



# Collecting evidence of FLEGT-VPA impacts

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**Guyana country report**



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Caption: Wood processing in Guyana.

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# Abbreviations

ADE	: Aide à la Décision Economique
APA	: Amerindian Peoples Association
CIFOR	: Centre for International Forestry Research
CS	: Civil society
EC	: European Commission
EFI	: European Forest Institute
EU	: European Union
EUTR	: European Union Timber Regulation
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization
FLEGT-VPA	: Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade-Voluntary Partnership Agreement
FGDs	: Focus Group Discussions
FPA	: Forest Products Association
FSO	: Forest Sector Operator
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
GFC	: Guyana Forestry Commission
GLSC	: Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission
GRA	: Guyana Revenue Authority
GTLAS	: Guyana Timber Legality Assurance System
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
DG INTPA	: Directorate-General for International Partnerships
JIF	: Joint Implementation Framework
JMRC	: Joint Monitoring and Review Committee
LCDS	: Low Carbon Development Strategy
LC & IP	: Local communities and indigenous people
NFP	: National Forest Plan
NFPS	: National Forest Policy Statement
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
NIS	: National Insurance Scheme
NPPO	: National Plant Protection Organization
NTWG	: National Technical Working Group
SFA/SFP	: State Forest Authorizations/Permits



# 1 Introduction

The objective of this study, a collaboration between the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and *Aide à la Décision Economique* (ADE), financed by the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), is to identify potential qualitative and quantitative evidence of impacts of the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade-Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT-VPA) process so far across a sample of four countries – Guyana, Honduras, Côte d’Ivoire and the Republic of the Congo. Results are placed within the global European Union-FLEGT (EU-FLEGT) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) indicator database, which includes relevant variables from secondary data sources.

A major, broader objective is to continue building a resource base on a long-term complex process which touches upon political, institutional and technical issues, with socio-economic and environmental impacts spanning from very localized to global geographies. By covering four countries at different stages of VPA implementation, this study will also present findings and lessons at a global level (in a separate summary report), combining results to outline a bigger picture of VPA process impacts where possible. This is also possible because the methodology (see Section 2) used in Cameroon, Ghana, and Indonesia (2019)<sup>1</sup> is the same as that used in these more recent assessments. This provides us with seven countries in total, and a real opportunity for in-depth comparative analysis and insight into global-level impacts and specific changes related to negotiation and implementation phases.

The methodology used is designed to be replicable over time and applicable to other VPA countries. FLEGT-VPA impact evidence at a more global level has the potential to provide clearer insights with the inclusion of more VPA countries in the future; and the current evidence could be used as a baseline scenario should future assessments be repeated in the same countries.

When collecting information, we take into account the fact that countries are at various stages of the VPA negotiation and implementation process. Guyana and Côte d’Ivoire’s VPAs are still in the negotiation phase, while Honduras’ has just been ratified (30 June 2021) and the Republic of the Congo’s has been implemented since 2013. Therefore, the questionnaire was designed to collect information on the current situation, and, through recall questions, on the situation prior to VPA implementation for the Republic of the Congo, and on the situation prior to VPA negotiation for Honduras, Guyana and Côte d’Ivoire. This results in indicator values being collected that establish a baseline situation (prior to VPA implementation) for all countries. Furthermore, it also captures perceived changes in various forest sector-related domains and the VPA contribution to these perceived changes (due to either VPA implementation or VPA negotiation). While we do not expect VPA negotiations to have made an impact in all the dimensions covered, nor for them to be as important as VPA implementation impacts, it is still relevant to estimate any changes the typically long negotiating phase has brought about, particularly as stakeholders begin to understand the specificities of the VPA process itself.

This report firstly outlines the methodology used, and then describes the VPA process and forest context in Guyana, and finally presents evidence of potential VPA negotiation impacts. These results are presented following the General VPA Theory of Change (ToC) logic. This General VPA ToC (Figure 1) details the causal relationships that lead to the expected VPA impacts (far right-hand side) resulting from the expected outcomes (centre and left-hand side).

The CIFOR-ADE team was in Guyana between 8 and 23 April 2021 to collect data. This country report is an intermediary deliverable designed to feed the final synthesis report of the seven countries.

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1 <https://www.cifor.org/knowledge/publication/7566>

# 2 Methodology

## Key takeaways

- A thorough desk review undertaken for each country, identifying available VPA negotiation phase impact evidence.
- A sample of respondents identified that are representative of the main VPA stakeholders in the country.
- A survey conducted enabling a quantitative assessment of the perceived changes in different VPA expected impact fields and VPA contribution to these changes.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) held that allowed respondents to give more qualitative details on their perceptions, as well as to share personal experience on some topics.
- Positive feedback received from respondents on the data collection methodology.

To measure the impact brought about by a VPA, a mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology was developed. This has been rolled out across each of the four countries, with slight contextual modifications for each. The methodology is designed to be replicable over time and applicable to other VPA countries (in any VPA phase).

A final data collection tool was developed and then deployed through **three main stages**, which are briefly described below:

1. definitions developed for the different themes according to the General VPA ToC
2. review of the existing literature
3. interviews conducted with key stakeholders.

## 2.1 Main themes of the study relying on the VPA Theory of Change

The **first** stage was the identification of the most relevant themes to cover during the study. ADE and CIFOR worked together to identify five main themes, which correspond to the five expected impacts as displayed in the General

VPA ToC (see Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> Note that causal links are not as linear as they appear in the figure and that most result boxes are interlinked. However, to better outline the causal relationship and to structure the report, we have assigned a colour to each impact dimension and coloured the related outcome boxes accordingly. First, we started by describing the impact in the governance and institution dimension. Indeed, this dimension can be regarded as a prerequisite for other subsequent impacts (as shown in Figure 1).

A mapping of the indicators collected through the perception survey and the General VPA ToC and respective list of indicators is available in Annex I.

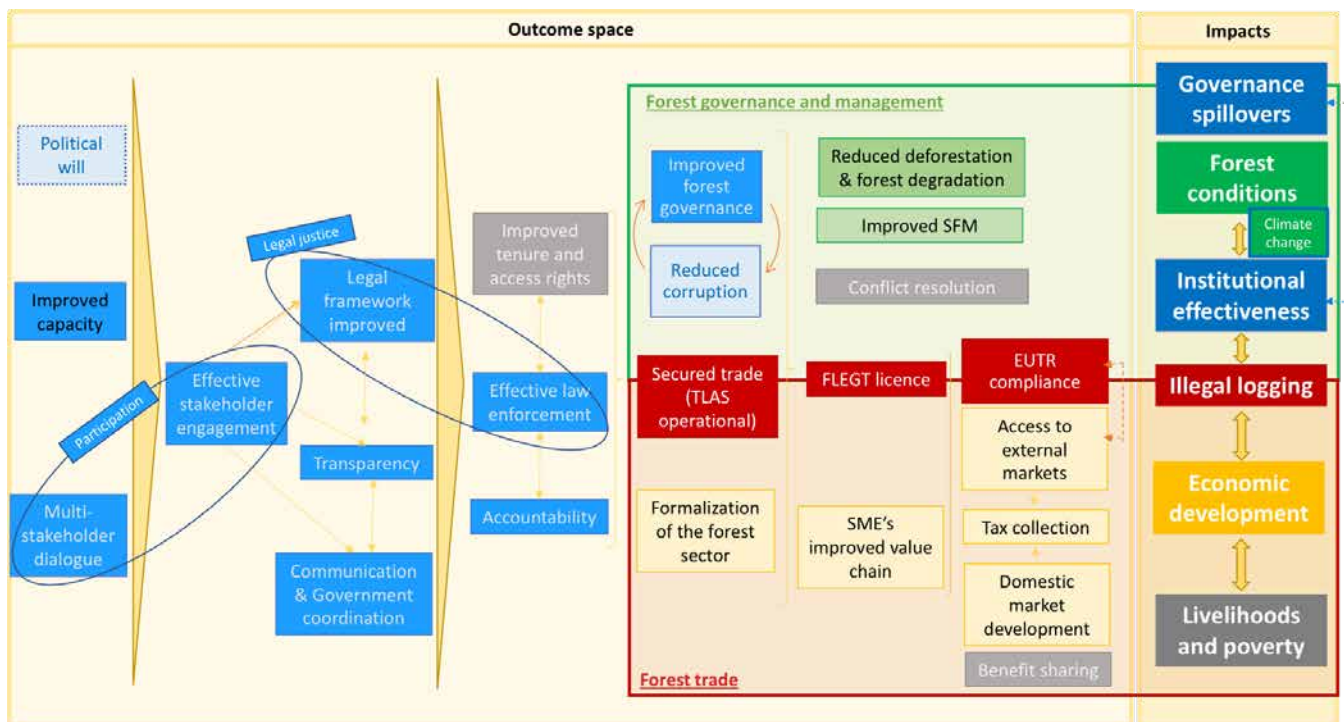
## 2.2 Desk review

The **second** stage was a thorough desk review per country. Stakeholders were consulted to ensure the most relevant literature was identified and processed (in particular, literature focusing on impacts within the five main themes). An exhaustive list of the reviewed literature is available in the bibliography. Note that this desk review<sup>3</sup> is a living, stand-alone document that can be further amended by adding relevant references when available.

The thorough desk review allowed us to identify prevailing hypotheses on impacts. This helped to formulate questions for the survey, and then build the indicators that were used for the data analysis. The desk review also ensured that the questionnaire could be tailored to different country contexts and that questions were in line with the sorts of impact the VPA would be expected to bring about in each country. This ultimately helped us to compare VPA impact expectations as identified during the desk review, against actual VPA progress and possible unintended impacts identified through the primary in-country data collection.

<sup>2</sup> This general ToC has been constructed based on the available ToCs for each of the 16 VPA countries (EFI documentation).

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1.



**Figure 1. General VPA ToC**

Note: For the synthesis report summarizing findings from seven VPA countries (Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guyana and Honduras), the ToC has been slightly updated.

The review included the following categories of documents:

- VPA annexes and VPA-related documentation
- publicly accessible EU-FLEGT facility reports
- logging-off VPA updates (FERN)
- legislative documents related to forest regulation
- selected academic papers
- impact monitoring documentation (indicator value and narratives) when made available to us.

One important takeaway from the desk review is that the available literature does not propose baseline measures for most of the impact dimensions. In general, baseline values, i.e., indicator values before a VPA implementation starting date, are not publicly available in the literature or were simply not considered at the beginning of the process to assess a change, hence the need for first-hand data to be collected.

## 2.3 Field mission

The **third** stage involved deploying the questionnaire in-country. Prior to the mission, the questionnaire was reviewed and revised by local experts to tailor it to the relevant country contexts. In addition, a sample of

respondents was selected from public administration, the private formal and informal sectors, civil society, as well as from local forest communities and indigenous groups. Some representatives from international institutions (EU Delegation, EU-FLEGT, FAO, EFI, etc.), consultants and academics were also invited and constitute the last category ('Other').

### Sample selection

Through research teams from CIFOR/ADE and EU-FLEGT/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/ European Forest Institute (EFI) connections and knowledge of the context, key experts and long-standing stakeholders in the forest sector were identified and invited to participate in the survey. The objective was to reach 100 relevant respondents weighted into five categories: the public sector, the private sector (industrial and formal/informal small and medium-sized enterprises [SMEs]), civil society (CS) and local communities and indigenous people (LC & IP), and an additional 'other category' grouping consultants, researchers, and donor representatives. In each category, we made every effort to reach out to and include representatives of different associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), departments

within ministries, etc., to capture as much diversity as possible. This expert sample was large enough to compute statistics, and to capture a range of the existing points of view regarding the VPA process and possible impacts.

If some preidentified respondents were not available, we made sure that they were replaced by someone who had similar levels of expertise. We also offered the possibility to answer the questionnaire online and to have a Skype call/discussion to receive qualitative input.

A full respondent breakdown can be found in Section 2.3.

### Individual survey

CIFOR's Ethical Review was applied to all interview sessions. A consent form reminded respondents about the anonymous and confidential treatment of the information provided in the survey. Respondents were also reminded that they could stop answering at any time during the survey if any discomfort was arising from answering the questions. Lastly, by signing the consent form, respondents agreed to their responses being (anonymously) used in the assessment.

Each questionnaire took between two and three hours, depending on levels of discussion and the number of participants.

A 15-minute introductory PowerPoint presentation was shown to all participants. The presentation covered the aim and scope of the assessment, the types of questions and answers that participants would find displayed on the tablets used for the questionnaire, as well as some practical examples to illustrate the concept of 'impact' and to agree on the meaning to be given to the various possible answers.

Agreeing on the meaning of the scale used in the questionnaire was a very important step because various participants from the same group of respondents, as well as from different groups, may have had a different understanding of responding with 'very positive' or 'very negative' to a question and impact area. Agreeing on the scale and on the meaning of various steps along the scale (e.g., 'weak', 'very weak', 'strong', 'very strong', etc.) provided the interview team and the respondent group with a common language to be adopted while completing the questionnaire.

This common language allowed for more meaningful cross-country comparisons, as a 'very weak' impact in the case of country A, for example, could be compared with the same 'very weak' impact from the same question/s in countries B, C, etc.

The answers input directly into tablets were designed to be individually completed using a Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing in a Group (CAPI-G) approach.<sup>4</sup> These individual sections were constructed using close-ended, multiple choice or Likert scale questions (0–5, 0–3, 0–100%) to capture respondents' personal opinions, hence allowing **quantitative analysis**.

Questions were mostly designed to understand changes in trajectory, to capture respondents' opinions related to the current situation within the different impact themes, their perceptions of the situation prior to VPA ratification, or prior to the start of VPA negotiations (recall), and then their opinions on the feasible contribution of the VPA to any perceived change. Other questions were statement assessments, where respondents selected their agreement level for a statement using a scale of 1–5, or selected which statement they agreed with the most.

### Focus group discussions

The individual questionnaire was separated by pauses at the end of each theme, during which participants could share their opinions that formed on the previous section in more detail, ideally providing **qualitative measures of change** and specific examples. This anecdotal evidence allowed us to better explain the findings contained in this report, and questions were tailored according to the group's subject-matter expertise. Indeed, the fact that, where feasible, participants belonged to similar (professional) categories ensured that they felt free to talk and share their experience/vision.

Data collection was bolstered by having two types of input, numerical data input into tablets – the results of which could be accessed daily – and qualitative data with examples (detailed and anonymous notes taken during these FGD sessions). Analysis could therefore draw on two information sources, as well as being able to direct results back to existing literature to better understand continuity/divergence.

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<sup>4</sup> This data collection approach was designed by ADE and had been proven in previous studies to be efficient and reliable.



Feedback on the interview experience was also regularly sought from participants. Verbal feedback reported from respondents indicated that they enjoyed the two-pronged approach, which allowed them to think about VPA evolution from numerous angles before engaging in often lively discussion with peers. They also commented that questions were easier to complete due to icons associated with the different answers. Quantitative answers also had a high response rate (as opposed to many ‘don’t know’ answers), validating the expert pool of respondents and the relevance of the questions.

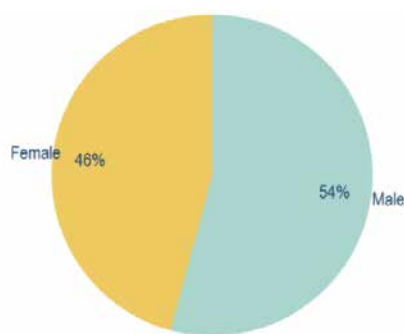
### Additional key informant interviews

Some key experts on the forest sector and VPA process in Guyana, that could not be present in the interview sessions or for which their presence was not deemed pertinent in the group discussions, were invited to individual interviews to collect qualitative inputs. When relevant, the online version of the questionnaire was sent to these participants, sometimes even after the field mission.

## 2.4 Description of respondent sample

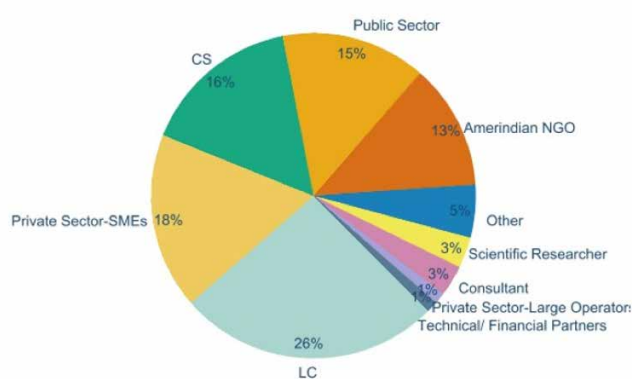
### Key takeaways

- **There was a balanced gender distribution across respondents** with males comprising 54% of respondents and females comprising 46%.
- **The expert pool** interviewed for the study was **highly relevant** as respondents had, on average, 13.5 years of experience in the forest sector and knowledge of the sectors covered in the survey (e.g., CS, the public and private sectors) was high.
- **The sample was balanced across respondent categories:** local communities (26%), the public sector (15%), small operators of the private sector (18%), and CS, including Amerindian NGOs (28%).
- **There was a high level of involvement in FLEGT-VPA-related activities** (87%) for respondents, with most being involved in discussions on capacity building, the definition of legality, and multi-stakeholder dialogue in the context of the FLEGT-VPA.



