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**FAO-EU FLEGT Programme**

**Guidelines for**

**Direct Assistance Requests**

Open to Government institutions and

Private Sector organizations

VPA and non-VPA countries

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# Introduction

Direct Assistance is a flexible financing tool to respond to immediate, specific requests connected with VPA and non-VPA national strategy and needs, such as provision of training and technical assistance. Direct Assistance are available to governments and private sector organizations, and are accepted by the Programme on a rolling basis, for support up to EUR 50,000. Requests exceeding EUR 50 000 will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

# Context

Illegal logging poses a major challenge for the establishment and maintenance of efficient markets and sustainable logging practices in a global economy that increasingly demands assurances of legal and sustainable production of wood and wood products. Illegal behaviour in the logging sector results in lost government revenue, missed opportunities for industrial development, and increased environmental damage and social problems.

In 2003, the European Commission adopted the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan[[1]](#footnote-2), whose ultimate goal is to encourage sustainable management of forests. To this end, ensuring the legality of forest operations is a vital first step. The FLEGT Action Plan focuses on governance reforms and capacity building to ensure that timber exported to the European Union (EU) comes only from legal sources.

# Programme objective, priorities and eligibility criteria

## Objective

The FAO-EU FLEGT Programme supports implementation of the EU FLEGT Action Plan targeting assistance to stakeholders in tropical timber producing countries. Phase III of the Programme was launched in 2016 and is operational until 2021.

## Support mechanisms

The FAO-EU FLEGT Programme operates through two main financing mechanisms:

* Calls for proposals: open on a regular basis to government institutions, civil society and private sector organizations
* Direct Assistance: open to government institutions and private sector organisations

For the purpose of these guidelines only the Direct Assistance mechanism will be henceforth described.

## Eligibility requirements

**When?** Requests of Direct Assistance can be submitted at **any time**. Proposals will be evaluated on a rolling basis.

**Which countries?** Requests for Direct Assistance can be submitted from entities in VPA countries and in countries not engaged in a VPA (non-VPA countries).

*VPA countries are countries that have negotiated or are negotiating a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union. Priority non-VPA countries are those countries that are not engaged in a VPA dialogue, and were selected by the Programme and Steering Committee as a target for support in Phase III. The following countries are concerned:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Regions*** | ***VPA Countries*** | ***Priority non-VPA Countries*** |
| *Africa* | *Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Republic of the Congo* | *Madagascar, Mozambique, Uganda* |
| *Asia* | *Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam* | *Cambodia, The Philippines, Myanmar* |
| *Americas* | *Guyana, Honduras* | *Colombia, Guatemala, Peru* |

**What stakeholder groups?** Direct Assistance requests are open to two groups of actors:

* **Government institutions**, including relevant Ministries, administrations and public institutions
* **Non-profit private sector organization** representing members of the private sector including trade unions, federations, organizations of chainsaw operators and charcoal producers, or other small scale unions or associations representing small and medium sized enterprises operating exclusively in the forestry sector. Direct support to private companies is not available through the Programme.

**What budget?** The proposal should be developed in the local currency of the country in which the project will be implemented and must be within the financial limit of **55 000 USD equivalent (or 50 000 Euros equivalent)**.

**What template?** The proposal (text and budget) should be developed in the templates provided (See section 6 on “Proposal format”)

**Promotion of gender equality and youth participation** will be one of the criteria to evaluate proposals. As a crosscutting objective, proposals should promote the inclusion of gender and youth in the forestry sector. This includes strategies towards gender equality, increasing participation of women and youth into the decision-making process and the activities, strategies that involve changing the attitudes and behaviour of men and boys and breaking sex role stereotypes. Please see **Annex 1** for recommendations. Proponents are strongly encouraged to integrate gender mainstreaming supported actions in their proposed activities.

# Proposal submission

Applicants can submit direct assistance requests at any time during the Programme life span. All requests must be signed by the applicant and submitted in English, French or Spanish to the e-mail address below. Proposals sent by e-mail must include the proposal in Word format, the budget in Excel format (See Annex 2) and a scan of the signature page of the proposal.

