

Lao-EU FLEGT NEWSLETTER



Issue May 2020

Photo: © Phetsaphone Thanasack

Representative of German Development Cooperation Visits Attapeu Province, the FLEGT Pilot Province

On 27 February a delegation consisting of representatives from the German embassy to Laos, Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Kreditanstalt fuer Wiederaufbau (KfW) visited Attapeu Province, one of the FLEGT pilot provinces, to understand the implementation and potential impact of German-supported projects on the ground.

The delegation met with representatives of the Provincial Office of Forest Inspection (POFI) and Provincial Office of Industry and Commerce (POIC) Attapeu to learn about their past and future activities as a FLEGT pilot province. During a field visit to Phouvong district, POIC and ProFEB presented its support for setting up an operational control and reporting system to comply with a soon-to-be issued decision on the management and monitoring of timber input and output by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC). A company that was part of the piloting support showcased its internal production system and demonstrated critical control points from timber input to the final product. This also

included how the management system has been adapted with improved documentation and data reconciliation.

The delegation expressed a strong interest in the activities and highlighted the importance of the FLEGT-VPA process for sustainable forest management and legal timber flow.



Laos Prepares for Fourth Negotiation with EU to Promote Legal Timber Trade

FLEGT stakeholders met to discuss the draft Timber Legality Definitions (TLD) and other elements of the timber legality assurance system (TLAS) at the February Negotiation Support and Development Committee (NSDC) meeting in preparation for the fourth negotiation round with the European Union (EU).

The 3rd negotiation round in June 2019 provided the Technical Working Groups (TWG) with key comments from the EU negotiation team for the Lao side to review and consider. In early February, the TWG consisting of representatives from all concerned ministries, CSOs, academia, private sector and support organizations have jointly worked on the review of the comments and the finalization of TLDs for timber from conversion areas (TLD 2), plantations (TLD 3), natural timber from village use forest and land of individuals, legal entities or organizations (TLD 4), confiscated timber (TLD 5) and imported timber (TLD 6). Representatives from the European Forestry Institute (EFI) also participated in the NSDC meeting in February, and shared their views and reiterated questions from the last negotiations.

FLEGT Standing Office (FSO) updated the stakeholders on the Lao-EU FLEGT VPA, related policy reforms and the roadmap until the next negotiation. Following the key points of the last negotiation, the stakeholders discussed on the proposal of piloting of supply chain control and compliance verification of TLAS elements, especially of TLD 2, 7 and 8 in an infrastructure project in Khammouane and Attapeu, the FLEGT pilot provinces. The NSDC has jointly appointed key presenters for the next negotiation.



Preparation of Piloting of Supply Chain Control and Compliance Verification in FLEGT VPA Pilot Provinces

During the 3rd face-to-face negotiation between Lao PDR and EU, the importance of testing certain TLAS elements was emphasized by both parties. On 14th February the Department of Forest Inspection (DOFI) sent a notification to the Department of Forestry (DOF) and the Provincial Office of Forest Inspection (POFI) Khammouane and Attapeu to inquire about the selection of potential areas and to start the discussion on a timeline for a testing plan.

Timber Legality Definitions, Timber Supply Chain Controls and Verification of compliance are the core of a robust TLAS and should undergo testing before finalization to reconfirm the clarity of the TLDs and ensure that they are operational and verifiable. Testing during the negotiation phase will support negotiations between Lao PDR and EU and can notably facilitate the implementation phase.

The proposed piloting is combining the work of the forestry sector, which currently is revising Guideline 0962 on the management of timber log transport from cutting area to log landing 2 and log landing 3 to also extend to conversion area. Piloting opens the opportunity to test newly developed forms for supply chain control. As the second step compliance of the data generated during supply chain control is systematically checked to either verify compliance or raise a non-compliance. The third step includes the verification of TLDs, which systematically checks the operators against the indicators as defined in the TLDs. Detailed procedures for verification will be developed and documented during the piloting phase. Piloting of TLAS elements during the negotiation phase improves the negotiation result and will ease the implementation phase.

Training on Operational Logging and Degradation Monitoring (OLDM)

From 10 to 21 February Department of Forest Inspection (DOFI) hosted a training on Operational Logging and Degradation Monitoring (OLDM), with its objective to have an operational system in place, delivering alerts in near real-time about suspicious activities outside conversion areas.

The training brought together central and provincial trainees to follow up with capacity building in monitoring of forest degradation. The workshop was a joint-activity and supported by three projects (ADB BCC, KfW ICBF, GIZ ProFEB) that utilizes the same tool for different purposes. The training will be followed by a series of field activities to apply the learned knowledge and confirm possible cases of forest degradation that were identified during the training.



New Agreement on Structure of Negotiation Support and Development Committee (NSDC) and Technical Working Group (TWG)

On 3rd October 2019, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) issued the agreement No. 3711, which revises and formalizes the structure of the FLEGT process in Laos. The former Technical Expert Group (TEG), responsible for the technical work on timber

legality assurance system (TLAS) elements, is now merged to the already existing Technical Working Groups (TWG), which are responsible for technical work, consultation, review and agreement and manages the FLEGT-VPA workplan.

