



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Support



to MSMEs

FAO-EU FLEGT PROGRAMME Success story

Cameroon: Boosting small timber operators' market access through improved legal compliance

Key facts

Within the framework of the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme partnered with Action for Sustainable Development (ASD) to increase legal compliance and the participation of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Cameroon's domestic legal timber market. Through combined efforts, ASD strengthened the capacity of small timber operators to comply with regulations and facilitated the creation of legal and sustainable market linkages.

An estimated 75 percent of the total volume of timber traded in Cameroon's domestic market is illegally sourced^[1]. This is partly due to the lack of information and support available to timber operators and the scarcity of legal timber supplies. The FAO-EU FLEGT Programme collaborated with ASD to assist MSMEs in producing and trading legal timber by providing dedicated trainings on legal compliance and formalization.

Guiding MSMEs towards compliance

Action for Sustainable Development worked alongside 232 small timber operators in the production-intensive Southern and Eastern regions of Cameroon to increase capacity to comply with national regulations. To ensure buy-in from the beneficiaries, ASD raised awareness of the financial advantages of



legality and formalization, including access to new markets and more stable, profitable commercial partnerships.

ASD then delivered targeted capacity-building to MSMEs on formalization requirements and on national timber production and trade regulations, including on the recovery and commercialization of logging waste. To further simplify the formalization process, ASD developed a step-by-step manual detailing administrative procedures such as compiling and submitting paperwork, following up on the application process and filing taxes.

^[1] [CIFOR 2016](#)



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Worked to

improve market access of small timber operators through strengthened legal compliance.

Worked for

small timber operators in Southern and Eastern Cameroon.

Worked with

Action for Sustainable Development (ASD) and the Ministry of Forests and Wildlife (*Ministère des Forêts et de la Faune*, MINFOF).

Worked thanks to

Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office of the United Kingdom (FCDO), European Union (EU), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

Related links

FAO-EU FLEGT Programme
ASD Cameroon
MINFOF

Project implementing partner



Following the training sessions, eight small timber operators, including three women, were able to put their knowledge into practice by registering their businesses with the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises, Social Economy and Handicrafts and the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife.

Expanding market access through legality

To further assist small timber operators to secure business opportunities, ASD linked MSMEs to legal timber suppliers from community and communal forests and industrial sawmills. Through 24 procurement contracts signed within the project, operators purchased 15 000 cubic meters of legal wood from these suppliers.

As a result, for the first time MSMEs can now supply legal timber to buyers in Yaoundé, including members of the National Association of Collective Sellers of wood and bi-Products (ANCOVA) and craftsmen of the Cameroonian Federation of Associations and professionals of secondary wood processing (FECAPROBOIS).

Contributing to national timber legality objectives

Formalized MSMEs will be able to significantly contribute to country-wide efforts to increase the use of legally produced timber on the domestic market. This is in line with national objectives foreseen in the recently issued joint decree which makes legal timber mandatory in public procurement works.

The Ministry of Forests and Wildlife is also currently involved in the development of a national platform for virtual and in-person trade of legal timber.

Newly formalized operators are now positioned to act as mentors to colleagues who aspire to document legality. Cooperation at the ground level among operators was instrumental for the project's success and will contribute to its long-term impact on the region. At the time of writing, MSMEs are capitalizing on the knowledge and skills acquired within the project to form an association, which will increase representation in relevant local and national policy dialogues and continue to build capacity for legality compliance.

The FAO-EU FLEGT Programme works with a range of partners to help implement the European Union's FLEGT Action Plan to combat illegal logging and associated trade. Since 2016, the FAO-EU FLEGT Programme has supported projects in 27 priority tropical timber producing countries throughout Africa, Latin America and Asia. In Cameroon, the Programme has funded 29 projects, committing over USD 3.2 million.



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