

AIDE MEMOIRE

THIRD MEETING OF THE PRE-JOINT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Monrovia November 14th, 2013

Introduction

1. The third pre-joint Implementation Committee¹ (pre-JIC) to facilitate the implementation of the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between Liberia and the EU, took place in Monrovia on November 14th, 2013. The meeting was co-chaired by Honorable Florence Chenoweth, Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Liberia and Ambassador Attilio Pacifici, Head of EU Delegation Liberia.
2. The Liberian team included representation from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, VPA Support Unit, civil society and the private sector. The EU team included representation from the EU Delegation, European Commission, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and experts from the EU FLEGT Facility. A participant list is attached as an annex to this aide memoire.

Ratification

3. On the European Union side, as reported in the previous meeting, the EU notified Liberia that the ratification of the VPA had been concluded on 14th May 2012.
4. On the Liberian side, the ratification process was completed on September 18th, 2013. Official notification of the ratification was sent to the EU Delegation on November 13th. The VPA is expected to enter into force on December 1st, 2013.

Institutional Arrangements

5. The VPA Support Unit was mobilised on September 2nd, 2013 and now supersedes the VPA Secretariat in the coordination of VPA activities and the building of capacity to support implementation of the VPA.
6. The Support Unit will work closely with the Liberia Verification Department (LVD) and other VPA support projects. The Support Unit is currently conducting a capacity needs assessment of Government institutions, private sector and civil society.
7. The LVD team mobilised on October 15th, 2013. Their role is to verify compliance with the legality definition (LD) and operate the Chain of Custody System (COCS). Over a five year period, the LVD will develop the necessary verification methodology and build the capacity of the FDA departments and divisions involved in implementing the Legality Assurance System (LAS). In their technical proposal, the service provider has developed a strategy for the establishment of the LVD, which will be finalised in consultation with the FDA.
8. A Project Board will be established before the end of 2013 to provide oversight of the contract and will meet initially not less once a month. This Board will be composed of the service provider, EU, DFID, and the Government of Liberia (FDA, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of

¹ Pre-JIC refers to the joint mechanism for dialogue and monitoring described in Article 19 (5) of the VPA foreseen for the period between its initialing and entry into force.