**Figure 2. Gender breakdown of respondents (N=96)**

Note: Although the workforce mostly consists of men, small logger associations in Guyana are represented by a majority of women (60%), which could explain the high representation of women in this study (46%).



**Figure 3. Respondents per their associated sector (N=96)**

The study purposefully identified experts and long-standing stakeholders in the Guyanese forest sector, which was demonstrated by the average number of years they had been involved in the sector (see Figure 4). We ensured that the main actors from each respondent group were included, making provisions to travel to them or them to us, which ensured that the data analysed was both accurate and credible. Respondents were invited to participate in the study through an official invitation sent by the local facilitator, who was also in charge of the follow-up by inviting respondents to pre-selected slots (based on sector) at a specific time and date (by e-mail and phone call).

To allow mean comparison tests across groups, respondents’ associated sectors were reduced to five:<sup>5</sup>

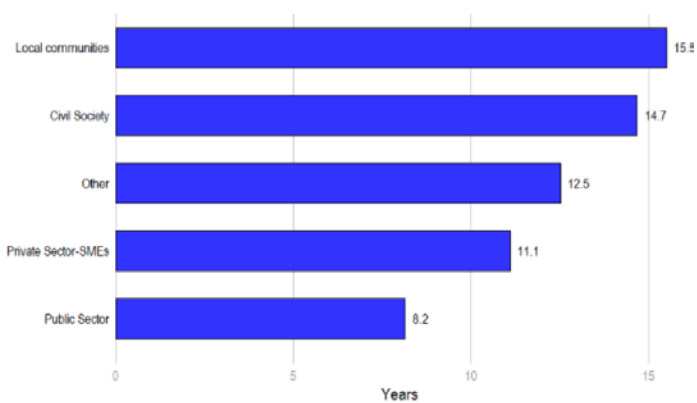
- **public sector:** 15%

<sup>5</sup> The number of responses (N) used for the different analyses is outlined in each figure. Sometimes this number does not correspond to the total number of respondents, since not all respondents replied every question.

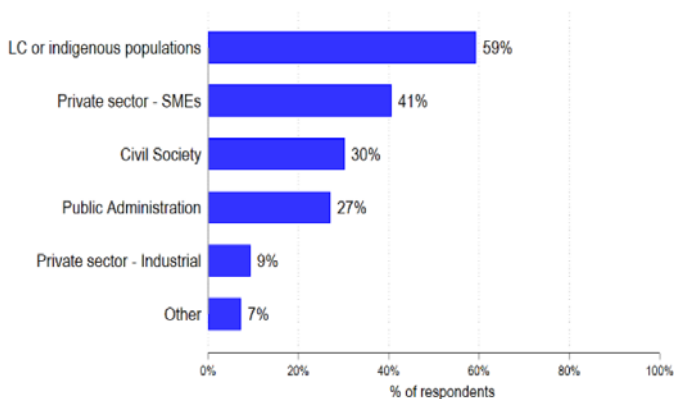
- **private sector – SMEs:** 18%
- **CS, including Amerindian NGOs<sup>6</sup>:** 28%
- **LC & IP:** 26%
- **others** (private sector – large operators, consultants, researchers and financial partners): 13%.

On average, respondents had **13 years of experience in the forest sector**. Within respondent groups, LC & IP were the most experienced, with more than 15 years of experience in the forest sector, while the public sector had the least number of years of experience (8.2). Respondents were most knowledgeable about LC & IP and small operators of the public sector (SMEs).

The three main motivating factors that respondents thought led Guyana to engage in the VPA process were i) to **improve forest management (67%)**, ii) to **reduce**



**Figure 4. Average number of years of experience in the forest sector (N=93)**

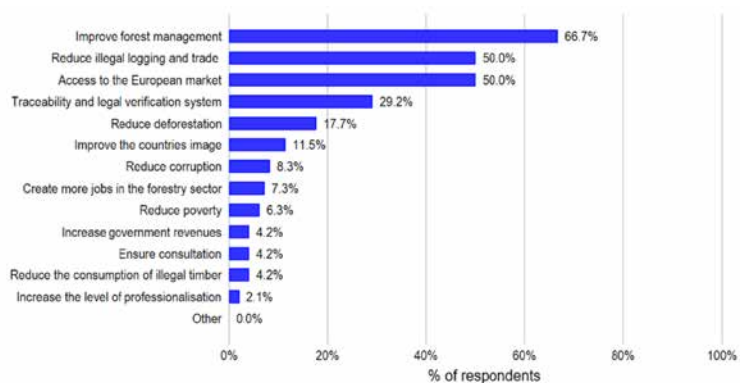


**Figure 5. Respondents' knowledge of sectors (N=96)**

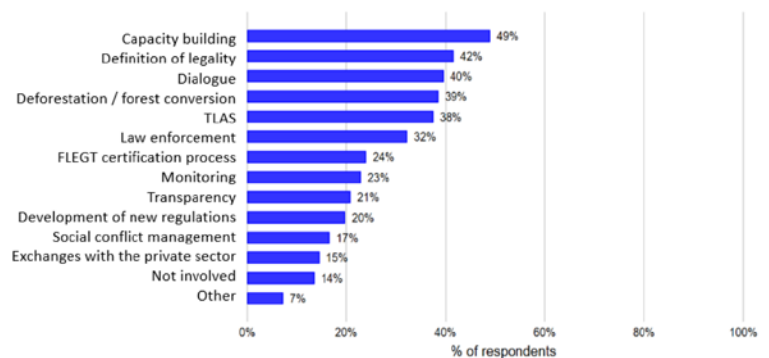
<sup>6</sup> Civil society in Guyana currently consists mostly of Amerindian or forest community associations.

**illegal logging and trade (50%)**, and iii) to **access the European market (50%)** (see Figure 6).

A large share of respondents noted that they are/were involved in discussions about **capacity building, the definition of legality and multi-stakeholder dialogue (49%, 42% and 40%, respectively)**, in the context of the FLEGT-VPA in Guyana. Respondents were also actively involved in **deforestation/forest conversion (39%)** and the Guyana Timber Legality Assurance System (**GTLAS (38%)**). Fourteen percent of respondents are not actively involved in discussions about any of the aspects of FLEGT-VPA (see Figure 7). Their answers have still been considered relevant for the remainder of the survey because 'not actively involved' does not mean 'not knowledgeable' about the FLEGT-VPA process. For example, while respondents may not be directly engaged with FLEGT-VPA activities, their knowledge of the process and the forest sector more broadly makes them relevant respondents to assess the changes and impacts of those activities.



**Figure 6. Top principal motivating factors leading Guyana to engage in the VPA process (multiple choices possible) (N=96)**



**Figure 7. Aspects of FLEGT-VPA respondents are/were most involved in (multiple choice possible) (N=96)**

## 2.5 Key takeaways of the field mission

### Key takeaways

- Ninety-six individual respondents completed the questionnaire, either in Georgetown, Linden, Anna Regina, Bartica, Annai, or online.
- Eight group sessions were convened in the above-mentioned locations (see Annex III for the agenda).
- The CIFOR-ADE team travelled to five out of ten regions in Guyana to ensure a high representation of all forest areas in Guyana.
- The CIFOR-ADE team met with the European Commission delegation to outline the purpose of the study and anticipated milestone dates.

The field team consisted of two experts from ADE, one from CIFOR, and three local facilitators. On the first day in Georgetown, an official briefing on the mission was held online with members of the Ministry of Natural Resources, and the data collection tool was refined. Team members then also travelled outside Georgetown to meet with relevant experts of the forest sector, and particularly forest communities.

### Key lessons learnt

- **COVID-19 measures were respected to the highest possible standards** (this included use of PCR tests, masks, sanitizer and disinfectant, social distancing and ventilated environments) – the entire team remained healthy during the mission.
- **COVID-19 measures presented some challenges:** transportation, tests, convincing participants and dealing with last-minute cancellations, and communication during in-person survey sessions were some of the challenges.
- **Actors agree that the VPA process is complex**, with many requirements, and a lot of effort is still required to complete them all. But there is also a **common understanding that significant progress has been made** and that the process is slowly moving towards its objectives.
- **The ADE-CIFOR team noticed an overlap between LC & IP and SME categories** with most respondents identifying themselves as LC & IP also working in the forest sector.
- **The CS category is mostly composed of Amerindian NGO members and LC/private sector (SME) associations.** This reflects the reality of the field, as CS groups (such as the ones existing in countries with a more advanced VPA process), with a focus on environment protection and natural resource management, do not exist yet in Guyana.
- **Despite significant efforts to mobilize them as participants, sawmillers are under-represented in the sample.** In Guyana, other actors often see them as intermediaries taking advantage of small loggers and avoiding regulations.
- **Only one participant from a large company completed the questionnaire.** The research team also met a representative from the Iwokrama forest concession (FSC certified), with whom the team visited the concession and discussed the different dimensions of the VPA and the forest sector in Guyana. Unfortunately, he did not have the time to answer the survey.
- **High-level Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) and Ministry of Natural Resources officials completed the survey online and participated in an online FGD.**
- **Some participants, mostly from LC & IP, knew little about FLEGT-VPA, which was expected because implementation has not yet started in Guyana.** However, this could also show that the VPA process was not participatory enough. Moreover, some invited participants sent a representative from their organization, which could be an issue as these representatives might not have the same level of knowledge as the originally invited actors. This should be avoided in the future and clarified with the local facilitators inviting the participants.
- **Most participants showed a lot of interest, were actively involved in the discussions and appreciated the exercise.** Several participants requested to receive the final report of the study once concluded. We will oblige by planning follow-up sessions in all countries.

# 3 Guyana's forest context in brief

According to the GFC, **the forest sector's contribution to Guyana's gross domestic product (GDP) steadily decreased during the last decade**, falling from 4.17% in 2006 to 2.27% in 2016 (GFC, 2017). The sector employs approximately 20,000 people from a total population of 735,000 inhabitants. It is estimated that the volume of exported logs represents 22% of total log production (GFC, 2020).

Of the 18.3 million hectares of forest (of which 45% is primary), almost **15 million hectares are managed by the state**, divided into 12.6 million hectares of **state forests** and 2.4 million hectares of **state lands**. State forests are under the management of the GFC, while state lands are under the control of the Guyana Land and Survey Commission (GLSC). About 2.6 million hectares have been formally allocated as **Amerindian Village Lands**.<sup>7</sup> Of the state forest, around 4.7 million hectares (38%) have been allocated to the forest timber industry for timber extraction through small concessions (43% of the allocated land), large concessions (36%) and State Forest Exploratory Permits (SFEPs) (21%).

**Guyana's deforestation rate is very low.** Fire and mining are the main drivers of deforestation, accounting for more than 50% and 41% of the change, respectively (GFC, 2020). Guyana's National Forest Policy Statement (NFPS) and associated National Forest Plan (NFP) of 2018 "reflect the country's **movement away from valuing forests for simply their wood, and instead treats forests as part of its national patrimony, to be managed collectively**". Aside from the timber industry, Guyana's forests

are key to the development of tourism, biodiversity conservation, wildlife management, and other ecosystem services.

Due to the **recent discovery of offshore reserves of oil**, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecasts an increase in Guyana's global economy of 26% in 2021.<sup>8</sup> However, the country's economic model strongly relies on the extractive sector and remains linked to the depletion of natural resources. Moreover, lack of diversification has left the economy vulnerable to economic shocks, such as fluctuations in global commodity prices and local production shocks (UNEP, 2017). In this context, **the VPA comes within the scope of improving forest governance and promoting trade in legal timber products**.

Regarding the FLEGT-VPA process, **negotiations started in 2012 and the VPA was initialled on 23 November 2018**. However, the agreement is not yet signed – since 2018, the VPA process has slowed down because of the 2018–2020 period of political instability in Guyana, as well as a disagreement between Guyana and the EU related to confiscated timber and its reinjection into the legal timber market.

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<sup>7</sup> The President of Guyana, under a special power of the State Lands Act, may issue land titles to Amerindian communities. By doing so he or she transfers ownership of the land from the state to an Amerindian community. Amerindians own the land collectively and for an unlimited period of time. Once title is transferred to an Amerindian community, the community owns the forest resources therein. There are certain limitations to the ownership rights of Amerindian communities. Their titles do not include rivers and riverbanks or mineral resources.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/GUY>.



# 4 VPA Impacts

The section below presents the results and their analysis of the study according to the following steps:

- Presentation of quantitative survey data starting with the contribution/impact of VPA negotiations.
- Outlining any statistically different views between respondent groups.
- Highlighting any evolution of indicators from before and after the start of VPA negotiations.
- Setting findings against literature contained in the desk review.
- Complementing findings with anecdotal evidence provided during the FGDs.

As mentioned in Section 2.1, we start our description of the results with impacts related to the governance and institution dimension as they can be considered a prerequisite for other subsequent impacts.

## 4.1 Governance and institutional effectiveness

This section focuses on two main expected impacts of the VPA process: *institutional effectiveness* and *governance spillovers* (see Figure 8).

- Improved *institutional effectiveness* in the forest sector will be enhanced by increased *forest governance and management* as well as *reduced corruption*, also possibly leading to *spillover effects* as the process might inspire other reform processes.
- To achieve better governance results, *improved participation* and *capacity* at CS, government, and private sector levels are primary necessary conditions.
- Subsequently, *improved participation* and *capacity* will also lead to *improved legal justice* (and law enforcement), as well as more *transparency*, better *communication and government coordination*, enhancing *accountability*.
- *Reduced corruption* will be achieved thanks to all these previously cited improvements and if it exists, *political will*.

These different expected results will be sequentially analysed in this section, using the collected data to construct appropriate indicators for each VPA ToC result box.

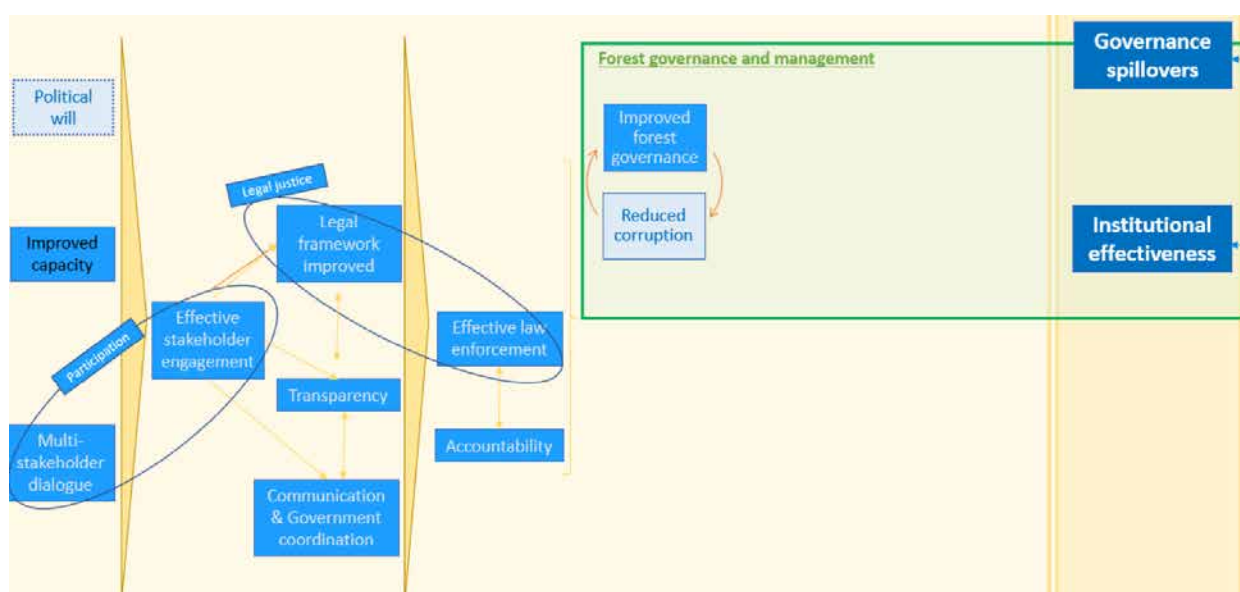


Figure 8. Impact pathways for Governance and Institutional Effectiveness

## Key takeaways

- **Most respondents (58%) agree that corruption in the forest sector has decreased**, and the VPA is considered to have improved the political will to fight corruption. Moreover, around two thirds of respondents believe that bureaucracy linked to the **FLEGT-VPA process has not created new opportunities for corruption**.
- Although the lack of coherence between regulations in the forest and the mining sector is an ongoing issue, the VPA has moderately contributed to **greater coherence of the legal and regulatory framework**.
- Even if there is still room for improvement in making information accessible, most respondents consider that the **VPA process has helped to increase transparency and accountability** of the government in the forest sector. This is in line with the VPA ToC result logic leading to improved institutional effectiveness and governance spillovers.
- **VPA negotiations have contributed to improved stakeholder dialogue of the different actors involved in the VPA process**, which are key outcomes leading to improved institutional effectiveness. The challenge is to maintain a high level of dialogue and consultation during the implementation phase of the FLEGT-VPA.
- However, while the VPA is considered to have improved the **capacity** of forest actors, participants remain sceptical about the capacity of small operators to comply with the law and regulations.