The proposals must be sent by e-mail to the following address: **FLEGT-Direct-Requests@fao.org****.** Proposals should also be addressed to the respective forestry officers responsible for the different regions:

* + Africa: Emmanuel Heuse (**emmanuel.heuse@fao.org**)
	+ Asia: Bruno Cammaert (**bruno.cammaert@fao.org**)
	+ Americas: Guillermo Navarro (**Guillermo.NavarroMonge@fao.org**)

The applicant shall receive a notice confirming receipt of the proposal shortly after the proposal submission.

# Selection criteria and process

All requests for Direct Assistance from government institutions and private sector organizations submitted to the Programme will be evaluated according to the following process.

## Step 1: Verification of eligibility

Submissions are received and registered by the Project Management Unit (PMU), and checked against the eligibility criteria defined in the guidelines for direct assistance requests.

The following types of action are **NOT** eligible:

* actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
* actions concerned only or mainly with individual research, scholarships for studies or training courses;
* actions intended to raise funds or only to promote the visibility of the applicant or its partner(s);
* actions intended to provide immediate personal and institutional financial gains;
* actions which consist exclusively or primarily in capital expenditure, such as infrastructure, large equipment or vehicles and other resources;
* actions which discriminate against individuals or groups of people on grounds of their gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or lack of them, or their ethnic origin;
* actions that do not include women in the decision making process;
* actions directly supporting political parties;
* actions which include proselytising activities;
* actions supporting activities that bear no relevance to the FLEGT Action Plan (eg. a proposal to carry out reforestation or tree planting);
* actions that use the funds to pay all/part of existing staff salaries for Government services;
* actions that seek funding for activities that have taken place prior to the submission of the request.

## Step 2: Technical evaluation, scoring and approval

Eligible proposals will be evaluated and scored by the PMU and, depending on technical aspects of the proposal, by at least one additional FAO professional with expert knowledge of the country, organization or region concerned. The proposal will be sent for information and technical advice to the European Union Delegations of each country.

Proposals will be scored based on the evaluation criteria and scoring presented in the following table:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Evaluation criteria**  | **Maximum Points** |
| 1. ***Relevance and complementarity***
* Is the project aligned with the Programme Outputs and Supported Actions framework?
* Does the project address the priorities of the forestry sector at the national level?
* Does the project respond to the needs and expectations of the target groups and the final beneficiaries?
 | 20 points |
| 1. ***Effectiveness and Feasibility***
* Are the activities adapted to the expected results and set objectives?
* Can the activities be carried out within the project duration? Are relevant risks and assumptions taken into account?
* Are the activities described adequately and are they technically achievable?
* Are the indicators Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART)?
 | 20 points |
| 1. ***Sustainability***
* Do activities support sustainable actions or complement long term objectives?
 | 15 points |
| 1. ***Innovation and Capitalization of lessons learned***
* Does the project include innovative approaches that could be replicated in other contexts, or does it contribute to programmes having these characteristics?
* Does the project contribute to the dissemination of ideas, lessons learned and best practices?
 | 15 points |
| 1. ***Adequate scale***
* Is the budget complete and the costs justified?
* Is the budget requested realistic and consistent with the planned actions?
 | 15 points |
| 1. ***Gender***
* Does the project promote inclusion of youth and/or reduction of gender inequalities in the forestry sector?
* Have gender and/or youth been considered throughout the project design and has this been adapted to ensure their full inclusion?
* Do the planned activities include a gender analysis

\*For guidance on how to include gender, refer to Annex I | 15 points |
| **TOTAL POINTS** | **100 points** |

A total of 100 points are available for the six criteria. To be eligible for funding, proposals must receive at least 70 points in total, and a minimum of 50 percent of the total points in each criterion. Proposals are evaluated on a rolling basis and funding will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

## Step 3: Information and contracting

The PMU will inform the applicant of the results in writing. In the case of a positive evaluation, the PMU will initiate the negotiations of Letters of Agreement.

# Proposal Format

## ***Part I. Project summary***

1.1 Project title

Indicate the project title

1.2 Applicant’s contact information

|  |
| --- |
| * Name of the organization:
* Office address:
* City and postal code:
* Country:
* E-mail:
* Telephone:
* Website:
 |

1.3 Information on the contact person within the organization

|  |
| --- |
| * Name of contact person:
* Title:
* E-mail:
* Telephone:
 |

1.4 Organization background

Indicate in one paragraph the context and background of the organization.

