



BRIEFING PAPER

FLEGT and REDD+ Synergies in Cameroon

Forest management in Cameroon : Some Key Information



Country surface area: 475 442 Km²
Forest surface area: ≈ 22 million hectares
Forest cover: 40% of the national territory
Factors of forest SD: Agriculture, infrastructure, mining, logging, various economic activities, etc.



Population: ≈ 22.25 million (2013)
Direct jobs: ≈ 22,722 in the formal sector and ≈ 595,000 in the informal sector
Production: Informal sector higher than formal sector
Contribution to GDP: 2.7% overall added value 2008-2010



- 1992: Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- 1992: Creation Ministry of Environment and Forestry
- 1993: Forest Policy Paper
- 1994: Forest Law
- 1996: Framework Law on Environment
- 2005: Creation of MINFOF and MINEP/DED
- 2008: R-PIN Approval
- 2010: Signature Cameroon-EU FLEGT VPA
- 2012: Decree establishing the REDD+ National Steering Committee
- 2013: Cameroon's R-PP Approval
- 2013: Order procedure for issuing FLEGT licences
- 2013: Order implementing SIGIF
- 2013: Order criteria and procedures for issuing certificates of legality
- 2014: Adoption of FPIC Guidelines
- 2015: Submission of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
- 2015: Draft 0 REDD+ national strategy
- ...2035: "Cameroon Emergence?"



Forests are under threat in Cameroon. Cameroon is the second largest forest country in the Congo Basin in terms of forest cover, after the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The various legal and illegal uses of natural and land resources have a heavy toll on Cameroon's forests, which explains the escalating rate of deforestation and forest degradation. In order to address this growing concern and ensure better use of forests and its benefits Cameroon has signed several international initiatives. Amongst these are the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT VPA), signed with the European Union; the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+). These two processes have huge implications for human and financial resources of state institutions. There is also the temptation to run these processes as all other initiatives. However the redtape in institutions and poor coordination could frustrate these initiatives. To be effective and efficient, the two processes must be synergised and complement each, stopping forest loss. FLEGT VPA process which preceded the REDD+ process in Cameroon has demonstrated some important lessons that the REDD+ process should learn from.

«FLEGT is one of the backbones of forest management on which REDD+ will have to build on» (Cameroon R-PP).»



INDC: Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
FPIC: Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
FLEGT: Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
GHG: Greenhouse gas
MINEPDED: Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development
MINFOF: Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife
MRV: Measuring, Reporting and Verification
REDD+: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Sustainable Forest Management and Enhancing Forest Carbon Stocks
R-PP: Readiness Preparation Proposal
SIGIF: Computerised Forest Information Management System
SIS: Safeguard Information System
NFCMS: National Forest Carbon Monitoring System

A brief overview of REDD+

Climate change is caused by increased levels of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere. Among these GHGs, is carbon dioxide (CO₂) which mostly derives from burning fossil fuels and forest losses. Forests loss from the three major forest basins of Amazonia (1st), Congo Basin (2nd) and Southeast Asia (3rd) and other areas account for about 20% of CO₂ emissions. These emissions are mainly results from man-made activities such as agriculture, infrastructure expansion, urbanisation, mining, logging, etc. Reducing deforestation and forest degradation would greatly help curb climate change.

The Paris Agreement signed in December 2015 portrays reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation an instrument of the international regime to control climate change. Countries should therefore work at their national level to build a REDD+ model tailored to their ecosystem needs and in line with their development model.

Cameroon, even though a not GHG emitter, given its status as a developing country and other factors, has committed through its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) to reduce its emissions by 32%. This is presented in the Growth and Employment Strategic Paper (GESP) and is consistent with the country's development objectives. Formally, the REDD+ mechanism should help develop the various sectors linked to the mechanism in a view to achieving emergence. The Ministry of Environment is in charge of managing the process and presiding over the REDD+ National Steering Committee. The Ministry of Forestry is the Vice-Chair of the Committee.

What is FLEGT VPA ?

The FLEGT Action Plan (Forest Law, Enforcement, Governance and Trade) was established by the European Union in 2003. It aims at supporting tropical countries to stop illegal logging and trade in illegal timber to achieve good forest governance and sustainable management of forest ecosystems. Achieving such objective requires the following actions including :

1) Controlling illegal logging activities in timber-producing countries by signing Voluntary Partnership Agreements and establishing export licensing systems (FLEGT Licence)

2) Eradicating illegal timber trade in the EU market through the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) which prohibits the placing of illegal timber and illegal timber products on the European market as a whole and to the national market as well.