### 4.1.1 Forest governance

We first present the results of indicators that have been replicated following the FERN approach, which uses the FAO-PROFOR methodology to assess and monitor forest governance (2011). As the implementation phase of the FLEGT-VPA process has not yet started in Guyana, no report is available from FERN. Therefore, the data presented below should be considered as baseline data and could be compared with data potentially collected at a later stage of the FLEGT-VPA process.

The questionnaire addressed accountability, government coordination, participation, capacity, transparency, and legal justice. These six dimensions of governance are also included in the left-hand side of



Figure 9. FERN forest governance indicators for Guyana, 2021 (N=96)

the VPA ToC. The scale ranges from 0 (extremely poor, non-existent) to 5 (very good), which corresponds to a statement matching a potential situation in Guyana.

As outlined in Figure 9, **results are relatively similar across the different dimensions of forest governance, which are considered to reach an average to high level.**

More specifically, accountability, government coordination, and legal justice reach higher scores (3.6, 3.5 and 3.4, respectively), while transparency, participation, and capacity reach lower scores (3.2, 2.9 and 2.9, respectively). In the next paragraphs, results of FERN indicators, as well as other indicators derived from the questionnaire, are presented for each of the six dimensions.

#### Participation (multi stakeholder dialogue and effective stakeholder engagement)

*Multi-stakeholder dialogue* is the first box on the left-hand side of the VPA ToC and is part of the *participation* outcome of the VPA process.

**Consideration of the opinions of the different actors involved in the FLEGT-VPA process has improved since the start of the negotiations according to survey respondents.** Results show that VPA negotiations have moderately contributed to the improved opinion of local communities, CS and SMEs, as well as to more consultation of LC & IP in decision-making in the forest sector. These findings are consistent with the literature, which outlines that stakeholder dialogue and participation, particularly of SMEs and local communities, is seen as a major preliminary impact of VPA negotiations. Participation in the

National Technical Working Group (NTWG), the multi-stakeholder steering body supporting the VPA Secretariat in the VPA negotiation and implementation, has increased since 2012 and is now open to Amerindian NGOs and large environmental NGOs (EFI, 2019a; EFI, 2019b).

However, discussions on this topic highlighted that some participants from LC & IP and CS feel under-represented in the consultation process and would like to be more involved in decision-making related to the FLEGT-VPA. Participants mentioned the importance of easy language and clear questions to enable participation in the process. All indigenous communities need to be given adequate time to understand the issues and information related to FLEGT-VPA topics, such as forest management or the implementation of new laws and regulations, to actively participate in national discussions. Moreover, while Article 16 of the VPA text states that “Guyana shall ensure that the implementation and monitoring of this Agreement are in a transparent and participatory manner together with all relevant stakeholders”, participants share their concerns that the level of participation in the FLEGT-VPA process might diminish after the start of the implementation phase.

With regard to the FERN participation indicator (see more above, in Section 4.1.1), all three categories of actors appear to have a similar level of participation in the forest sector (around 3 on a scale of 0 to 5), with SMEs having the highest level of participation and LC & IP the lowest.

### Improved capacity

Along with multi-stakeholder dialogue, *capacity building* is an essential element of the ToC (on the left-hand side). It refers to the capacity of the CS to play its role as an independent observer and the capacity of SMEs to comply with laws and regulations.

VPA negotiations have had a moderate role in ensuring that independent observations are carried out more effectively by CS and in contributing to an improved degree of autonomy in its role as an independent observer in the forest sector. While the levels of autonomy and effectiveness of CS in its role as independent observer are perceived to have increased since the start of VPA negotiations, a large share of respondents still consider these levels as average (49% and 59%, respectively). Discussions indeed highlight that CS does not yet have enough capacity to act as a watchdog in the forest sector of Guyana.

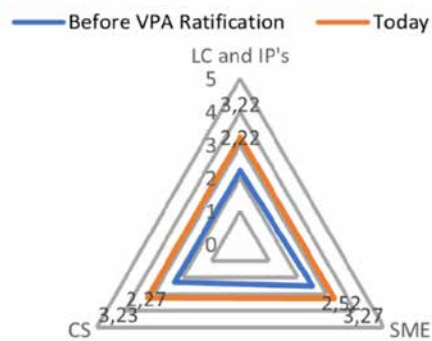


Figure 10. Evolution of the consideration of the opinions of CS, LC & IP and SMEs in decision-making in the timber sector (N=73)

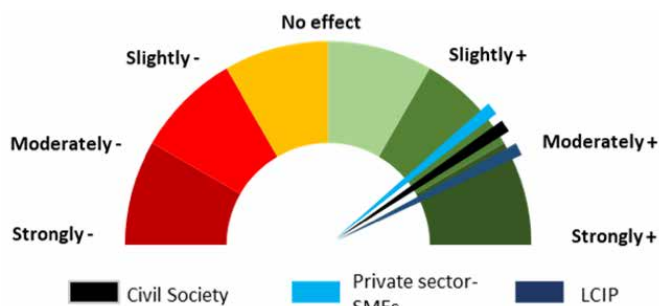


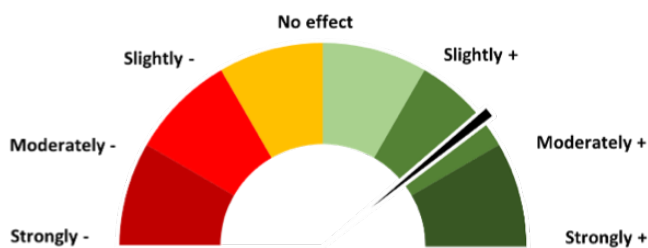
Figure 11. Contribution of VPA negotiations to more consideration of the opinions of CS, SMEs and LC & IP (N=91)



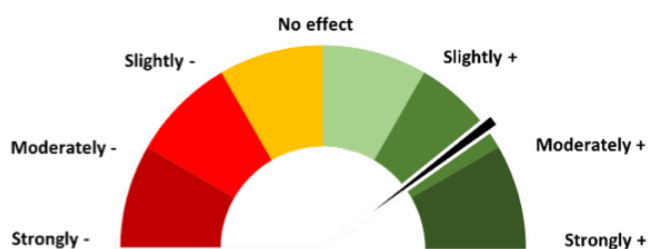
Figure 12. Contribution of VPA negotiations to more consultation with LC & IP (N=91)

Available documentation has already revealed that CS (not including Amerindian NGOs) seems weak and fragmented and scarcely involved in the forest sector. Ensuring that the voices of CS are heard, and its members are active in the implementation phase, will continue to be a challenge.

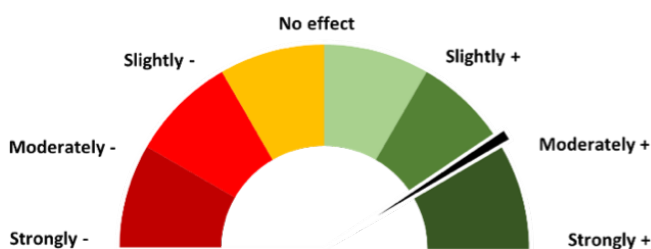
VPA negotiations are considered to have moderately contributed to the improvement of SMEs' technical capacities to conduct their activities legally. In line with the literature, participants during FGDs remain sceptical about the capacity of small operators to comply with the law and think that more capacity building and support for small operators



**Figure 13. Contribution of VPA negotiations to more effective independent observation carried out by CS (N=84)**



**Figure 14. Contribution of VPA negotiations to a greater degree of autonomy of CS in its role as independent observer (N=83)**



**Figure 15. Contribution of VPA negotiations to improved technical capacity of SMEs to conduct their activities legally (N=93)**

is required. Some stakeholders also warn about the limited capacity of the GFC in terms of skills and infrastructure to apply the relevant laws and regulations. Nevertheless, with regard to the **FERN capacity indicator**, it is the public sector that is considered to have the highest level of capacity (3 on a scale of 1 to 5), followed by local communities (2.7), SMEs (2.5) and CS (2.4).

### Legal justice

*An improved legal framework and effective law enforcement* both refer to *legal justice* that can be improved thanks to more participation and capacity of the different stakeholders involved in the VPA process.

**The VPA is considered to have moderately contributed to greater coherence of the legal and regulatory framework of the forest sector**

in Guyana. Moreover, regarding the **FERN legal framework indicator** (see more above, in Section 4.1.1), the answer “some legal reforms have been completed and significant steps have been taken to implement them” is seen as the most relevant. Indeed, available documentation mentions that by prompting a revision of the existing legal framework, the VPA process has contributed to clarifying legal and administrative requirements applicable to the forest sector, particularly with the enactment of the **Forests Regulations** (replacing the existing 1953 version) and the **Code of Practice for Forest Operations** in 2018 – two important legal instruments for the forest sector and future VPA implementation.

However, both the literature (Benn, 2020) and survey participants highlight the lack of coherence and cross-over between the legal frameworks underpinning the forest and mining sectors. As mentioned in Trevin and Nasi (2009), many forest users still consider “mining as functioning without any rules”. Participants also pointed out that there are still grey areas regarding (il)legal logging related to mining, and especially related to the use of timber after clear-felling.

Respondents consider that the VPA negotiation process has moderately contributed to the greater role of CS in the identification of irregularities. Related to effective law enforcement, the role played by CS in controlling legality and identifying irregularities has positively evolved: almost 80% of respondents consider CS to play a relatively important role today, while only one-half consider that this was already the case before the start of VPA negotiations.

Moreover, the perceived level of application of sanctions on actors who do not respect the laws and regulations in the forest sector has increased since 2012. Fifty-four percent of respondents consider that sanctions are mostly or systematically applied (compared with 30% of respondents who consider that this was the case before the start of VPA negotiations).

In line with this result, VPA negotiations are considered to have slightly contributed to more enforcement of sanctions as outlined in the law, as well as moderately made these sanctions more credible in the forest sector. However, discussions revealed that sanctions are sometimes excessively high, even for ‘minor’ infractions that are usually due to human error, and that sanctions are not commensurate to the severity of the infraction.



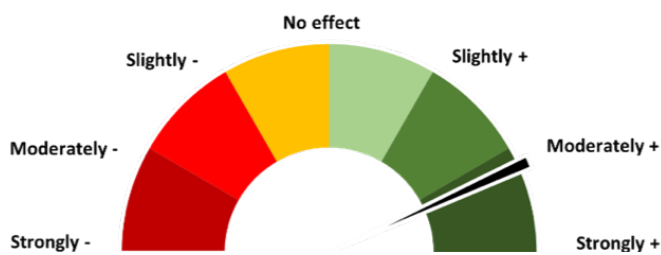


Figure 16. Contribution of VPA negotiations to better coherence of the legal and regulatory framework in the forest sector (N=94)

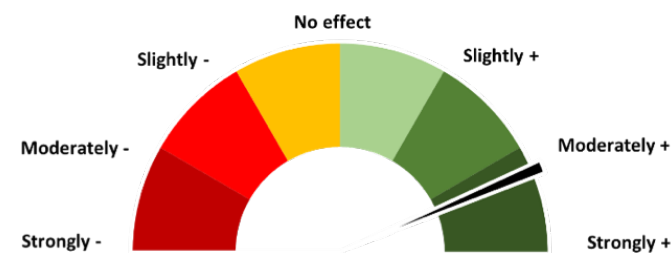


Figure 17. Contribution of VPA negotiations to providing CS with a greater role in controlling legality and in identifying irregularities (N=94)

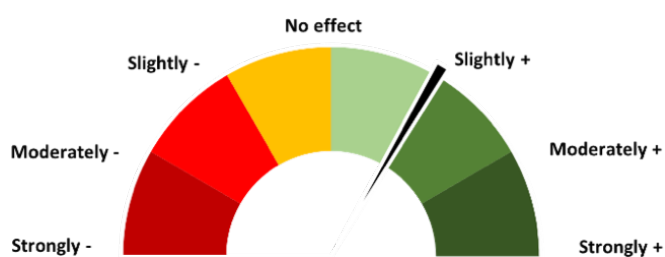


Figure 18. Contribution of VPA negotiations to more enforcement of sanctions as outlined in the law (N=89)

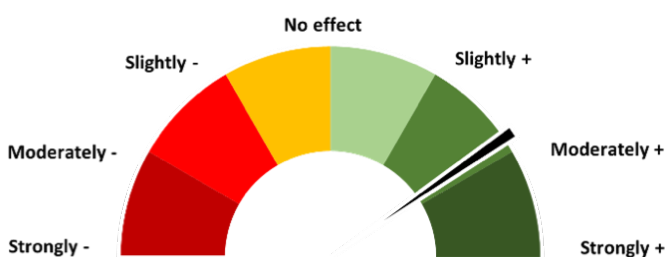


Figure 19. Contribution of VPA negotiations to making sanctions more credible in the forest sector (N=87)

The three main reasons for non-compliance highlighted by respondents were the lack of coordination between government agencies (63%), conflict of interests (45%) and contradicting laws and regulations (48%). As mentioned earlier, participants during focus groups systematically

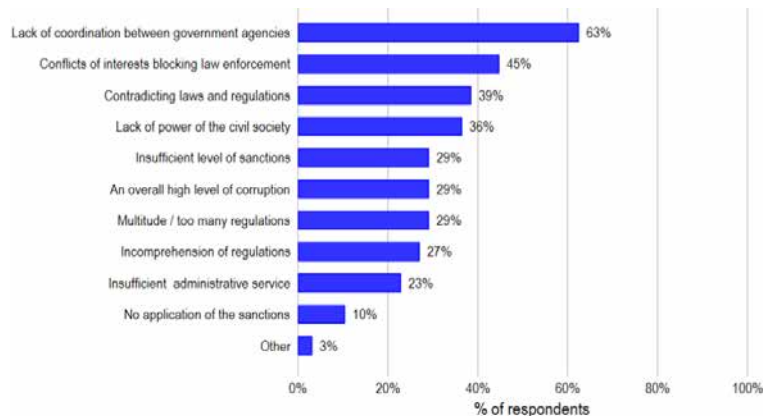


Figure 20. Causes of non-compliance with the law (multiple choices possible) (N=96)

mentioned the lack of coordination between regulatory agencies and the contradictory laws and regulations presented in the separate Mining and Forest Acts. Nevertheless, the FERN government coordination indicator reveals that “coordination within the forest department is good and there is reasonable information sharing but little joined up priorities and approaches”.

#### Transparency, communication and accountability

*Improved participation and capacity, as well as improved legal justice leads to more transparency and government accountability.*

The VPA negotiation process is considered to have moderately contributed to improving transparency and to making the government more accountable for its actions in the forest sector. Perceived transparency in the forest sector in Guyana has increased since the start of the VPA process. Ninety-three percent of respondents considered there to be at least a medium level of transparency in the sector today (versus 57% of respondents who consider this to have been the case before the start of VPA negotiations). While the literature also mentioned improved transparency as a preliminary positive impact of VPA negotiations, FGD participants highlighted that there is a need for improved communication to ensure a flow of relevant information that also reaches Amerindian villages. The participants actively asked for follow-ups and the regular sharing of information in a timely manner.

With regard to the FERN transparency indicator (see more above, in Section 4.1.1), the answer “most information is available on request within a

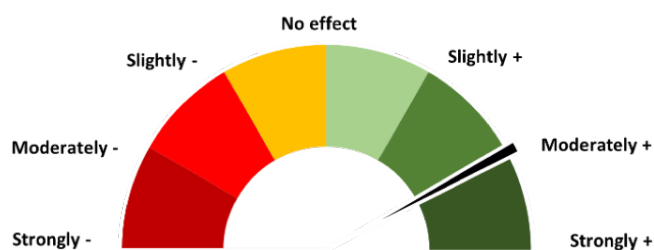


Figure 21. Contribution of VPA negotiations to improving transparency in the forest sector (N=96)

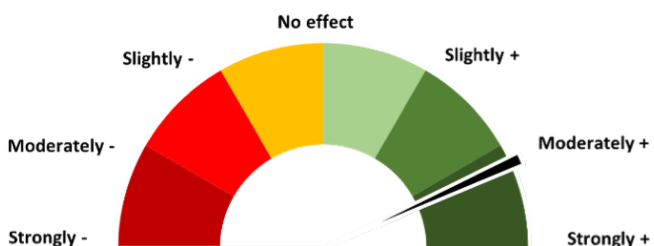


Figure 22. Contribution of VPA negotiations to making the government more accountable for its actions in the forest sector (N=93)

reasonable time frame, some information habitually published” was seen as the most relevant. Regarding **accountability**, the most selected option was that accountability in the forest sector “exists, is acknowledged by authorities and sometimes results in follow-up action but not always timely or complete”.

