

Why is verification important?

There is a growing interest in tackling illegality within forest sectors, both:

- within timber-producing countries, where governments and civil society groups recognise that illegality undermines good governance, and
- within consumer nations, where there is growing pressure to require proof of legal production before wood products can be sold on import markets

The EU Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), for example, invites partner nations to sign agreements in order to safeguard their access to European timber markets. To deliver the proof of legal production necessary, an effective and independent system of verification needs to be developed, which has the confidence of a wide variety of stakeholders and the public at large.

Challenges in verification

To introduce viable verification systems, timber producing countries must overcome some significant challenges, by:

- Strengthening mechanisms to ensure public oversight of the forest sector
- Streamlining laws and regulations to clarify what is 'legal' in the sector
- Tackling conflicting claims and jurisdictions to land or resources
- Ensuring that industrial capacity matches the potential offered by forests
- Strengthening law enforcement agencies, and access to justice

Focus

Throughout its work, VERIFOR has a focus on:

- institutional mechanisms rather than technical solutions
- the provision of equitable solutions without adverse effects on the poor
- the principles of good governance

Funding

VERIFOR is a 4-year project (2005-9) co-funded by the European Union's 'Tropical Forestry Budget Line' (80%) with the Government of Netherlands covering the remaining 20%. Additional funding for the Latin America component is provided by the Government of Germany.



The VERIFOR team

VERIFOR is led by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), in partnership with institutions in tropical countries:

- The Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE) in Costa Rica
- The Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Central Africa office in Cameroon
- The Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) in Thailand



Research so far

Research has been completed to review existing verification systems in the forest sector and elsewhere, including:

- Existing national forest verification systems (for example, Ecuador's outsourced monitoring system or the Philippines' Multisectoral Forest Protection Committees), which already provide most of the basic building blocks for verification of legality
- Innovative examples of verification in other sectors, such as The Kimberley Process for diamonds, Nuclear safeguards and the IAEA and The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)
- Thematic work on 4 key themes
 - » Ownership
 - » Independence
 - » Legality Standards
 - » Developmental Impacts of Verification



What is VERIFOR?

VERIFOR is a research project on the verification of legality in the forest sector. It aims to work with partner institutions in tropical countries to ensure that timber and forest products are legally harvested and help producer nations put in place verification systems with high national and international credibility.

The illegal harvesting of timber and forest products in tropical countries has a detrimental impact on the environment and forest-dwelling communities, and causes a significant loss of public revenues



Contact details

For the latest news and publications, please visit the VERIFOR site at: <http://www.verifor.org/>

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VERIFOR

*Institutional Options
for Forest Verification*

