



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Government institutions, Non-state Actors and
Private Sector Organizations
VPA Countries

Support to the VPA process

Call for concept notes

Deadline for submission of concept notes:

15 September 2017, 16:00 GMT

Notice

Only submission by email is permitted under this Call for concept notes.

This is a call for concept notes. Applicants whose concept notes have been selected will be invited to submit a full proposal. The main criterion for pre-selection is that the concept notes be relevant to the FLEGT objectives and the VPA process.

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1. Introduction

Projects will be selected for funding through a competitive two-phased approach. First, all eligible institutions are invited to submit a concept note of a maximum of three pages using the current concept note format (see template in **Annex 1**). The concept notes will be evaluated by the Programme Management Unit (PMU). Only selected concept notes will be asked to submit full proposals. Those full proposals will be evaluated and scored by a panel of experts who will make the final selection of projects to be endorsed and funded. The final funding decision will be made by the Steering Committee of the Programme.

2. Programme objective, priorities and eligibility criteria

2.1 Background

Illegal logging poses a major challenge for establishing and maintaining 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 actions in the logging sector results in lost government revenue, missed opportunities for rural and industrial development, and increased environmental damage and social problems.

In 2003, the European Commission adopted the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (**FLEGT**) Action Plan¹, 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.

The Voluntary Partnership Agreement (**VPA**) is one of the pillars proposed in the FLEGT Action Plan. It is a legally binding trade agreement between the EU and a timber-producing country outside the EU. The agreement helps timber-producing countries to stop illegal logging by improving regulation and governance of the forest sector and by ensuring that wood products comply with the legality requirements in place.

2.2 Global objective

The FAO-EU FLEGT Programme is a five-year demand-driven programme launched in 2015 that supports stakeholders to put elements of the FLEGT Action Plan into practice. The scope of the Programme includes two groups of countries:

- Countries engaged in a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU; and
- Other eligible timber producing countries that are not engaged in a VPA with the EU (also called non-VPA countries).

For the purpose of this call for concept notes ***only applicants from countries engaged in a VPA with the EU*** (defined in point 2.3) are eligible to submit concept notes.

¹ FLEGT Action Plan: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52003DC0251&qid=1435586269486&from=EN>

2.3 Definition of “VPA countries”

VPA countries are those that have already negotiated or are in the pre-negotiation / negotiation / implementation phase of a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union. The following countries are eligible to apply through this particular Call:

Regions	VPA Countries
Africa	Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Republic of the Congo.
Asia	Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam.
Americas	Guyana, Honduras.

2.4 Specific objectives for this call for concept notes

The objective is to ensure that government institutions, private sector organizations², civil society, and indigenous and tribal peoples continue to identify, through a demand driven process, the highest priority actions to support and participate in implementing the VPA process.

In order to provide timely support for pressing and specific national forest governance issues and VPA requirements, this Call will target a set of thematic priorities customized to fit the needs of each VPA country. The list of country-specific priorities (Annex 3) has been established based on the countries’ most recent VPA/FLEGT roadmap or strategy, in consultation with key stakeholders. Applicants should address one priority per concept note and clearly specify it in the concept note template.

Concept notes should promote the inclusion of both men and women 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 gender role stereotypes. Please see Annex 2 on Gender for recommendations. Applicants are strongly encouraged to integrate gender mainstreaming supported actions in their proposed activities.

2.5 Financial allocation provided by FAO

Each project will have a maximum duration of 12 months and a FAO budget allocation of a maximum 110 000 USD.

2.6 Pre-screening criteria

Applications must meet the following general criteria:

1. The concept note has to be realistic and feasible considering the envisaged budget and time allocation (maximum 12 months and USD 110,000);
2. The applicant must be registered in an eligible country (see list of eligible VPA countries, **Section 2.3**) where the project is implemented;

² A private sector organization is a **non-profit** 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 forest sector. Private sector organizations can produce for domestic markets or export to regional and/or international markets. Direct support to private companies is not available through the Programme.

3. The applicant must be a government institution³, or a civil society organization⁴, an organization/federation of the private sector⁵ or an indigenous and/or tribal group;
4. The concept note must identify a national priority, as listed in Annex 3;
5. The concept note must be complete and follow the required format (see **Annex 1** “Concept note form”);
6. The funding requested from FAO does not exceed the maximum limit of USD 110,000 ;
7. All actions should take place in the country/ies⁶ where the applicant is based and directly operates. Applicant must also be actively involved in all stages of implementation.

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;
- Action 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 that consist exclusively or primarily in capital expenditure, such as infrastructure, large equipment or vehicles and other resources;
- Actions that 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 directly supporting political parties;
- Actions supporting activities that bear no relevance to the VPA (eg. a proposal to carry out reforestation or tree planting);
- Actions that use the funds to pay all or part of existing staff salaries for Government services;
- Actions that seek funding for activities that have taken place prior to the submission of the concept note.