#### 4.1.2 Corruption

*Participation, capacity, legal justice, transparency, and accountability* are five key elements that, when improved, contribute to improved governance and therefore reduced corruption.

Below, different indicators are presented to measure the level of corruption in the forest sector. To fight corruption, political will is an important factor to then allow CS to play its role of independent observer. An estimation of the level of bribes and informal taxes is another interesting indicator to assess corruption levels in the forest sector.

##### Level of corruption in the forest sector

Most respondents (58%) agree or strongly agree that the level of corruption in the forest sector has decreased since the start of VPA negotiations, which is in line with the results related to forest governance. This is a major improvement as the literature claims that corruption and absence of

transparency has been persistent in the forest sector in Guyana for decades. According to the Corruption Perception Index published by Transparency International in 2020, Guyana was ranked **83 out of 180** with a score of 41/100 (an increase of 13 points since 2012).<sup>9</sup> However, opinions on this topic are quite diverse, as half of the public sector and 40% of CS disagree with this statement. Moreover, around two thirds of respondents believe that the **bureaucracy linked with the FLEGT-VPA process has not created new opportunities for corruption**. However, opinions in the SME category are quite diverse, with half of the respondents agreeing with the statement.

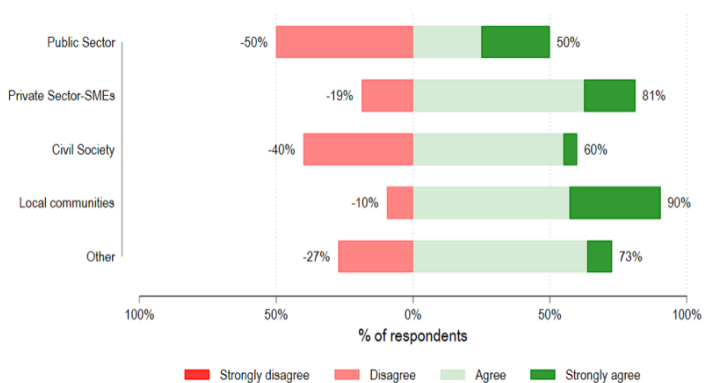


Figure 23. Statement on whether the level of corruption in the forest sector has decreased since the start of VPA negotiations (N=76)

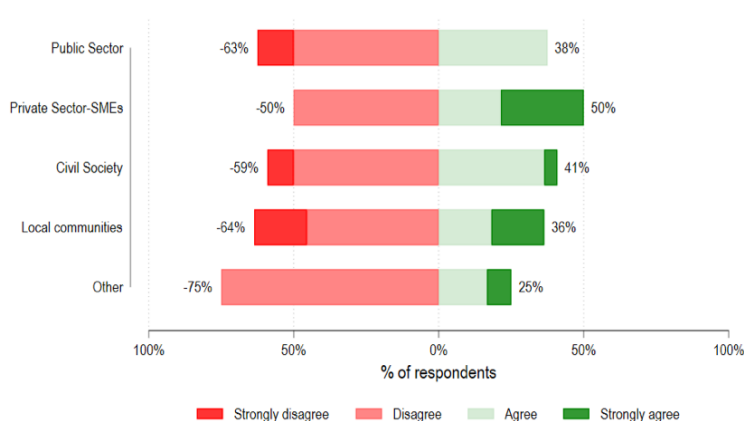


Figure 24. Statement on whether the bureaucracy linked to the VPA process has created new opportunities for corruption (N=78)

9 <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/guyana>

## Political will to fight corruption

Likewise, political will to fight corruption is perceived to have increased since the start of VPA negotiations, with 77% of respondents considering there to be at least a moderate level of political will today (versus 43% before the start of VPA negotiations). In line with this result, the VPA is considered to have slightly to moderately contributed to improving the political will to fight corruption in the forest sector.

Although the literature recognizes that efforts have been made to fight corruption, the battle seems to focus on targeting small-scale loggers, who are often connected with misuse of timber tags and extraction from non-designated areas, while leaving the large concession holders more often unchecked. This could be partially explained by the fact that some people with connections are linked to the logging industry, causing a conflict of interest in applying the laws uniformly (Almas *et al.*, 2014). As mentioned in Section 4.1.1, conflicts of interests are seen as one of the three main reasons for non-compliance. Participants also highlight that enforcement of the law and credibility of sanctions regarding bribes made to forest offices could be improved to avoid corruption.

### Work of independent observation in monitoring political corruption in the forest sector

From the literature, there is little information related to independent observation, suggesting the absence of an organized independent observation body with the objective of monitoring political corruption in the forest sector. However, 77% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the importance of the role of independent observation in reducing corruption in the forest sector. It should be noted, however, that 38% of SMEs disagree with this statement.

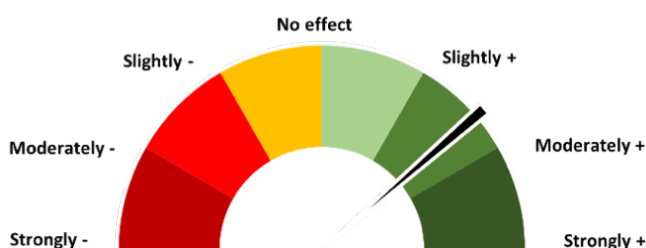


Figure 25. Contribution of VPA negotiations to improving the political will to fight corruption in the forest sector (N=88)

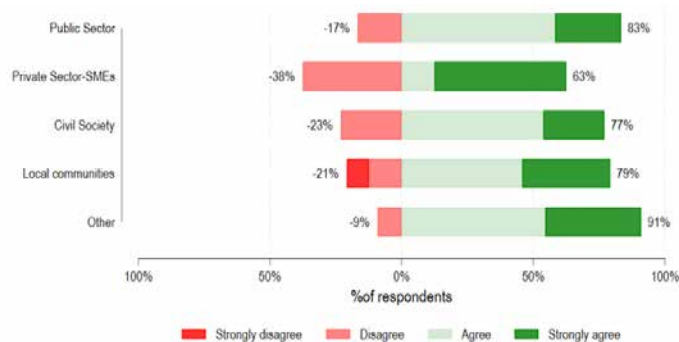


Figure 26. Statement on whether independent monitoring contributes more to reducing corruption in the forest sector than before VPA negotiation (N=89)

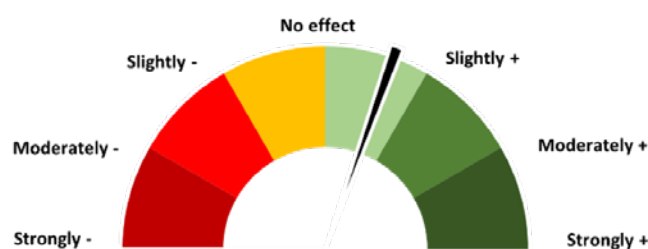


Figure 27. Contribution of VPA negotiations to reducing the costs faced by SMEs paid as informal taxes (N=59)

### Bribes and informal taxes for SMEs

VPA negotiations are considered to have slightly contributed to reducing the costs faced by SMEs in terms of informal taxes, although respondents consider that the share of costs faced by SMEs in the form of informal taxes are slightly higher today (37%) than before the start of VPA negotiations (36%). More than one third of respondents chose the option 'I don't know' as a response and no data has been found related to this topic in the literature, suggesting a lack of general information regarding informal taxes paid by SMEs.

### 4.1.3 Governance spillovers

Other sectors might also benefit from, or be inspired by, new processes developed in the forest sector thanks to FLEGT-VPA, leading to *governance spillovers* in the country, as shown on the right-hand side of the VPA ToC.

According to 71% of survey respondents, the VPA process has initiated spillover effects to other processes in Guyana, such as stricter regulation of the mining and agriculture sector, more regulated

forest management in harmony with the REDD+ program, and capacity building of local stakeholders. According to EFI country reports (2014–2019), “there is currently no evidence that the VPA process has had an impact in other sectors”.

## 4.2 Forest conditions

This section focuses on a crucial expected impact of the VPA process: *improved forest conditions* (see Figure 29).

- *Forest conditions will improve thanks to reduced deforestation and forest degradation, as well as to more sustainable forest management (SFM).*
- *All three are directly positively impacted through improved forest governance and reduced corruption in the forest sector.*

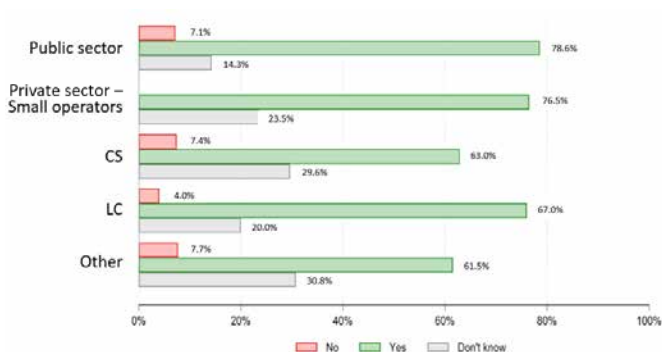


Figure 28. Statement on whether the VPA process has inspired other processes in the country (N=96)

- *Improved participation and capacity and improved legal justice are required to achieve improved forest governance and reduced corruption, as described in the previous section.*

These different expected results are sequentially analysed in this section, using the collected data to construct relevant indicators.

### 4.2.1 Reduced deforestation and forest degradation

Guyana is a country with high forest cover and a low deforestation rate (GFC, 2020) – mainly related to land use policies. Annual estimations of deforestation are estimated at about 0.1%, which is low compared to other countries in South America. Participants during FGDs were aware that deforestation is essentially caused by mining in Guyana. They seem to be frustrated by this situation and wonder what could be done by the government to better manage the conflicting interests of economic development through mining and the preservation of the country’s natural resources.

All types of actors are more aware of the consequences of poor governance in the forest sector today than before the start of the VPA process, with the lowest level of awareness being attributed to the LC, CS and public sector (73%) and the highest to the private sector (83%). This high level of awareness among small operators is in line with the fact that 86% of respondents agree or strongly agree with

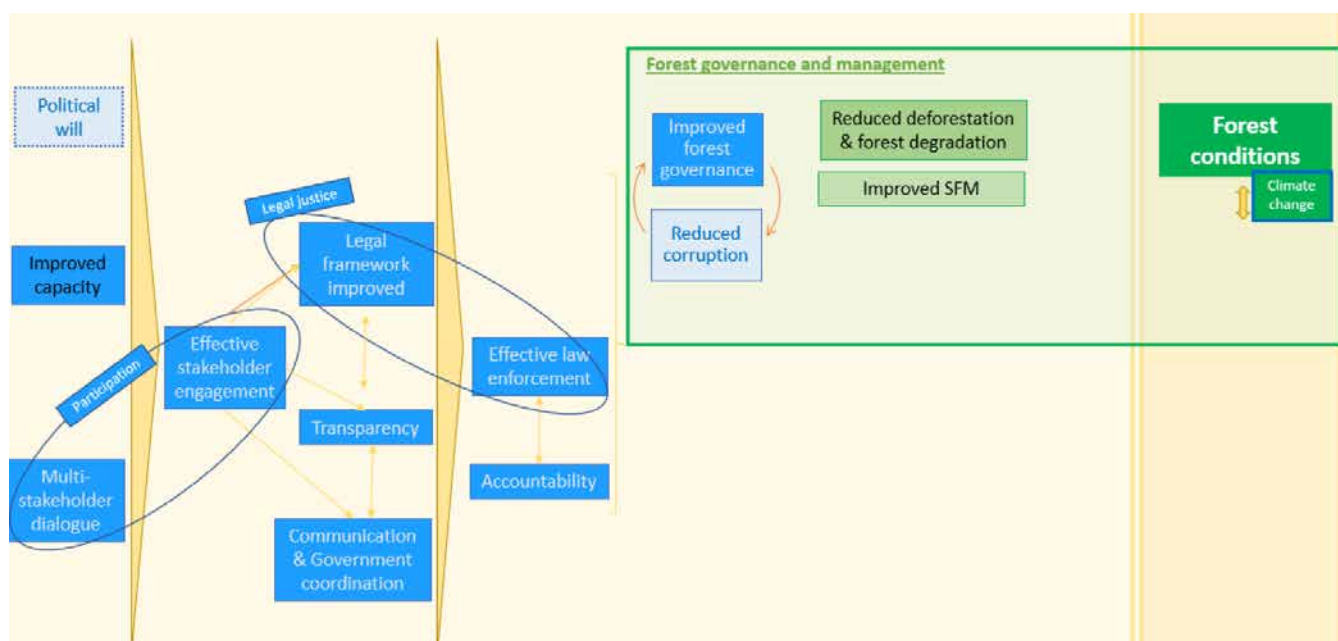


Figure 29. Impact pathways for Forest Conditions



## Key takeaways

- Regarding forest conditions in Guyana, annual deforestation rates are low.
- Forest management plans are at least partially implemented today** according to almost all participants (96%) **and the VPA is considered to have moderately contributed to this change.** The VPA has also moderately contributed to a **better integration of multiple forest functions.** This is in line with the result logic of the VPA ToC which indicates possible improved forest conditions in the country.
- The VPA has slightly contributed to an increase in the number of hectares exploited with a private certification system.** Two concessions are FSC certified in Guyana today: *Iwokrama* and *Toolsie Persaud Ltd.* According to a large company representative, FSC certification adds value to the timber and the company can barely supply the high demand of the export market.
- All types of actors seem more aware of the consequence of poor governance in the forest sector today than before the start of the VPA process.** Fifty-eight percent of respondents agree that SMEs have reduced their environmental impact since 2012. These are key outcomes (left-hand side of the VPA ToC) leading to improved forest conditions.

the reduction of SMEs' environmental impact since the start of VPA negotiations. However, the public sector seems to be less convinced by this statement, as 42% of them disagree.

### 4.2.2 Sustainable forest management

**Strong progress in the implementation of forest management plans since the VPA process started is perceived by the respondents.** Ninety-six percent of participants indicated that the plans are at least partially implemented today, compared with 61% before the VPA. In line with this, **the VPA is considered to have moderately contributed to better implementation of forest management plans in Guyana.** The VPA has also **moderately contributed to a better integration of multiple forest functions.**

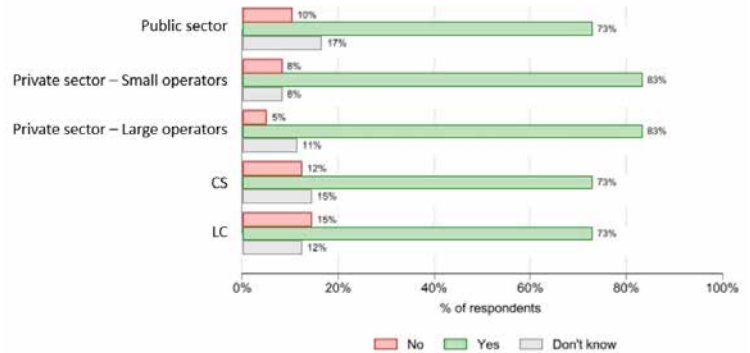


Figure 30. Actors' awareness of the consequences of poor governance in the forest sector (N=96)

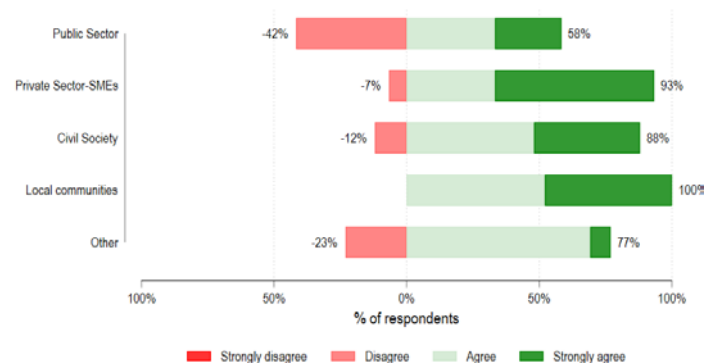


Figure 31. Statement on the reduction of the environmental impact of SMEs since VPA negotiations (N=88)

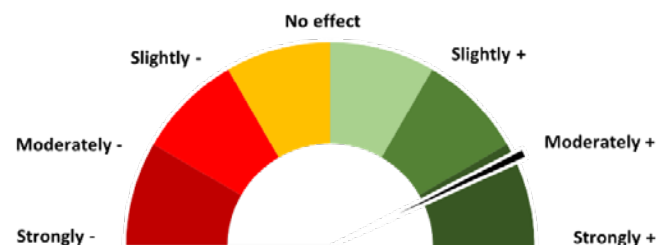


Figure 32. Contribution of VPA negotiations to better implementation of forest management plans (N=91)

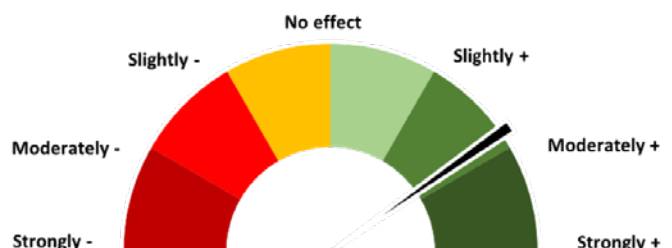


Figure 33. Contribution of VPA negotiations to better integration of multiple forest functions (N=95)

Moreover, participants consider that the VPA has slightly contributed to an increase in the number of hectares exploited with a private certification system. According to the literature, the Iwokrama Forest (371,000 hectares) achieved Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification for forest management in October 2016 and continues to maintain its certification with annual surveillance audits (Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development, 2020). Amongst the participants of the FGD, there was one representative from one of the largest companies operating in the forest sector in Guyana, with both its chain of custody and concession FSC certified (since 2020). According to this representative, FSC certification adds value to the timber the company sells on the market. Facing a very high demand from the export market, the company can barely supply enough timber to meet this demand.