Cameroon signed a FLEGT VPA with the EU on 6 October 2010 and it came into effect on 16 December 2011. The agreement provides a framework through a tractability system and independent audits of the timber supply chain to ensure the timber and timber products going from Cameroon for the European market, and on the national market have complied with all legal requirements. Cameroon's definition of legality and its applicable criteria within this framework was done through a multi-stakeholder approach. The legality grid includes five criteria which are 1) administrative and tax obligations; 2) logging, development and transformation activities; 3) transport; 4) social obligations; and 5) environmental obligations. To demonstrate transparency, Cameroon has committed through Annex VII of this agreement to disclose different types of information. To be issued a certificate of legality, holders of voluntary certifications will no longer be subject to additional specific verification.

MINFOF is in charge of managing the process at the national level.

Differences between FLEGT and REDD+ in Cameroon

REDD+ is mainly supervised by MINEPDED, and FLEGT by MINFOF. The difference between both mechanisms lies at the contractual level, their scope and the ties they create.

At the contractual level :

FLEGT VPA is a bilateral mechanism between the European Union and Cameroon set up at the national level to ensure the compliance with the forest legality. REDD+ is a multilateral mechanism adopted at the international level that Cameroon is implementing at the national level.

Regarding the scope :

FLEGT VPA focuses on monitoring the legality of the production chain of timber and wood-derived products, and it is restricted to the production and trade of such products. REDD+ looks at the various development sectors to tackle the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation at the national and local levels, and takes measures to mitigate the effects of climate change so as to produce long-lasting carbon and non-carbon benefits in order to achieve integrated development.

With regards to the ties they create :

FLEGT creates a link between access to market and governance. REDD+ links result-based incentives, reforms in land use and the fight against climate change.

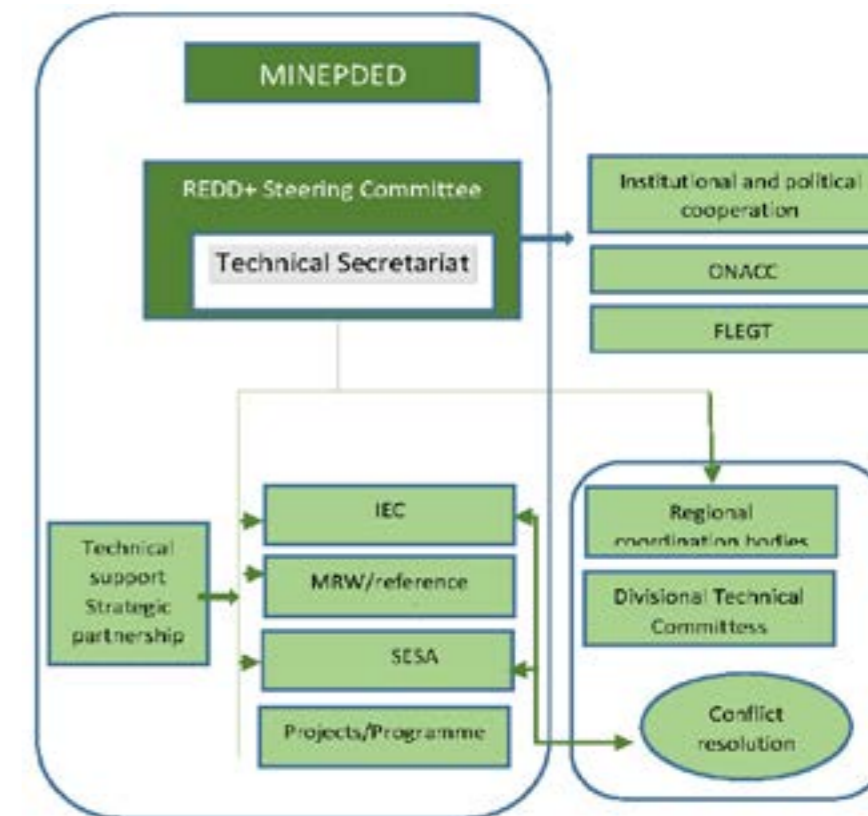
« Any timber which has been verified/ controlled as originating or coming from one or more production or acquisition processes that meet all of the statutory and regulatory provisions in force in Cameroon applicable to the forest sector shall be deemed to be legal timber »

Opportunities for Linking FLEGT and REDD+ mechanisms in Cameroon

The link between FLEGT and REDD+ can be complementary, competitive, just as it can exist or simply be a potential link that needs to be developed.

According to Cameroon, link between FLEGT and REDD+ can be of two categories. On the one hand, there is a link pertaining to governance and institutions, and on the other hand, it deals Specifically with technical issues. In either category lies the idea of knowledge transfer, common commitments and practices and shared impacts.

The analysis of both mechanisms highlights the fact that FLEGT VPA, even though more advanced, can and will certainly build on new experiences from REDD+ which is still being developed.



