. There is also a need for adequately trained personnel in African countries to apply the technologies. Therefore, the regional GTTN regional workshop in Africa aims at the following:

- Increase awareness of stakeholders in Africa about GTTN and the growing potential of timber tracking techniques to help curb illegal logging.
- Identify interest and potential demand or prospective barriers for adoption of timber tracking techniques in Africa.
- Map existing capacities and know-how with laboratories already involved with timber tracking as well as with laboratories that currently apply their competencies to other areas (e.g. agriculture, CITES species other than wood etc.).
- Identify the needs for knowledge transfer and financial assistance for developing skills, knowledge and tools and with the aim to adopt timber tracking technologies including the collection of sample material and the development of reference data.
- Handling and sharing of intellectual property rights, concerning technology, methodology, reference data, thereby also addressing issues relating to Access and Benefits Sharing (with reference to the Nagoya Protocol).
- Identify interest for the development of strategic partnerships (with private sector, key institutions and decision makers) within African countries in the application of the timber tracking technologies.
- Explore avenues for collaboration and up-scaling GTTN initiative between demand and supply side countries for effective wood traceability systems (including e.g. timber legality assurance systems, CITES monitoring, due diligence systems etc.).

Who can participate in the regional Workshop?

GTTN brings together various stakeholders for interdependencies in the fight against illegal logging. GTTN's stakeholders include government and non-government institutions, academia, public and private sector, forestry and timber sectors as well as law enforcement agencies. Workshop participation is on invitation, however limited seats may be available for interested parties to join. Please contact gttn@efi.int for further information.

Expected outputs of the Workshop

- **Awareness raising of the GTTN initiative** and its benefits in Africa improved.
- **Draft proposal for a roadmap** towards the use of GTTN technology in the fight against illegal timber trade.
- **New avenues for collaboration amongst African countries** in reducing illegal timber trade identified.
- **African stakeholder** (government and non-governmental institutions/development partners, private sector) potential **roles in the GTTN initiative identified.**

Location and date of the Workshop

Yaoundé, Cameroon, 27-28 June 2018

Tentative Agenda Modules

Session 1: Introduction to GTTN
Session 2: Interests, demands and barriers for timber tracking in Africa
Session 3: African timber tracking capacities
Session 4: Towards an African regional network node for GTTN

Excursion to a forest concession: Legal timber trade in practice

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www.globaltimbertrackingnetwork.org