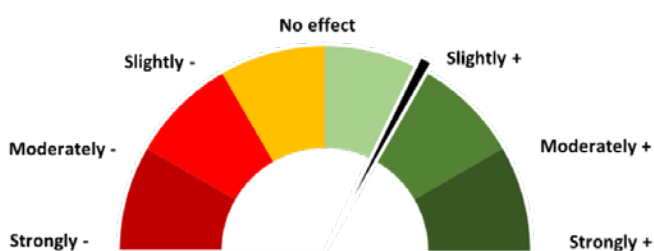


Figure 34. Contribution of VPA negotiations to increasing the number of hectares exploited through a private certification system (N=69)

### 4.3 Illegal logging

This section focuses on one of the main and most obvious expected impacts of the VPA process: the reduction of *illegal logging* and trade (see Figure 35).

- *Illegal logging* is expected to decrease especially when the VPA is implemented, and once *Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS)* is developed and operationalized, as they will ensure that timber logging and trade can be traced, and that illegal forest activities can be denounced and punished thanks to improved *legal justice* and *forest governance*.
- A fully operationalized TLAS leads to the *FLEGT license*. Furthermore, a well enforced *European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR)* also contributes to reducing illegal timber logging and trade. But when a TLAS is not yet fully operational, the effect on illegal logging is expected to be limited.
- However, (marginal) reduced illegal practices can be observed thanks to *improved forest governance* mainly due to improved stakeholder knowledge fostered by higher *participation* and *improved capacity*.

In this section, illegal logging approximations are presented, both in state and non-state forests, as well as in the export and domestic markets. These different expected results are sequentially analysed, using the collected data to construct relevant indicators.

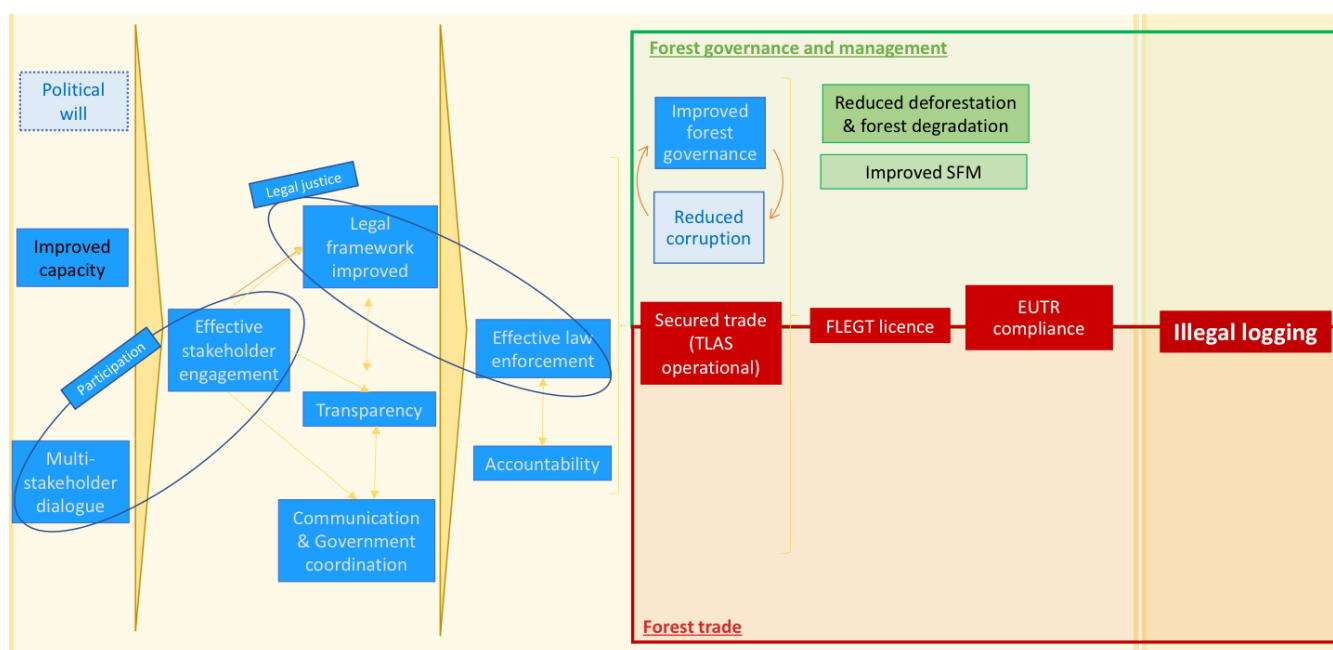


Figure 35. Impact pathways for Illegal Logging

## Key takeaways

- **Illegal trade (in volume) has decreased in both state and non-state forests and, on average, VPA negotiations are considered to have moderately contributed to this decrease**, according to most respondents. However, more than 20% of SMEs think that illegal logging has slightly increased in state forests.
- **The VPA is also considered to have slightly contributed to an increase in the amount of timber exploited with a legally obtained permit.** Respondents consider that 60% of total timber is being exploited with a legally obtained permit, whereas private sector actor responses remain lower, highlighting the problems for SMEs when complying with legality requirements and legally obtaining permits.
- **The VPA has moderately contributed to a reduction of illegal timber on the domestic and export markets in Guyana.** The volume of commercialized legal timber is considered higher on the export market (75%) than the domestic market (65%).
- **SME operators, which mostly supply the domestic market, are said to face difficulties in complying with the VPA requirements**, remaining more likely to be involved in illegal logging, while larger operators have more capacity to convert to legal practices.

### 4.3.1 Illegal logging measures

Respondents estimate that illegal logging (in volume) has strongly decreased in state forests (42%), and slightly decreased in non-state forests (53%) since the start of VPA negotiations. However, there are differences between groups. Twenty-three percent of SMEs consider that illegal logging has slightly increased in state forests and 30% of the public sector believe it has not changed. Regarding non-state forests, SMEs are also the least optimistic, as one quarter believe that the share of illegal logging did not change since the start of VPA negotiations. However, on average, the VPA is considered to have moderately contributed to a decrease in illegal logging both in state and non-state forests. During discussions, stakeholders regularly expressed that it is difficult to assess the share of illegal logging.

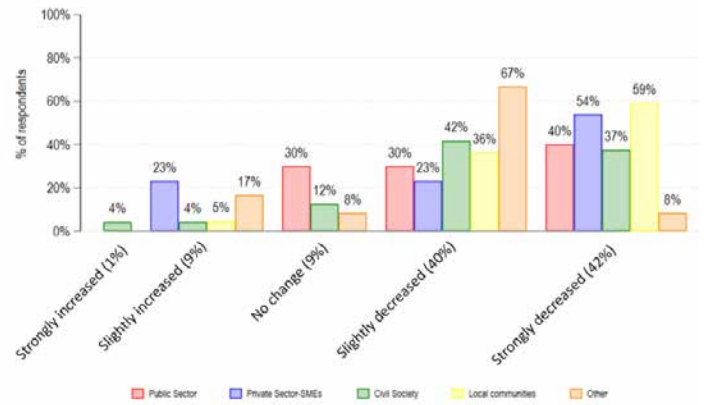


Figure 36. Illegal logging in state forests since the start of VPA negotiations (N=81)

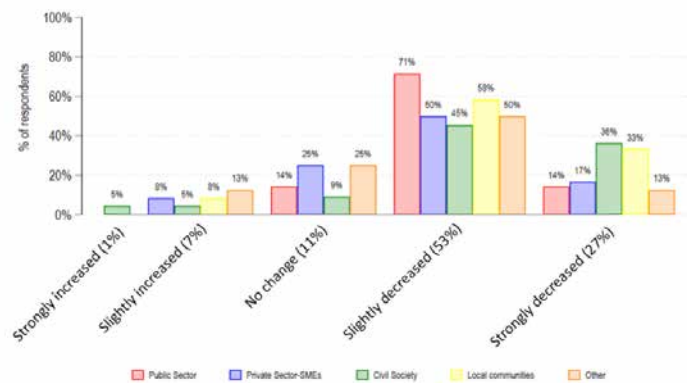


Figure 37. Illegal logging in non-state forests since the start of VPA negotiations (N=73)

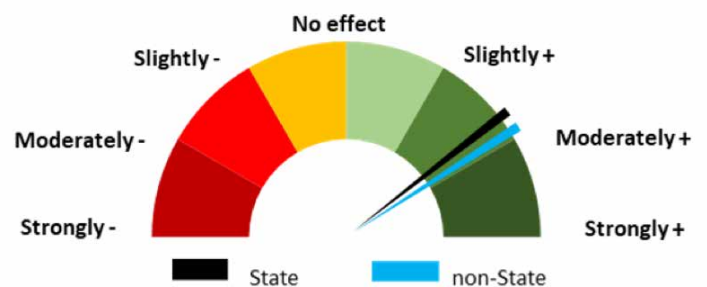


Figure 38. Contribution of VPA negotiations to the reduction of illegal logging in state and non-state forests (N=91)

The VPA is considered to have slightly contributed to an increase in the amount of timber exploited with a legally obtained permit. On average, respondents consider that 60% of total timber is being exploited with a legally obtained permit, compared to 56% before the start of VPA negotiations. Private sector actor responses remain lower than other actors both

before (45%) and after (45%) VPA negotiations, potentially highlighting the problems for SMEs to comply with legality requirements and legally obtain relevant permits.

**The VPA is considered to have moderately contributed to a reduction of illegal timber on the domestic market in Guyana.** Whereas before the start of VPA negotiations the share was said to be 52%, participants considered that 65% of the total wood commercialized on the domestic market is legal after the start of the VPA process. Discussions revealed that some small operators are still actively involved in illegal logging, mostly supplying the domestic market in Guyana.

**The VPA is also considered to have moderately contributed to the reduction of illegal timber on the export market.** Commercialized legal timber seems to be higher on the export market (currently 75% versus 60% before the start of the VPA process) than on the domestic market. This is consistent with discussions where the difficulties for SME operators (mostly supplying the domestic market in Guyana) to comply with VPA requirements was highlighted, compared to the greater capacity of larger export-focused operators to convert to legal practices.

The number of respondents is quite low for this question, with less than half of the participants providing an answer. This shows that it is hard for forest stakeholders to estimate the prevalence of illegal logging in Guyana.

#### 4.3.2 Secured Timber Legality Assurance System

As VPA implementation has not yet started in Guyana, we do not expect any impacts of the VPA on the TLAS. Information about the evolution of the Guyana TLAS can be found in the desk review.

### 4.4 Economic development

This section focuses on a less direct expected impact of the VPA process: *economic development* (see Figure 42).

- *Economic development* in the country is expected to improve through better *access to external markets*, the *development of the domestic market*, and more *efficient tax collection*.
- Domestic and external market opportunities can be created thanks to an increase in the production of *legal timber* that is locally traded and exported



Figure 39. Share of legal timber on domestic and export markets (N=46)

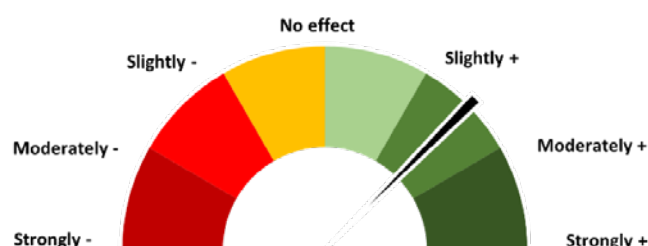


Figure 40. Contribution of VPA negotiations to an increased amount of timber exploited with a legally obtained permit (N=88)



Figure 41. Contribution of VPA negotiations to the reduction of illegal logging on the domestic and export market (N=88)

(to the EU market), which can be achieved, in the long run, with the completion of the VPA process.

- An increase in legal timber trade, together with *better governance* and *less corruption* in the forest sector, would normally lead to more *efficient tax collection*.
- As prerequisites for a more *formalized timber market* and an improved *timber value chain at SME level*, which would also contribute to better *forest sector governance*, there must be *better informed and capable stakeholders*, in parallel to with *improved legal justice* and more *accountability*.



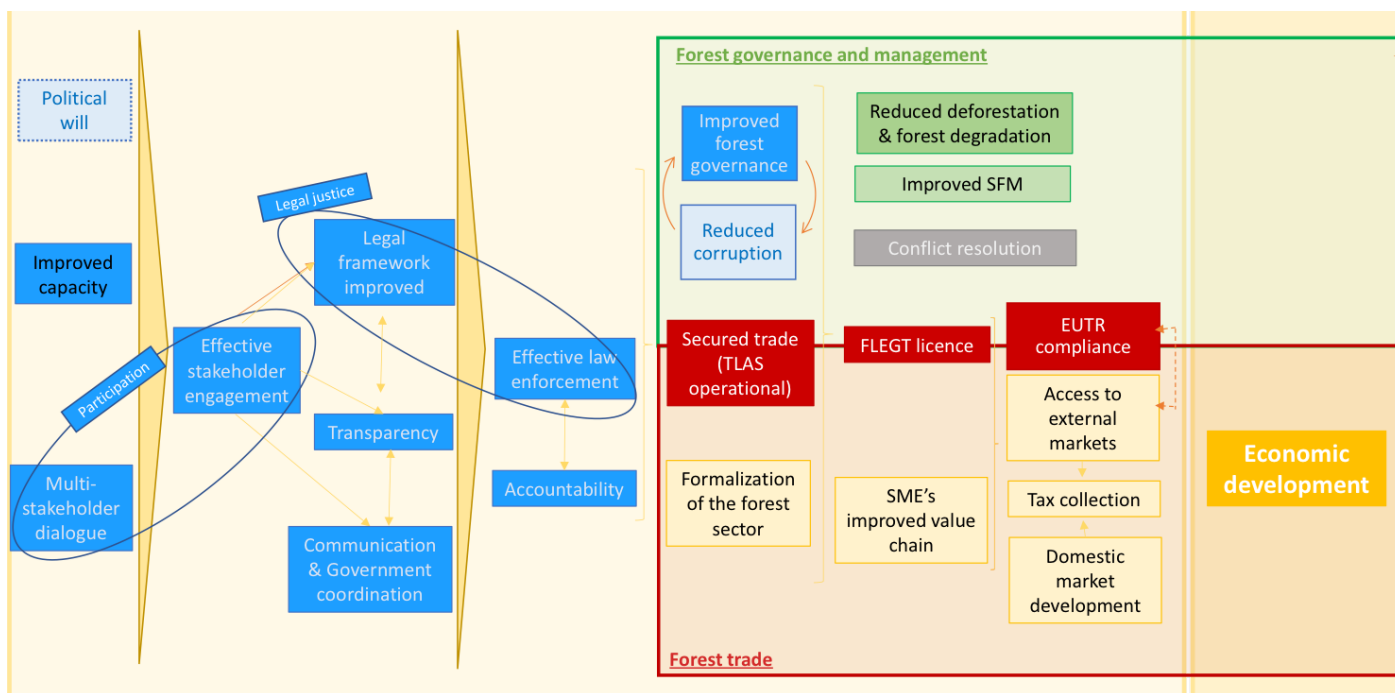


Figure 42. Impact pathways for Economic Development

The following section describes indicators related to the development and benefits of the VPA process for the legal timber export and domestic markets, as well as perceived efficiencies in tax collection for the forest sector.