Governance and institutions

Institutional set-up at government level

FLEGT and REDD+ are two commitments made by Cameroon which are imposed on sectoral ministries in charge of their steering and those in charge of their implementation. The drafting of the national strategy and the implementation of REDD+ projects should develop its objectives/deliverables/products taking into account the country's commitments under the FLEGT VPA. The institutional set-up and management of REDD+ in Cameroon provides that the Technical Secretariat of the REDD+ Steering Committee works with the FLEGT Unit of MINFOF to align actions and develop synergy between REDD+ and FLEGT activities. The commitment from both institutions in charge of the presidency and vice-presidency of the REDD+ National Steering Committee in Cameroon is reciprocal. In this regard, both institutions are involved in discussions

with the support of development partners and the national civil society, to set up an institutional framework to make the synergy operational and with a mission that is still being defined.

« The Technical Secretariat will get close to the various officials in charge of the various processes underway, namely the FLEGT Unit of MINFOF so as to capitalise the lessons learned from these processes and valorise them in the REDD+ process. »



FLEGT and REDD+ governance

Cameroon's R-PP identifies the implementation of FLEGT as a practical measure in the forest sector that will impact governance within the framework of REDD+. Such governance is considered as a cross-sectoral option of REDD+ based on support to current processes of legal reforms. As part of their implementation, REDD+ and FLEGT can affect each other by bringing in changes in either process. A change (tightening or improvement) in the legality regime within the FLEGT mechanism, resulting from a legal reform, will require amendments accordingly in REDD+ governance. Resolutions made in the legality grid could be applied to practices to be followed in REDD+. For instance, in case reduced emissions in REDD+ would possibly be considered as wood-derived products, the various stakeholders will therefore have to comply with the legality requirements provided for in FLEGT to sell their reduced emissions on the European market in case of market option, and even of REDD+ fund. Such implications are multifarious and it can be noticed

that the lack of precision in land and forest tenure is equally the cause of illegal exploitation of natural resources which are determining within REDD+, and of interest for FLEGT as well.

Involving the civil society, local communities and indigenous people

The commitment to participatory forest management gives grounds for the involvement of the civil society in the decision-making processes of FLEGT and REDD+ in Cameroon. FLEGT VPA negotiations involved 5 trade unions in the private sector, and 29 NGOs representing the interest of local communities. These negotiations equally provided a framework for their meetings within the forests-communities platform. The national REDD+ and Climate Change civil society platform includes inter alia networks belonging to the FLEGT platform. Both mechanisms consider involving all stakeholders including local communities and indigenous people, as a major component.

Techniques applicable to both FLEGT and REDD+

Social and Environmental safeguards

Social and environmental safeguards presented in the FLEGT legality grid in Cameroon fall specifically under public access to information as shown in Annex VII. Cameroon is planning to create a corridor or a permanent framework for information transfer between FLEGT platform/website and that of REDD+ national register. Information in the annex should be used to support the Safeguard Information Systems (SIS) in REDD+. Moreover, complying with social obligations, notably obligations pertaining to relations between timber companies as defined in the FLEGT legality grids, requires considering local population needs and development in wood production or acquisition activities. This involvement is equally a key safeguard in the REDD+ programme. According to Cameroon's R-PP, drawing up a SIS is actually a prerequisite in REDD+ and should integrate existing safeguards of the country. It should also integrate supporting law instruments including their social and environmental assessment systems. Similarly, new agreements on safeguards (warranty) within REDD+ could lead to changes/adjustments in the FLEGT legality grid, especially in the event of future reforms

that would meet up with the needs of REDD+.

Monitoring System

FLEGT and REDD+ both need a monitoring system, which is generally expensive and also requires good expertise. The system for timber legality assurance, which aims at ensuring the credibility of the FLEGT Licensing scheme, will be of crucial importance when issuing reduced emission certificates in REDD+. Having an independent auditor of the LAS (Legal assurance system) for the REDD+ Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System would also guarantee its credibility. From an IT perspective, the data management system could be coordinated. SIGIF, a regulatory database used for issuing certificates of legality and FLEGT licences, should possibly collaborate with operators of the Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system, notably with the centre for GIS/remote sensing that is being settled in Yaoundé. Within the framework of the National Forest Carbon Monitoring system (NFCMS), these should go beyond merely estimating emissions and forest carbon uptake to equally include monitoring forest as well. The preparation of the NFCMS under the REDD+ mechanism in Cameroon is based on the fact that there is a need to «build on existing systems and capacities». Such is the case of systems implemented by FLEGT, like SIGIF, which will provide



real time information on exploited wood resources, and will possibly help in carrying out an inventory of national forest resources needed to define not only the reference level, but first and foremost to assess it. In addition the MRV system could help set annual allowable cuts that are consistent with environmental sustainability and carbon sequestration.

