

SNAPSHOT

FLEGT-related forest governance in Cameroon

Introduction

This report summarises the Forest Governance Index (FGI) assessment of forest governance in Cameroon in the context of its forest law enforcement, governance, and trade (FLEGT) process from 2007 to 2022. Cameroon has a rich forest heritage, boasting diverse species and ecosystems. However, in recent years, it has faced significant challenges in managing its forests sustainably and effectively. To address these challenges, Cameroon is actively engaged in forest governance initiatives, including the implementation of a FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA), which aims to ensure the production and export of legal timber to the EU. In this context, the FGI assessment indicates areas of governance where progress has been made.

The FGI assessment provides insights into the country's forest governance regime, highlighting areas of strength and weaknesses. In engaging with the findings in each five areas of governance, stakeholders may consider the following questions:

1. Do you relate to the findings of the FGI assessment and why?
2. Which of these findings might you use and for what purposes?
3. Are there opportunities for improvement? What might constrain their realisation?
4. Should the FGI assessment be run again for all or some areas? If so, what would be the periodicity and process(es) to focus on?

Evolution of forest governance in Cameroon between 2007–2022



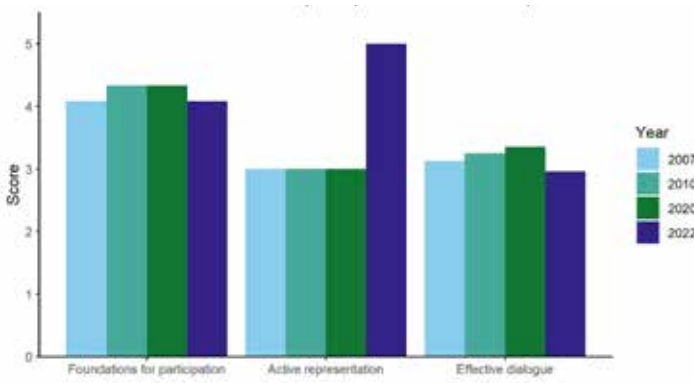
SCORES AND RECENT TRENDS

AREA OF GOVERNANCE	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Stakeholder participation	4.01	↑
Legislative and institutional clarity	3.54	→
Accountability and oversight	3.67	→
Transparency	2.87	↓
Compliance promotion and enforcement	3.27	→

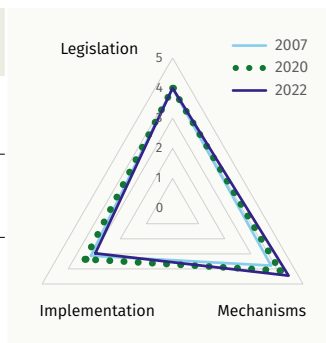
KEY

- ↑ Significantly improving
- ↗ Moderately improving
- No change
- ↘ Moderately decreasing
- ↓ Significantly decreasing

Stakeholder participation related to FLEGT



BUILDING BLOCK	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Legislation	4.00	→
Mechanisms for participation	4.44	↗
Implementation (breadth and frequency of dialogue)	2.96	↘



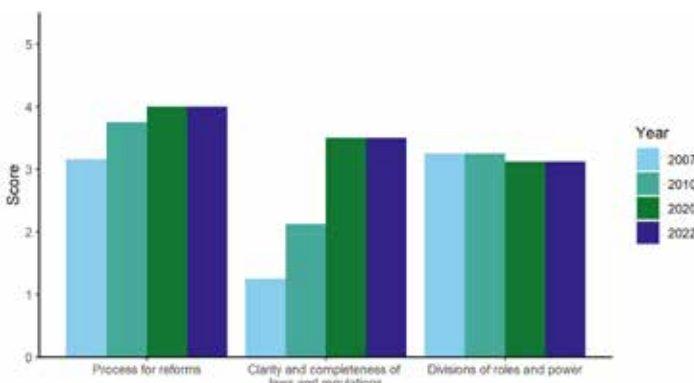
HIGHLIGHTS

- The **legal basis** for participation existed before 2007 and the FLEGT process further formalised it.
- **Mechanisms** to enable participation of stakeholders existed since 2007, reflecting the establishment of the VPA multistakeholder committee.
- Civil society and the private sector have been represented since 2007. Active representation of local communities and informal enterprises in the VPA multistakeholder structure was achieved in 2022.
- **Breadth and frequency of the dialogue** with stakeholders have varied throughout the process.
- Recent multistakeholder structures in the forest sector do not include all stakeholders in all issues, which has translated into less effective dialogue.

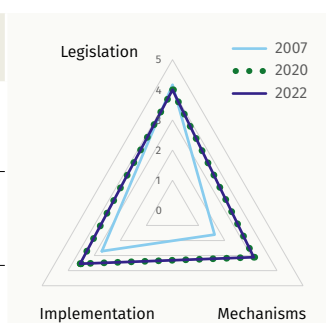
QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- What** are the causes of the drop in the frequency of dialogue?
- How** can we relaunch an effective dialogue and improve the representativeness of stakeholders in dialogue bodies?

