

# FLEGT and Illegal Conversion

Overview for EU FLEGT Stakeholder  
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# What is forest conversion?

Clear forest to use land for other purpose... but

- Natural forest → Timber plantation
- Slash and burn subsistence agriculture
- Drivers: agriculture, mining, infrastructure
- Scales: commercial large > commercial small-holder/informal > subsistence
- Convert vs. degrade → convert
- 2-3 steps: 1) Land-use decision, 2) Land rights allocation, 3) Allocation of right to harvest/commercialise trees

# When is it (il)legal?

- Not illegal by definition but often violates law
- Common types of violations
  - Clearing without respecting the process for granting land and/or harvest rights
  - Failing to respect the terms
  - Corruption in the process

# Conversion as a source of commercial timber

- Estimated that half tropical timber traded comes from conversion (Lawson 2014)
- Often - but not always - a by-product of large scale/industrial conversion
- Not by-product of conversion for small-holder or subsistence farming

# FLEGT/VPAs and conversion

- FLEGT = initiative on illegal logging and trade
- VPAs focus on forest governance
  - “Deforestation/salvage permits” in the VPA legality definition, if part of the legal framework
  - Not (explicitly) included, if not on the agenda at the time of negotiations
    - If conv. timber commercialised later, LD to be amended
- Broader issues addressed if raised by stakeholders

# New VPAs more directly taking on conversion

- Vietnam: LD includes land use change reqts
- Guyana: In LD and transparency reqts
- Honduras: In the LD and Complementary Measures
- Laos: early in process, identifying types of conversion to address gaps and promote consistency/harmonisation

# Limitations and complementary instruments



- Limitations
  - Land governance and land allocation
  - Addressing non-forestry drivers of conversion
  - ...
- Complementary/alternative instruments: land use planning, land tenure reform, REDD+, national efforts for monitoring and law enforcement, etc.

Thank you!

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