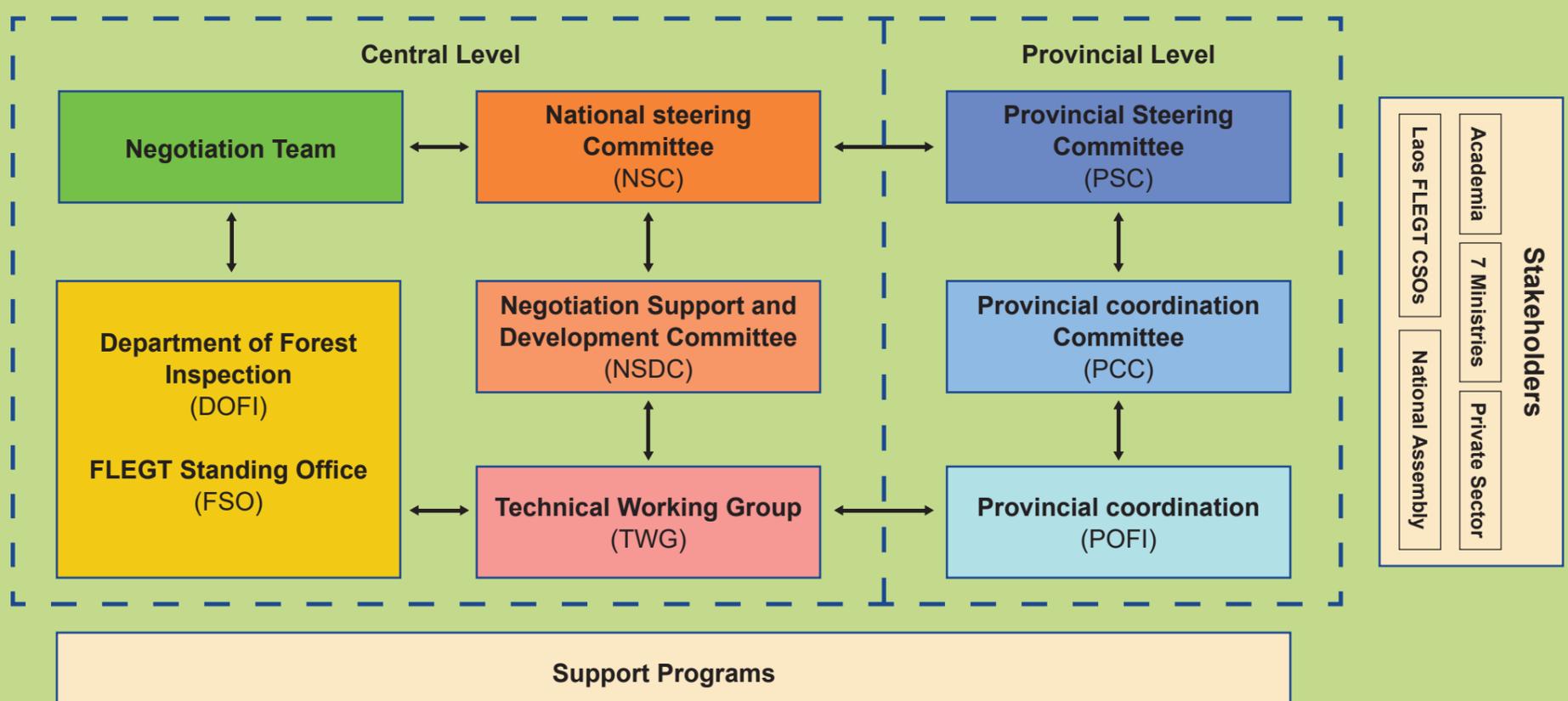


Figure 1: Revised Institutional set up of FLEGT VPA process in Lao PDR.

Joint Provincial Coordination Committee (PCC) Meeting in Khammouane Province

A Joint Provincial Coordination Committee (PCC) meeting with the participation of PCC Attapeu and PCC Khammouane was held in Thakhek on March 5, 2020. The PCC of Khammouane and Attapeu were established to coordinate with the Provincial Steering Committee (PSC), the National Steering Committee (NSC) and other related stakeholders in the implementation of the piloting of the FLEGT VPA process. In addition to the members of the committee from both provinces, representatives of the FLEGT Standing Office (FSO) and the GIZ project 'Protection and Sustainable Use of Forest Ecosystems and Biodiversity in Laos' (ProFEB) also attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the current status of the FLEGT VPA process in Lao PDR, the work progress in the FLEGT pilot provinces and the workplan for the current year were discussed. Furthermore, suggestions regarding the revision of the member structure of both PSC and PCC were made.

As highlight, the 'Preparations for TLAS piloting' on provincial level were presented. The piloting of TLAS is integrated in the joint workplan in Khammouane and Attapeu provinces.

In addition, the forest sections of both provinces presented a selection of potential piloting areas. From

the areas presented, the following two regions in Attapeu were selected to be suitable for TLAS testing: Namkong 3 and Sanamxay District, located in the previous flooded area.

Both of the chairman, Mr. Bounchanh Xaypanya, Director General of Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) Khammouane, and Mr. Santisay Sileusay, Deputy Director of Provincial Office of Industry and Commerce (POIC) Attapeu, stressed the importance of the committees as a platform for exchange and decision making, hence for the implementation of the FLEGT VPA process in the provinces.



Contact:

Legislation and Forest Inspection Policy Division
(FLEGT Standing Office)
Department of Forest Inspection
That Dam Campus
Chanthabouly District
Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR
Telephone: +856-21-255 264
Fax: +856-21-255 263
Email: info@flegtlaos.com
www.FLEGTlaos.com