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Presentations	Session 2.3	<i>Individual presentations: Forest trade and legality.</i>

Abstract Session 2.3 – Effectiveness of the Transnational Timber Legality Verification Regime: the case of Ghana’s Timber, Legality Assurance System (GhLAS).

The EU’s Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan is one of the most innovative transnational environmental forest governance mechanisms. It combines the “push” of imposing timber legality requirements on state and business actors and the “pull” of accountability, transparency and participatory involvement of non-state actors to tackle illegal logging and trade in illegally produced forest products along global supply chains. FLEGT stimulates formation of Voluntary Partnership Agreements between EU and timber producing countries to economically reward progress towards the rule of law through offering beneficial access to the EU market.

We present policy research that explored the effectiveness of timber legality verification regime drawing on Ghana’s Legality Assurance System (GhLAS). Informed by institutional theory of international regimes, six key aspects of effectiveness (problem solving; goal attainment; behavioural change; process effectiveness, constitutive effectiveness, and evaluative effectiveness) as baseline for regime evaluation suggested by Young (1994) were employed as the main analytical framework. Based on the qualitative analysis of 12 interviews and 8 documents, our results revealed that GhLAS has made substantial strides towards in: reducing illegal logging, promoting trade in legal timber, increasing transparency and accountability, improving benefit sharing and generally improving forest governance. However, we unravelled evidence of certain factors that constrain legality verification including weak systems infrastructure and neglected domestic markets with adverse effects on smallholders in the informal economy.

In conclusion, we identify areas of policy and legal action where there are still major hurdles that the FLEGT regime needs to overcome considering special circumstances such as poverty and limited alternative means of survival for chainsaw operators in the informal economy. Key conclusion is that conscious efforts are needed to increase capacity of medium and small-scale timber operators to enable them become legally compliant and stay in business which is otherwise dominated by large scale companies.

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