Legislative and institutional clarity related to FLEGT



BUILDING BLOCK	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Legislation	4.00	→
Mechanisms for legal clarity and completeness	3.11	→
Implementation	3.54	→



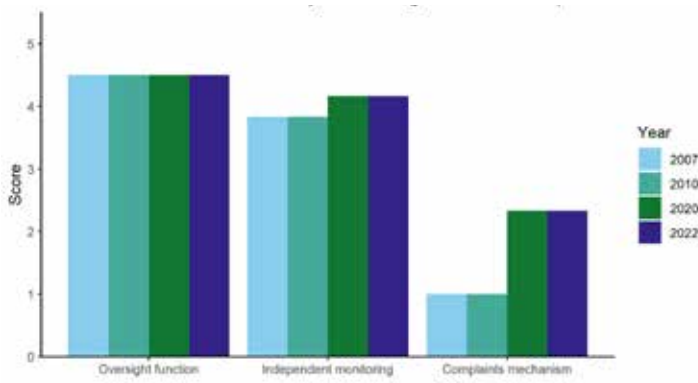
HIGHLIGHTS

- The **legal basis** existed for raising concerns about forest laws and regulations.
- Stakeholders became more able to identify and contribute to **legal reform** during VPA implementation.
- The VPA contributed to improving the **clarity and completeness of laws and regulations**. Law reform mostly took place after VPA negotiations concluded. Many rules on forest management and use have been adopted since 2012.
- **Roles and powers** over forest resource use and management are mostly clear and followed, but the VPA assisted to further clarify them.
- There are some **overlaps and conflicts** of roles and powers over land-use planning, land allocation and activities impacting forests.

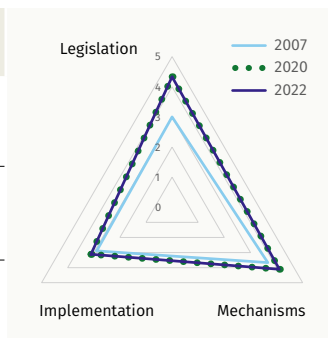
QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- How** have the improvements in the clarity and completeness of laws and regulations affected stakeholders' engagement in forestry and decision-making processes?
- What** are the avenues to continue to push for increased legislative and institutional clarity?

Accountability and oversight related to FLEGT



BUILDING BLOCK	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Legislation	4.33	➔
Mechanisms for accountability	4.11	➔
Implementation	3.11	➔



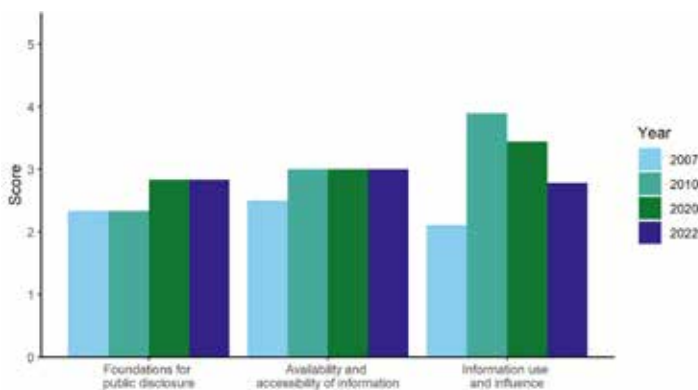
HIGHLIGHTS

- The General Inspectorate carries out the **oversight function** on government entities responsible for the management and control of forests. However, its reports are not public. No change was observed for this function throughout the assessment period.
- Independent monitoring** of forest use and management improved as a consequence of monitors expanding their geographic scope, having access to more information and enhancing monitoring work. Independent monitor reports are public.
- Complaints mechanisms** against government agencies and private operators do not exist in Cameroon. The VPA introduced a legal commitment to establish a complaints mechanism, though it is yet to be realised.

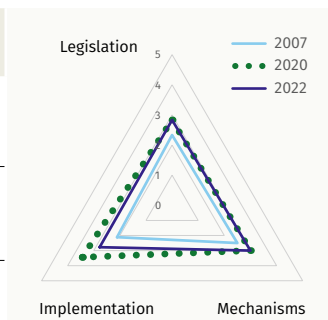
QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- How** to maintain the function of independent monitors and overcome remaining financial and operational constraints?
- How** to ensure that complaints mechanisms are operational, used by stakeholders and acted upon by the government?