Finance Management

The Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and the Ministry of Environment play a part in managing funding under the FLEGT and REDD+ mechanisms. The Forest Environment Sector Programme (PSFE), which is under the

supervision of the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, is technically a national sectoral development programme set up by the Government of Cameroon and open up to contributions from national and international stakeholders for the implementation of the country's forest policy. The rationale of such programme approach is to put an end to independent and fragmented initiatives. The PSFE has an Interdepartmental Facilitation Committee established by a Prime Minister's decree on 11 August 2006 to facilitate collaboration between the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and the Ministry of Environment as part of the implementation of the PSFE. Its operational tool is the basket fund and the budget support.

FLEGT in Cameroon: Some lessons for REDD+

Coordination challenges inside ministries, that can be overcome

The setting up and implementation of the FLEGT programme in Cameroon highlighted the existing division and difficult collaboration between various services within a ministry. The legal framework which ensures smooth collaboration between various divisions in a ministry is generally very unclear and is poorly enforced even when visible in Cameroon. As a matter of fact, where there are no clear instructions, public servants fail to act. It is very possible that the implementation of REDD+ would have the same challenge. In reality, the coordination between

the various division and services in the Ministry of Environment is more complex. The various sector Ministries involved in REDD+ are equally subject to the same in-house reality and they might possibly think of action to take to address this issue. Hence, the models of solutions such as that by the Ministry of Forestry to issue Circular No. 0051/LC of 21 November 2015 on collaboration within the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, for the collection of data to be published as per Annex VII of the FLEGT VPA.

A potential trap to avoid would be to set up additional institutions that would add to existing redtape.

Resilience challenges in cross-sectoral coordination

Coordination between the sectoral ministries involved in REDD+ is a major concern in the setting-up and implementation of REDD+ in Cameroon. Though there is an interdepartmental committee in charge of environment and regular meetings of the REDD+ national steering committee, involving and coordinating actions from the various sectoral ministries in analysing deforestation and forest degradation factors and identifying solutions, remains a difficult task. These two arenas are ironically the very platforms where hurdles to cross-

sectoral coordination are to be addressed. One of the potential key consequences for failing to effectively coordinate will be the difficulty to supervise information sharing between the various sectoral ministries. On the other hand one of the traps to avoid would be to set up new institutions that would add to existing redtape. One should further resort to the implementation of effective and efficient tools to strengthen collaboration between existing institutions.

The need for a national participatory regime

The principle of participation in environmental processes is enshrined in Article 9 (e) of the 1996 Framework Law on Environment. Yet, not all development sectors benefit from such guidance. For participation to become a tool for effectiveness, efficiency and equity in FLEGT and REDD+, there should be a national regime which sets the framework for collaboration and participation between governmental and non-government actors in the various processes in Cameroon. Such regime would

be fully in line with participatory democracy and could possibly open clearer ways for consultation, dialogue and potential joint drafting of sustainable development policies. It could also contribute to a better supervision of interdepartmental coordination, but especially a smooth involvement of all the decision-makers of the decision-making chain, concerning processes and operations underpinning sustainable environmental management.



Conclusion

Synergy goes beyond the simple implementation of FLEGT and REDD+ altogether. It requires coordination of actions and sharing of resources between local and national stakeholders, so as to create a capital gain in achieving the objectives of both mechanisms. Such capital gain can be manifested in better logistic efficiency and better result, compared to the result which would have been achieved if FLEGT and REDD+ are implemented separately. There is therefore a need to make some savings or increase the result without generating opportunity costs, investment costs or additional transactions, for both the State and other stakeholders. As concerns FLEGT and REDD+, there are two operational possibilities: creating legal bridges or setting up an institution in charge of managing the synergy. The first option would entail adding to the existing legal framework, other provisions which ensure integration and consistency between both processes and commission various stakeholders with the task to ensure concerted actions as part of their usual duties.

Joint orders between sectoral ministers could serve in this regard, such as Decree 076MINATD/MINFI/MINFOF of 26th June 2012 on the management of logging revenue meant for local communities. The second option is to set up an institution specially commissioned to manage the synergy. In such a case, there is a need to mitigate the risk of generating investment costs and additional transactions, which add to the current fragmentation and redtape which impede collaboration and coordination inside and amongst sectoral ministries. There is a need for institutional re-orientation to problem solving rather than institution running. Problem solving means that both the REDD+ and the FLEGT bodies are focused on solving the problem of forest loss from illegal timber, urban expansion, agriculture and other drivers. This could reduce turf wars and promote greater collaboration. This could also be realised if managers and supervisors in REDD+ and FLEGT have clear performance indicators related to collaboration with other institutions.

There is therefore a need to make some savings or increase the result without generating opportunity costs, investment costs or additional transactions, for both the State and other stakeholders.

Further reading :

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FODER is working towards a more just society, one without marginalization or discrimination, which uses natural resources for sustainable development.



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