As well as the expected impact on reducing illegal logging and trade, studying the expected impact on economic development will be more relevant when the VPA process is implemented. However, it makes sense to assess the current situation in these dimensions (baseline measures, prior to VPA implementation), as well as to highlight potential slight changes thanks to negotiations.

Almost all actors agree or strongly agree (98%) that **being involved in the VPA process creates a positive image for the country and that it helps it to be considered a reliable business partner**, as it is a signal of improved governance or at least a sign of the will to improve governance. **A majority of respondents (77%) also agree or strongly agree that there is political will to give as much priority to the development of the forest sector as to other sectors, such as the mining or oil sectors, to contribute to the overall development of the country.** However, 41% of CS disagree with this statement.

### Key takeaways

- **According to almost all respondents, being involved in the VPA process contributes to a positive image of the country and helps it to be considered a reliable business partner**, contributing to improved economic development in the country.
- **While export market opportunities seem to have increased** since the start of VPA negotiations, some respondents think that **small operators do not have the capacity to meet export market demand and therefore to benefit from increased export opportunities.** Nevertheless, the VPA is not considered to be squeezing SMEs out of business.
- Today, there is a **high demand for legal wood on the domestic market**, and the government has made legal wood more attractive in Guyana since 2012.
- While the VPA has moderately contributed to a more efficient collection of taxes, a key outcome (left-hand side of the VPA ToC) leading to economic development, it also represents a significant burden for SMEs, by introducing new formal and informal taxes.
- **Although private sector organization has improved, it is still deemed weak by participants.**

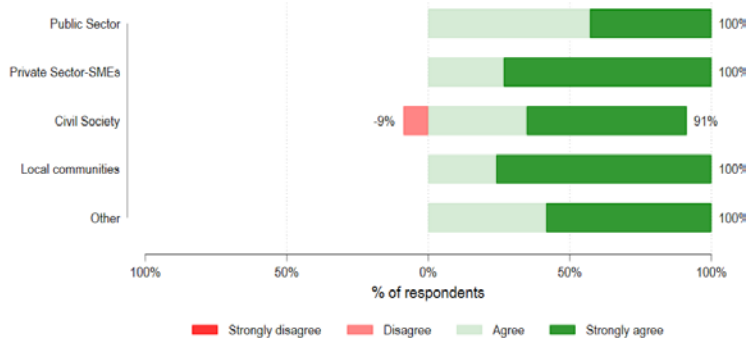


Figure 43. Statement on whether being involved in a VPA process gives a positive image of the country (N=89)

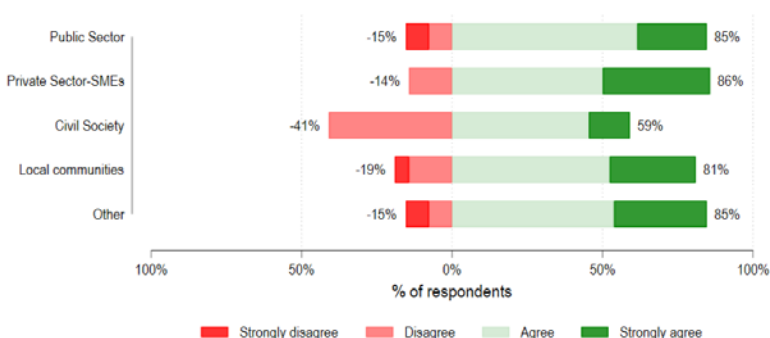


Figure 44. Statement on whether political will exists to give as much priority to the development of the forest sector as to other sectors (N=83)

#### 4.4.1 Export market opportunities

##### Timber trade trends

The perceived volume of wood exported from SMEs (out of the total volume of exported wood) has increased since the start of VPA negotiations. Almost half (48%) of respondents consider that the share of timber coming from SMEs in the export market is higher than 30% (versus one quarter who consider that this was already the case before VPA negotiations started). One third of respondents were not able to estimate the share of exported wood coming from SMEs, therefore responding 'I don't know'. While a large share of respondents claims that VPA negotiations have improved access to the export market for SMEs, participants in FGDs were not convinced that small operators have the capacity to meet the demand of the export market, mainly because of high costs (inadequate infrastructure and road networks) and poor availability of technical and financial services (Trevin and Nasi, 2009).

Moreover, most respondents consider that the VPA has not contributed to squeezing SMEs out of business, and that the number of SMEs has even slightly increased since the start of VPA negotiations. Yet, discussions revealed that increased regulation, legality mechanisms and the level of compliance have all resulted in a shift of the workforce from the forest to the mining sector, as it is perceived that mining is not as controlled as the forest sector.



Figure 45. Contribution of VPA negotiations to improving access to the export market for SMEs (N=86)

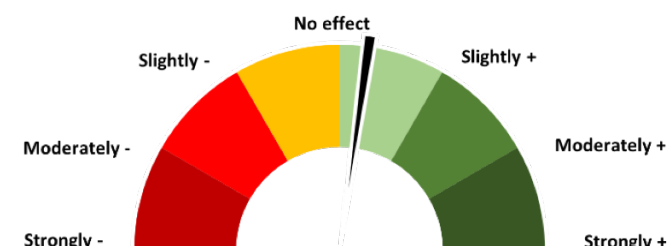


Figure 46. Contribution of VPA negotiations to squeezing SMEs out of business (N=85)

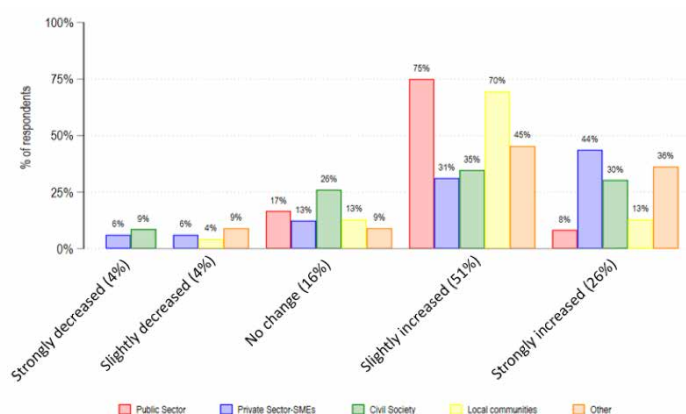


Figure 47. Evolution of the number of SMEs since the start of VPA negotiations (N=85)

## Perception of VPA-FLEGT benefits for SMEs – large companies

In discussions with large company representatives, it seems straightforward that the FLEGT-VPA will have a positive impact on large operators in Guyana through an increase in legal wood demand and the value of such wood on the export market. However, small operators and local communities expressed their concerns regarding the genuine benefits of the FLEGT-VPA due to the high costs of compliance.

## Perception of VPA-FLEGT potential issues

An issue regularly mentioned by participants concerns the overlap of mining and forest regulations. Participants mentioned that there are several loopholes protecting miners, and that the GGMDA (Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association) as well as the GGB (Guyana Gold Board) are very engaged and powerful in discussions at the policy level. With the implementation of the VPA, conflicts between the two sectors could intensify and operators (particularly SMEs) might leave logging to join the mining sector. This tendency has been highlighted by several local communities in some regions of Guyana (such as in the north-west), where mining is prevalent.

### 4.4.2 Domestic market development

#### Demand and awareness of legal wood on the domestic market

More than half of respondents (63%) believe that there is a high or very high demand for legal wood on the domestic market. Moreover, a large share of respondents agrees or strongly agrees (70%) that the government has made legal wood more attractive on the domestic market (e.g., through subsidies, or awareness raising) since the start of VPA negotiations. For example, the government offers tax exemptions for locally produced lumber used for construction.<sup>10</sup>

#### Legal wood constraints on the domestic market

For most respondents (59%), the legal exploitation of wood is too constraining for SMEs, both technically and financially. However, around half of respondents in the categories ‘other’, ‘LC’, and ‘public sector’ disagree with this statement. This is in line with FGDs where several participants expressed fears that VPA implementation will be too constraining for small operators in the forest sector.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gra.gov.gy/business/customs-and-trade/exemptions/forestry-products/>.

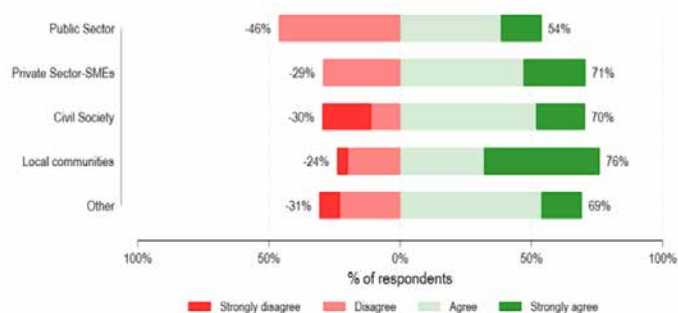


Figure 48. Increased attractiveness of legal wood on the domestic market due to government action (N=95)

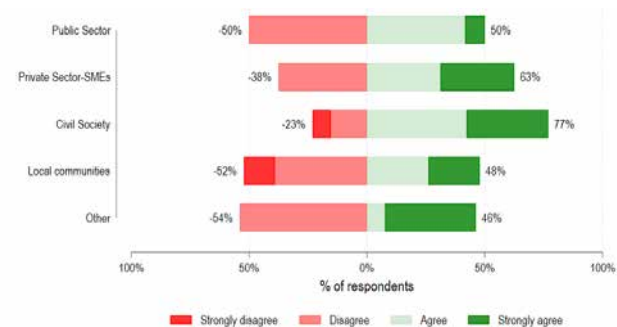


Figure 49. Statement on whether the legal exploitation of wood is too constraining for SMEs (technically and financially) (N=90)

#### Private sector organization and formalization (associations)

The VPA has slightly contributed to less disruption in the timber sector. This is consistent with the literature, which suggests that VPA implementation will lead to better organization of the market and that private sector actors will improve their organization in preparation for regulatory requirements that will become a reality once FLEGT-licenses can be issued. The VPA is also considered to have moderately contributed to a better recognition of SME associations in the forest sector. However, FGD participants think that even though small loggers provide their inputs during consultations, the decision-makers do not seem to recognize their issues and therefore advocate for the need for small loggers to associate themselves in more powerful organizations to obtain better recognition.

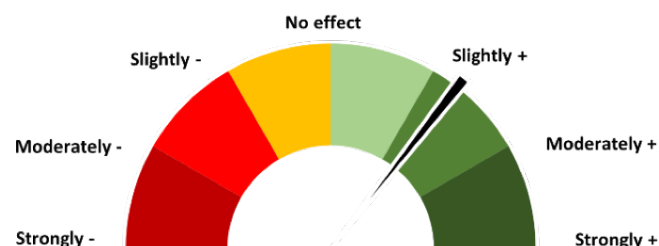


Figure 50. Contribution of VPA negotiations to less disruption in the timber sector (N=91)

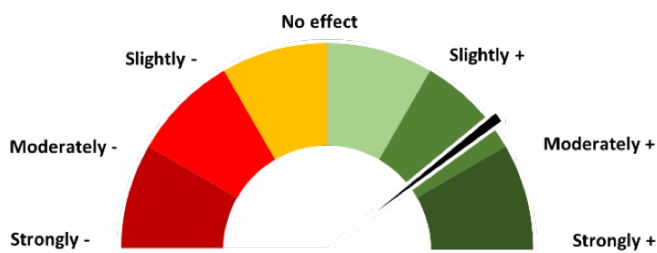


Figure 51. Contribution of VPA negotiations to better recognition of SME associations in the forest sector (N=92)

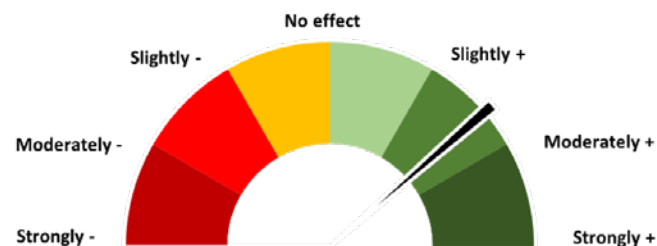


Figure 52. Contribution of VPA negotiations to a more efficient collection of taxes by the state in the forest sector (N=80)

#### 4.4.3 Tax collection efficiency

Respondents believe that the amount of taxes effectively collected in the forest sector have increased since the start of VPA negotiations. Fifty-seven percent consider that more than half of the amount that is owed is effectively collected by the government (versus 40% before VPA negotiations).

The VPA is considered to have moderately contributed to a more efficient collection of taxes by the state in the forest sector. Discussions highlighted that most taxes were avoided by SMEs before the start of VPA negotiations. Today, small operators are obliged to pay these taxes, which, according to some of the respondents (mostly SMEs and LCs), represents a significant burden for them.

### 4.5 Livelihoods and poverty

This section focuses on the last expected impact of the VPA process: *livelihood and poverty* (see Figure 53).

- Improved livelihoods and less poverty are directly linked to the potential impact of a VPA on economic development, mainly through the potential increase in job opportunities and improvement of working conditions in the forest sector.
- Furthermore, on one hand, increased legal timber business and improved governance leading to more efficient tax collection would entail a better redistribution of taxes and benefit sharing, improving livelihoods.
- On the other hand, an improved legal framework and law enforcement (legal justice) in the forest sector would contribute to better consideration of property rights, and in particular those of LC & IP, but also more inclusion of women, youth and marginalized groups, which in turn would contribute to the development of conflict resolution mechanisms, hence improving people's living conditions.

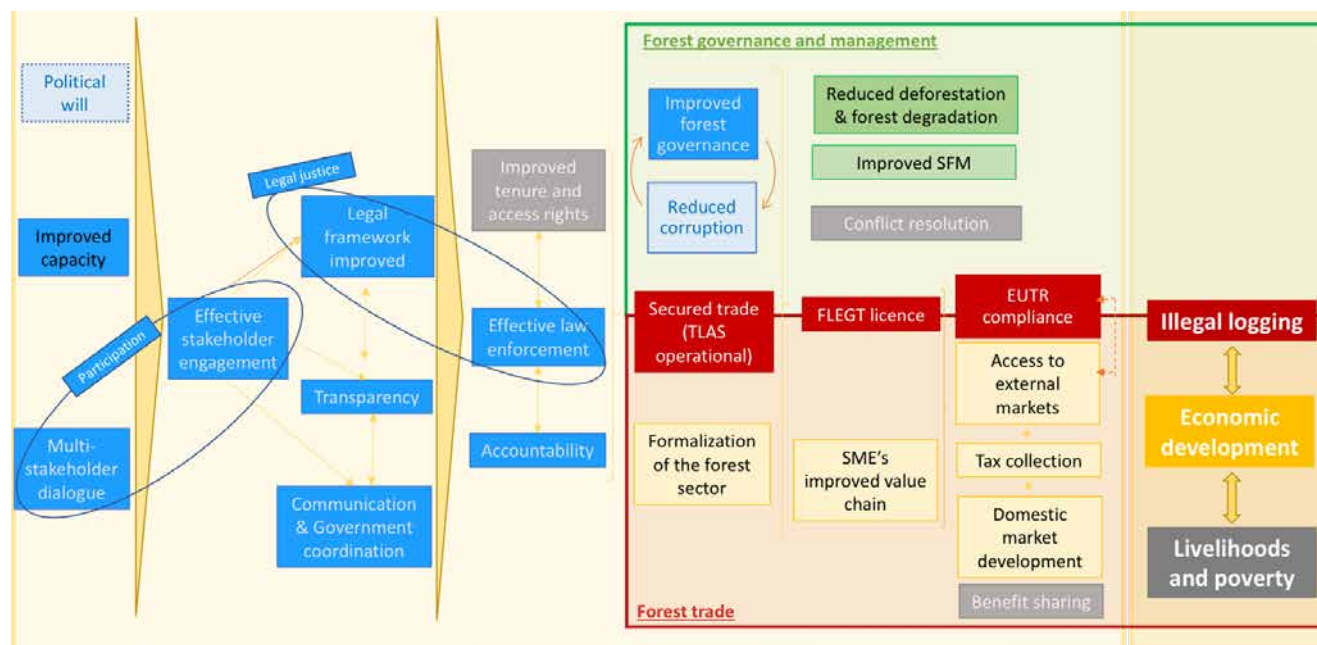


Figure 53. Impact pathways for Livelihoods and Poverty



## Key takeaways

- As Guyana is still in the negotiation stage of the VPA process, the effects on livelihoods and poverty levels are still quite limited.
- Most respondents (62%) consider the number of jobs (formal and informal) in the forest sector to have slightly increased** since the start of VPA negotiations due to an increase in businesses in the timber sector and the creation of new types of jobs – contributing both to economic development and improved livelihoods. However, according to FGD participants, VPA negotiations have not led to an increase in jobs in Amerindian villages.
- Sixty-four percent of respondents agree that forest sector workers have had access to more secure jobs** since the start of VPA negotiations. However, 63% of the public sector, 52% of CS and 41% of SMEs disagree with this statement.
- While conflict resolution mechanisms are not yet in place, the consideration of rights and property rights of local communities has steadily improved over the last few years.
- The VPA is considered to have a moderate effect on **better consideration of women, youth and marginalized groups on questions related to forest management and logging.**

Similar to previous impact dimensions, countries in the VPA negotiation phase might not yet see the effects of the VPA process on livelihoods and poverty. In this section, different indicators to assess the potential impact of the VPA process on livelihoods and their contributing factors are presented.