1.5 Requested funds

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Total local currency** | **Total (in USD) – Maximum 55000 USD** |
| Requested funds: |  |  |

1.6 Information on the government references (Private Sector organizations only)

Private sector organizations submitting a proposal must provide the names of at least two officials in the forestry administration who have knowledge of the project proposal.[[2]](#footnote-3) Each government reference must be accompanied by at least the name of the person, his/her title, e-mail and telephone number. Check the appropriate box: [[3]](#footnote-4)

* Government references ❑
* Not applicable ❑

Please include the following information:

* Name of Government Reference 1:
* Title
* Ministry :
* E-mail :
* Telephone :
* Name of Government Reference 2 :
* Title:
* Ministry:
* E-mail :
* Telephone :

1.7 Declaration and signature

**I hereby certify that all information contained in this proposal is accurate and true. This proposal is not currently and has not been previously funded by another institution.**

**Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 *(signature and name of applicant)*

##  Part II. Project Description

2.1 Background (maximum ½ page)

Please describe the problem addressed, explaining its context and causes. Confine the description to relevant forest-related policy, legislation, law enforcement and socioeconomic issues and explain how the project addresses the priorities of the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme, and the priorities of the forestry sector at the national level.

2.2 Objective:

The project objective should be expressed in a concise statement, identifying the ultimate goal of the requested assistance. The objective should contribute to resolving the stated problem and be realistic, given the available financial resources.

**Remember!** The proposed project cannot be more than 12 months duration. Achieving the stated objective should be possible within this timeframe.

2.3 Organization background and partnerships (maximum 1 page)

Indicate in one paragraph the context and background of your organization.

In a second paragraph, describe the main partners involved in the project implementation, your experience working together (if applicable), and the intended mechanisms to collaborate throughout project implementation.

2.4 Project outcomes, activities, deliverables, and work plan (maximum 2 pages):

List the project outcomes. Each outcome should be described in one sentence, supported by a list of key activities. For each outcome, please identify at least one clear deliverable which will be used to report on the outcome’s achievements.

Each of the activities should be described in one paragraph, with a clearly outlined methodology, including the location, the number of days and participants for each workshop, event, study as well as the number of copies of each publication or similar output. Provide an indicative timeline for these activities.

When relevant, proposals should include a small launching workshop to inform relevant stakeholders about the project objectives, expected results and to finalize the project action plan. They should also include a close-out workshop at the end of the project to present results, lessons learned and possible steps forward.

The applicant should establish a communication and visibility strategy and describe this in one result and activities in the proposal. This may include publications (brochures, publications, posters, CD / DVD, website, radio / television / printed media, a documentary, promotional items, or any other means to promote the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme and its partners (EU, the Swedish Cooperation, the UK Department for International Development and FAO).

The duration of the project should be less than **12 months**

|  |
| --- |
| **Example:**Outcome 1: Community Forests (CF) have the capacities to ensure legality and traceability *Activity 1.1:* Produce training material for the CF managers.Under the supervision of the project manager, an expert in legality and traceability will work during 5 days to produce the training material for the CF. *Deliverable(s):* training material *Activity 2.2*: Organize 1 training in legality and traceability.10 CF managers will participate in this training. It will be organized in Yaoundé during 5 days. It will be delivered by the expert who produced the training material. The training will focus on the legality and traceability requirements in the context of FC, with a theoretical part followed by exercises and practice. After the training, an assessment will be run to evaluate the level of the participants. *Deliverable(s)*: report on the training, and results of the assessmentOutcome 2: *Activities, deliverables…*Outcome 3: Communication and visibility of the project is ensured throughout the project **[strongly recommended in all proposals]***Activities, deliverables…* |

2.5 Indicative work plan[[4]](#footnote-5) (maximum 1 page)

Please provide an indicative work plan of the completion of the activities for each month. Example of work plan:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity description** |  |  |  | **Months after project signature** |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** | **11** | **12** | **13** | **14** | **15** |
| **Outcome 1** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Activity 1.1 | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Activity 1.2 |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Outcome 2** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Activity 2.1 |  |  |  |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Activity 2.2 |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Activity 2.3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Outcome 3** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Activity 3.1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x | x |  |
| Activity 3.2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |

***Please note that all projects will require an inception report within 2 months of implementation, preferably two progress reports during the implementation phase, and a final report within the last month.***

## ***Part III. Budget***

Please develop the budget using the Excel spreadsheet attached (Annex 2) and make all budget submissions in local currency.

