



Project Speaking Points Document

Strengthening Communication and Capacity of the NTC for Improved Compliance in Indigenous Communities under the EU FLEGT VPA Programme

The purpose of this speaking points document is to provide a clear and concise overview of the project *“Strengthening Communication and Capacity of the NTC for Improved Compliance in Indigenous Communities”* under the **EU FLEGT VPA Programme**. It highlights the project background, objectives, expected outcomes, key activities, and future direction of the initiative. This document is intended to support communications, presentations, stakeholder engagement, and awareness raising regarding the project and its contribution to forest governance, Indigenous participation, and sustainable forest management in Guyana.

What is the AFD / EU FLEGT VPA Project?

Background & Scope

The project supports the strengthening of the **National Toshiads Council’s (NTC)** capacity to effectively represent **Indigenous Peoples** and **forest-dependent communities** in the implementation of Guyana’s Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT VPA) with the European Union.

The initiative forms part of the **European Union FLEGT VPA Programme (2021–2025)**, implemented by the **Agence Française de Développement (AFD)**, which supports countries committed to improving forest governance, promoting legal timber trade, and combating illegal logging.

Guyana formally signed the FLEGT VPA with the European Union in December 2022, and the Agreement entered into force in June 2023. The Agreement establishes a framework to ensure that timber and timber products exported to the European Union are legally produced and traceable.

The project specifically supports stakeholder engagement and Indigenous participation in the implementation of the VPA through improved communication, outreach, awareness, and institutional strengthening.

The initiative recognizes the important role Indigenous communities play in sustainable forest management and seeks to ensure that Indigenous Peoples are fully informed, meaningfully engaged, and able to contribute to forest governance processes affecting their communities.

The project also supports implementation of **Strategic Task 6 of Guyana’s Joint**



Implementation Framework (JIF), which focuses on stakeholder engagement, coordination, and outreach mechanisms.

Role of the National Toshias' Council (NTC)

The National Toshias' Council (NTC) plays a central role in representing Indigenous villages and communities in Guyana's FLEGT VPA implementation process.

Key Roles of the NTC include:

- Representation and Advocacy: Represents Indigenous Peoples and communities in national forest governance discussions and VPA implementation structures, including the **National Implementation Working Group (NIWG)**.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Facilitates consultations and engagement with **Indigenous villages, Forest Sector Organizations (FSOs), Indigenous CSOs**, and other stakeholders.
- Communication & Outreach: Supports the dissemination of information related to the VPA, forest governance, legality requirements, and compliance mechanisms.
- Capacity Building: Strengthens awareness and understanding among Indigenous leaders and communities regarding forest governance, timber legality, compliance requirements, and sustainable forestry.
- Coordination & Collaboration: Works alongside **the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC), the EU, the FLEGT Secretariat**, and development partners to support implementation of the Agreement.
- Promoting FPIC: Ensures that all activities are implemented using the principles of **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)**.

Overall, the NTC serves as a critical bridge between Indigenous communities, government institutions, and development partners to ensure inclusive, transparent, and community-informed implementation of the FLEGT VPA.

Key Goals & Objectives of the Project

The overall goal of the project is to strengthen the participation, knowledge, and capacity of Indigenous stakeholders in Guyana's forest governance and FLEGT VPA implementation processes.

Key objectives include:

- Strengthening the NTC's institutional capacity to support Indigenous participation in forest governance.
- Improving knowledge and understanding of the FLEGT VPA and forest legality requirements among Indigenous communities.
- Supporting communication and stakeholder engagement between the NTC and

Indigenous villages and communities.

- Building awareness on compliance, sustainable forestry, wood tracking systems, and forest governance mechanisms.
- Strengthening Indigenous participation in discussions relating to traditional rights, complaints mechanisms, and forest sector compliance.
- Developing communication tools, training materials, manuals, and outreach strategies to support long-term awareness and engagement.
- Supporting stronger linkages between the FLEGT VPA process and **Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS 2030)**.

Key Activities Under the Project

Several important activities are being implemented to support the achievement of the project objectives.

