

AIDE MEMOIRE

FIFTH SESSION OF THE JOINT MONITORING AND REVIEW MECHANISM

Accra, 28th – 31st May, 2013

Introduction

1. The fifth session Joint Monitoring and Review Mechanism¹ (JMRRM) to facilitate the implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between Ghana and the EU took place in Accra from 28th to 31st May 2013. The mission was co-Chaired by Ghana and the EU. The Ghana Delegation was led by the Honourable Alhaji Inusah Fuseini. The EU Delegation was led by Ambassador Claude Maerten.
2. The Ghana team included representation from the Forestry Commission (FC), Civil Society and the Private Sector. The EU team included representation from the European Commission, Member States and experts from the EU FLEGT Facility. A participants list is attached as Annex I to this aide memoire.
3. The JMRRM discussed progress on key aspects of VPA implementation. It also discussed concerns raised by civil society and a report and subsequent press release by Global Witness, regarding the allocation of timber rights.

The following sections provide a summary of the discussions and decisions in relation to each of the areas concerned.

Legality Assurance System (LAS)

4. The LAS comprises a legality definition, a wood tracking system (WTS) and a system to verify compliance with the laws included in Annex II of the VPA. An Independent Monitor (IM) that conducts periodic audits to assure credibility of the system to verify legal compliance also forms part of the LAS.
5. It was expected that contract negotiations with the preferred bidder for the role of service provider to develop the WTS would be concluded by April 2012. However, in order to address the complexities of the LAS and capitalise on lessons learned from the pilot project, contract negotiations extended beyond the anticipated timeframe and a contract with a consortium led by Ata Marie Group (AMG) Limited was not signed until December 2012.
6. In order to accelerate the development of the system, the FC are working with AMG to fast track the WTS development process and are currently at a more advanced stage of system development than anticipated by the timeline agreed in their contract. The VPA implementation plan attached as Annex II to this aide memoire, provides details on key milestones and timelines for LAS development and roll-out.

¹ The purpose of the JMRRM is described in Article 19 of the VPA