Please submit the budget, in Excel format (\*.xls), duly completed with the project proposal.

**Recommendations for developing the budget:**

Ensure correct formulas are applied throughout the excel sheet, and check for accuracy before submission.

Please ensure particular attention is brought to the following points:

***Section 1- Human resources***

* Ensure all HR costs are reflected in this section. This includes project staff and consultants, and also retribution for tasks such as desk studies, field needs assessments etc. (facilitation for workshops are the exception, and can be indicated in section 5: workshops).
* For permanent project staff in non-governmental organizations or the private sector, please indicate the percentage of the salary covered by FAO funds.
* Staff salary for government officials/civil servants cannot be covered by FAO funds. However an allowance for project staff can be included to compensate for working time spent on project-related activities. Any allowance should reflect the amount of working hours dedicated to project activities and needs to follow national legislation and tax policy. The service provider is liable to prove that applicable taxes/contributions are paid through required documentation.

***Section 2 - Staff travel***

* Ensure expenditures indicated here clearly indicate which activities they relate to, number and role of travellers.
* *Per-diem* should be reasonable and include all costs incurred for the travellers (i.e. food and accommodation, local transports etc.)
* *Per-diem* rates should not be excessive and must be in line with national practices;

***Section 3 - Equipment***

* Provide accurate and reasonable estimated costs, and demonstrate items listed here correspond to actual project needs (a bullet point can be added in the corresponding activity if necessary). FAO-EU FLEGT will expect project implementers to purchase only material relevant to project implementation, and to apply general acceptable practices for procurement.

***Section 4 - Operating costs***

* Provide accurate and reasonable estimated costs, and demonstrate expenses listed here correspond to actual project needs (a bullet point can be added in the corresponding activity if necessary).
* Overheads are not eligible costs under the Programme but additional administrative or management costs directly linked to project implementation can be charged to the project as long as they are clearly described.

***Section 5 - Workshops/Trainings/Conferences***

* Ensure the number of estimated participants is systematically indicated, and all costs detailed per number of participants. Favour inexpensive facilities, and consider that working locally reduces excessive travel.
* Short events for large numbers of people may be useful for general awareness-raising type of activities. However, for training and skills transfer, workshops should be small and of adequate duration. Training activities should also be followed by practice or implementation/use of acquired skills. Project should favour a balanced participation of men and women when selecting beneficiaries.
* Ensure an appropriate balance of costs between project activities and human resources and the organisation of workshops. A majority of funding should be dedicated to the implementation of activities and achievements of outputs/outcomes.

***Section 6 - Information management***

* Ensure reasonable costs for publications considering the targeted readers.
* No payments shall be made to media actors for coverage. Only in cases where advertising pages/radio slots/TV commercials are clearly required by a specific activity can payments be made.
* Ensure visibility articles listed are relevant and useful to the project objective, and their costs reasonable. Avoid give-away items with little impact on actual visibility of the project.
* List only website or IT costs relating to site hosting or standard external fees. Maintenance of websites by webmasters, or fees to developers for applications for instance, should be listed in Human Resources.

**Remember!**

* Excel formulas should be used to calculate costs on the basis of unit costs and number of units, do not simply type the figures into the cells separately.
* You need a total cost for each budget line, make sure the total formula includes all the relevant cells.
* When you total the column, either add the totals for each budget line together or, sum the whole column (including budget line total) and divide by two to avoid double counting the budget line totals and the individual costs for each budget line item.
* All these errors have occurred in earlier proposals!
* Check and recheck your Excel budget file before you submit it!

#

# Annex 1

**How to Include Gender Considerations in Proposal**

*The following is an indicative list of* supported activities that should serve as reference for the Service Providers in the formulation of their gender-specific activities. The supported actions are grouped under four categories, with corresponding objectives. There is no expectation that all activities would be addressed but proponents are strongly encouraged to include/make reference to some of these activities in the development of their project interventions.

1. **Normative and policy dialogue**: Mainstream gender in national forestry policies and debate; enhance inclusiveness in the decision-making process.