Transparency related to FLEGT



BUILDING BLOCK	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Legislation	2.83	➔
Mechanisms to support transparency	3.00	➔
Implementation	2.78	➔



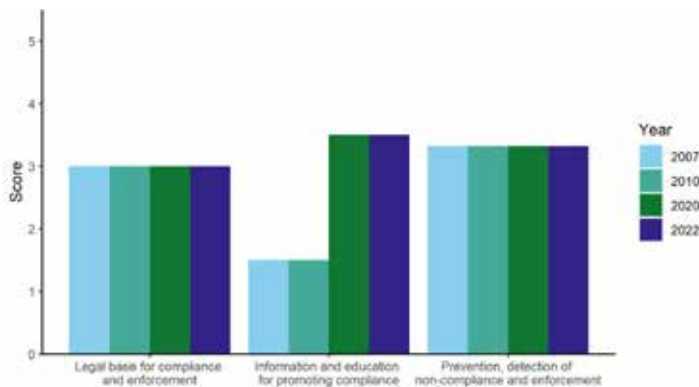
HIGHLIGHTS

- The **rights** to access certain forest information existed in 2007, but the VPA clearly defined and expanded which information was to be made public. For example, the VPA required the publication of information on forest management at all levels, taxes and law enforcement. There are still no legal provisions to specify grounds for refusal to disclose information. Although the VPA led to **information becoming slightly more available**, government entities continue to delay publication of information and do not consult stakeholders on which information they need.
- The **use and influence of information** increased during VPA negotiations, but this gain has been slowly decreasing in later years as information stopped being widely distributed.
- The use of information via the VPA has meant that forest stakeholders have gained a better understanding of forest laws and regulations.

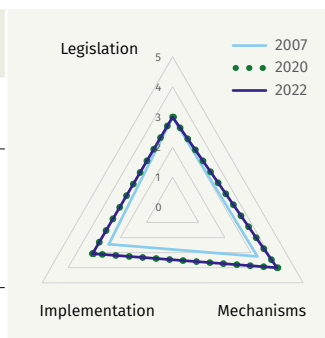
QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- What** hinders the implementation of transparency despite the existence of legislation and support mechanisms in this area?
- Which** aspect of transparency should be improved in priority and how: policies, the availability of information or its use by stakeholders?
- How** to reverse the decline in the use of information?

Compliance promotion and enforcement related to forest areas



BUILDING BLOCK	SCORE 2022	TREND 2020-22
Legislation	3.00	→
Mechanisms to promote compliance and support detection and enforcement	4.00	→
Implementation	3.07	→



HIGHLIGHTS

- The **legal framework** contains provisions on the application of the law, but there have been minimal changes since 2007.
- Mandates for addressing non-compliance** with land-use planning and land allocation are unclearly defined, while they are well-defined for forest use and management, payment of fees, environmental legislation, and third parties' rights to forests.
- The legal framework could better define the **type of response and penalties** for addressing non-compliance.
- The VPA led to a significant improvement in the amount of **information and education** for promoting compliance. Information to support operators in understanding their obligations became more available and educational initiatives promoting private sector compliance increased after 2010.
- Prevention, detection of non-compliance and enforcement** did not change throughout the assessment period. There were no significant changes observed in the presence of enforcement officers in the forests, information systems for promoting compliance, or enforcement measures.

QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- How** can legal improvements be encouraged?
- What** constrains improvements in implementation, in particular in prevention, detection and enforcement?

The Forest Governance Index

The Forest Governance Index (FGI) is a tool for capturing evidence in areas of governance applicable to the management, protection and conservation of forests. The evidence then supports the scoring of indicators that help illustrate a country's forest governance situation and changes.

The assessment covers changes in the following areas:

- Stakeholder participation related to FLEGT
- Legislative and institutional clarity related to FLEGT
- Accountability and oversight related to FLEGT
- Transparency related to FLEGT
- Compliance promotion and enforcement related to forest areas

Each of the five areas is assessed at three levels:

- Legal foundations that promote good governance
- Infrastructure in the form of mechanisms and processes to implement the legal foundations
- Implementation of the mechanisms and processes

For each of the five governance areas, three key features serve to unpack forest governance.

Methodology

The first stage of the FGI assessment is carried out by experts using a standard questionnaire to guide the scoring and collection of evidence. Evidence can be in the form of published documents and information on events, activities or developments that took place from 2007 to 2022. The evidence provides for the substantiation of the score rather than relying on opinions or experts' perceptions. A scoring guide is provided for each indicator, which is scored out of a maximum of five once the scoring is rescaled. The score of each governance area is calculated as an average of its three constituent key features, and no weighing is applied.

To interpret the scores, predefined thresholds categorise the magnitude of change. Changes below 0.15 points are considered as 'no change', changes between 0.15 and 1 point as 'moderate', and those exceeding 1 point as 'substantial'.

Following the first stage, the data is reviewed, checked and validated by 10 to 15 country actors with knowledge and experience from their roles in government, private sector or civil society, and the ability to contribute for the years covered by the assessment. During this stage, representativeness and inclusion of groups such as women and marginalised peoples is encouraged.

For more information on the Forest Governance Index methodology, visit <https://fgi.efi.int/resources>