Number of concept notes per applicant

An applicant may submit more than one concept note under this call for concept notes (for example, two concept notes targeting two different national VPA priorities). An applicant may at the same time be partnering with one or more other applicants. However, an applicant may not be awarded more than one grant under this Call for concept notes.

³ Commerce Departments, Business development offices and other Government offices not directly related to forestry are also eligible

⁴ For the purpose of this guideline a civil society organization is defined as a not-for-profit organization that pursues an issue(s) and values defined by its members or constituency and that contributes to the common good or public interest.

⁵ For the purpose of these guidelines a private sector organization is defined as a not-for-profit grouping, union or association of private sector businesses or individuals working toward a common interest that is aligned with the public interest.

⁶ The project and project proponent should be clearly established in one country but it could involve participation of other VPA and non-VPA countries.

3. Evaluation process

All concept notes submitted to the Programme shall be evaluated as follows:

- The Programme Management Unit (PMU) will register all received concept notes.
- All concept notes received will be pre-screened by the PMU using the criteria presented in point 2.6.
- Concept notes that pass the pre-screening will be further evaluated by the PMU according to the evaluation criteria presented in Table 1. A maximum of 100 points is available for the 10 criteria combined. A minimum of 70 points and at least 50 percent for each criterion are required to be selected to submit a full proposal.
- The PMU shall inform all applicants who submit concept notes of their evaluation results of their concept note. Applicants who have submitted concept notes that fulfil the pre-screening criteria and score at least 70 points as per the requirement noted above, will be asked to *submit a full proposal*. These applicants will receive guidelines for writing the full proposals with a description of the evaluation criteria and the selection process.

Depending on the quality of the concept notes received, the evaluators will also seek as much as possible to establish a balanced geographical distribution in their evaluations.

Table 1: Evaluation criteria and scoring system for concept notes

Evaluation criteria	Score
1. How coherent is the overall design of the project? In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved? Does it take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders?	/20
2. Are the results and activities consistent with the project's objective?	/10
3. Are the anticipated results achievable within the budget and time-frame?	/10
4. Does the project seek collaboration with other partners at the national or regional level?	/10
5. Is the project innovative and provide added value to what is already in place?	/15
6. Does the concept note effectively specify the means that will be deployed in order to sustain the project, or at least its outcomes, in the long term?	/10
7. Does the project promote inclusion of youth and/or addresses gender issues in the forestry sector?	/15
8. Does the applicant present sufficient managerial capacities?	/10
TOTAL	/100

4. Concept note submission

Concept notes in English, French or Spanish should be submitted by email. After the submission deadline the Applicants will receive a notice informing them that their concept note has been successfully received.

The concept notes must be sent to the following address:

FAO EU FLEGT Programme
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla - 00153 Rome - Italy
E-mail: FLEGT-cfp@fao.org

The concept notes must be submitted no later than:

15 September 2017, 16.00 GMT

5. How to write the concept note

All concept notes should be completed using the Concept note form (See **Annex 1 below**). There should be a concise description of the project, and the description of the concept should be no more than three A4 pages. While no specific guidelines are imposed to describe the main idea of the project, please keep in mind the following:

- The objective of the project should be expressed in a single, concise statement.
- Applicants are encouraged to provide details on the expected results and activities to achieve the results. Each result or output should be described in one sentence, supported by a list of key activities and deliverables.
- The project should be in line with the priorities of the VPA process under way in the country of intervention and/or should contribute to the priorities identified in the list.

In the Concept Note, applicants are only required to provide an estimate of the requested FAO financial contribution. Only applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be required to present a detailed budget.

Additional annexes will not be considered.



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ANNEX 1: Concept note form

Government institutions, Non-state actors and
private sector organizations

Support to the VPA process

Deadline for submission of Concept Notes:

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1. Applicant – general details	Full name		
	Acronym		
	Country ⁷		
	Legal status		
	Address		
	Contact person	Name	
Tel			
Email			

2. Applicant – managerial capacities	Annual turnover / Budget	
	Governance structure <i>Please briefly describe the structure of the organization, roles and responsibilities of the resource persons involved.</i>	

3. National priority addressed	
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4. Main targeted country	
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5. Requested FAO contribution <i>(maximum 110 000 USD)</i>	
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6. Duration <i>(maximum 12 months)</i>	
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7. Title, objective and main activities - Title

⁷ Country in which the applicant is registered

- Objective (50 words)

Describe what the project aims to achieve in terms of its topic and the changes that should take place as a result of the project.

- Expected results and activities (500 words)

Give sufficient information so that the results, preferably no more than 3, can be clearly understood. For each result, list suggested indicators of achievement, covering BOTH quantitative and qualitative progress.

Under each result, list the activities proposed with a brief explanation of each activity. There should be at least two activities per result and preferably no more than four or five. State the key deliverable(s) that each activity should achieve.

8. Relevance (500 words)

State which priority the proposal addresses and how it complements other ongoing work. Briefly describe the problem to be addressed, how the proposal will address this problem. Indicate how the outcome at the end of the project will be sustained.