Examples of supported activities:

i. Consider including gender-disaggregated data collection and/or gender-specific indicators in the development of national forest policies, building on relevant work undertaken by other stakeholders and relevant organizations on gender monitoring, evaluation and indicators.

ii. Promote/conduct gender analysis as a tool for better informed policy-making (baseline studies to inform laws reform, formulation of ad-hoc policies etc.).

iii. Ensure that stocktaking exercises associated with the formulation and revision of national forest policies adequately account for the differences in uses of forest and non-forest resources between women and men.

iv. Build women capacity to participate in decision-making processes (facilitate access to decision-making bodies through provision of ad-hoc support services, including awareness raising, capacity development activities etc.).

v. Ensure that women are effectively engaged as members of relevant stakeholder groups consulted for the draft of national forestry laws and regulations.

vi. *Assess* how gender considerations can be incorporated into national forest laws and regulations and how they can contribute to their effective implementation.

vii. Request that gender experts review draft national forestry regulations in order to assess gender sensitivity and provide guidance on improvements.

viii. Identify indigenous and local communities’ experts on forest governance and gender mainstreaming to support the integration of gender considerations into national forestry policies.

ix. Review relevant policies to identify gender differences, including in policies related to forest governance, tenure and use rights, employment, health, local governance, decision-making and access to financial resources, and consider steps to address these.

x. Gather and disseminate local and national case studies on the benefits of gender mainstreaming in forest governance and more in general sustainable use of natural resources (forests).

xi. Ensure that those responsible for high-level decision-making and international negotiations under the VPA agreement are aware of gender commitments at national and international level.

2. **Organizational level**: Promote gender equality and active participation within organizations.

i. Provide training and awareness raising on the links between gender and better forest governance, sustainable use of natural resources (forest) and improved livelihoods to interested staff, indigenous and local communities and policymakers.

ii. Establish a list of gender experts that staff can access to support their work, including experts from indigenous and local communities.

iii. Consider establishing a gender review body or agreement, including indigenous and local communities that can provide input on the gender sensitivity of documents and regulations prepared to support the implementation of VPA agreements or any other legally binding processes or products.

iv. Consider adopting gender-responsive budgeting when assigning resources for implementation of projects.

3. **Implementation and delivery:** link gender aspects to the achievement of Programme outcomes (reduce poverty, decrease adverse environmental impacts, promote better forest governance, enhance opportunities for more sustainable livelihoods and market integration)

i. Ensure gender balance in capacity building to enable effective participation in implementation processes and consider providing dedicated capacity building for women’s groups, as appropriate.

ii. Develop and disseminate information material on the linkages between gender and better forest governance in different languages that can equally be understood by men and women.

iii. Monitor and report on the participation of men and women in implementation processes.

iv. Consider the different needs of men and women when designing and implementing specific actions in support of the implementation of project/Programme activities.

v. Consider the different risks faced by men and women as a result of actions undertaken to achieve project/Programme objectives.

vi. Ensure that men and women’s access to and use of forest resources are equally taken into consideration and assessed during the implementation of a project.

vii. Include gender-disaggregated data when reporting on project progresses and achievements.

viii. Collect and disseminate case studies and best practices on impacts monitoring, evaluation and indicators for gender mainstreaming in the forestry sector.

4. **Partnerships:** build partnership to promote gender mainstreaming among different stakeholders and actors, at the national and regional level.

i. Take stock of gender-related commitments at the national and international level.

ii. Engage ministries responsible for gender and/or women in planning and implementation of project activities.

iii. Identify and/or establish collaborations with other relevant national or regional stakeholders that are already gathering and using gender-disaggregated data and/or incorporating gender considerations in their actions.

iv. Engage women’s groups already active in related sectors such as agriculture or land use rights.

1. FLEGT Action Plan: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2003:0251:FIN:EN:PDF> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. At this stage, it is not required to provide an official approval by the forestry administration. The references provided shall only aim to ensure that the submission of the project to the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme is known by the heads of the forestry administration. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. If the applicant is a government institution, no reference shall be provided and the box “not applicable” should be checked. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. The example work plan is designed as only a guide to project applicants. The numbers of outputs and activities are variable, depending on the project. No preference will be granted to projects with more or fewer outputs or activities in the work plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)