### 4.5.1 Job opportunities and working conditions in the forest sector

Most respondents (63%) from all categories consider that the number of jobs (both formal and informal) in the forest sector has slightly increased since the start of VPA negotiations. On average, the VPA is considered to have slightly contributed to this job increase, both because of an increase in businesses in the timber sector and the creation of new types of jobs. FGD participants mentioned new job opportunities due to inventory and monitoring requirements. However, this result goes against the decrease in the number of people employed in the forest sector that is observed

in the literature. Participants also regularly mentioned that part of the workforce leaves for more lucrative sectors, such as the mining sector.

Although most respondents agree that employment opportunities have increased for LC & IP since the start of VPA negotiations, FGD participants mentioned that there is, for now, **no impact of the VPA in terms of timber-related jobs in Amerindian villages.**

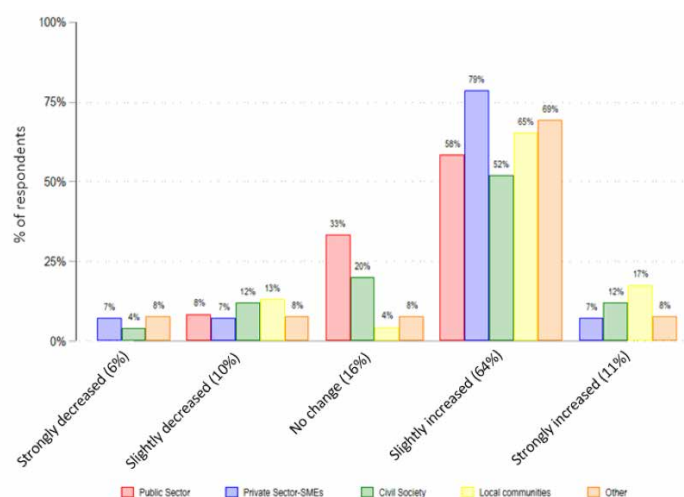


Figure 54. Evolution of the number of jobs in the forest sector since the start of VPA negotiations (N=96)

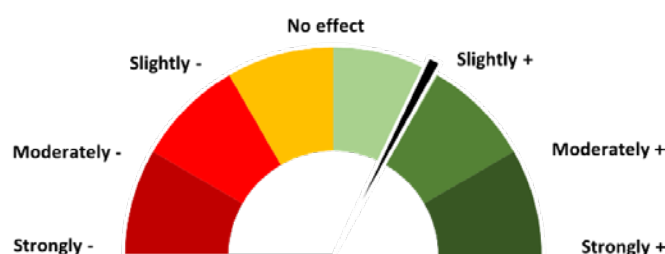


Figure 55. Contribution of VPA negotiations to changes in the labour market (N=82)

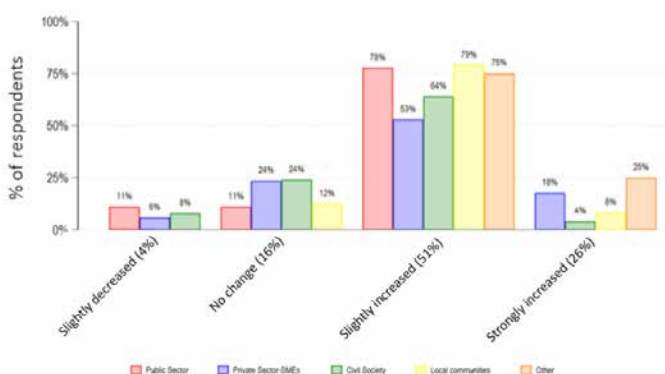


Figure 56. Evolution of the employment opportunities for LC & IP since the start of VPA negotiations (N=85)

Regarding working conditions, 64% of respondents agree or strongly agree that forest sector workers have access to more secure jobs now than before the start of VPA negotiations. However, opinions differ across respondent categories with 63% of the public sector, 52% of CS and 41% of SMEs disagreeing with the statement. The VPA is considered to have only had a slight effect on improving working conditions in the forest sector. Some participants highlighted that their jobs are also safer now because of the better enforcement of the National Insurance System (NIS) and Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) requirements. Some logging company representatives also mentioned that it is sometimes difficult to get their workers to comply with safety protocols, which generates a risk for the employer and their license in case of inspection, as well as a physical risk to the employee.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that forest sector workers are better organized than before the start of VPA negotiations. Representatives of two important private sector associations related to forestry in Guyana took part during FGD sessions:

- The Forest Products Association (FPA) was established in 1944 and is seen as representing the interests of large forest companies.
- Small Loggers Associations (SLAs) which represent small producers. In 2014, there were 73 SLAs in Guyana, representing more than 2000 members (Bulkan, 2015).

A large share of respondents (81%) agrees or strongly agrees that the curricula of institutions better integrates the themes of legality and SFM than before VPA negotiations. Some FGD participants that are members of research and teaching institutions explained that they would like to include aspects of the VPA in the curricula of schools and universities.

Sixty-six percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that forest sector workers have greater expertise than before the start of VPA negotiations. However, interviewee opinions are quite diverse, as half of the SME category does not agree with this statement.

#### 4.5.2 Tax redistribution and the well-being of local communities/benefit sharing

As the VPA is not yet implemented in Guyana, there are not yet any impacts of the agreement on tax redistribution and benefit sharing.

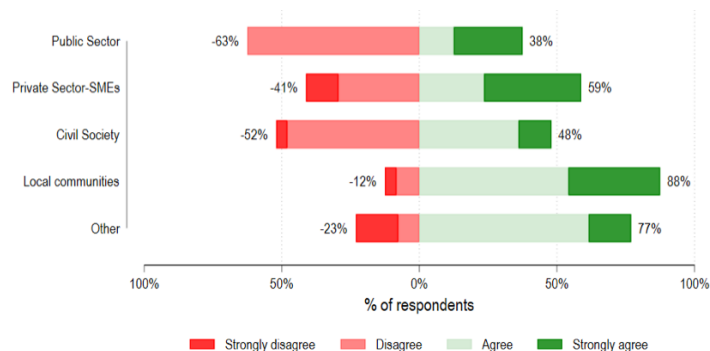


Figure 57. Statement on whether forest sector workers have access to more secure jobs than before VPA negotiations (N=87)

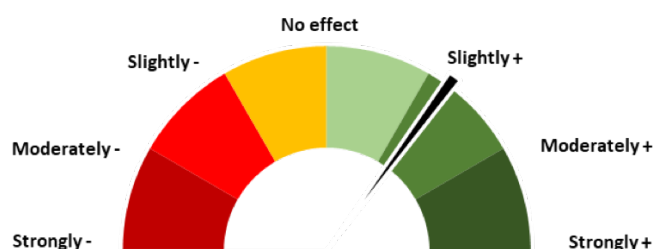


Figure 58. VPA contribution to improving working conditions in the forest sector (N=89)

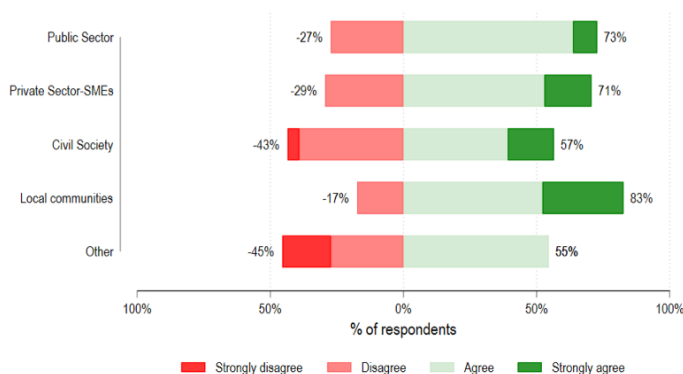


Figure 59. Statement on whether forest sector workers are better organized than before VPA negotiation (N=85)

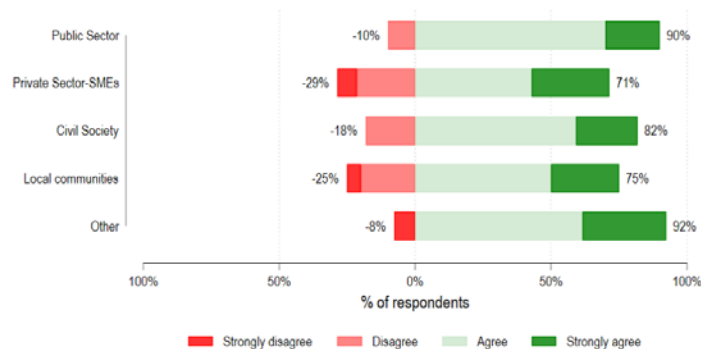


Figure 60. Statement on whether the curricula of institutions better integrates the themes of legality and sustainable forest management than before VPA negotiation (N=79)

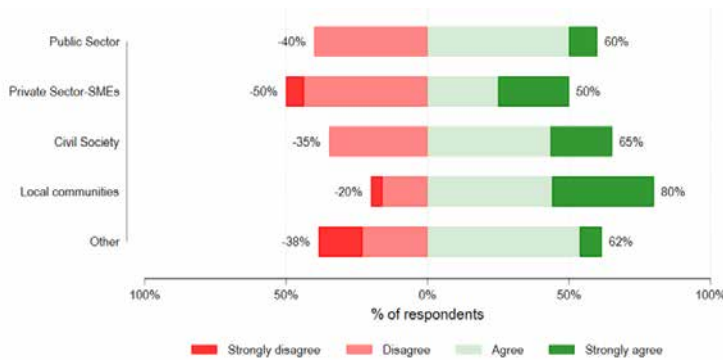


Figure 61. Statement on whether forest sector workers have greater expertise than before VPA negotiation (N=87)

### 4.5.3 Rights and property rights (land tenure) of local communities

The VPA is considered to have moderately contributed to increased consideration of the rights of LC & IP and to more recognition of the property rights of these communities. Participants of FGDs mention that land conflict regarding customary rights for Amerindian communities is still prevalent. Indeed, according to the literature, a great source of contention surrounds land ownership and titling, with Amerindian communities facing persistent conflict and friction, with logging companies operating on their titled land with government permission to do so. Indeed, over 25 communities (60%) find their untitled customary lands overlapping with logging and mining concessions (Atkinson et al., 2016).

### 4.5.4 Inclusion of women, youth and marginalized groups

Most respondents (53%) consider that employment opportunities for women, youth and marginalized groups in the forest sector have slightly increased since the start of VPA negotiations. Nevertheless, a share of LCs (38%), CS (34%), and SMEs (34%) consider that these opportunities have not changed, or had even slightly decreased, since 2012. Participants from LCs explained that men typically undertake the logging and selling activities, while women oversee the paperwork. Hence, with more regulatory requirements, VPA implementation could also increase employment opportunities for women specialized in compliance procedures.

The VPA is considered to have contributed slightly to better consideration of women, youth and marginalized groups on questions related to forest management and logging. As mentioned earlier,

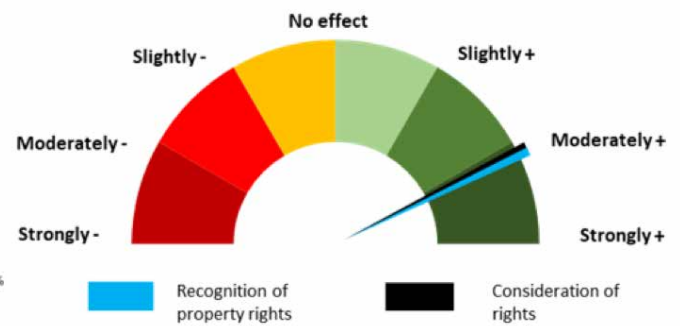


Figure 62. Contribution of VPA negotiations to more consideration and recognition of the rights of LC & IP

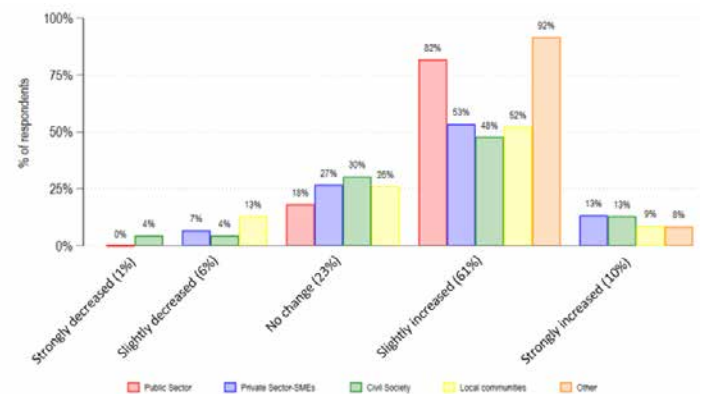


Figure 63. Evolution of employment opportunities for women, youth and marginalized groups in the forest sector (N=84)

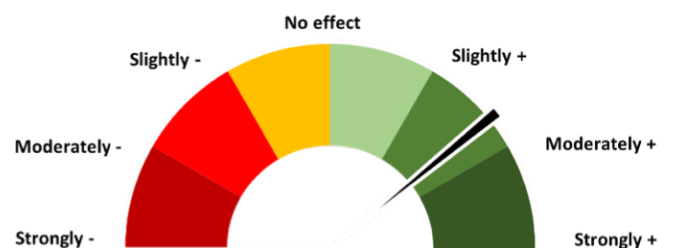


Figure 64. Contribution of VPA negotiations to better consideration of the status of women, youth and marginalized groups in forest management and logging (N=92)

small logger associations are represented by a majority of women (60%) although the workforce mostly consists of men. This could explain the high representation of women in this study (46%).

### 4.5.5 Conflict resolution

The options for conflict resolution regarding customary rights for Amerindian populations are very limited. A fair and transparent appeal process where villages can express their concerns about

**demarcation surveys is not sufficiently developed,** and “there are no legal safeguards to protect community land and resource rights outside title areas from being sold or given to third parties” (Atkinson et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, through the support of the UNDP and the Guyanese Ministry of Indigenous People’s Affairs (now the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs), Amerindian communities with conflict issues concerning their respective lands can access the Grievance Redress Mechanism provided through the Amerindian Land

Titling Project, in order to address and resolve land-, resource- and territory-related conflicts (Amerindian Land Titling Project Board, 2017).

Aside from this exception in the landscape of legal conflict resolution, villagers do not have access to an appropriate appeal process to make official complaints. Many villagers believe that the existing system of titling and demarcation of land ownership is a threat to the Amerindian way of life, destabilizing traditional reliance on the natural ecosystem on which they depend (Atkinson et al., 2016).

# 5 Summary of impacts

Summarizing across the four dimensions, excluding livelihoods and poverty, the indicators below, on average, indicate a change compared to the period before the start of VPA negotiations. Moreover, for each indicator and respective change, we can also identify the level of VPA contribution to such change.

The average improvements are highest for governance and institutional effectiveness (32%) and forest conditions (37%) and lower for illegal logging (25%) and economic development (9%). This is in line with the chain of causality of the VPA ToC, assuming that

the latter dimensions are impacted at a later stage of a VPA process. **Importantly, the contributions of the VPA negotiations per dimension are high according to the respondents: 58% for governance and institutional effectiveness, 70% for forest conditions, 61% for illegal logging and 49% for economic development.**

Although a decrease was reported for indicators A.11 and A.16, this does not mean that VPA negotiations have contributed negatively to their development, rather, the decline could have been even stronger if the negotiations had not taken place.