9. Gender and youth (300 words)

State briefly those aspects of the proposal design that focus on gender mainstreaming and/or youth inclusion. How is the proposal different as a result of the gender and youth focus? Has it be designed to meet specific gender or youth needs? Please refer to Annex 2 for guidelines on proposed activities.



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ANNEX 2: How to include gender considerations in proposals

The following is a list of supported activities that should serve as a reference for the service providers in formulating their gender-specific activities. The supported actions are grouped under four categories with corresponding objectives. Applicants are not expected to address all activities, but they are strongly encouraged to include, or to make reference to, some of these activities in developing their project interventions.

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

Examples of supported activities:

- i. Consider including gender-disaggregated data collection and/or gender-specific indicators in developing national forest policies, building on relevant work undertaken by other stakeholders and relevant organizations on gender monitoring, evaluation and indicators.
- ii. Promote or conduct gender analysis as a tool for better informed policy-making (baseline studies to inform law reform, formulating *ad hoc* policies, etc.).
- iii. Ensure that stocktaking exercises associated with formulating and revising national forest policies adequately account for the different ways men and women use forest and non-forest resources.
- iv. Build women's capacity to participate in decision-making processes (facilitate access to decision-making bodies by providing *ad hoc* support services, including awareness raising, capacity development activities, etc.).
- v. Ensure women are effectively engaged as members of the relevant stakeholder groups being consulted for drafting 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 community 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, in general, on the sustainable use of natural resources (forests).
 - xi. Ensure those responsible for high-level decision-making and international negotiations under the VPA agreement are aware of gender commitments at the national and international level.
2. **Organizational level:** Promote gender equality and active participation within organizations.
- i. Provide training and awareness raising to interested staff, indigenous and local communities and policymakers on the links between gender and better forest governance, sustainable use of natural resources (forests) and improved livelihoods.
 - 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 implementing VPAs or any other legally-binding processes or products.
 - iv. Consider adopting gender-responsive budgeting when assigning resources for implementing projects.
3. **Implementation and delivery:** Link gender aspects to achieving the Programme's outcomes (reducing poverty, decreasing adverse environmental impacts, promoting better forest governance, enhancing opportunities for more sustainable livelihoods and market integration)
- i. Ensure gender balance in capacity building to enable effective participation in the implementation processes and consider providing dedicated capacity building for women's groups, as appropriate.
 - ii. Develop and disseminate information materials in different languages that are relevant to both men and women on the links between gender and better forest governance.
 - iii. Monitor and report on the participation of men and women in the implementation processes.
 - iv. Consider the different needs of men and women when designing and implementing specific actions in support of implementing the 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's and women's access to and use of forest resources are equally taken into consideration and assessed when a project is being implemented.
 - 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 partnerships 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 implementing 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.



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ANNEX 3: List of Priorities LIBERIA

1. Private Sector Capacity Building

Support contract and permit holders, processors, operators, workers and private sector associations to meet VPA legality requirements. Proponents are invited to address, through creative and innovative ideas and approaches⁸, one or more of the following identified needs:

- a) Support contract and permit holders to complete annual operation plan and forest management plan as part of their Forest Management Operation and Harvesting requirements.
- b) Increase skills of local Liberian workers (operators, workers, associations) with regard to Health, Safety and Welfare measures as prescribed by Liberian Laws.
- c) Increase knowledge and compliance of employers in the forest sector with regard to Liberian labor laws and VPA legal requirements.
- d) Promote legality of chain saw milling operations, strengthen capacities of chain saw millers to operate in compliance with national Laws and VPA requirements and formalize their roles and relations along the timber supply chain.
- e) Explore options and potential for the development of a timber public procurement policy to promote legality of timber for the domestic market.

2. Strengthening Community Forestry Management Body (CFMB) ability to comply with LAS for commercial timber sale for exports and/or local markets

Complementary to current initiatives in this area, concepts are sought which address the ability of forest communities to source and supply legal timber to the domestic and/or international markets and respond to legal requirements. Potential support areas may include one or more of the following:

- a) Promotion and establishment of working relationship between CFMBs and chain sawyers or other local small operators and the formalization of potential long-term agreements for accessing, sourcing and supplying legal timber.
- b) Enhancing CFMB and CFDC members' capacity to monitor companies' timber production (volume) and accruing benefits (cubic meter fees) by providing rudiments of scaling and volume compilation.
- c) Enhancing community, and other non-state actors' capacity to monitor, communicate outcomes, and improve transparency measures around accruing benefits (cubic meter fees, land rental fees, resulting community development projects, social agreement deliverables etc).
- d) Strengthen the capacity of the CFMB governance structures to properly negotiate with the third party investor in the management of CFMAs.
- e) Build the capacity of CFMB to get involved with timber harvesting of their community forests as to reduce direct third-party investment.

⁸ Examples: Creative approaches to build capacity beyond basic training activities are encouraged, such as technical accompaniment; on the job training; technical exchanges etc.