Major activities include:

- Recruitment of a Forest Focal Person within the NTC Secretariat to support coordination, communication, and stakeholder engagement on forest governance issues.
- Development of a stakeholder engagement plan for consultations with Indigenous communities, FSOs, and Indigenous organizations.
- Development of communication and outreach plans for dissemination of VPA-related information to Indigenous villages and communities.
- Training of the NTC Executive, Secretariat staff, and representatives on:
 - The FLEGT VPA
 - VPA implementation processes
 - Compliance requirements
 - Wood tracking systems
 - Health and safety
 - Forest governance
 - Linkages between the VPA and LCDS 2030
- Development of manuals and communication materials to support awareness raising and training.
- Promotion of inclusive participation using Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles.
- Strengthening engagement on issues related to traditional rights and complaints mechanisms.

Expected Impact & Outcomes

The project is expected to generate significant benefits for Indigenous communities, forest

governance institutions, and Guyana's broader sustainable development goals.

Expected outcomes include:

- Improved awareness and understanding of the FLEGT VPA among Indigenous communities.
- Increased participation of Indigenous Peoples in forest governance and VPA implementation processes.
- Strengthened institutional capacity of the NTC to support forest governance and stakeholder engagement.
- Improved communication and coordination between Indigenous communities and national forestry institutions.
- Enhanced understanding of legality requirements, compliance systems, and sustainable forestry practices.
- Greater inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in national forest governance discussions.
- Stronger transparency, accountability, and stakeholder participation in Guyana's forestry sector.
- Improved readiness of Indigenous Forest Sector Organizations to participate in legal and sustainable forest management.

Ultimately, the project contributes to more inclusive forest governance, improved sustainability in the forestry sector, and stronger recognition of Indigenous Peoples' role in protecting Guyana's forests.

Contribution to National & International Commitments

The project contributes to several national and international commitments related to sustainable development, climate action, and forest governance.

These contributions include:

- **Sustainable Forest Management:** Supports improved governance and legal compliance within Guyana's forestry sector.
- **Climate Change & Forest Conservation:** Contributes to Guyana's efforts to maintain high forest cover and low deforestation.
- **Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS 2030):** Supports sustainable forest governance aligned with Guyana's low carbon development priorities.
- **REDD+ Objectives:** Strengthens systems that support forest conservation, transparency, and sustainable forest use.
- **Indigenous Rights & Participation:** Promotes meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in decision-making processes affecting their lands and resources.
- **International Timber Trade Compliance:** Supports Guyana's implementation of the EU FLEGT VPA and future issuance of FLEGT licenses.

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Advances SDGs related to climate action, reduced inequalities, strong institutions, sustainable communities, and life on land.

Through these contributions, the project supports both national development priorities and global commitments to sustainable forest governance and climate resilience.

Key Milestones / Deliverables

The project includes several important deliverables and milestones that support long-term institutional strengthening and stakeholder engagement.

Key deliverables include:

- Recruitment and placement of a Forest Focal Person within the NTC Secretariat.
- Development of stakeholder engagement and communication plans.
- Development of training manuals and outreach materials.
- Conducting consultations, working sessions, and stakeholder engagement activities.
- Capacity building and training sessions for the NTC Executive and key stakeholders.
- Preparation of interim and final reports documenting progress, lessons learned, and recommendations.
- Strengthened collaboration between the NTC, GFC, EU, and other forest governance stakeholders.

These milestones support the long-term sustainability of Indigenous participation in forest governance processes.

Future Plans

The project will continue to strengthen Indigenous participation and communication within Guyana's forest governance framework.

Future priorities include:

- Continuing outreach and awareness activities in Indigenous communities.
- Strengthening the NTC Secretariat's technical capacity on forestry and forest governance issues.
- Expanding stakeholder engagement and consultation processes.
- Supporting Indigenous communities and FSOs to better understand and comply with forestry regulations.
- Improving access to information and communication materials in Indigenous communities.
- Strengthening collaboration between Indigenous stakeholders and forestry institutions.
- Supporting long-term Indigenous participation in implementation and monitoring of the FLEGT VPA.



These efforts will help ensure that Indigenous communities remain informed, engaged, and empowered participants in Guyana's sustainable forest management and governance processes.

Note: The information provided above can be tailored to make it appropriate for the channel of communication that is being used.

If you have questions about this matter or ideas for improvement, please contact the **Knowledge Management & Communications Coordinator** at kmcc@ntcgy.com. Thank you for your kind cooperation.

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