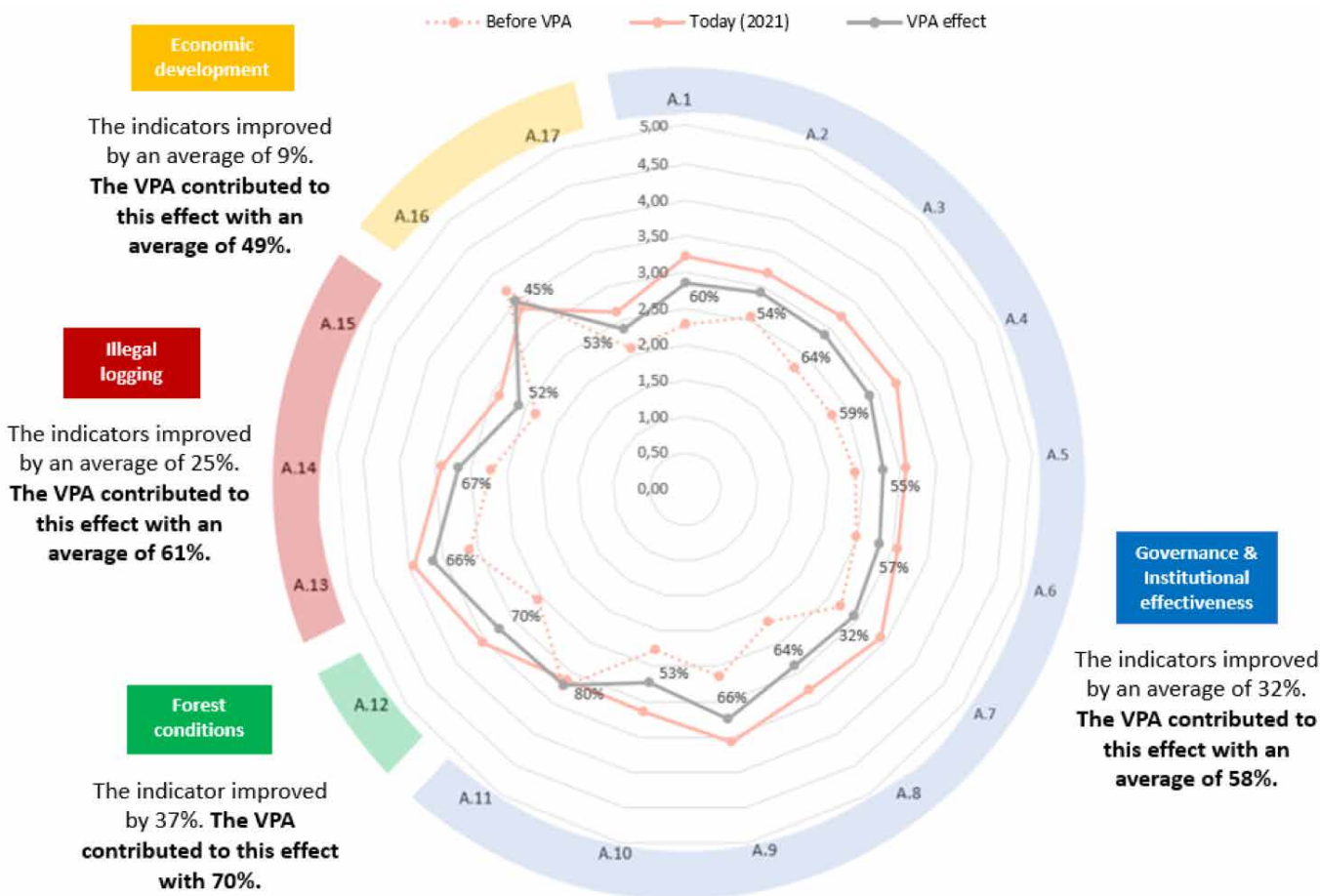
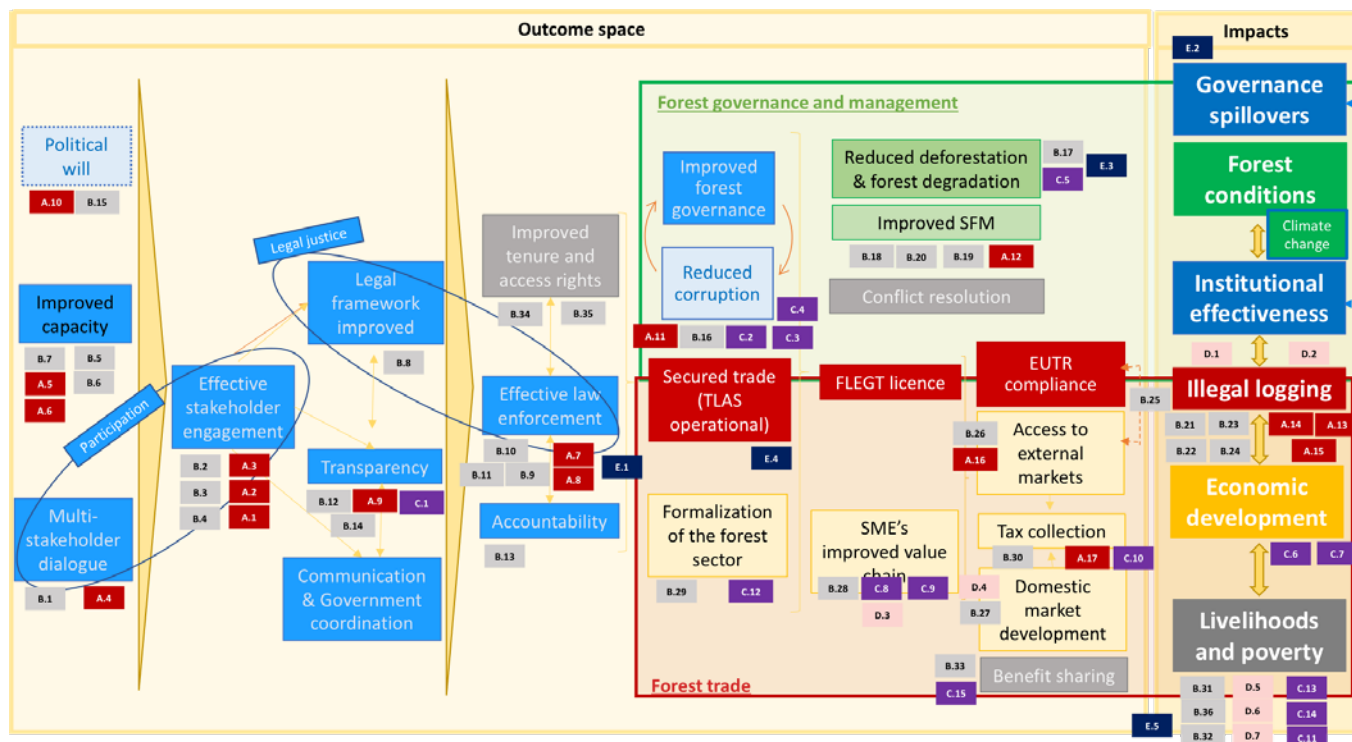


Figure 65. Change measurements before and after VPA negotiations and the estimated VPA contribution to these changes (Scale from 0 to 5)



# Annexes

## Annex I. Theory of change mapping and indicators



### A. VPA Impact - Change indicators (before and after VPA ratification/negotiation)

- A.1** Level of consideration of CS opinion in forest sector decision making
- A.2** Level of consideration of SME opinions in forest sector decision making
- A.3** Level of consideration of LC and IP opinions in forest sector decision making
- A.4** Level of LC and IP consultation in forest sector decision making
- A.5** Level of CS effectiveness as an independent observer
- A.6** Level of CS autonomy as an independent observer
- A.7** Level of sanction enforcement
- A.8** Level of importance of CS's role as a control an agent to denunciate irregularities in the forest sector
- A.9** Level of transparency
- A.10** Level of political will to fight corruption
- A.11** Share of SME costs paid as informal taxes
- A.12** Level of implementation of forest management plans in the country
- A.13** Proportion of legal wood on the export market
- A.14** Proportion of legal wood on the domestic market
- A.15** Proportion of national timber production exploited with a legally obtained permit
- A.16** Share of SME business in the export market
- A.17** Level of efficiency of tax collection

## B. VPA Impact - Contribution indicators

- B.1 VPA C° to more consultation of LC and IP
- B.2 VPA C° to better consideration of LC and IP opinions
- B.3 VPA C° to better consideration of CS opinions
- B.4 VPA C° to better consideration of SME opinions
- B.5 VPA C° to more effective CS independent observation
- B.6 VPA C° to greater autonomy of CS in its role as an independent observer
- B.7 VPA C° to improving the technical capacity of SMEs to conduct their activities legally
- B.8 VPA C° to better coherence of the legal and regulatory framework
- B.9 VPA C° to providing CS with a greater role in controlling legality and identifying irregularities
- B.10 VPA C° to better enforcement of sanctions
- B.11 VPA C° to making sanctions more credible
- B.12 VPA C° to improving transparency in the forest sector
- B.13 VPA C° to making the government more accountable
- B.14 VPA C° to providing information that allows SMEs to conduct their activities legally
- B.15 VPA C° to improving political will to fight corruption
- B.16 VPA C° to reducing the share of SME costs paid as informal taxes (bribes)
- B.17 VPA C° to decreasing deforestation
- B.18 VPA C° to better implementation of forest management plans
- B.19 VPA C° to better integration of multiple forest functions and ecosystem services
- B.20 VPA C° to increase in privately certified areas
- B.21 VPA C° to reducing illegal logging type 1
- B.22 VPA C° to reducing illegal logging type 2
- B.23 VPA C° to reducing share of illegal logging on the export market
- B.24 VPA C° to reducing share of illegal logging on the domestic market
- B.25 VPA C° to increasing production exploited with a legally obtained permit
- B.26 VPA C° to improving SME access to the export market
- B.27 VPA C° to squeezing some SMEs out of business
- B.28 VPA C° to less market disruption
- B.29 VPA C° to better recognition of SME associations
- B.30 VPA C° to a more efficient tax collection
- B.31 VPA C° to changing the labour market in the forest sector
- B.32 VPA C° to improving the working conditions in the forest sector
- B.33 VPA C° to better redistribution of taxes to LC and IP
- B.34 VPA C° to better consideration of LC and IP rights
- B.35 VPA C° to better recognition of LC and IP property rights
- B.36 VPA C° to better consideration of women, youth, and marginalized groups' opinions

### C. VPA Impact - Statement indicators

- C.1 Publicly available information on legality requirements is relevant for SMEs to meet these requirements
- C.2 Bureaucracy linked to the VPA process has created new opportunities for corruption
- C.3 The level of corruption in the forest sector has decreased since VPA negotiation (relative to other sectors)
- C.4 The work of independent observers contributes more to reducing corruption in the forest sector than before VPA negotiation
- C.5 Reduction of the environmental impact of SMEs since VPA negotiation
- C.6 The VPA process gives a positive image of the country and helps to be considered as a reliable business partner
- C.7 Political will exists to give as much priority to the development of the forest sector as to other sectors
- C.8 SMEs in the forest sector provide better quality timber than before VPA negotiation
- C.9 Legal exploitation of wood is too constraining for SMEs (technically and financially)
- C.10 Obtaining a certificate of legality (FLEGT) introduces new formal and informal taxes
- C.11 Forest sector workers have access to more secure jobs than before VPA negotiation
- C.12 Forest sector workers are better organized than before VPA negotiation
- C.13 The curriculum of institutions better integrates the themes of legality and sustainable forest management than before VPA negotiation
- C.14 Forest sector workers have a better expertise than before VPA negotiation
- C.15 Tax revenues coming from the timber sector contribute more to an improvement of the wellbeing of LC & IP than before VPA negotiation

### D. VPA Impact - Evolution indicators (since VPA ratification/negotiation)

- D.1 Illegal logging evolution type 1
- D.2 Illegal logging evolution type 2
- D.3 Evolution of the number of SMEs
- D.4 Evolution of the demand for legal wood on the domestic market
- D.5 Evolution of job opportunities in the forest sector
- D.6 Evolution of job opportunities for LC and IP in the forest sector
- D.7 Evolution of job opportunities for women, youth, and marginalized groups in the forest sector

### E. VPA Impact – Other indicators

- E.1 Causes of non-compliance with the law
- E.2 Statement on whether the VPA process has inspired other processes in the country
- E.3 Actors' awareness of the consequences of poor governance in the forest sector
- E.4 Effects produced by the process of TLAS development
- E.5 Reasons for job increases in the forest sector



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## Annex III. Field mission agenda

### Day 1: Friday 9 April

Arrival of CIFOR and ADE facilitator teams in Georgetown.

Meet to trial the data collection tools (individual and FGD), test skip patterns, prompts, logic of content and time needed. This involved the CIFOR-ADE team members and local facilitator wherever possible to ensure correct terminology.

Finalization of logistics, ensuring open communication with travelling participants, sufficient refreshments, stationery, tablets, etc.

Online meeting with the Ministry of Natural Resources.

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### Day 2: Saturday 10 April

AM Team travel from Georgetown to **Linden**, Region 10 (covers participants from Linden, Rockstone, Ituni and Kwakwani)

AM Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant

AM Interviews undertaken by participants

PM Team travel back to Georgetown

PM End of day debrief, data quality checks, data downloaded from server

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### Day 3: Monday 12 April

AM Team travel from Georgetown to **Anna Regina**, Region 2 (covers participants from the Essequibo Coast, Pomeroon and Moruca – Region 1)

AM Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant

AM Interviews undertaken by participants

PM Team travel from Anna Regina to Lake Mainstay

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### Day 4: Tuesday 13 April

AM Team travel from Lake Mainstay to **Bartica**, Region 7 (covers participants from Bartica township, Lower Mazaruni and Essequibo Rivers)

AM Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant

AM Interviews undertaken by participants

PM Team travel back to Georgetown

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### Day 5: Wednesday 14 April

AM Air travel from Georgetown to Fair View/**Iwokrama** Airstrip. Land travel to **Iwokrama** River Lodge, Region 9 and Sawmill.

PM Team visit to sawmilling operations at Iwokrama mill site and KII

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#### Day 6: Thursday 15 April

- AM Land travel to **Annai**, Region 9 (covers participants from Annai, Surama, Lethem and surrounding villages)
  - AM Participants arrive, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
  - AM Interviews undertaken by participants
  - PM CIFOR-ADE Team on Radio Paiwomak
- 

#### Day 6: Friday 16 April

- AM Team travel back from Iworkrama/Fair View airstrip to Georgetown by Air
  - PM Notes edited and clarification of outstanding statements on focus group sessions
  - PM Data quality checks and data downloaded from server
  - PM Key takeaways of the mission and planning of the next sessions
- 

#### Day 7: Saturday 17 April

- AM Participants (saw millers and lumber yard dealers) arrive in **Georgetown**, Region 4, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
  - AM Interviews undertaken by participants
  - PM Notes edited and clarification of outstanding statements on focus group sessions
  - PM Data quality checks and data downloaded from server
- 

#### Day 8: Monday 19 April

- AM Participants (private sector, academia, civil society, public administration, technical partners) arrive in **Georgetown**, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
  - AM Interviews undertaken by participants
  - PM Notes edited and clarification of outstanding statements on focus group sessions
  - PM Data quality checks and data downloaded from server
- 

#### Day 9: Monday 19 April

- AM Participants (private sector, academia, civil society, public administration, technical partners) arrive in **Georgetown**, introduction to the study, consent forms read and signed, tablet provided to each participant
  - AM Interviews undertaken by participants
  - PM Notes edited and clarification of outstanding statements on focus group sessions
  - PM Data quality checks and data downloaded from server
  - PM Team debriefing
- 

#### Day 10: Wednesday 21 April

- AM Debrief of the mission with the **EU Delegation** (Karel Lizerot and Anna Coreira)
  - PM Notes edited and clarification of outstanding statements on focus group sessions
-

This Guyana report is part of a series of seven country level studies (Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia and Republic of Congo) which intend to gather qualitative and quantitative evidence of the impacts of the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade – Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT-VPA) process to date. This initiative was financed by the European Union and results are placed within the global European Union-FLEGT (EU-FLEGT) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) indicator database. The analysis is structured along five key thematic areas (with indicators clustered into governance and institutional effectiveness, illegal logging, forest conditions, economic development, and livelihoods and poverty). The methodology used is designed to be replicable over time as well as applicable to other countries. Each country assessment provides a baseline for future studies in the same country, that would help to measure progress (or regress) between two points in time. More countries can also be added over time to increase the overall sample and help to derive lessons based on more evidence. By covering seven countries that are in different stages of the VPA process – from negotiation to implementation to issuance of FLEGT licences – findings allow for global lessons to be learned across different geographies and time. These lessons and global findings are presented in a separate synthesis report, which combines results to outline a bigger picture of VPA process impacts where possible.

In total, 96 respondents were interviewed in Guyana, which started its negotiation phase in December 2012 and signed and ratified the VPA in February 2021.

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Financed by the European Union and led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), GML is a five-year project implemented across Sub-Saharan Africa that aims to address key knowledge, technical and policy gaps related to the global impacts of the FLEGT Action Plan, as well as forest and land governance, trade in informal and legal timber products, deforestation-related commodity-based agribusiness, woodfuel and ultimately sustainable forest and land-use management and improvement of livelihoods.

#### Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

CIFOR advances human well-being, equity and environmental integrity by conducting innovative research, developing partners' capacity, and actively engaging in dialogue with all stakeholders to inform policies and practices that affect forests and people. CIFOR is a CGIAR Research Center, and leads the CGIAR Research Program on Forests, Trees and Agroforestry (FTA). Our headquarters are in Bogor, Indonesia, with offices in Nairobi, Kenya; Yaounde, Cameroon; Lima, Peru and Bonn, Germany.

